



GOLD DEMON
BY
OZAKI KŌYŌ
VOL. III

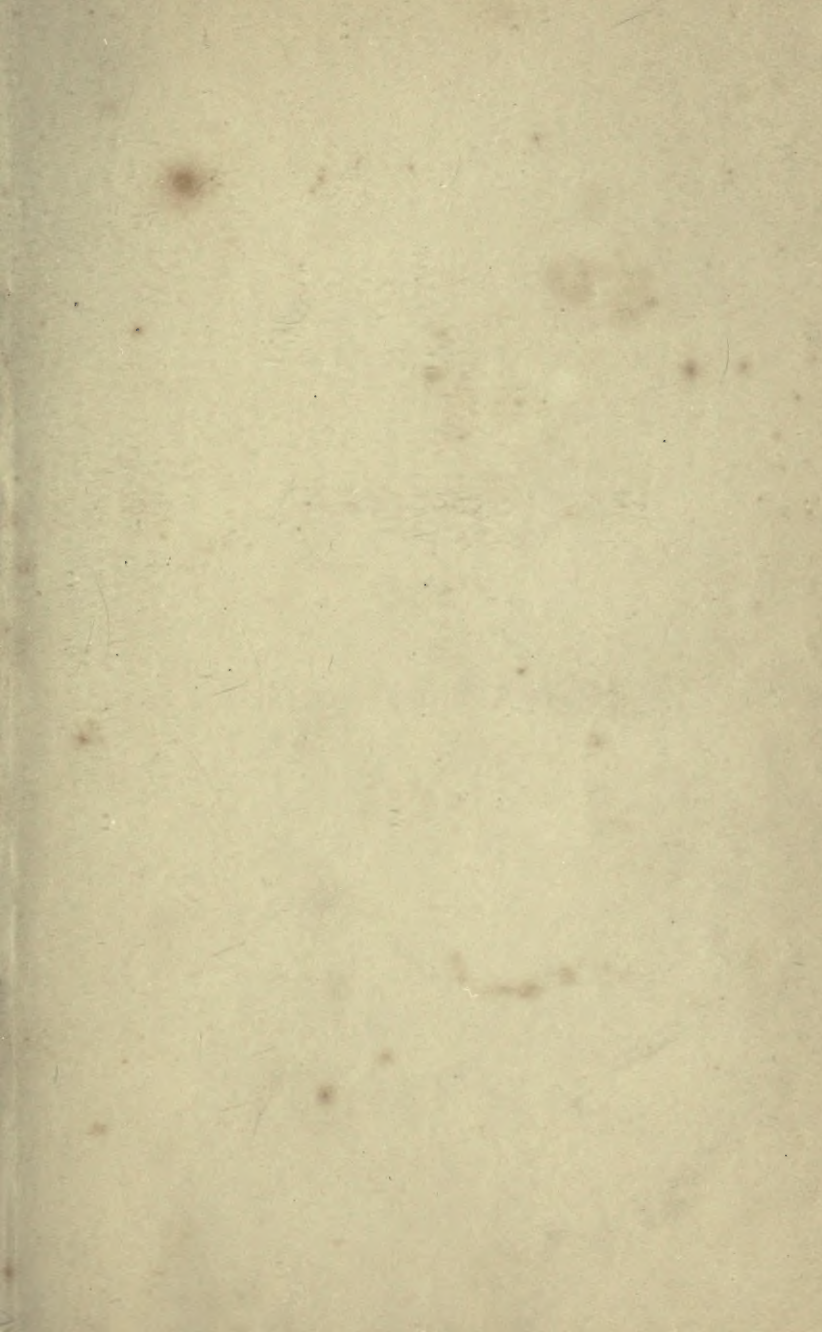
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RE-WRITTEN IN ENGLISH
BY
A AND M LLOYD







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The Gold Demon.



THE
Gold Demon

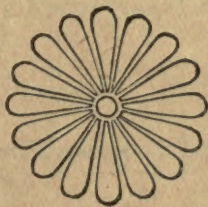
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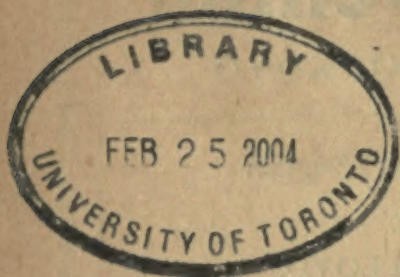
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TOKYO
THE YURAKUSHA.

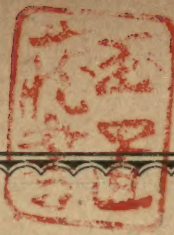
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(THE END).

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BOOK III

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BOOK III

CHAPTER XLI

At the End of the Year.

TO find out the money value of time we may start with the calculation that one second is worth a "mō," (100th part of a farthing) and that therefore the value of a working day of 16 hours is 5 *yen* 76 *sen*, (eleven shillings and six pence farthing) which in a year amounts to as large a sum as 2102 *yen* and 40 *sen*. (Two hundred and ten pounds, four shillings and tenpence).

Hence the bustle in our cities on the twenty-seventh of December! It is the trumpet blast announcing the end of the year!

Those who are in the habit of sitting still begin to bestir themselves, those who usually walk begin to run, the runners rush about wildly, heedless of knocks and bruises from shoulders they

At the End of the Year.

hit in their headlong career, or of the wheels they break as they are whirled along. For all these people are suddenly conscious that the twelfth month is drawing to a close, and that somehow eleven months have been wasted, and with them are lost two thousand *yen* and more—precious seconds which might have been converted into gold. They are making their last desperate effort to find the lost treasure; with blood-shot eyes turning each blade of grass aside, digging up each inch of soil they should have cultivated during the year. Impatiently they hurry past, their minds burdened by the many things they had meant to do, and had put off from day to day, and which must be done now, at the earliest opportunity, or left undone for ever. Time at this juncture, though it increases a hundred and even a thousand-fold in value, will not abate one fraction of the rapidity of its flight, and every moment that passes, serves to increase the panic.

Heaven, which has not neglected its duties, shows no change that day. The sky is as blue as ever, as grand as ever, as serene as ever. It covers the earth as it has always done, and blows down the North wind all day. The sun shines and keeps himself bright high above the whirling December

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dust, and at the appointed hour he sets in flood of red and golden glory.

In most of the streets the New Year decorations have been put up. Before each door the pinetrees sway gently in the wind. Like the garland of plaited straw above them, they typify Divine Blessings, which each inmate hopes will be showered before his gate.

Perhaps it is these tributes to the new, which have frightened the soul of the waning year, that it seems to fly so fast.

In the midst of those who rush along to try and make good their loss of two thousand and odd *yen*, whose child is it that walks abroad carrying a branch of blossoming plum? Whose is that child with a gun over his shoulder, and whose the child that rides in a carriage with a geisha, and that one, in fine clothes of silk, his tooth brush in his hand? (rising *so late* and on his way to the bath when most people are so busy).

Some people there are who drive out in a carriage drawn by two horses and others who carry wedding gifts. There are some who walk along the road reading the latest magazine and yet others who are taking a troop of children to the Bazaars. These must be the people who have made use of

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their time and are satisfied with the result.

Thus there are those who have lost little and are glad at that, and those who have lost much and are sorrowful. A few there are who have lost nothing, and they may well be content. And all of them are anxious to keep what they have, make good what they have lost, and strive to get more and more. This seems the object of all, even from earliest childhood, even in the midst of natures beauties—whether beneath the blossoming trees or under the golden moon—the desire for gain has become a passion.

.....There was one man, who apparently disregarded the crisis of the year. His bare legs were exposed to the cold air, for his silk *hakama* (divided skirt), had shrunk and wrinkled till it looked like a piece of baked seaweed. His flannel shirt was almost threadbare and the stripes of his *kimono* were undistinguishable, so worn was it. His cloak had probably been given him a good many years ago, for it looked old and was very short for so tall a man. He looked about thirty-six years of age. Though not very lean, he had somewhat the appearance of a solitary tree stripped of its leaves, so high did he tower above his fellow-men. He had a cheerful countenance, perhaps a

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little haughty, but not unpleasantly so, and a fine luxuriant black beard hung over his breast and spread sidewise as far as his ears.

At the moment he was slightly intoxicated, and was crossing from a side street to the main road with gay insouciance, sauntering down the very centre of it as though it were a meadow, and the season Spring.

And as he went he sang the well-known song :

“ The wine-gourd is empty,

The night is still,

I come to the fine, high house.

They bring in the Saké,

The curtains they draw,

Inviting the moonlight to enter.

But I have caroused

And the spirit of wine

Still holds me clasped in her arms.

Then draw I my sword,

And behold ! on the blade

Is reflected the light of the moon.”

Farther and farther over the sky spread the glory of the setting sun, which itself glowed like a ruby. The north wind grew sharper, pricking eyes and mouths, like polished needles driven into the flesh. The singer tottered on, swaying now to the

At the End of the Year.

right, now to the left, the wind stinging his face, hot and red from his late carouse, and making him pause at moments to draw in his breath with great gasps.

“Often do I sing a sorrowful song and shed tears alone.

“Would that I could cut Mt. Kune asunder and make the river Sho flow straight;

“Would that I could chop off the “Katsura” (an imaginary tree in the moon) to make the moon shine brighter!

“Having ambition I.....”

Here a troop of the Imperial Cavalry crossed his path at a gallop and stopped his song. He leaned for support on his iron stick and watched the fine men in their gay uniforms, apparently filled with hearty admiration for them. When they had quite disappeared he resumed his song in a low deep voice:

“Having ambition I wandered about far and wide but failed to realise my ambition; Feigning madness, I sold medicine in the city of Seito.”

The eyes of all the passers-by, busy as they were, were attracted to the strange figure which comported itself as though lord of all the world—a world, which to those harrassed passers-by had

At the End of the Year.

become as dismal as hell itself.

Was he a cheerful soul or one who easily despaired? Was he an unknown hero, or a sage or just a drunkard? Many cast curious glances at him, some approached and stared in his face wondering who he was. Others, as they went by, gave a few moments thought to his circumstances. He was too intoxicated to take notice of any one, and stood undecided in the midst of the traffic, unable to make up his befuddled mind where he would go. It was not the first time he had been in this street, in fact he came there very often, but never as drunk as today. The policeman in his box who had often watched him, thought it strange he should have drunk so much more than usual, but otherwise took no further notice of him.

Presently he turned to the right and had walked down the road a distance of two blocks, dragging his heavy iron stick behind him, when a jinricksha, rushing down a narrow incline at right-angles to the main road, ran into him and sent him flying a distance of about four yards, where he fell on his face and grazed his cheek considerably.

Strange to say the jinricksha man kept his balance and stopped for a moment to consider whether he ought to apologize or not, but decid-

ing that the gentleman would not be easy to deal with, he started off again ; leaving the victim of the accident to scramble to his feet as best he could. The lady in the *kuruma* was however differently minded. She pushed aside the silk rug and called impatiently to the jinricksha man to stop. At first he disregarded the call and increased his speed, but a loud cry of: "Hallo there! Wait!" made him pull up.

CHAPTER XLII

A Strange Encounter.

AS is usual a crowd collected, and voices were heard reproving the jinricksha man for his cruelty in leaving a wounded man to his fate. The lady in the meanwhile had descended and was retracing her steps, hurriedly pulling off her headgear as she went, intent on showing all politeness to the man her servant had unintentionally injured.

Around him a number of people had assembled, clustering as thickly as ants who have found something sweet. They seemed to have forgotten their urgent business and many came forward and surrounded the lady clamouring for the punishment of her careless servant.

She, poor lady, felt like a frail flower in the storm. How she wished she could have kept on her silken hood and hidden her face in it. She flushed deeply as she advanced and hardly dared look up so shy and terrified did she feel.

The crowd seeing an elegantly dressed woman, her hair put up in *marumage* style, tied with silk, and decorated with hairpins of gold cloisonné and

A Strange Encounter.

a comb of gold lacquer, stopped their chatter and made way for her to pass. The intoxicated man, leaving his hat, stick, book and clogs to take care of themselves, half rose, and covering his wounded cheek with his hand, stared at the approaching lady.

She stopped in front of him, and summoning all her courage bowed politely and said :

“ I don't know how to apologize to you, I have been most rude and careless! Oh! dear! your face! Is your eye injured? What can I.....”

“ It is not very serious.”

He tried to rise but was unable to do so, and the lady continued anxiously :

“ I fear you have been seriously injured,” and begged to know what she could do.

Her servant now appeared behind her and with many low bows and expressions of regret, apologized for what he had done.

Turning his eyes on him, his victim said in a solemn tone of voice :

“ You are a nice rascal! If you thought you had been rude why did you not stop? I called to you, but you tried to run away, and now because of your ill-conduct your mistress has the unpleasantness of coming to me to apologize for you.”

A Strange Encounter.

“Oh! sir, I am very sorry.”

“I hope you forgive us.” added the lady still further humbling herself.

“Be more careful in future.” was the reply, and he added to the crowd: “Off with you all, and quickly.”

The spectators were sorry the affair was so quickly concluded and went away murmuring that it had ended very tamely and that it was like a drama one sees only through a curtain.

The lady was relieved to see them go and her servant helped the gentleman to rise, handed him his clogs and his stick while his mistress cleaned the hat and picked up his book. She then gave her man her silk hood and ordered him to wipe the mud off the gentleman's cloak and *hakama* with it.

Although he had accepted the apologizes which had been offered, a certain look of annoyance was still visible on his face and the lady who had not taken her sympathetic eyes off him was strangely fascinated by it. Somewhere she had seen that look before, and the thrill of sadness she felt, told her it was connected with some painful memory. The pity in her eyes gave way to a keenly questioning look, but while she was still in doubt, the man

A Strange Encounter.

bowed and tottered slowly down the road. He had not gone very far when she suddenly remembered who it was and hurrying after him called to him to stop. He turned and waited leaning on his stick.

"Excuse me," exclaimed she, as she hastened up, "if I mistake you for someone else—but are you not Mr. Arao?"

He fixed his dull eyes upon her and wondered if he were dreaming. With a frantic effort he strove to clear his muddled brain and disperse the cloud which dimmed his vision. She was very beautiful and she knew him, surely he ought to know her, but memory refused her aid.

"Are you not Mr. Arao?"

"Yes, I am Arao."

"A friend of Kwanichi Hazama!"

"Oh! Hazama! he *was* an old friend of mine."

"I am Miya of the Shigizawas."

"Shigizawa—let me see—your name is Miya!"

"Yes the Shigizawas with whom Hazama used to live."

"Oh! Miya San!"

The surprise at this unexpected meeting cleared his brain for the moment. He could not take his eyes off her, trying to recognize in the elegant woman, the girl he had known in former days.

A Strange Encounter.

With what different eyes they now regarded each other. A moment ago she was a beauty riding in a *kuruma*, a world apart from him, now she was the friend of old days with whom he had laughed and talked, and in whom he had confided with an affection rare even in brother and sister.

To her he was no longer a drunkard, but the friend of the man she loved. He had been to Hazama like an elder brother in those days, and as such she had loved him sincerely.

How their conditions had changed! Here was she, exquisitely dressed, riding proudly in her *kuruma*, about her all the signs of wealth and luxury. He, poor, badly dressed, was drunken in the street!

Who could have foretold such a meeting?

Who would have dreamed of so great a difference in their fortunes?

The same thought occurred to both of them and the tears rushed to Miya's eyes.

"How very much you have changed."

"You too have changed."

The wound on his face was bleeding profusely and Miya gave him her handkerchief to staunch the blood.

"It must hurt you very much," and she whisper-

A Strange Encounter.

ed an order to her jinrikisha man and continued :

“ A doctor I know lives quite near, please come with me to his house. I have ordered a *kuruma* for you.”

“ Why do you trouble, there is nothing really the matter with me.”

“ Oh! there is! Pray be careful or you will fall,” for Arao began to stagger “ you seem to be under the influence of saké so please take a jinricksha at any rate.”

“ No, no, I am all right. By the way what has become of Hazama ?”

Miya felt as if a sword had pierced her heart. Controlling herself she replied :

“ As to that, I have many things to discuss with you.”

“ But you can tell me what has become of him. Is he all right ?”

“ Well.....”

“ That sounds as though something were wrong.”

Crimson with shame Miya was about to reply, when her servant, bringing up a less than usually shabby jinricksha and man, spared her the necessity of answering. To her intense annoyance she saw that a small crowd had again collected and

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was curiously watching her and her companion, and that a policeman was approaching to discover the cause.

CHAPTER XLIII

A Strange Encounter.

(Continued.)

JŌSUKE ARAO with a plaster on his thickly bearded face, was seated in front of a bright lamp, smoking a cigar the doctor had offered him. His intoxication had passed leaving his face pale and grave. Opposite to him on a chair, over which had been thrown a bearskin, sat Miya, drooping and wistful. The room was an upper room in the doctor's house, furnished in European style, but having mats like an ordinary Japanese one, and the two seated there had been talking for some time.

"I received a letter from Hazama," Arao was saying, "when he was about to hide himself, and in it he confided to me the whole of his story. When I read the letter I was very angry. I thought of seeing you at once and advising you to think the matter over.....In case you refused to follow my advice, and do the only right thing, I was determined to treat you no longer as a reasonable human being, but to beat you as you de-

A Strange Encounter.

served so thoroughly that you might be crippled and made unfit for marriage the whole of your life. With this determination, I stood up ready to go to you.

“But I did not go. I thought it over again and came to the conclusion that where Hazama had failed to persuade you, I too would fail, that you were merely a piece of merchandize willing to be sold to Tomiyama and that it is not right to injure another’s merchandise. I restrained myself, pressing both hands upon my breast to hinder it from bursting with the anger that was pent within.

“Miya San! Never, never would I have thought you were that sort of girl. No wonder I was deceived, just as you deceived Hazama with whom you were once as much in love as he with you. As for me, it does not satisfy me that I despise you on my own account, no, I will also hate you for Hazama’s sake—surely I will do this now and throughout the seven lives I shall live in the future.”

Miya’s face had been hidden in her sleeve and she had tried to stifle her sobs, now she could restrain herself no longer and she wept aloud.

“Hazama has been a failure through your fault,” continued Arao, “but I blame him for having

thrown away his chances and allowed himself to sink, simply because a woman gave him up. Still, however foolishly Hazama has behaved, your fault remains, for you caused his fall, and in that your behaviour as a woman was not chaste, it is set against you as though you had stabbed your husband to death. Don't you realize this yourself? It is good that you have repented, for it is a thing you must continue to repent of to the utmost extent of your human power. I am sorry for you that it is too late for your repentance to do any good.

"As to Hazama, he is like one dead.....and you have lived six years with your husband. 'The milk is spilt and the tray is broken' and since it is so, not even Divine power can mend it. I wish I could find a word of consolation for you; it is hard to find, for the fault is entirely yours and consequently it is only proper you should suffer for it."

Miya lifted her wet eyes and encountering Arao's glance, shuddered, for she seemed to behold Kwanichi's hatred of herself gazing at her from the eyes of his friend.

"Alas! my own fault!" thought she, "though at the time I knew not how great a wrong I was

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doing. It must be great indeed if this man who has *not* suffered for it should feel such hatred and resentment. If so, how can the man who said, in time I should realize the consequences of my deed, ever forgive me. Alas! I shall never be forgiven, I shall never see the man I love again!"

She bowed her head and sobs shook her slight flower-like form.

Arao, though fancying he read in Miya's eyes more self-interest than true love and despising her accordingly, could not fail to be moved by a grief he saw was sincere.

"You have indeed repented," he said more gently, "and that must bring you forgiveness from yourself, even though Hazama and I may be unable to forgive."

But Miya, signifying that she would not listen to even so poor consolation as this, shook her head vehemently and continued to sob.

"It is better," went on Arao, "to forgive oneself than not be forgiven at all. For in order to do the former one must have repented very bitterly and suffered much, which, being observed by the other person, may lead him to forgive the wrong. I cannot yet forgive you, although in spite of despising you, I feel sorry for you in your grief.

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My chief sympathy is for my friend Hazama though you are both to be pitied. Ah! I can well imagine the bitterness that was mingled with *his* despair.

“These are my feelings and as long as I feel so, I can do nothing for you but look on in silence.

“Unexpectedly I met you to-day, the only woman of whom I ever made a friend. How many kindnesses you did me in past days! How often my heart was filled with gratitude towards you! Thus, when I recognized you after so long a separation, I ought to have felt full of affection towards you. But I observed your “*marumage*” hair and your splendid garments and I could not love you. It was a happy chance, I thought, when you said you had something to say to me, for at last the time had come when I could avenge the wrong done to Hazama. As you had deceived Hazama, I felt convinced you would try and deceive me, but I was willing to hear what you had to say and punish you after that. Contrary to my expectation, you spoke of sorrow and repentance and to this I have listened with secret joy. You are still my friend as of old, Miya-San! How ceaselessly you have repented your wrong! Had you not, I would have inflicted ten times as many wounds

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upon your face as you see here on my cheek. I said, when one could with justice forgive oneself, it sometimes lead to being forgiven by another..... Do you understand?

“Now you ask me to plead your cause with Hazama, to apologize and beg forgiveness in your place. This request I cannot grant. I cannot do so because it would appear that I was taking your side against him, and as I know you to be the offender, I cannot reasonably take your part. Besides, if I were Hazama I would not forgive you either.

“You must take it, please, as a sign of the goodwill I bear you, that I can thus meet my friend’s enemy and part from her without doing her an injury. I have said many hard words to you, but please forgive me and let me say goodbye to you, for I must be going.”

Arao bowed and was about to rise when Miya, brushing the tears off her heavy eyelids, stopped him :

“A few more moments, please.....Then however earnestly I beg you, you refuse to take my message to Hazama—and you say you will not forgive me either.”

“Yes, that is what I said,” replied Arao and half rose.

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"Please wait," cried Miya desperately, "some dinner will be served in a moment."

"No, thank you, I do not want any," was the reply.

"Oh! Arao-san, *do* sit down, I must finish what I have to say to you."

"Whatever else you may say to me will be quite in vain, however much you may plead."

"Need you speak to me in that tone?" Miya replied reproachfully, "can't you be patient with me a few moments longer?"

Holding his hand over the glowing charcoal in the brazier, Arao turned his gaze to the ceiling as though pondering deeply and made no reply. Miya went on:

"Arao-san I am quite convinced of the hopelessness of persuading you to apologize for me to Hazama and of being forgiven by either of you, and I am not going to ask you to do either..... I want to see Hazama once and for all and honestly confess my wrong. To confess in his presence is all I desire. I do not ask for forgiveness and I do not think he will forgive. No, I don't even want to be forgiven, for I have made up my mind....."

Sobs choked her utterance for a while and then

A Strange Encounter.

in spite of Arao's astonished gaze she said beseechingly :

“ Please, please take me with you. If *you* take me, Kwanichi will be sure to see me. I only want to see him and then let him kill me—when you and he have rebuked me for what I have done, let him kill me—for it is my desire to die by Kwanichi's hand

Arao, who had listened immovable as a pine-tree covered with frost, now shook his great beard and said :

“ Well, well, what a fine idea ! To see Hazama and then be killed by him ! It certainly *ought* to be so ! But—but—but you are Mrs. Tomiyama—Tadatsugu is your husband and you can't do just as you like.”

“ I don't care ! ”

“ Don't care ? That won't do. Your resolution to shun not even death is, as a sign of your repentance, quite right, but in any other way it means that you recognize a duty to Hazama and not to your husband. What about your husband ? Would that be the right way to treat him ? I want you to think that over. It means this. You deceived Hazama for Tomiyama's sake and now you want to deceive Tomiyama for the sake of

The Gold Demon.

Hazama—to deceive not one, but *two* men! If you repent on the one hand and commit a sin on the other, all the merit of your repentance is annulled.”

Biting her lip viciously, Miya replied :

“ I don't care in the least about all that.”

“ Your “ don't care ” will bring you to grief.”

“ Really, I don't care.”

“ That won't do! ”

“ I tell you I don't care ! I don't care what becomes of me for I gave myself up as useless long ago. My only desire is to see Kwanichi-san once more, to make confession to him, and to die. As for Tomiyama, I don't..... I should like to die as I have said.”

“ What foolish talk ! How can you expect me to take the part of so thoughtless and unreasonable a person as yourself. I think you gave up Hazama because your disposition is bad and perverted. It is wicked to talk as you do. What do you mean by saying that you, a wife, *don't care* if you deceive your husband? If that is really your belief, I shall be inclined to give my sympathies to Mr. Tomiyama for having so unfaithful a wife..... poor Tomiyama! It is hateful to hear you talk like that! ”

A Strange Encounter.

"Do not be so cruel," cried Miya, "but tell me how to prove that I repent.....I implore you, tell me what to do."

"Instead of asking me what to do, you had far better think it out for yourself."

"There has not been a single day these last three or four years that I have not thought about it—and because of it I am ill and wasted as by disease. How often have I said to myself I should be far happier dead than living like this. But I dared not die without seeing, if only once, Kwan-ichi-san again."

"Well, think it over again!"

"Arao-san you are *too* cruel!"

Then as though the burden of her grief were too heavy for her to bear alone, Miya seized the man's sleeve and wept.

Arao, who in spite of his harsh words was very much moved, dared not shake himself free, and looking down at her he noticed for the first time how emaciated she was and he realized that her words were true and that grief had wrought a terrible change in her:

"Do you not believe I am penitent," she cried. "For the sake of our old friendship please help me—tell me what to do."

CHAPTER XLIV

At Supper.

The clatter of china and the running to and fro downstairs warned the two that a meal was in preparation, and it was not long before the servants appeared and began to prepare the table for the two guests. During this time both Miya and Arao sat in an indescribably wretched silence.

As soon as the meal was ready, the servants departed and Arao took up the thread of the discourse.

“I understand very well what you feel, Miya-san, and don't think it unreasonable. I wish I could help you and show you a way by which you might attain peace of mind.....If I were you I would.....no, I can't tell, you, really I cannot. If it would do you any good I would tell you, but it won't. It is not a thing one person should tell another of—it would not be right, for after all it is only a fancy of mine—my innermost private thought and if I told it to you, it might lead you into a mistake and one should avoid suggesting things which might lead another into an error,

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especially when the suggestion is fancy—not fact. I don't say I will not tell you at all but I cannot do so now. If I think it over and perhaps find a way of showing you what I mean, I will try and impart my idea to you. I certainly hope to have another opportunity of meeting you.

“ You want to know where I live? I do not think I had better tell you just now, “ a homeless wanderer am I,” as the poem has it. No, there is no particular reason why I should not tell you where I live, except this one, for you to come and call upon me would get you into trouble. You are surprised at my style of dress! Not more than I am, I assure you, but it can't be helped. I too have a history I might tell you some day.”

In this way Arao strove to divert Miya's mind from her grief as they sat at supper together and he was not unsuccessful. Her tears ceased to flow and she began to look more cheerful and to take an interest in the doings of her old friend. Seeing him pour out a cup of wine, she was reminded of the intoxicated condition in which she had found him. She begged him to be careful, not to drink too much and gave him advice on his conduct in this respect, all of which he listened to good-humouredly, promising to be careful in the future

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and assuring her he rarely drank as much as he had that day.

After a while they reverted to the topic of Hazama. Miya wanted to know if Arao had ever seen him since that letter he had written and when Arao said he had not, she wished to know why and wherefore and whether he would go to see him and when and how. The man promised to do his best, but declared he was unable to go to-morrow, as he was too busy. Miya had finished her dinner and with a gesture of weariness she sighed:

“I am so weary of the world!”

“Are you?” exclaimed Arao, well, so am I. One makes a mistake in this world and what a chain of trouble comes of it. At the present moment I find no use in living in the world, but also no special reason for dying. It seems a pity to die for nothing and so live on. It is certainly better to die than to live in pain. What is there to love in life? The more I think on that subject the gloomier is the outlook.”

He had finished, too, and put down his *hashi*, saying with a smile to Miya, who had been attending to his wants:

“How many years it is since you waited on me like this!”

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The recollection was too much for Miya; the ready tears sprang to her eyes, seeing which, Arao suddenly stood up and prepared to go. He had witnessed enough tears for one day.

“Well, thank you for all your kindness, Miya san,” he said cheerfully, “and Goodbye.”

“No, no,” cried the girl, “can’t you.....what shall I do?”

“There is only one thing,” replied Arao, “resolution,” and as though to show her what resolution meant, he pushed her gently on one side and went to the door. But she clung to him, crying:

“What do you mean by resolution?”

“I mean what I say,” was the reply. He freed himself from her clasp and was gone.

CHAPTER XLV

Concerning Tadatsugu Tomiyama.

THE New Year's pines had been removed some eight days ago, but Tomiyama Tadatsugu had not yet laid aside his festive humour and was still in search of fresh amusement, day after day, night after night. Miya made no complaint, allowing him to come and go as he pleased, and performing her wifely duty of receiving him on his return and seeing him off when he went out, just as the proprietress of a hotel does for her guests, as a matter of course and without asking any questions. This state of things had been going on for some time and Tomiyama had grown accustomed to his wife's passiveness, looking upon it as her natural disposition and requiring no more of her than to see her on his return home. This cold passivity on Miya's part did not make her husband's home a cheerful one. The result was he sought his pleasures elsewhere and though at first these had been harmless amusements, a gradual change had come over Tadatsugu, and he fell more and more into evil habits, until now he

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was leading a positively dissolute life, taking advantage where he could of Miya's indifference to his doings, to go unmolested where he pleased. She had noticed the change which first had seemed merely like ripples on shallow water, and she knew by this time of the habits into which he had fallen, but she said no word. It was her duty as a wife to admonish him, yet she would not speak.

He had not lost any of his affection for her, for though emaciated by constant grief, her beauty had not suffered, and as long as this was so, Tadatsugu's love for her would in all probability not decrease. No, he loved her still, but she was cold and unresponsive, and when he had satisfied himself by gazing at her beauty, he would become conscious of the chilly atmosphere of his home, and could not but feel that the time he spent there was like sitting before a stove in which no fire burned.

Money can buy much. Flattery and caresses, smiles and tears, gay looks and happy laughter, all can be had for money. Tadatsugu was rich and since he could not find these things in his own home he sought them elsewhere, taking refuge from the cheerlessness of his house in temporary pleasures, and realizing how empty

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they were, just in the same way that he rejoiced in being able to call his own, so great a beauty as Miya, without realizing how empty that beauty was. Thus, unconsciously, he was suffering pain, though had he been told so, he would have unhesitatingly denied it, being satisfied with himself as a man of the world, who knew how to take his pleasure at home and abroad, and was wealthy enough to do both.

Now Miya, whose love of Hazama intensified her dislike of her husband, tried to see as little of him as she could, and was glad to see him go out early and return late, and though she guessed where he went and how his time was spent, she never reproached him or even looked angry. When the evening was chilly, she would, like a thoughtful wife, bring out a warm waistcoat lest he should take cold, and he, touched by the attention, would congratulate himself on having so good a wife, one he could so thoroughly rely on, a splendid mistress in her house, and to him a valuable possession. And so it appeared outwardly, not only to her husband but also to her parents-in-law (who did not live with her as is customary), to her relatives and her acquaintances. All pitied her on account of her delicate health

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and regarded her as a model wife. She did not go into society as much as Mr. So-and-so's wife ; she was not wayward like Madam X, nor as fond of gaiety as some other ladies, nor was she a gossip, nor jealous, nor importunate. No, she stayed at home, serving her husband faithfully and quietly, in spite of the fact that she was more beautiful and more talented than the other ladies and therefore more worthy of admiration. Nobody knew the secret that was hidden in her breast and she never did anything by which that secret might be betrayed, so that the indifferent and cold manner to her husband was only regarded as the behaviour of a gentle and reserved nature and not as the outward expression of the false heart within. Outwardly, she was fortunate and happy and envied by many, inwardly, all was darkness and misery.

Miya was now in her twenty-fifth year. Her days were passed in dreaming of the past and sighing over the present. The New Year had brought only remorse keener than ever, disappointment and sorrow. It had added another year to her age—years, as she said to herself, for which she had no desire since life to her was a useless gift.

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She had spent the last days hoping for a word from Arao, like a prisoner who hopes for, but expects no acquittal. Each day had brought fresh disappointment to her and she longed to retire to her bed and weep there alone, but having no actual illness or pain she could not do so and was obliged to dress herself as her husband liked to see her, in the silken garments which best showed up her beauty.

Miya was sitting beside the brazier opposite to her husband, who was drinking saké to warm himself before going out into the cold.

The sun shone brightly on the two blossoming plum-trees placed on the southern verandah, on the paper doors and upon the "fukujuso" (adonis amuraisis) standing on the alcove shelf. Tada-tsugu was scarcely less shining in his new triple suit of silk holding in his right hand a white silk wrapper of a delicate and transparent weave, while in his left he held the cup into which Miya was at that moment pouring wine.

"Why! that is a very awkward way to pour out wine....." he exclaimed, "it is overflowing! Very bad manners! Miya san! I might almost say I'd rather go out to have my

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wine poured out for me, if you are going to do it like this!"

"Go out to drink as much as you like, dear," replied Miya smiling.

"All right! You have said it is all right! I shall be *very* late to-night then!"

"About what time will you be back?"

"I shall be late!"

"But if you do not say what time you will return, it is tiresome for those who have to sit up and wait for you."

"I shall be late."

"Very well, then every one will go to bed at ten o'clock."

"I shall be late."

Miya was too bored by this foolishness to give a reply.

"I shall be late," said Tadatsugu teasingly. Silence on Miya's part.

"I shall be so late as to surprise you!"

Miya turned away her head.

"Come, look here!"

And when she still kept silent he said in surprise, half laughing:

"Why, I believe you are angry! You need not be angry, dear!"

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He pulled Miya's sleeve to make her turn.

"Why do you do that?" she asked in her even voice.

"Because you do not answer me!"

"I know you will be late, so what more can I say?"

"I shall not really be late, so don't be cross."

"It is perfectly right to be late if you have to be late, and....." her voice had a sharp ring suddenly.

"I have just told you I shall not be late. You are very easily offended nowadays. What is the reason?"

"Partly owing to the weak state of my health and partly....."

"And partly owing to my infatuation for some one else.....eh?—I stand corrected!"

Tadatsugu paused to see what effect his last remark would produce in Miya. He was disappointed that she made no sign; not even a frown disturbed the serenity of her brow.

"Won't you take a cup of wine?" he asked.

"No, thank you."

"I will take half and you can drink the rest."

"No, no, I don't care for any."

"Oh! Nonsense! let me pour out just a little

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for you—next to nothing.”

“You give me what I don’t want, dear.”

“Well, never mind. Pouring wine should be done like this.....do you see?.....Aiko style.” He mentioned the name of the *geisha* who was known to be his mistress and waited for his wife’s answer, sending her a half-mischievous, half lover-like glance. Miya feigned not to have recognized the name and only made a little grimace at the taste of the wine of which she had taken a sip.

“You don’t like it?” queried her husband, “well, give me the cup—and now fill it up to the brim for me.”

Miya did as she was requested and apologized for not having emptied the cup her husband had poured out for her. She then once more urged him to hurry as it was long past ten o’clock. Tadatsugu, that morning, was in no mood to go. He declared he had no important business that day and lingered, sometimes caressing, sometimes teasing her. Finally he again referred to the probability of his being late that night and Miya regarding him questioningly, he added:

“But not for the reason you attach to my late home-coming! On the 28th the “*Denden kwai*” (an association for the purpose of dramatic song-

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singing = "*Jōruri*") are giving their Concert and I am going to call on *Ito-gawa* at five o'clock this afternoon for a rehearsal. I am singing my favorite :

"Being persuaded by my parents, I sailed from the harbour of *Naniwa*;

"Alas! what pain it was to me, I ceased not to weep until I came to *Akashi*.

"Though I found him there, a great storm parted us,

"And I returned again to my native place. My parents had found me a husband; They wished to give me to an unknown man."

At the beginning of the song *Miya* had turned her face away—she hated her husband to sing and as his voice grew louder and more and more artificial the line between her delicate eyebrows deepened.

Suddenly she interrupted him:

"You had better stop now—that is a good passage to break off at—and you *must* go, it is getting so late."

"Please listen to me a little more.....'that I might break my avowed love with"—

"Another time I will listen to you," *Miya* interrupted him impatiently.

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"But isn't it good, Miya?" cried her husband delighted at his own performance. "Worth hearing, isn't it?"

"I don't know."

"Don't know? Good gracious! It is a pity you don't! Won't you try and understand this dramatic singing a little?"

"What does it matter whether I understand it or not?"

"It does matter. People who know nothing of the "*jōruri*" style of singing lose a great deal. You are naturally very cold and that is why you don't care about *jōruri*; I am sure that is the reason."

"No, you are wrong."

"No, I am right. You are *very* cold!"

"What about Aiko?" said Miya, startling her husband by the suddenness of the question.

"Aiko! *she* is not cold."

"Ah! then I understand!"

"Understand what?"

"I say, I understand!"

"Well, I certainly *don't* understand."

"It is time you went—go, go.....and come home soon."

"I see! you are not cold after all, and you tell

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me to come home quickly." Tadatsugu's voice was eager. "Shall you be waiting for me?"

"Am I not waiting for you always?" she replied gently.

"You are not cold?" questioned the man, but Miya made no reply.

She assisted him with his coat and then gave him her hands. This did not prove that she was not cold, for it was a custom Tadatsugu had taught her from the beginning of their married life, that at parting and at meeting they should thus shake hands.

CHAPTER XLVI

How Miya Spends her Morning.

HAVING watched her husband out of sight, Miya returned to her own room moving wearily and shuddering a little, as though she had been forced to enter some cave of ice. Although her husband's presence was irksome to her and she was relieved to see him go, yet to be alone in the big house was melancholy. Left to herself and free from all restraints, for in her husband's presence she was on her guard to give no indication of her real feelings, Miya when alone would suddenly find herself very tired in body, and a hundred harassing thoughts would creep into her mind, until within all seemed confusion and disorder and beyond her power to disentangle.

Leaning over her brazier that morning she looked sorely perplexed. How could she extricate herself from all this sorrow and grief? Was she to pay the penalty all her life long for that one false step? Would there never be sunshine again; never anything but this blank darkness? Ah! how oppressive it was! She rose and pushing aside the sliding door, stepped into the verandah.

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The winter sky looked clear and cold, with here and there a kite or hawk soaring past, far away into the blue. The garden indeed was brown and withered and would have looked dreary, had not the sun been shining with such dazzling brightness. A noisy brown-eared bul-bul stopped singing as she came out, and then flew into a more distant treetop. From the next garden came the sharp click-click of a shuttlecock and Miya paused for a few minutes counting the taps and looking up longingly at the sun. But her restlessness drove her indoors and she wandered aimlessly about the house until, reaching her bedroom, she flung herself down upon her couch.

What a charming picture she made as she lay there in so unconsciously graceful an attitude. Upon a pile of thick quilts of white silk, the slender, dainty figure in its flowing dress of delicately tinted crêpe looked like some lovely vision borne ashore on the white crest of the waves. The sun poured his mild rays upon her, as, with her face supported on one white hand, she gazed before her with unseeing eyes.

The clock ticked evenly in the corner and the room was very still and peaceful. Miya's head drooped, her eyes closed, and then for a little

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while at least, time moved imperceptibly to her. The shadow of a bird flashing across her face awoke her. She sat up lazily, lifting one hand to her disordered hair, and gazing through the window into the garden, allowed her mind to continue the vain imaginings of her sleeping and waking dreams.

Presently she rose from her bed and glided into her sitting room. Here she kneeled before a chest and opening it, took out a soft crêpe sash from which she drew a roll, which looked like a very long letter. With this she went into her husband's study and sat down at his desk. The roll was not the letter written to her by Kwanichi before he left the Shigizawas, but was her own secret manuscript intended for him and was a detailed record of her thoughts and feelings since her separation from him so many years ago.

Since she had seen Kwanichi in Viscount Tazumi's garden some years ago, her grief had become more acute, her lot harder to bear. Having no one to whom she dared confide her sorrow, she sought relief by writing down what she might never speak. At first she thought of sending what she wrote to Kwanichi, to show him that she too suffered, and suffered more even than he had told

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her she would, but prudence forbade such a course. The letter might never reach him: it might be opened and read by other eyes. Or, in his anger he might return it to her, thus exposing it to her servants, or her husband, which meant ruin to her. Not that she would greatly care for that, she said to herself, but..... Yes, to send it would be as risky as when some insect flies into the flame; to destroy it would be a pity. Some day by good luck she might be able to see it placed safely in his hands, till then she would keep it as a solace for sad and lonely hours.

When she looked at the closely written lengths she felt almost as if she had seen her beloved. When she wrote down her thoughts and dreams of him, she felt as if she were talking to him, and could thus talk more freely, more intimately than if he stood before her. Thus, when overcome with her secret grief, she would take her brush and correct or add to what she had written before, and when one long letter was finished, she would rewrite it from beginning to end, beautifying and improving it, and burning the first copy, put the new letter safely away in the folds of her sash. In this way she kept only one letter, which had now been rewritten many times. Miya improved

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greatly in penmanship.

When she met Arao she was overjoyed and filled with hope. No more need to comfort herself with writing letters she could never send. Arao would be the mediator between her and Kwanichi and they would at last be reconciled. She waited and waited for Arao's answer; but alas! he, too, disappointed her.

Miya had become desperate and as she unfolded the letter in her husband's room, decided that today it should be sent at whatever cost.

With great care she prepared her ink, chose her finest brush and her best paper and then with carefully selected characters, she began to re-write her letter for the last time.

But her hand trembled and she had not written ten lines when she impatiently tore it off and threw it on the charcoal in the brazier. The flames sprang up and at that moment the door opened, and the maid, alarmed at the disturbed face of her mistress, and amazed at the sight of the flame, muttered somewhat incoherently, "Mistress, your mother-in-law has come!"

CHAPTER XLVII

The Wanibuchi Inheritance.

AFTER Mr. and Mrs. Wanibuchi's terrible death, Kwanichi had rebuilt the house, somewhat smaller than the original and on a more economical principle, but still very much on the old lines. He had put up a porcelain doorplate, on which could be read in large clear characters the name "Hazama Kwanichi," and he was now master of the entire property.

But what had become of Tadamichi, the real heir?

From the very beginning he had vowed he would not touch a "rin" of so unjust an inheritance and had bequeathed it all to Kwanichi, with the hope that he would use it to start some honest trade, that he might be converted into a right-minded man and that with the profits, fairly earned, he would embark on some good work to atone for some of the evil he had done. But Kwanichi, when he became master, refused to give up his old trade, and carried on that avaricious business more energetically than ever. Those who knew the two men were puzzled as to the relation-

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ship in which they stood to each other, and many conjectures were made as to why Kwanichi should have inherited everything and the real heir should show no resentment. There are many cases like this one: some mystery or secret lies at the root which will never be explained to the world. Wise are they who do not pry into their neighbour's business; fortunate are they who may pursue their calling, unmolested by an inquisitive world.

Tadamichi and Kwanichi never divulged their secret.

Hazama was now no longer a clerk, but an independent usurer and he soon became influential among his fellow traders. He was successful in all his undertakings and might have lived in grand style, had he so desired. But no, he kept to his old "disappointed student" way, lived frugally, abhorred luxury and indulgence and kept but one elderly woman servant, so that he need not cook for himself. Thus he gained the reputation of being eccentric.

Formerly, when Kwanichi came home tired after a long day's work, he felt as though he were resting beneath a wayside tree on a tiresome journey — now he felt restless and lonely, and as the even-

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ing drew on, the pall of sadness hung heavily over him.

One evening, as he paced restlessly up and down his room his old servant entered and told him that a visitor had called that afternoon and said he would come at the same hour on the morrow, trusting to find Kwanichi at home.

"When I asked for his name, he said 'a school-mate,' and went away," added the servant.

Kwanichi wondered who it might be—which of his schoolmates had reason to look him up after so many years.

"What sort of a man was he?" he asked.

"Let me see. A man of about forty with a big bushy beard, tall, and very fierce looking—together very like a *sōshi*." (political rough).

After a pause she added:

"And he was very haughty."

"What time did he say he would come to-morrow?" demanded Kwanichi.

"At three o'clock, sir."

"Who can he be?"

"He seemed to be a man of bad manners," ventured the old woman, "shall I let him in when he comes?"

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“He did not say what he wanted to see me for?”

“No, sir.”

“All right. I will try and see him.”

“Yes, sir.” The old woman was about to rise from her knees, then bent herself to the ground again and said nervously, “and after a little while Mrs. Akagashi came.”

Kwanichi's only response was a frown.

“She brought three fine pieces of Kobe *Kama-boko* (a preparation made from fish) and some “*Yōkan*” (a sweet) made by Fujimura—she also gave me a present.”

Kwanichi looked still more displeased and made an impatient movement. The servant continued very meekly:

“And she left word she would be here at five o'clock to-morrow, as she had various matters to ask you about.”

At this announcement Kwanichi's face became dark with displeasure and he sharply told the woman she had said enough. The poor old thing scrambled to her feet in haste and went out, leaving her master to brood alone over the messages she had brought him.

CHAPTER XLVIII

The First Visitor.

THE visitor who had given no other name than 'a schoolmate' arrived at the appointed hour. Kwanichi was so amazed when he saw who it was, that he was as one who has been dazed by a great clap of thunder, and he could not easily recover from the stupor into which he had fallen.

Arao Jōsuke, for it was he, stroked his long beard as he settled himself on the cushion, and stared openly at his long forgotten friend, trying to read in those features what manner of man he had grown.

Arao was the first to break the long silence.

"It is nearly ten years since we last met," he said, "therefore there is much to be said, but before we go any further I have a question to put to you: Do you consider me your friend?"

Kwanichi's mind was still too confused to answer readily and Arao, mistaking his hesitation, exclaimed:

"There is no need to think over so simple a question. If you do, then say you do, if you do not, then say you don't—there is only one word

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you have to say, "yes" or "no."

"Well," Kwanichi stammered out uncertainly, "you were a friend of mine."

"I *was* a friend?"

"But not now."

"Why not?"

"Because not having seen each other for a good many years we can hardly call either of us the other's friend."

"Meaning, I suppose," rejoined Arao with a sarcastic smile, "that some years ago you did not choose to treat me as a friend," and as Kwanichi looked at him questioningly, he continued: "allow me to remind you. In that critical moment when you had to decide whether you would become a university student or go to the..... or become a usurer, you not only did not consult me, but you hid your whereabouts from me. Do you consider that treating me as a friend?"

Not a word dared Kwanichi answer but he felt as if his wounds had been torn open anew, for this was a matter over which he had suffered shame and remorse—he was conscious that in his anger at Miya's faithlessness he had made all his friends suffer.

"The girl you loved may have given you up,"

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added Arao, "but your friend never turned from you. Why did you give me up? To hear this I have come to see you to-day. I have a right to an answer—for, understand, I have by no means given you up."

In this way Arao pleaded for a long time with Kwanichi. He begged to know the reason of the indifference he thought he saw in Kwanichi's face. He recalled the past to him—the days of a great friendship, which on one side had never been broken. If Kwanichi did in truth no longer desire his friendship, let him say so openly and they would part with some words of farewell and candidly say to each other that they neither desired to see the other any more. To all this Kwanichi listened, his head bent low in shame, and many thoughts rushed through his bewildered brain. He saw Arao again as a student—then as councillor of the prefecture, full of dignity and importance! and now, here in his house was Arao again—miserably poor! In spite of these changes in position, Kwanichi recognized that the man himself had never changed. There was the same haughty independent bearing, the same frank, almost reckless way of speech, the quick but always generous temper and the little tricks of manner which brought back to him so vividly the old days—now all vanished like a

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dream. He tried, but was unable, to make any answer.

“We are to part then,” began Arao, again having vainly waited for a reply. “We are to part and I am to give you up, whom till this very day I still regarded as my friend. Before I go, I must say to you a little of that which is on my mind.

“Now, Hazama, what are you making all this money for? Is it to take the place of the love of which you have been robbed? Granted that is so, and there is no wrong in that, why make money in this unjust way? You consider you have been made to suffer by one, should you not therefore be careful not to cause suffering to others, knowing what pain it is—and yet what is your trade but a torment to all who have to do with you. You take advantage of misfortune, you suck the people’s blood; does the money you make by these means console you for your own loss? It is said in these days that money can do every thing—it is almighty—has it been able to give you peace and quiet—*you* who know you are doing an evil thing! Are you happy? When you go out dunning or distraining, do you feel as if you were going to see the cherries in bloom on a sunshiny day in spring?.....Probably in all these years

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you have not had a really happy day—you have forgotten what happiness is! Why! look at your face! You look like.....a criminal—such faces are found in prisons!”

Arao, as he said these words and gazed into the miserable and emaciated face before him, burst into tears.

“Hazama,” he cried in a loud voice, “why do I weep—do you know? The Hazama I see before me to-day does not understand—you are a different being. You are drinking poison to cure a disease—are you as ignorant of medicine as all that. Money gained by robbery will never comfort you, however much you may acquire. My *friend* Hazama was not such a fool; he must have gone mad when he became what he is now. A madman is not accountable for the foolish things he does—but I, as your friend, had to bear the shame of having loved the soul which was small and weak enough to succumb on account of a girl!”

He spoke vehemently. “Now, Hazama, show your spirit—you have been called by me a thief, a criminal and lunatic! Be angry! By all the gods, be angry and give me blow for blow—or kick me out!”

“I am not angry,” came the answer very low.

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"Not angry.....!! Then you regard yourself as a thief, a criminal....."

"And a lunatic too," added Hazama. "I have 'no face to turn to you' (I am ashamed) that I should have gone mad for a faithless woman. There is no help for it now, for you see I am mad—I thank you, Arao—but you had better leave me."

"I see. Then you do get some comfort out of your unjust money?"

"No, not yet."

"Do you think you will?"

"I don't know."

"Are you married?"

"No."

"Why not? Bachelor life must be very inconvenient since you live in a house like this."

"Not necessarily."

"What do you think of her now?"

"Do you mean Miya? She is a brute."

"But you are a brute too. No usurer can have a human heart and one who has not a human heart is a brute."

"I dare say—and nearly all men are brutes."

"Am I a brute too?"

Hazama made no reply and Arao continued :

“Did you, Hazama, become a brute, being madened by her behaving brutally? Then in case she repents and is softened and sorry you must cease to be a brute—do you not think so?”

“*She* become womanly and penitent! Impossible! I am a brute in that I covet money, but I have never deceived any one. I could not do so cruel a thing as receive love and affection and then betray it. At the outset I call my bussiness usury and money *lending* and those who borrow have to pay; I do not force my money on anyone who does not want to borrow it. Pah! how can such a creature as Miya become the owner of a human heart?!”

“Why should she not?”

“Then you really think she can?”

“You seem to hope she will not be able.”

“It is not a question of hoping.....I have nothing to do with such a person,” and Kwanichi looked as though he would be capable of spitting in her face.

“You may wish to have nothing to do with her but for your own sake I ought to tell you this:

“Miya has repented—she has deeply, very deeply repented her sin against you.....she cannot forgive herself for the wrong she has done.”

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Kwanichi laughed contemptuously—he scorned the idea. It was absurd, ridiculous, he cried, and he laughed again; striving to recover himself he laughed the more and the contemptuous laughter rang all over the house.

CHAPTER XLIX

The Parting of two Friends.

WHEN Hazama was quiet once more, Arao, remembering his promise to Miya, returned to the duty of pleading with him for her forgiveness.

"Since she is repenting, you would do well to relent - I think it is time you relented!"

"Her repentance has not the least effect upon my feelings towards her. She behaved like a brute and now she seems to realize a little what her action has cost. That perhaps is a good thing!"

"I met her the other day unexpectedly," said Arao in his deep voice, ignoring Hazama's scornful manner. "She shed bitter tears. She implored me to plead with you for your forgiveness or else to beg you to allow her to come and see you just once more. I declined the office of mediator—I had my own reason for not granting her request—and therefore I do not intend to persuade you into forgiving her because she is sorry for what she has done—that point lies outside my

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intention. What I say to you is this. She is suffering because she is repenting, or in other words she is now being punished herself—and had you seen her, you would realize that the punishment is adequate to the fault.—For this reason I would have you bury your hatred and in doing so—here is the point—you would become once more the old Hazama we loved and respected. You say yourself you are not happy and do not know when you will be happy again—well, does not this news, that Miya is repenting and thinking of you with love, comfort you a little? It ought to do so. The money you have spent all these years in acquiring—I don't know how much it is, but I fancy it is not a little—has it brought you much comfort?—Not as much as this one piece of news—Miya's repentance—has brought you! Is it not so?"

"The repentance you speak of is not so much a comfort to me as a torment to Miya. That she realizes her fault does not in any way restore to me what I have lost—consequently, why should I feel comforted by it? I shall hate her to the last—but do not imagine that this hatred is the cause of the sadness and weariness I feel within. Also do not fancy that I shall in any way revenge

myself on her—bah! she is not worth the thought even!”

He paused a few moments and then said half to himself and very bitterly :

“So she has repented at last! I wish I could even say ‘that was well done’—but it is nothing but a matter of course. If she had not committed the fault she would not have had to repent! It was a fault—a grave fault!”

“I am not here to plead for Miya,” resumed Arao, “I merely speak of her because I want to get at your reasons—at your point of view—and I quite agree with you that her repentance cannot restore to you what you have lost—no, indeed it cannot,” he added with a deep sigh as he compared the Hazama of the past with the man before him. “You have therefore no reason to feel consoled that she is sorry—your point seems to be this: nothing will satisfy you but to regain what you have lost—and for this purpose you are making money. Am I right in my supposition? I know you have lost much and I sympathize with you deeply on that account. I would rejoice to see you happy once more.

“You think that money can give you back what you have lost—love, position, happiness—and you

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are building all your hopes for future contentment upon that money! That I absolutely disagree with that way of thinking is a detail—as long as you are convinced it is so, well and good, and granting it is right to make money, I hope you will in time become a very wealthy man.

“What I do object to is an unjust, dishonourable trade. Wealth is not made by covetous accumulation only; there are many *ways* of becoming rich besides those of the usurer. I am not advising you to change the *aim* but the *means*! You remember what the Buddhists say about truth—the saying can be applied to many things: “By different roads, you may reach the peak from whence you can see the moon, immeasurably high above it.”

“Thank you,” said Hazama sadly, “but I have not yet waked from my delusion—leave me as I am and regard me, if you like, as a madman.”

Arao looked at him a few minutes in silence, and then said in a voice that was cold—almost harsh—“I see—you accept nothing of what I have said.”

“Forgive me,” exclaimed Hazama.

“For what, pray?” returned the other, “you have given me up, and I have.....given.....you.....up.....there is nothing for either of us to forgive.”

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There was a pause, then Hazama said:

"Since we are going to part and are giving up each other, I have one more thing to ask you..... about your present circumstances. How are things with *you*?"

"I should think you might tell that by looking at me."

"That does not give me sufficient information."

"I am badly 'off."

"That is quite evident."

"That is all."

"That cannot be all. Why did you resign your government appointment? Why are you so impoverished? There must be reasons for this!"

"The things I have to tell would not be understood by a madman," said Arao with a sarcastic intonation and preparing to rise.

"Yes, tell them to me," begged Hazama, "even if I do not understand."

"What can you do if you have heard them?" replied Arao, "ah! I see, you will offer to lend me money! for that—no thank you—even if I am poor—I am happy—with a great happiness."

"I am the more anxious to hear you relate the causes of your poverty—and of the happiness you say is yours."

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“What is the use of telling such a bloodless worm as you are? I even hate to hear you speak the same language that human beings use!” replied Arao fiercely.

Hazama remained unmoved.

“I am so thoroughly corrupt,” he said, “that even when I am insulted like this I am unable to reply.”

“You speak the truth,” was the cutting answer. Hazama continued: “There can be on earth no one more corrupt than mine! But *you*—with your University degree, *you*, once a Councillor of the Prefecture—what has been done to you? I always expected your advance in the world and prayed for it secretly—yes, the brute, the madman, the thief as you call me, has still a heart—and the thought of you has never left it. I have had no friend but you. The year before last I was told of your appointment to the government office at Shidzuoka. Guess what joy the news caused me, and what sorrow too when I reflected upon my own condition. I could eat nothing all day. I wanted to congratulate you myself; I wanted to see you again after that long separation—I wanted to see you in the glory of your young success—I could not do so because of my position—but I

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went to the station at Shinbashi where I might look on without being seen and I saw you—I remember how the tears rushed to my eyes.

“Now, imagine what my feelings were when I saw you come in to-day—noted the signs of poverty about you and compared you with the last time I had seen you in the flush of victory.

“Considering my own condition and position, I have no right to speak to you about yours—but I have given myself up altogether. I despise myself and hate myself as a fool who was unable to become master of himself, and allowed a woman's falseness and the anger that he felt, to ruin his whole career. I shall become rotten like a tree and as a tree I shall wither away. Look upon me no longer as your old friend Hazama for he is dead, but listen to my words as words spoken by some other friend who is full of warm sympathy for you. I do not know what the causes of your present condition are, for you will not tell me, but I am certain the land has need of men like you and that you are not forgotten. I should like to see you using your powerful energies and brain for the good of the State—I should like to see you a power in society. A certain friend of yours is anxious to help you so that your talents may

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not remain unused, but may benefit the people and the land."

Kwanichi's face became illumined as if the disease of his mind has been miraculously cured, and he looked almost like the Hazama of old whose thoughts were noble, whose ideals high.

Arao replied: "Then you think it is a pity to see me in a poor and miserable condition."

"I am not such a brute as you think me," was the reproachful answer.

"Ah! that is the point Hazama. Because there are usurers such as you, many talented men who ought to be of use in the world, are being ruined, defamed, driven from their proper place in society and languishing in prisons. I am grateful to you for your argument, that I should have a care of myself for the sake of the state, and by a similar argument I ask you to give up your unjust trade—for the benefit of society. What are the things that are ruining talented men nowadays? They are profligacy and usury! If you feel sorry for my miserable condition, have a little pity on the men on whom the nation rests her hope, who are being ruined by you and your like.

You are suffering because of an unfortunate love-affair, others because they have been unlucky in

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money matters. The suffering is the same though the case be different. I, myself, am in the latter strait. Would that I had a friend, such as the Hazama of old, with whom I could share my griefs. What pleasure it would be to be helped by such a one ; to regain through his aid the position one has lost, and be enabled to do that work in the world for which one feels most fitted. The best thing in the world is a friend ; the most hateful thing is a usurer ! The more I see of the wickedness of usurers, the more I think of how much it means to a man to have a trusted friend. *My old friend is now a usurer—that hateful usurer !*”

Arao cast a wrathful glance at Hazama who neither by word nor sign betrayed what he felt. His voice was quite calm and steady when he replied :

“ Thank you for your *warm* advice. What you have said I shall consider carefully ; for to restore my rotten and corrupt soul to its former goodness and purity, as you suggest, would.....give me much happiness. As to yourself, I pray you take care of yourself. Though you have given me up I still wish to see you sometimes and help you where I can. I want to be made use of. A man

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like you should be playing his part in the world; and more than pity for the unlucky man himself, I feel regret that his talents are lying unused and that the State is not employing him.

My affection towards you is great. Let me come and see you sometimes. Where do you live?

"I cannot have usurers coming to call on me." said Arao haughtily.

"Then I will call upon you as a friend."

"I have no friend among usurers." was the icy answer.

But who was this gently pushing aside the screen. Mitsué! How could she have got in? Hazama was astonished, but his wonder was nothing as compared to the amazement of Arao when he perceived her. He pulled himself up very straight and violently twisted his long black beard—then regretting that he had so plainly betrayed his feelings he folded his arms high across his chest and pretended to be as "unmoved as a mountain." But he overdid his part. Mitsue bowed low first to Hazama and then even more deferentially to Arao. In all her gestures and in the motion of her eyes her behaviour was that of a perfect lady; she did not even soften her counte-

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nance with a smile; and conforming to all the rules prescribed by etiquette, she did not speak. Arao was too impatient to keep silence.

"I never expected to see *you* here—are you acquainted with Hazama?"

"Then you know her too!" exclaimed Hazama looking from one to the other.

"I know her slightly," rejoined Arao in his haughtiest manner. "I fear I disturb you by remaining—excuse me—goodbye."

"Mr. Arao," called Mitsue intent on keeping him there, "it may not be correct to speak to you on that matter here, but —,"

"No, most certainly it is not a matter to be discussed here."

"But as you are never at home, I am at a loss how to deal with you."

"Even had I been at home I could not have settled the matter yet." Proudly, "I am not going to flee or hide myself—and you must wait until, at the proper time, I settle with you."

"If I must wait, I must," said Mitsue putting on a plaintive air, "but I cannot really afford to do just what suits your convenience—please sympathize with me in that!"

"How cruel you are to make me sympathize

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with you on such a point." said Arao sarcastically.

"I shall call on you in a day or so, and I hope I may be welcome." smiled the beauty.

"I am afraid you may not be welcome!"

"Is it true," she asked: "that the other day when I sent my man to you on business you were very angry with him, because you considered him lacking in politeness, and drew your sword on him?"

"Yes, it is true!"

"Dear me," would you really do such a thing?" laughed Mitsue trying to abash him. Arao assumed a mock-serious look and replied:

"Yes, certainly. I intended to run my sword through him."

"But you must have thought of the consequences."

"Perhaps I did. He was neither dog nor cat; he could not be killed so easily."

"What a dreadful thing to say! I shall hardly be safe if I call on you." The coquette was uppermost again.

Arao threw back his head and laughed a long jeering laugh—he then looked at her with contemptuous eyes and said insolently:

"Do you think I should—*kill*—a beauty?"

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Do you fancy I shall let your eyes kill *me*? Let me go home and wipe my sword clean."

"Arao-san, they told me dinner was ready, won't you have some before you go."

"Thanks, I do not drink from a thief's well!"

"Do sit down," cried Mitsue persuasively, bringing a cushion and placing it in front of Arao. Hazama said not a word. "I will wait on you myself," she said.

"You are exactly like husband and wife," scoffed Arao, taking Hazama's silence as proof of his guiltiness, "a well-matched pair!"

"Believe what you will, and sit here please," replied Mitsue rejoicing secretly.

But Arao had reached the door. Anger, sorrow and disgust were written on his face, for his suspicions as to the relation between Hazama and Mitsue were confirmed by the beauty's words.

"Hazama! Anata!" (thou) was all he said; but the words he left unsaid and the look of scorn pierced Hazama to the heart.

CHAPTER L.

An Unreasonable man.

THE old Servant having slid the outside wooden shutters with a loud rattle into their place, brought in the lamp, and still Hazama sat with bowed head, crushed by the blow of those unspoken words. Mitsue had taken a seat near the low table and as the lamp light fell on her it seemed to add to her charm, as if she had put on an extra flower, or a jewel, so that she looked like some lovely peony in full bloom, bending gracefully from its delicate stem.

“What is the matter with you Hazama-san? You seem very depressed.”

Hazama lifted his head slightly to look at her, and then asked wonderingly :

“How on earth did *you* come to know Araō?”

“I am still more surprised to find him a friend of *yours*.” replied Mitsue evasively.

“How did you come to know him?” persisted Hazama.

Finding she could not evade the question, Mitsue answered with evident reluctance :

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"Well, he is in a way one of my guarantees."
"Guarantee! Araō? *Your* guarantee?"

"Only indirectly. *He* did not contract the debt with me."

"Ah! and what is the sum?"

"It is about 3,000 yen."

"Three...thou...sand yen! And who was the direct creditor?"

He turned on his cushion and pushed himself nearer in his eagerness. Mitsue smiled a little disdainfully :

"How earnest and how eager you are when you want something of me. You never answer any question I put to *you*—but *now* you don't mind making use of me."

"That is quite right."

"No, that is *not* right."

"Was there a direct creditor?"

"Don't know!" said Mitsue shortly in the voice that means 'I shall not tell.'

Hazama changed his tone.

"Please, tell me," he begged, "so that I may redeem the money according to the conditions agreed on."

"I should not accept the money from you."

"It is not a matter of accepting, but of redeeming." argued Hazama.

An unreasonable man.

"This is not a case for you to interfere in," said the beauty, and then looking searchingly into the man's face she exclaimed: "but if you have made up your mind to redeem it, I will give up my claim for the money."

"Why will you do so?" asked Hazama, not a little astounded and suspecting some hidden and dangerous motive.

"You need not know why. If you want to redeem the pledge of 3,000 yen, you have but to *command* me to give up my claim.....and I shall...give it up...gladly."

"What is your reason?" persisted he obstinately and densely.

"Yes, what *is* my reason?" cried Mitsue almost despairingly.

"You are quite *unreasonable*, are you not?"

"Of course I am unreasonable for.....I don't know the reason!" Mitsue felt sudden anger against this man who would not see. "But *you* Hazama san, what a.....yes, *very* unreasonable man you are!"

"No, I am quite reasonable," replied Hazama calmly.

"Pretend what you like, but for goodness' sake let one of us be honest," cried Mitsue

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striking her gold pipe viciously on the brim of the firebox and casting a glance of wrath mingled with despair at Hazama. He took not the least notice of this sudden ebullition of anger, except to say:

"Don't talk nonsense, but let me hear the story."

"You think of nothing but yourself and what you want," cried the woman.

"Tell me the story please."

"I am going to do so," sullenly. She took out her pipe slowly and deliberately, lighted it and puffed at it for a while ignoring Hazama's presence altogether.

"I never expected to find him one of your guarantees," remarked Hazama, impatient for Mitsue to begin. She made no reply, so he continued in a tone, calculated to rouse her into a response of some sort:

"I hardly believe it is true!"

Mitsue examined the stem of her pipe with great intentness.

"Three thousand yen! what did Araō contract a debt of 3,000 yen for? It is not possible but..."

Looking up he saw that Mitsue was still holding her pipe in her hand, and he exclaimed irritably:

"I wish you would tell me the history of that 3,000 yen!"

"You are very impatient, or else I am very slow," said the beauty sending up a delicate little puff of smoke.

"You can see that I am impatient!"

"Impatience is not a happy humour!"

"You are only talking."

"You are right, I stand corrected. I will tell you the story in a moment."

She tapped the tiny bowl of her pipe gently on the rim of the brazier, and having refilled it with tobacco from a pouch of gold brocade, she related as follows:

"You may have known Sagisaka who used to live with us. He is now at Shidzuoka and doing very well there. Mr. Araō was Councillor at Shidzuoka, was he not? and it was there that Sagisaka let him have the money. The authorities hearing of the affair ordered him to send in a petition for his dismissal—and there was nothing for him to do but return to Tokio. Sagisaka then put the matter into our hands and entrusted us to get the money from him here. Last autumn it passed entirely into our hands. You can imagine what a difficult thing it is to get money out of Araō. He

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has nothing to do, except a little translation at which he is working; one cannot expect any large sum for that, so very little can be done about the debt at present."

"But whatever did he borrow 3,000 yen for?"

"It is this: he was a joint guarantee."

"Ah! and who was the debtor?"

"It was a Democrat at Gifu called Ōdachi Sakurō. They say he failed at the Election and the debt was in consequence of electioneering expenses."

"Ōdachi Sakurō! Sure enough! Then it *must* be true." exclaimed Hazama.

"Do you know him?"

"He was the man who paid all Araō's school expenses and of whom the latter always spoke as "my benefactor."

And now Hazama understood why Araō had said his poverty made him not sad but happy, "with a great happiness." For the man who had been kind to him, he had risked his fame and his honour, and in losing both had felt no regret, for was it not his honour to give largely where he had received such generosity?

"Noble friend!" mused Hazama, "his poverty

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is better than another's wealth. Truly the Fates must be blind thus to reward such nobility of purpose."

CHAPTER LI.

Faithful Love.

RECEIVING a sudden summon to go to Chiba, a small town to the north of Tokio, Kwanichi hurried into a jinrikisha hoping to catch the five o'clock train at Honjo, but alas ! he arrived a minute after the train had left the station and found to his disgust that he would have to wait two hours for the next. He accordingly walked over to the Tea-house which faced the station, entered a room at the back and seated on one of the red blankets which are in vogue at most teahouses in Japan, he sipped a cup of lukewarm tea brought in by one of the "ne' sans." (waitress) The three unopened letters which he had thrown into his handbag, he now took out. The first words that met his eye were : M. Shigis. upon the back of the topmost envelope.

"For shame ! another one from her !" he exclaimed. This letter he did not unseal, but threw it back into his bag with the two others, when he had read them through carefully. Shutting up the bag, he placed it under his head as a pillow and

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lay down on his back closing his eyes drowsily. But he could not sleep.—The words, “ M. Shigis.” danced before his eyes and the thought of Miya possessed his brain. He had sworn to himself that he would care no more for her—neither in love, nor in hate—and yet she robbed him of his peace.

This was the second written appeal Miya had made. The first, Kwanichi had received a fortnight ago. He had opened it and read it with surprise, but it had in no way altered his opinion of her; he was still of the same mind as when he had replied to Araō. This second letter he concluded was probably a repetition of the first and he saw no reason to “ defile his eyes ” with it, as he said to himself.

Poor Miya! how miserable she must have been to go to the extremity of writing to Hazama. In these two letters she poured out all her heart—her grief at what she had done—her sincere penitence. She bid him observe that the writing and sending of them was proof of her earnest desire to be forgiven, seeing that she risked much in doing so.

She did not expect to soften Kwanichi’s heart by one appeal, so after waiting a fortnight she had sent her second letter. If this one had no effect and elicited no response she would write a third and

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so on until he was conquered.

She could not know that Kwanichi did not even trouble to open her second letter and was firmly resolved to read no more "foolish confessions," even if she should write to him three, or five or seven or a hundred times.

Unable to sleep Kwanichi got up took the letter out of the bag and then looked for a match. With it he set fire to the letter holding it over the little brazier. The hot white flames sprang up. Were they like Miya's thoughts? The black ashes which fell, did they resemble Miya's mind?

The record of her sorrow is in her lover's hand—how glad that would make her—but alas! it has vanished like smoke, and no more stable than smoke is the impression it has made on Hazama.

Kwanichi lay down again, the bag beneath his head.

After a short interval he heard the noisy welcome,—the "Irashai" of the tea-house women—guests were conducted into the room next to his. From their voices he knew them to be a man and a woman. They took their seats quietly, unlike young people. Hazama concluded they were an old couple.

"We have plenty of time," said the man, "we

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have plenty of time," said the man, "we need not hurry. Come, Su-san, take a cup of tea, *please*."

"Will you really come back next summer?" came a woman's voice, imploringly.

"Yes, I promise to return after the feast of Departed Souls." (in July) replied her companion. "But it is no good hoping that your parents will change their mind, Su-san, I can see they are quite determined and so we may as well resign ourselves and bear it as best we can."

"You may do so if you like Masa-san, you are a man, but I am a woman, and I have not given up hope. Though you deny it I am sure you are angry at the way my parents have treated you, and so you hate them, and me too.....yes you *do*.....I don't care what becomes of me..... if you will not have me, I will not marry all my life." The woman's words here became unintelligible. Hazama decided they were quite young and most unhappy.

"However willing I may be," rejoined the man, "how can I marry you if your parents are unwilling? No one is to blame but I, myself—one can not expect a father or mother to give a daughter they love, to a man whose reputation is not clean. I

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should be the first to justify them and say they are right."

"If my parents will not give me to you whyshould you not.....take me?" cried the girl.

"Ah! Su-san do not be unreasonable! You know how I wish that that were possible! Through my own folly I have brought this sorrow on myself. I fell into the usurer's trap, and the weeks I spent in prison, like a common criminal—have left a life-long blot upon me. It killed my mother,my betrothed was torn from me! Would that I had died in prison rather than suffer all these miseries."

Both wept. After a while the man continued:

"My mental wounds were cured the day that I heard my mother had set fire to the wretch's house, and that he and his wife were burnt to death; but the injury done to myself can never be cured!

"My poor Mother! how she looked forward to your coming. Morning and evening she talked of nothing else but "next month" and the "marriage" and "Su-san" and.....ah! I do not want to break our engagement.....but I have no right to marry you.....forgive me.....forgive me!"

“No.....no.....no! it must not be broken off!” cried Su-san desperately.

“If you marry me Su-san,” said her lover more quietly, “your shoulders will be straitened to bear my shame, and people will sneer at you all your life. I could not bear to see you suffer, and so I must leave you and we must not meet again..... but the love you have given me Su-san I shall never, never forget.”

Kwanichi who had lain very still now rose quietly and tried to get a glimpse of the man through the sliding doors, which showed a crack here and there, but he was unsuccessful. However he felt sure he recognized the voice and from what he had heard, he knew it must be the son of the lunatic woman who had set fire to Wanibuchi's house, and who had been imprisoned for a year on the charge of having forged a private document. Besides the girl had called him “Masa” and the lunatic's son was called Akura Masayuki. Hazama nodded to himself, sat down again and listened with great attention.

“If, as you say, you will never forget me, then marry me according to the old promise. If I had been minded to consent to the breaking of my promise, would I have abstained from eating salt

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for a whole year? (a means of asking a god for something) What happened may be partly your fault, but it was sheer misfortune which caused you to be imprisoned on a usurer's false accusation. I am very very very sorry for myself and for you but I will not give you up on that account I am not such a woman Masa-san not such a woman !”

She wept and lamented, poor girl, and if Masa-yuki did not understand all her emotion, Kwanichi did. He lay prone on the mats, his cigarette had gone out and he had not observed it.

“You, Masa-san, do not know what sort of woman I am. I was ill for three months after after you were imprisoned. If my parents have made up their minds that I shall not marry you, *I* have made up my mind to keep my promise. The more so now that your shoulders will be bent by shame and that you are unfortunate. I am willing to bear all with you, if I were *not* how could I be faithful to your mother's spirit—your mother who loved me from my childhood. It may be undutiful for a child to set up her will against her parents, but I am not going to leave you Masa-san. Do you care for me? Are you willing to take me with you?”

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Kwanichi was deeply impressed. The girl's strong will moved him more than her sorrow or the man's misfortune, of which he, Kwanichi, was the cause. That there *did* exist faithful love and truth caused his head to burn and his heart to beat more quickly.

Masayuki replied :

“Need I tell you how much I want you? How happy we should be if I had not been so unfortunate—you and I and my mother living together. My parting with you to-day is indescribably painful to me for yet another reason. You are the only one in all the world who will speak kindly to me, now that I am an outcast of society. Nothing could make me happier than to be linked with so tenderhearted a woman as you. But were I in your parent's place I also would decide as they have... any parent would do the same. So there is no hope. To cause grief and trouble to one's parents is an evil.....almost a crime! I caused my Mother much grief and she suffered through my fault! It is as if I had killed her with my own hand. If I married you I should grieve your parents terribly. Am I to kill your parents as well as mine? Therefore we must part. I shall strive hard to regain my place in society. It will

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be a hard fight; and life without you will be like living in that dark prison once more."

"You are so full of thought for my parents, Masa-san—don't you at all think of me?.....I don't care what becomes of me!" cried Susan passionately. He tried to soothe her; he pleaded with her to be brave and resigned, that he dared not marry her—he, with a stain on his reputation, but he achieved nothing. She broke down all his arguments and declared that if he loved her she would not leave him.

"Sympathize a little more with me," she cried, "and forget my parents and yourself. It was settled that I should marry you.....all the wedding clothes have been bought.....how can I marry another? Think of it! If I have to die, I will marry to one but you. And I am right! I am right!" Then Masayuki gave way.

"How wildly you speak!" he said "What is it you want me to do?"

CHAPTER LII

Questionings.

THERE was a silence. Kwanichi crept closer to the door but he heard no more. The two lovers were whispering in tones too low to penetrate even the thin screen which divided them from the next room.

Just once he caught a word: "Sure, are you quite sure?" and the answer, "if *you* are, *I* am satisfied," and then the whispers continued. Kwanichi felt certain their wills were now in harmony, and he secretly blessed the girl for her perseverance, and reflected how happy Masayuki must be. As for himself he felt as if he had overheard a strain of lovely music and for a while he forgot himself and his sorrow.

As he settled down in a corner of the compartment of the train that was to take him to Chiba, his mind was still occupied with what he had overheard in the tea house.

"If that girl were Miya and I were Masayuki, what would have been the result then?" he mused. "There was a time when Miya was as true to me

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as that girl is to her lover. If she had not seen the Diamond's brightness would she have loved me faithfully to the end, even had I been a criminal as he has? If Tadatsugu with all his wealth had tempted *that* girl, would she have forsaken Masayuki? Which has the greater power to divert love, the abominable record of a crime or the love of money?

Would that girl, who is willing to link her life to that of a man with a prison record, who swears she will follow him to the ends of the earth, who has forgotten even her obedience to her parents, continue faithful, if she, by deserting him, might greatly enrich herself?

Would she not sell the love she once gave to Masayuki if she could make a profitable bargain?

Which would make *him* hate her most, her love overcome by the love of gold, or her love given for love to another man?

Over the highest love the Gold Demon has no power; there is nothing that can tempt it to an exchange—through good and ill it remains unchanged, unmoved. If it moves, it proves that it is not the highest love. Can a woman be as true as a man? or was Miya specially unfaithful to me? I believe she was. Because I was angry at her

Questionings.

injustice and lack of chastity I doubted *all* love—I rejected it altogether. I ceased to believe in the existence of love and in its place I planted anger and grief; and the grief has grown and has eaten up my soul, and torments me like an evil spirit which is intent on slowly putting an end to my life. Why was it, I wonder, that my mind which is unable to enjoy anything, felt glad at the sight of two lovers' happiness.....as if it had been chasing the shadow of joy. Is it that, having lost Miya's love my mind rejoices at the sight of what might have been my own happiness?

Miya has repented, she writes me, and is willing to do anything I shall command, in order to prove the sincerity of her repentance. Ought I to conquer my resentment? Well, her repentance can not restore my love to life. Her repentance remains her own affair and my hatred remains my hatred. Can wealth many times as great as that of Tomiyama wipe out my hateful feelings; or can the pursuit of Gold be absorbing enough to cause one to forget his wrongs?"

He sighed bitterly.

"It was Tadatsugu who tore my love from me. Who tried to tear the loves of Su-san and Masayuki? Was it not I? I, who am now going to

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Chiba to tear again and yet again? And what is the result? Money! Can it cure my madness, or heal my diseased heart like some beneficial medicine? "Broken love is like a broken mirror," (bronze) so says the proverb. But for them the mirror is mended and restored to its former perfection. *My* love was torn as a flower is torn, whose delicate petals can never be restored to their stem. Now shall I continue this road of corruption? or fly up through the wind, or flow out upon the stream to the ocean?"

The train rattled over the Funa Bridge and Kwanichi gazing out into the night saw the lights of the town reflected in the river.

CHAPTER LIII

The Suppliant.

FIVE days after he returned from Chiba, another letter came, signed "M. Shigis." As often as Kwanichi saw Miya's handwriting there rose before his inward eye the plumgarden at Atami and Tadatsugu standing beside Miya in that never-to-be-forgotten interview; and each time his anger arose new-born. He therefore destroyed the cruel reminder as soon as he received it, scorning the idea of her winning back his love through the power of her pen, and comparing her attempt to that of the fabulous bird who tried to drink up the ocean.

Miya, unconscious of the fate accorded to her letters, would sit for hours trying to picture their effect on her lover. The thought, that if even a thousandth part of the affection she had poured into them reached Kwanichi's heart, it would pave the way to success, cheered her greatly; and whenever she was alone and unobserved, she took the opportunity of writing again. She expected

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no answer, but she made sure that the letters reached him.

Tadatsugu, hearing that his wife was training herself in penmanship, was filled with admiration and would buy her good ink, fine brushes, pretty inkstands and the latest books on writing, in order to encourage her. But none of these things would Miya use, she even gave up sitting at her husband's desk, so abhorrent to her mind was the idea of using anything of his.

A fourth letter was sent to Kwanichi, which he again ruthlessly reduced to ashes; and two days later the fifth was put into his hands. Kwanichi, who had vowed to himself that all missives from Miya's hand, though they should be a hundred in number, should be consigned to the flames unread, now began to wonder at this excessive perseverance and tenacity, the like which he had never before observed in her of and did not immediately burn the fifth appeal. He turned it over in his hands and was about to unseal it.

"But no," he said to himself and held it out toward the flame. However, the letter was not burned; instead, Kwanichi, keeping it in his hand, mused thus:

"It is to ask for my pardon of course, and that is

The Suppliant.

probably the whole gist of the letter. If there is anything else it is no doubt unwise for me to see it. If she asks for pardon I will pardon her, since her penitence has in any case won her pardon. Pardon and Penitence! What good can they do me or her now. They alter nothing in our relation to each other. Can penitence heal the wound made by her broken vows, or pardon restore her to the purity and perfection that were hers before she knew Tomiyama?

I, Kwanichi am the same Kwanichi that I was ten years ago, but you, Miya, are Miya defiled as long as you live. I loved you in your purity, and I hated you when you sold yourself; and once defiled, though you practice ten times the virtue you had before, you can never blot out the spot that has caused your corruption. And what did I? Did I not humble myself before you that night on the sands of Atami, imploring you to return to me, and swearing that I would have no other for my wife but you. I regarded you as my wife, and I have kept my vow; but you turned from me, and now prate of repentance!"

He trembled with anger and twisted the letter like a rope in his hands.

From that day Miya's letters came every week.

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Kwanichi kept them, but did not open them. Their arrival insensibly influenced his mind. Angry and sore as he was, his anger weakened at the sight of them and at the thought of a contrite Miya. As each letter came, she was recalled to his mind, sometimes as the girl he had loved and who had forsaken him and repented of it, sometimes as the woman who had deceived him and whom he could never pardon. These two conflicting ideas swayed Kwanichi hither and thither, bringing no relief, but rather adding to his grief.

As he looked at the letters—he now had ten of them—he would conjure up their contents, and to his morbid mind they were ten times more sorrowful than what Miya had actually written. A new sort of anger, a new resentment awoke in his mind, displacing the old. The world seemed a miserable place, he, a helpless wretched man. He grew uneasy and restless, and the arrival of a new letter would even cause him to neglect his business and make him forget that such neglect and loss of time would also cause him to lose—that which he most desired—Money!

One night he had tossed ceaselessly to and fro on his bed, but just before dawn he slept heavily. The spring rain pattered softly on the shutters

The Suppliant.

and Hazama moaned in his sleep. At seven o'clock the aged servant came in to call him, and finding he paid no heed, she shook him by the shoulder, crying in her shrill, cracked voice:

"You have a visitor Sir!"

Hazama awoke with a start.

"A visitor! who is it?"

"Araō-san is the name."

Kwanichi jumped out of bed in haste: "Show the visitor in and say that I am getting up—make my apologies and beg Araō san to wait."

Kwanichi had called three times on Araō since their last interview in Kwanichi's house, but he had each time been turned from the door with: "Araō is out." He had written twice and received no answer, and upon inquiring of Mitsue if she knew where Araō was, he had been assured that he was still in the house in which Kwanichi had called upon him. From this he concluded that his old friend had spoken in all seriousness when he said a usurer could be no friend of his.

How welcome then was the news that he had come to see him. What a long talk they would have. He would order a good dinner and plenty of saké and would keep him with him all the day. As he dressed, he wondered a little why

The Gold Demon.

after having been so unfriendly he should have called suddenly, but he put it down to a careless disposition, and was pleased to think that Araō could not quite dispense with his friendship.

Hastily tying the cords of his coat, he opened the sliding doors of the drawing-room, but what he saw with amazement was not Araō Josūke, but a beautifully dressed lady, her head bent low. Hazama hesitated and waited for the lady to raise her head. He noticed that a mild rain was falling and that the trees in the garden cast long shadows in the room.

“Is your name Araō-san?” he asked at length, entering and taking a seat. The lady, still intent on hiding her identity, bowed low in silence, keeping her hands on the mats. Kwanichi watched her for a moment in bewilderment, and then something in her manner seemed familiar. His eyes wandered over her figure like one seeking something in haste.

“You want to see me on business?” he asked, his eyes never leaving her. Like a lily, heavy with dew, sways in the gentle breeze, she wavered—then half raised her head, and in that moment Kwanichi knew. In a voice that seemed torn from his very vitals he gasped:

The Suppliants.

“Miya!”

She, overcome with joy, and grief, and fear, bowed her graceful head down to the very floor, incapable of answering.

In Kwanichi, too, arose conflicting emotions. Was he glad or was it anger he felt? Did he hate her? Should he humiliate her and rebuke her, or should he weep for the irretrievable? His voice was harsh when he spoke:

“Why are you here?” and Miya, just able to raise her face and gasp out a word for pardon, shrank back at the sight of his eyes, which shot flame, and were terrible in their anguish.

“Go!” he exclaimed, and then, as though overcome by the sight of her, he added: “Miya,” in the voice she had loved and had yearned to hear. She thought he was relenting, for was not his voice a caress, his eyes filled with tears. By a great effort he controlled himself, and all the tenderness had faded from his voice, as he said sternly:

“You should not have come to see me—are you not ashamed to meet me? As for all those letters you have written me, I have not read them;—they were burned, unopened, and I must beg you to cease troubling me with them in the future.....
.....And now you must go.....I am ill.....I cannot

The Gold Demon.

sit before you like this.....it is too much.....go quickly.....” He called to his servant :

“The lady is going, tell her *Jinrickisha* man to come round.”

Summoning up all her courage, Miya exclaimed wildly :

“Kwanichi san! I have come here to die—punish me as I deserve, but forgive me.....I implore you to wait and hear what I have to say.....I have repented oh! how bitterly! You do not know what I have suffered, for you would not read my letters.....it is all written there.....Would that you had read them, for I have not the courage to say to you, what I would, and, though my written words are too weak to express to you all I feel, they would have touched you a little, and melted your anger.....I want to ask your forgiveness for so much, and now, when you are before me, I have no words. Shame strikes me to the ground and ties my tongue.....I know I have done very wrong to come here, but I have come here only to die.”

“What has that to do with me?”

“Kwanichi, Kwanichi you *must* hear my story.” implored Miya, prostrating herself at his feet. He turned from her;

“The 17th January, six years ago, do you

The Suppliants.

remember what happened then?" He waited for a reply; none came.

"Answer me!"

"I have not forgotten it." was the miserable girl's answer.

"Well" said the man, and each word fell like a lash upon her bruised heart, "you are now experiencing what I felt that night."

"Forgive me," cried Miya writhing. But he had sprung to his feet, and the screens closed behind him like an iron wall. Miya, all her hopes shattered, fell half-fainting to the ground.

CHAPTER LIV

Desperation.

“**K**URUMAYA! Kurumaya!” sounded the servant’s voice outside, summoning the jinricksha man. There was a sound of running feet and then, of wheels, as the jinricksha was drawn up to the door. All being in readiness, the servant came in to tell Miya so. The latter had partly recovered, but traces of tears were still visible on her face, and she sat limply on her cushion. The old woman wondered what could have distressed so lovely a lady, and noted with admiration how fashionably her hair was dressed, how graceful was the slope of her shoulders and the hend of her pretty neck. She must be wealthy, indeed, for was she not dressed in a double robe of the heaviest silk, of a pale and tender green—while the sash, that was fastened high at the back, was of tea-coloured brocade. On the hand, that held her little silk handkerchief, flashed a brilliant gem—a large diamond.

“Madam, my master, who has been ill has suddenly grown worse and was therefore obliged to

Desperation.

leave you. He begs you to excuse him and to go home, pardoning his impoliteness."

"Yes," murmured Miya, feeling she must make some reply and furtively wiping away her tears.

"It seems too bad, you should have to go, when you have come all this way on purpose to see my master," continued the old woman, garrulously.

"Yes, yes," was the hasty reply: "I will get ready to go—you can tell my man to wait a few minutes....."

"Certainly, don't hurry! it is raining, and very cold today."

Miya was left alone again. She made no attempt to get ready, but let her gaze wander round the room, vacantly, as she pondered what she should do. Half an hour passed, then, the woman returned. Miya rose, adjusted the folds of her dress, and said:

"I am going, now, but I must bid Mr. Hazama good bye first—where is he?"

"Pray, do not trouble about that, Madam."

"Lead me to him, I must take leave of him!"

"Please, come this way." The maid, though it was against her master's express commands, led the lady to a room, which was detached from the house, and was reached through the verandah.

The Gold Demon.

This was Kwanichi's room.

The bed had not yet been rolled up and put away for the day, and Hazama, when he left Miya had thrown off his garments, and flung himself down upon the quilts. Miya entered his room, suddenly, and quickly, and before he could rise, she had flung herself onto the bed, into his arms, clinging to him, weeping and murmuring inarticulate words.

"For shame!" cried the enraged man, trying to free himself, "what is this you are doing."

"Kwanichi san, hear me! I did wrong, forgive me."

"Be quiet!" he commanded sternly, "and let go of my hands;" when she only clung the closer crying: "Kwanichi, Kwanichi!" he repeated: "You *shall* let go, you shameless creature!" For some moments they struggled, and the woman with a strength born of desperation, and beside herself with excitement, retained her hold. Her breath fanned his cheeks, her face was close to his. How pale she was this Miya, whom he had vowed never to see again. What a delicate flower-like form this Miya's, who was the old Miya but outwardly. He sank back. How came she here in his arms—was it all a dream?

Desperation.

Miya, her eyes shining, her teeth set, swore to herself she would never let him go, no, not for a diamond as large as a head. What were diamonds to her now? She had learnt, that the largest diamond on earth, was not so great a treasure as human faith and truth. *She* had flung away the priceless treasures (where were they now?) for a worthless gem.

“Go, go, go,” moaned Hazama.

“I shall not see you again,” said Miya, pressing close to him, “so be patient with me today; beat or strike me, if you like, but listen to my reasons for seeking you out.”

“Do you think that beating *you* will do *me* any good? why, even if I were to kill you, it would not satisfy me.”

“Ah! I am willing to be killed. I long to die; and death at your hands would be sweet. Put an end to my misery, Kwanichi, for life is at an end for me!”

“Kill yourself,” returned he harshly, and Miya, then knowing that he so despised her, that he did not consider her worthy of death at his hands, burst into tears.

“Die! yes, die!” jeered Hazama “better that than a life of deceit, or this shameless behaviour

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towards me, whom you once forsook."

"I did not mean to forsake you, that is why I am here—to tell you so. As to death, there is no need for me to think of that—I am as one dead, for I ceased to live six long years ago."

"I do not want to hear what you have to say, I have told you to leave me—now *go!*"

"I will *not* go!" cried the excited woman, "nothing on earth will make me go, as long as you speak to me and treat me with such cruelty." She clung to his hands. In her excited state of mind, she cared neither for husband, nor for the world; she only felt she would rather give her life than loosen her hold on Kwanichi's hand.

At this juncture footsteps approached the room, nearer and nearer.

"Some one is coming," whispered Kwanichi, striving to rise, unsuccessfully, for Miya held him as in a vice.

The maid appeared at the opening, and then stepped quickly back, that she might not be seen, and announced:

"Mrs. Akagashi has come."

Consternation was to be read in every line of Kwanichi's countenance.

"Very well," he replied, struggling to appear

Desperation.

calm, "I will come in a moment." Then to Miya in a furious whisper, "You see I have a visitor—will nothing induce you to go? Don't you hear what I say? You *must* go now?"

"No, I shall be waiting for you here. Infuriated, Kwanichi shook her off. Like a lily, that is bruised, she fell, and before she could rise, he had gone.

CHAPTER LV

The Rivals.

THE Azuma coat, with its mauve silk lining, had not escaped Mitsue's sharp eyes on entering. Another woman visiting Hazama indeed! She looked at the coat, carefully, and then summoned old Toyo. The latter, who had been very generously treated by Mitsue, in the matter of gifts, was not loath to relate all she knew, and all she had seen. Mitsue was furious. Her heart felt on fire, with jealousy. She waited, expectantly, for this woman, who had supplanted her, to come out, relishing the idea of throwing scornful glances at her. For a long time she waited and listened. Kwanichi did not appear; not a sound came from the detached room. Mitsue concluded that they were keeping thus silent because of her, so that she might not overhear what they whispered to each other, and the thought fretted and angered her. At last she called impatiently for the servant:

“Ōtoyo san, tell your master that I am in a hurry today, and must see him for a moment.

The Rivals.

Toyo hesitated, knowing Kwanichi would be annoyed if she presented herself at his door, a second time; She made excuses, but in vain. Mitsue assured her, she would bear the responsibility and take blame.

Advancing cautiously, and taking care that Kwanichi did not see her, Toyo called, softly, outside his door:

“Master, Master!”

“He is not here!” came in Miya’s soft accents. The servant came forward and looked in. No, sure enough, he was not there. The lady was still sitting beside his pillow, looking very sad. Her hair was slightly dishevelled, her left sleeve showed a rent.

“He went out a little while ago—into another room, I think, to see a visitor in there.”

“No Madam, he is not there, and the lady says she is in a hurry, so I came to tell him so. Where can he have gone!”

She left hurriedly and went in to Mitsue.

“Did he not come in here?”

“Who?”

“He is not in there either?”

“Ah! your master! where is he then?”

“The lady says he must have come in here?”

The Gold Demon.

"That is a lie!" said Mitsue rudely.

"But, she is there, all alone."

"I don't believe it."

"I assure you, she is alone. I, too, thought he was with her, but ——"

"He is hidden somewhere," replied Mitsue with conviction, "you must go and find him."

Toyo rose to do as she was bid, and Mitsue waited, ill at ease, on her cushions, trying to master her indignation and jealousy.

Miya, had lost all hope of carrying out the purpose for which she had come. She felt that it would be useless to await Kwanichi's return. Everything had gone against her; yet, she could not make up her mind to go away unsatisfied. She heaved deep sighs and gazed out of the window at the sky, which grew darker every minute.

In the meanwhile, Toyo had made careful search for her master, but he was nowhere to be found. It was with a suspicious look that she returned to the detached room, and while she talked, her eyes wandered searchingly around. She felt sure Kwanichi was hidden.

"I cannot find him anywhere, Madam."

"No? has he not gone out perhaps?" replied Miya, with well-assumed calmness.

The Nibals.

“That may be, but why?—leaving his visitors like this, one in this room, one in the next! He can't have gone out, but as he can't be found anywhere, he *must* have gone out. Excuse me, I will look once more.”

She hurried away to Mitsue, to tell her the result of her search, adding that she had looked most carefully all about the detached room, and that he, certainly, was not in there. Suddenly, she recollected the foot-gear and hurried to the verandah to examine them. Mitsue followed—paused a moment to reflect, and then stepped lightly into the garden and appeared with great suddenness in front of the room, in which Miya sat.

The latter looked, up, in surprise, and at once changed her drooping posture to assume a more correct attitude. She looked somewhat shy, like a graceful flower, that hides among its green leaves. Mitsue, on the contrary, appeared like the cool looking winter moon. She advanced. The two women exchanged the formal greeting. Mitsue found the “enemy” younger than herself, lovelier than herself, and with that air of nobility which she herself lacked. Against her will she was filled with admiration. Jealousy and hatred

The Gold Demon.

of her rival took possession of her. If Kwan-ichi loved this woman, what hope was there for her. She recognized that it was useless for her to enter the lists against a loveliness, that so greatly surpassed her own. She longed to fling herself on Miya and stab her to death. Since she could not do that, she determined to tease and wound her in every way she could.

"This is the first time I see you," she said sweetly, "are you a relation of Mr. Hazama's?"

"Yes, I am a *kind* of relation," replied Miya hesitatingly.

"Indeed! My name is Mitsue Akagashi and I have been an intimate friend of Mr. Hazama's for many years; in fact almost like a *real* relation. We help each other, and do business together. Being at his house so much, I wonder how it is, that I have never seen you, all these years?"

"I have only just returned to Tokio from a distant province."

"May I ask where you have been living?"

"Oh! yes! it was ...at... Hiroshima"

"And where do you live now!"

"I live at Ikenohata." lied Miya boldly.

"Ikenohata? that is a very pretty place. How curious that Mr. Hazama should have told me he

The Rivals.

had no relatives, and that there was no one with whom he cared to be on terms of friendship,—of *intimate* friendship, except me,—who am more to him than any *real* relatives. So I always fancied he had no relations. I wonder what could have been his motive in saying so, considering he has so charming a relative as you. What *could* have been his reason for hiding the fact from me—Do you think it is like him, to do so cold-blooded a thing?”

A wave of anger swept over Miya, as she listened to this impertinent speech. “This must be the woman my father saw, at the hospital;” she thought, “what was it he said about her? That she was not an ordinary visitor, but had some closer connection with Kwanichi. Perhaps she is his wife, secretly, who is trying to keep him from me. Perhaps he has sent her here to punish me.” She bit her lip “He wants me to see the woman he loves! I will *go*—but no! when I am gone he may come out of his hiding-place, and they will laugh at me, and abuse me together. He will take her hand and put his face close to hers.” She clenched her teeth, to hide the quivering of her lip, and Mitsue, delighted at the effect of her words, continued in a tone of insufferable patronage:

The Gold Demon.

"I am full of regret that Hazama should have been called off on urgent business, when you have come all this way to visit him. The place to which he has gone, is some way off, so I hardly expect to see him back before night. You had better come some other day, when you are at liberty, for your talk with him."

"I have stayed here too long already," said Miya with some haughtiness, "I am very sorry to have detained him so long, since you, too, came totalk with him."

"It does not matter in the least, I am here so often, and can see him at any time; it is for yourself you must be most sorry," Mitsue smiled wickedly.

"I am *very* sorry," said Miya boldly, "I have not seen him for four or five years, so of course we had much to talk about. I contemplated spending the day here."

"Most disappointing for you."

"I am going." she bowed.

"Must you really go? see, it is raining."

"I have my own kuruma, and so, am independent of the weather," was Miya's frigid response.

With the most ceremonious bows and the politest phrases of leavetaking, which expressed pleasure in each other's society and hopes of future meetings,

The Rivals.

the two women parted, each hiding in her heart the sword of jealousy and vowing never to see the hated rival again.

CHAPTER LVI

Mitsue Waits.

WHEN Miya had driven off, Mitsue and Toyo hunted in every nook and corner for Kwanichi but he was nowhere to be found. Mitsue sat down to wait, expecting he would come soon, and to watch the path that led to the house. The fact was, that Kwanichi finding himself in an awkward predicament and not knowing how to extricate himself, had escaped by the back door. He stole down the road in the pouring rain, sheltering himself as much as he could by keeping close to the houses. He hardly knew where he was going but seeing the doors of a Gō hall, where he sometimes had a game, open, he slipped in there hoping to be safe for a while. How peaceful it was in there. There were only three couples playing a game of gō quietly ; the host, a lean dried-up man was polishing a gō board. The breeze had a soothing sound as it played among a group of graceful bamboos, outside the window. Kwanichi seated himself close to the brazier and leaned over it to dry his wet garments.

Mitsue Bait.

The host, who knew him, came across the room and plied him with questions as to his wet condition, to all of which Kwanichi replied evasively. His heart was still beating loudly and his mind was too confused to heed what was said to him and so after a curious glance at his disturbed countenance the host left him alone.

Kwanichi knew not whether he was glad or sorry, whether it was hate or pity that surged in him, stirring old memories and giving birth to new emotions. When he had somewhat recovered from the intense excitement which burned within him, he found himself wondering what would be the results of his leaving Mitsue and Miya alone in his house. Would they meet and what would come of their meeting? Ought he not to return and prevent it? He was roused from the deep brooding into which he had fallen by the gradually increasing noise among the gō players and looking up he became aware that all their heads were turned towards him and that the shouts were directed at him.

“Kusai, kusai!” (bad smell) they called and Kwanichi then perceived that one of his sleeves had caught fire and that a strong smell of burning filled the room. He extinguished the smoulder-

The Gold Demon.

ing flame, and the calmor of the players ceasing, a woman's voice was heard at the door asking for admittance.

"Is my master here?"

"Yes," replied the host, "he is sitting in the back room." Kwanichi looked round and recognized his servant Toyo. He felt awkward and embarrassed at being found but hid this beneath a nonchalant manner. Carelessly he said:

"You have brought my umbrella I suppose."

"Yes, master and your high wooden clogs. So this is where you are—I have looked for you in all sorts of places."

"Indeed?" said Hazama coolly. "Has the visitor gone?"

"Yes, she has gone."

"And the lady from Yotsuya also?"

"No sir, she insists on seeing you?"

"Do you mean she is still at the house?"

"Yes, master."

"Then tell her you were unable to find me."

"Are you not coming home?"

"By and bye."

"It is nearly lunch time."

"Never mind—go home now."

"But master, you have not even had breakfast."

Mitsue Waits.

"I told you to go home." said Kwanichi sharply and Toyo putting down the umbrella and the clogs went away disappointed.

His hiding-place, having been discovered, and knowing Mitsue well enough to feel sure she would be capable of pursuing him there, Kwanichi determined to stay no longer. He would not go home either, until she had left the house, for in his present state of mind he felt unable to cope with her importunities. He did not know where to go and to make matters worse he found he had not a cent with him and he began to want his breakfast. But he put on his clogs, opened his umbrella and sallied out into the pouring rain.

Late in the afternoon the rain stopped, and though the month was May, it grew dusk very early. The players rose from their go-boards, and the host saw them to the door, and then lighted the lantern above him. Just then he saw Kwanichi enter his gate.

No sooner was the latter in the little hall than he called in a loud, irritable voice: "Dinner, Dinner," and entered his sitting room brusquely.

The lamp was lighted and beside it, with her back towards him, sat a woman. Kwanichi stared at her in amaze, and as she did not move or turn

The Gold Demon.

towards him he exclaimed angrily:

"Has Mitsue not gone home *yet?*"

And he closed the door with a snap and walked over into his own bedroom. He called to Toyo to bring sundry garments and to serve his meal in there. Strange to say Mitsue did not come in while he dined—quite unlike her usual way—and Kwanichi congratulating himself on this respite stretched out his tired body when he had eaten, in the shadow of the moon and indulged in a long luxurious smoke.

As he lay there, his thoughts reverted to Miya. He saw again her graceful but emaciated form and heard the plaintive tones of her sweet voice. Once or twice he raised himself on his elbow to look round to make sure that the shadow, which the bamboo cast on the paper screen, was not hers.

"Miya cannot have stayed here very long," he thought, "and I am as lonely as ever. When I could have done so, I would not forgive her, even though I saw her penitence was real, and so I have alienated myself from her forever. To-night I feel strangely lonely and this is a new burden added to the old. This full moon-light makes me sad—and greater than my hatred of her is, to-night, the sadness I feel at beholding her frailty."

He rose and pushed aside the paper screen, and the crescent moon hanging in the calm summer sky lighted up his face and revealed the hunger in his sad dark eyes.

“Hazama san!” came the jarring voice of Mitsue whose presence he had absolutely forgotten, and turning round he saw she had already seated herself in his room close behind him. He gazed at her and thought her face looked dry and without the bloom of youth, and that her eyes which smiled at every man, lacked charm. He wondered how it was he had not observed this before, and while still puzzling over it he excused himself politely and formally for his absence, adding that since she had waited so long, her business must indeed be urgent. But Mitsue was angry and in no mood for polite nothings. Hardly allowing him to complete his sentence, she began her attack, in a voice shrill with displeasure.

“And so you consider it wrong for me to wait for you even if my business is not urgent? Of course it is wrong; but what *you* consider worse than my waiting, is that I should have come here at all this morning. Most unpardonable! for I interrupted you in a strange pleasure Hazama-san.”

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She glared at Kwanichi, who replied angrily :

“What nonsense you are talking !”

“Ah ! it is no good your trying to deceive me. No explanation is needed when one sees a young man and a woman in a room together, clinging to each other, laughing and weeping. I heard it all in the next room and I am no child of seven or eight years. Do I not understand these things? And when you had gone I came in here and saw the lady !”

Kwanichi who had not greatly minded her harangue so far, looked up at her last words and listened attentively. What he feared had come to pass—Miya and Mitsue had met. Mitsue continued :

“We had a long talk, about many things—thus I have come to know of the relation in which you stand to her. She even told me things of which women as a rule do not speak, and I learned many curious secrets. But, Hazama I really cannot help admiring you. What a talent !

You have this lovely lady for your pleasure—secretly—and the world regards you as an eccentric fellow, absolutely indifferent to the.....pleasanter sides of life. Your talent for secrecy is amazing ! Fancy having so successfully kept your pleasures

hidden from the world all these years !”

Kwanichi clenched his fists with rage.

“What do you mean by it?” he exclaimed, “Cease your foolish chatter.”

“It is all very well,” cried Mitsue, “for you to call it foolish chatter ; you know it is true and that you are glad it is true. I can see it in your face you are thinking of it now, and I suppose you can’t help being in love with her.”

“This is just what I expected to happen.” thought Hazama, “I ought not to have left them alone or given them a chance of meeting. What an annoying thing it is !” He closed his mouth resolutely and stared up at the moon.

Mitsue, keeping her watchful eyes on his face, said :

“Hazama, why are you silent? I am sorry that you should have to converse with such a woman as I am, after being in the company of that beautiful love of yours. I will not keep you long, I have only a few little words to say—may I say them?”

“Anything you like,” said the exasperated Kwanichi.

“I’d like to kill you !” cried she jealously.

“Eh ?” said Kwanichi in surprise.

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"I should like to kill you, and her, and then myself!"

"Pooh! ridiculous! why should I be killed by you?"

"How dare you say ridiculous?" cried the Beauty, her eyes flashing; and then with a sudden rush of tears, "Do you hate me so much? why do you hate me? Tell me the reason. I will not go until I know."

"Hate you? Impossible!" cried Kwanichi in mock horror.

"Why then did you say 'ridiculous?'"

"Well, isn't it ridiculous that you should want to kill me? I know of no grounds you can have for wanting to do it."

"I have, indeed I have."

"You may *believe* you have, but....."

"And if I do believe it, what matters it if no one else thinks so. I shall carry out to the uttermost what I believe to be my right."

"Then I am to understand you intend to kill me?"

"I shall not hesitate to do so. Be prepared."

"I am quite prepared," replied Kwanichi coolly, wondering how far she was in earnest. This scene having in his opinion lasted long enough,

he stood up, shivering slightly, for the night was cool, and closed the doors on to the verandah. The moon sailed high in the heaven. Kwanichi looked at the clock which stood in the alcove and said:

“It is late, you had better go home.”

“Were I the lady who was here this morning, I am sure you would not dream of calling my attention to the hour,” was the vicious reply. Kwanichi was about to make some angry retort but considering it was wiser not to argue with her, he kept silence.

CHAPTER LVII

A Plea for Love.

“WHO is she?” said Mitsue after a pause, “I was told that she is an old friend of yours. From her manner and appearance I should say she is not a woman in *the* trade, nor just an ordinary lady. She seemed mysterious, and you enjoy a woman with a mystery, do you not? Is she perhaps a “flower with an owner.” (married woman).

Although Kwanichi felt sure this was a random shot, his heart beat uncomfortably loud and fast:

“I cannot tell,” was all he replied.

“It is said that pleasure enjoyed under such conditions is the greater—but the crime is also the greater. It is quite plain to me now why you should have kept the affair a secret. It is certainly nothing to be proud of. Now, you are furious that your secret has leaked out, and it is especially annoying that I should have become possessed of it—I, whom you dislike so much. Believe me I am delighted. You have long and cruelly tormented me—now, I shall be able to torment you to my

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heart's content by means of this secret. You know what you have to expect."

"Are you quite mad?" asked Kwanichi contemptuously.

"Perhaps I am. Who has made me so? If I am mad, my madness dates from this morning. And since I became mad through coming to your house, it is your duty to restore my mind before I leave you."

She drew closer to him, but he shrank from her contact, wishing he could escape as he had that very morning.

"I have a simple request to make," said Mitsue, "will you grant it?"

"What is it?"

"I hate your 'what is it,' say, 'I will'."

"But —"

"No 'buts' please, you always give me such cold answers, I want a simple answer to a simple request."

Kwanichi nodded.

"Then listen, Hazama. You look upon me as a tiresome woman, I know, for I have clung to you regardless of your opinion of me, because I cannot for one moment forget you. No matter how I love you, you continue to dislike me and my love

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is exactly like that described in the poem: "To love one who loves not in return, is more idle than to draw pictures on running water." I am drawing pictures on running water, and I despair of gaining my heart's desire; yet I cannot relinquish my hopes. You find it tiresome to be loved in this fashion by me; but, you know, at least that I love you, earnestly and in all seriousness—you know this, do you not?"

"Well.....perhaps so, but....."

"Oh! stop your eternal "perhaps," and "maybe," and "but." If I did not love you, should I continue to persecute you? That I do so, when I know you consider me a tiresome woman, is the strongest proof of my love for you."

"Since you say so, it may be true."

"You *do* know that I love you, in spite of your dislike of me?"

"Yes?" said Hazama uncertainly.

"Hitherto I have not spoken direct to the point, and in consequence you have evaded me. You know what I desire,—and that such a desire is generally considered unlawful.—If you knew me thoroughly, you would see, that for me, it is not so wrong as you think. And if it is, I cannot help it, for where love is, reason takes flight. You have

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avoided me on the pretext of unlawfulness, and while I still believed you to be too hard and too eccentric a character to care for love, I considered your pretext sincere—but *now*,—”

As she said these words, fire flashed from her eyes, and she took up her pipe and struck Hazama, with all the force of which she was capable, on the knee.

“What are you doing?” he cried, taken by surprise, and snatched her pipe from her, but she struck him with her hand, wherever she could reach him. Kwanichi managed to get possession of her hands, and held her down firmly, whereupon she immediately bit him on the thigh. He twisted her off furious, but she clung to his knees, and lay there sobbing.

Puzzled at her extraordinary behaviour, Kwanichi said nothing, but endeavoured to free himself. She clung desperately weeping, her hot tears penetrating his thin garment and wetting his skin.

“Go home!” he said, at last, roughly.

“I won’t go.”

“You have got to go—and I will see that from to-day you never enter my house again—remember that.”

“I shall come, even if I have to die for it.”

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"I have been very patient with you," said Hazama controlling his anger, "but I cannot have this going on any longer, I shall see Mr. Akagashi and speak to him about you."

Mitsue lifted up her tearful face.

"Please speak to him, do you suppose it matters if Mr. Akagashi hears of it or not?"

"You wicked and depraved woman!" cried Hazama, red-hot with anger. "I wonder really what Mr. Akagashi is to you!"

"And what do you suppose Mr. Akagashi is to me, Hazama san?"

"You are outrageous!"

"You evidently think he is my husband, but he is not?"

"What is he then?"

"I have told you before how my father gave me to him, in exchange for a sum of money. People may call us man and wife, but I don't regard him as my husband, he is my enemy. So there is nothing to prevent my having a lover, just as any unmarried woman might. Hazama, when you see Mr. Akagashi, say to him: 'that woman Mitsue loves me madly, and I am going to take her into my house as my cook,' then I will serve you until I die..... Did you think to frighten me by say-

ing you would speak to Mr. Akagashi; on the contrary, I think it would be to my advantage if you did; he would not know what to say to you. If any one is put in an awkward position by your speaking to him, it will be he and not I."

Kwanichi did not know what answer to make to these curious statements. Her boldness disarmed him.

"If, by speaking to him," continued Mitsue; "you hope to get rid of me, your trouble will be in vain. He is afraid of me, not *I* of him! Still you might try your plan, just to see what the result would be. Then I shall noise abroad your secret too. I shall tell it everywhere, that you are connected with a married woman, and are always having lovers' interviews with her. Then we shall see who will be harmed most, you or I! What do you say to that?"

"I say, that it is unworthy of *you*, who are sharper than a man, to take a woman's revenge. And listen to me. May not a man and a woman talk together, without being suspected of illicit dealings? Or, is a woman of mature age always a *married* woman? If you spread such a report it will be a wicked misrepresentation of facts. You

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slanderous woman! be more careful when you speak!"

"Hazama-san, turn this way, and look at me!" She plucked him by the sleeve, but he shook her off with a smothered oath.

"I annoy you, do I not?"

"You do indeed!"

"I am going to annoy and worry you still more. What was it you said? 'A wicked misrepresentation?' I must ask you, in my turn, to choose your words more carefully. Be a man, and own you have a mistress! I have no right to ask you this—if I had a right, it might be wise of you to hide the fact from me. Let me speak openly with you. If you had a hundred loves, I should never give you up. My mind is no unstable one. I know, I shall not gain my desire by noising abroad your secret; I am not the woman to do such a thing, though you may think differently. I spoke in anger, and I ask you to pardon a hasty word."

She humbled herself before him, and bowed, as the menial to the master. Again Kwanichi was at a loss what reply to make.

"Now, let me make my request. First of all, give up your attitude of hermit, who neither knows, nor cares for, the delights of love.

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You know me well and thoroughly. Am I a person likely to relinquish the thing for which I strive? Do you dislike me so much, that you will always be unable to accept, what I have so often offered you. Decide what *you* will do, and I will decide on *my* course of action. As a rule, I am quick in making a decision ; but, in this case, I have been as weak-minded as a fool. I am not blind about things as a rule, but where you are concerned, I am blind—and infatuated. ! It must be my “Ingwa,” (result of actions in a former life) that you should dislike me still, in spite of my love for you. Or, is it the absolute disagreement of natures, which the Buddhists preach, the Water Nature or the Fire Nature of the man, which will not mingle with certain natures of women? Ought you not therefore to pity one, whose fate it is to love you, under such adverse and hopeless conditions? Though you may not be able to love the person, at least, you should have pity on the mind of such a one. That you are not so hard or loveless a character, as to be unable to extend to me some sympathy, I have been assured of, by the events of the morning. I know, *now*, that you are capable of love. The love, you bestow on another, is the same love as that, with which I love you. Think

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how painful unrequited love must be! Was I, then, so very unreasonable when I said, I wished to kill you, Hazama san? It may be madness, but I was born to *this*: that I should love you, and be willing to give up my life for you, or be your slave, in return for a kind word or look. If you think this over, you will, I feel sure, be able to spare me a little love and pity, even, if it be only as small as a drop of dew. Can you not do so? I do not ask much of you but, will you not speak the word I am longing to hear, for the sake of our.....*friendship?*"

As she drew near the end of her plea, her voice trembled more and more, until it lost its usual harsh tone. She begged him for this *one* word, for which she would have sacrificed many registered bonds, worth thousands of yen. With suspended breath, and beating heart, her face, pale as death, she awaited his answer, ready, to be made happy by one word, or, prepared to end all, with the dagger she held concealed in her sleeve.

This Kwanichi felt was lovemaking indeed, and, it was as terrible, as it was pitiful. But, how make friends with a snake or a scorpion, simply because it loved him? The whole scene had rendered him incapable of saying a harsh word. His face

had grown softer, although his brows were still knit.

“A word that will satisfy you?” he asked, “what kind of a word do you want me to say?”

“How can *I* tell you, what words you should say to me?” cried Mitsue, with a passionate gesture.

“I don’t really know what it is you want.” replied Kwanichi, seeking some way of escape.

“Don’t know? Ah! that is because you are seeking for some cunning word of evasion! There is but *one* word that will satisfy me; and you are the only one who can give me that word!”

“If you mean *that*, I know.....”

“If you know it,” broke in Mitsue, “try to say it.”

“I know, that you want me to agree with all you have said, but that is difficult—I can find no word which will please you.”

“Ah! try,” she cried, “I will be content with whatever you say. Show me, that you sympathize with what I feel; that you are not devoid of pity.”

“I am grateful to you, for you kind thoughts of me,” began Kwanichi, slowly and laboriously, “I shall remember all you have said, tonight, and I will not forget, in the future, that you love me...”

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"Are you sure Hazama san?" came the eager question.

"I am *sure*," he replied.

"Is it truth?" she asked.

"Yes, it is true."

"Then," she cried, triumphantly, "give me the proof!"

"The proof?" he asked, startled.

"Yes. I hate an empty word. You have given me the assurance of your sympathy; you have said you spoke truly—now give me the proof, show me that you understand."

"I would if I could," he faltered.

"You would? and you *can*....."

"*If I could*—yes—but....."

"If you are willing, you can give me every thing," she panted.

As she spoke, Kwanichi threw open the sliding door, with violence, and sprang into the dewy garden. Mitsue followed him like a flash, and in the moonlight her face looked like a rose.

CHAPTER LVIII

The Dream.

“WHY do I hear women’s voices, crying and disputing,” Kwanichi asked himself, early one morning, as he lifted his head from his pillow and listened, “when I know, there is no one in the house but myself and Toyo.” The voices became louder, more excited, and were accompanied by a violent knocking on the partition. At this, Kwanichi pushed back the bedclothes, and was about to jump out of bed, when, with a bang, the partition was knocked down, and two figures were hurled into the room. They were two women, and the hair of one was unbound, and floated about her shoulders. Her dress was wet with rain. She looked up at him, in an ecstasy of love and yearning, and cried, “Kwanichi san.” But when she tried to reach him, the other woman fell upon her and held her down, so that she was unable to move. The woman, with the long black hair and the wet garments, was Miya; the other, her hair dressed like a geisha and exquisitely arrayed, was Mitsue, and this was her revenge, for what Kwanichi had refused her the other night.

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Still holding Miya tightly, Mitsue turned round and cried:

“Hazama san, here is your love, of whom you think so much.” She seized Miya’s neck and twisted her head, so that the latter was obliged to face Kwanichi:

“Is not this the woman?” asked Mitsue. Miya moaned softly and said:

“Kwanichi san, it makes me so sad; *do* tell me, is this woman your wife?”

“What does it matter to you, if I am his wife?” demanded Mitsue, viciously, shaking her victim, and when the latter groaned, and rubbed her legs against each other in pain, Mitsue held her the more firmly, telling her to be quiet, and to listen to what she was going to say to Kwanichi.

She began:

“Hazama san, I now know the truth. It is only, because this woman shamelessly clings to you, that you refuse, what I ask of you. Although she has deserted you and married another, you have still a sneaking affection for her. You are more unmanly, than I thought possible. How can you care for a woman who forsook you, and gave herself to another?—And you call yourself a man? If I were *you*, I would stab her to death.”

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Miya struggled to free herself, but so strong a hand was on her, that she was hardly able to breathe.

Mitsue continued :

“Hazama san, have you not often spoken of me as immoral? And yet, you have allowed this creature to live on in her shame, and though you love her, call yourself an honourable man. Are you not ashamed of the remarks you made about me? I will put into your hands, now, the opportunity of becoming a *man* again, freed from the stain of unmanliness, which is as a blot, on your character, in allowing her to live. Punish her now, I will not rise, until you do so. I will lend you the knife, a good knife. Here take it in your hand.”

With one hand, she drew from her sleeve a dagger, in a lacquered sheath. Kwanichi was petrified with horror—he gazed as if fascinated, at Mitsue’s excited face. Miya never moved. Was she already insensible from fear?

“Come,” whispered Mitsue, “while I hold her down like this, stab her in the throat, or heart, quickly. Fie! Why do you hesitate? Don’t you know how to hold a dagger? Draw it like this!”

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With one hand she shook it in the air; the sheath flew off, and, with a flash, like lightning, the shining blade cut through the air, and dropped within three inches of Kwanichi's face.

"Stab her, stab her!", she cried. Kwanichi shuddered, and Mitsue, snatching up the knife, said:

"Now, I know that you love her still. Your honour demands, that you should put an end to her life, and you are too weak to do so. Let me take your place and kill her. It is very easy. Look here."

She drew the sharp blade across Miya's dishevelled hair, but she, with the strength that terror lends, wrenched herself free, and sprang aside, shrieking:

"Help! Kwanichi san," and then flinging herself on Mitsue, seized her by the wrist, in which she held the dagger.

"Kwanichi, quick, take the dagger from her, and kill me with your own hand. I want to die, but, I will not have that woman kill me. Help! Kwanichi, and put an end to my miserable life yourself."

But Kwanichi never moved. He seemed to be held immovable by some mysterious power; try as he would, he could not lift hand or foot. Meanwhile

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the two women struggled for possession of the dagger. It flashed now high, now low, like a bright crescent, seen through willow branches in the wind. Miya shrieked piteously to the man she loved :

“ Are you going to look on, while this woman kills me? Oh! help me Kawnichi, my life is *yours*, not hers; she must not take it. If you will not kill me, at least, let me kill myself. Take the knife from her, and let me have it in my hand, just for a moment; for mercy’s sake, be quick, be quick!”

The struggle waxed desperate; there was no sound in the room, except the panting of the two women. Suddenly the dagger slipped from Mitsue’s hand, and fell on the mat in front of Kwanichi. In a second, Miya leapt across the room, seized it, and held it triumphantly aloft. Mitsue was on her immediately, but, at that moment, Miya thrust at her, with all her might, and the dagger pierced her to the heart. With a shriek she fell back.....dead.

Miya dropped the dagger, and fled to Kwanichi.

“ Now, I must regard myself as dead. Kill me Kwanichi,” she pleaded, “ and, if you will do it, I

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will regard it as your pardon, and die happily. Forgive me for the past; for, if you do not forgive me, I shall come to life again and again miserably, and shall torment others, as I have you. I implore you, pray to Buddha, that he does not let me go astray after death, and then, let me die beside you."

She placed the blood-stained knife in his hand, keeping her own over his.

"As this is the last time I shall ever see you, I want you to say one word, "Pardon," to my departing soul. It will be like a prayer and a blessing to the dead. While I am alive, you may hate me still; but death changes all. With death all sin, and therefore all hatred for that sin, dies, and is reduced to ashes. Therefore, let the past flow away with the flowing stream, and forgive me, for I have repented and am glad to give up my life for my past fault. I have no words, in which to tell you all I feel, but I remember how you wept over me that night at Atami, and I hear your voice saying: "Don't forget what has happened tonight, you will think of it often." I ask myself in despair sometimes why I did what I did. I must have been mad at the time, or driven on, by some malignant power. And so, your curse fell upon me, and there

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is now no place under the sun, in which I can live in peace ; so I must go,—and I pray, forgive me.

“ I should be foolish to imagine, that this soul of mine, which is accursed, could in this life, even though I had your pardon, be at rest. The Buddhists say, that the result of evil actions, in a former life, cannot be done away in this life, however much we may suffer here as the penalty. Therefore, though, with your forgiveness, I should long to stay near you, I know it is better for me to die at once, and bury all this grief with my body, and then be born again, pure, as I was at the very beginning. Thus, in a future life, in spite of difficulties and barriers we shall come together, at last. I will prove myself worthy of you, and we shall live together in perfect bliss. In my next life, I shall beware of foolish actions, and I beg you, do not forget me. Be sure, you never forget me, It is said, that our dying thought shapes our next life, so I will die thinking of but one thing : of *you*, Kwanichi, and of your forgiveness. And thus, I die ! ” Still holding his hand, she fell upon the dagger gasping :

“ It.....is.....done.....Kwanichi ! ”

Then Kwanichi awoke at last.

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“Miya,” he cried, “it is you? what have you done?”

He tried to pull the dagger from her throat, but she was stronger than he.

“Let me have it,” he panted, “Miya let go.”

“Kwanichi Kwanichi,” she sobbed.

“What do you want to say to me?” he asked, holding her close in his arms.

“Nothing. I am so glad. You have forgiven me.”

“Miya, let me take the dagger.” Again he tried to remove it, but she cried, with sudden strength:

“I will not. I am going to die like this, and be at peace. Oh! Kwanichi I am growing faint, say that you pardon me,—quick pardon, pardon.”

“Can you hear, Miya?” he asked, for she had fallen back, with eyes closed, and when she breathed a ‘yes,’ he said, slowly, and impressively:

“I forgive you. You are now forgiven and pardoned.”

“Kwanichi, I am so glad.”

He leaned over and kissed her, his hot tears falling on her face.

“Now at last I can die,” she cried, and strove to drive the dagger home. Kwanichi implored her to have pity on him, to recover, and succeeded, after a struggle in gaining possession of the

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knife. No sooner had he done so, than Miya stood up and rushed from the room with swaying, stumbling steps.

Her lover sprang up, after a moment's hesitation, and was about to follow her, when he stumbled over Mitsue's dead body, and fell with great violence to the ground. He called loudly :

" Miya, wait ! I have something to say to you. Toyo, Toyo, where are you ? run after Miya and stop her."

He called and called, but Miya did not return, nor did the servant give any sign. When the pain in his knees allowed him to rise, he found he had so injured himself that he was unable to stand without support. He staggered from the verandah into the garden guided by the drops of blood from the wounded woman. They led him to the door at the end of the garden, then into the street, and far down the silent, misty road, he saw her staggering before him.

" Miya wait !" Again and again he called, but she heeded not, and he gnashed his teeth with rage, that fate, at the supreme moment should have rendered him helpless. Supporting himself by clinging to the fences at the side of road, he struggled forward, regardless of the falls and the agony he experienced,

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He shouted "Miya" as long as he had strength to do so. Presently her obi (sash) becoming untied, and twisted round her feet, she fell, and lay still. Kwanichi, almost exhausted redoubled his efforts, and with a loud cry of Miya, plunged madly forward. At the same moment he felt a sharp stab in his throat; his words were checked in a rush of blood, and he fell fainting to the ground.

How long he lay there he did not know. When he came to himself, he found he was close to the moat, which encircles the Palace grounds. He looked up and saw Miya among the willows which fringe the bank. Rising with difficulty, he followed her, but stopped at the strange sight which met his eyes. The usually peaceful moat had changed into terrific rapids, which came dashing down with a noise like thunder. Huge boulders seemed have been thrown in, to break their force, but the waters leapt and plunged over them, in great bounds, sending the spray high into the air, and almost making the banks tremble beneath their onset.

"What an awful scene!" thought Kwanichi, clinging to the bough of a willow. As he gazed, he noticed a narrow steep path, bordered by high grasses, leading down the cliff to the water. He

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also noticed the bamboos and grasses were disturbed, as though some one were moving among them, and looking round hastily for Miya, he saw she had disappeared, and was at once persuaded that she it was who was walking down towards the water.

He now knew the reason of her flight. She was going to drown herself in one of the whirlpools beneath those terrible rapids. Save her he must. But how? He could not reach her in time by taking the path—what could he do?—He paused one moment, and then sprang. By a miracle he was not killed, not even injured or stunned. But Miya had vanished.

Crying to Heaven at his ill-luck in having lost her by one moment, Kwanichi gazed into the water with blood-shot eyes, hoping against hope that he might yet rescue her.

Presently, at a distance of perhaps a score of yards, something came in sight, which was certainly not a piece of wood. It was tossed hither and thither by the waves, was visible for a moment, then lost to sight. Could it be Miya?

Kwanichi strained his eyes and leaned down ready to grasp at dress or floating hair. But the current was very swift where he stood, and at the

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moment when he recognized the form of his beloved, she was borne past him, shot out of his reach, like an arrow from the bow. Undaunted, Kwanichi followed, there was no path, but he scrambled over rocks, climbed trees, hung over the precipice, and waded at peril of his life in the swirling water. He staggered along, bleeding and half dead, till he reached a shallow place in the river. There in the sobbing water, under the shadow of green trees, whose branches were bowed in mourning over her, he found his Miya. He fell upon her weeping.

Alas! alas! How grateful would Miya have been for one of those hot teardrops before she died. Now a thousand cannot avail her.

“Miya,” cried Kwanichi, “are you really dead! and have I found you only to have lost you? Beloved one! Too much thinking has driven you to this. First pierced by a sword, and then drowned! Did you want to give up your life twice for my sake, that I might know how true and deep was your penitence.

“I swore I would never forget my wrongs, no matter what should happen,—and now, in spite of my oath I find my resentment has melted, and seeing you dead before me, I cry that I forgive you

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from my heart. But Miya, hear me ; I forgave you before you died, do you remember that? I said but one word, " Pardon," and in pain you breathed that you were glad. Did it mean so much to you, Miya ?

" Ah ! how well you have proved your penitence ! What a splendid repentance has been yours ! So grand, that I feel ashamed before you and implore you now to pardon me. I have been dull and have not understood you ; my own grievance blinded me to your sorrow. Forgive me Miya,— ah ! too late ; you are dead."

Seeing how very tragic, and how brave was the manner of her death, Kwanichi felt that all her inward impurities had been poured out with her blood, and that her sin-stained skin had been washed clean, leaving to him her fair young body, which, for his sake, and as a proof of her repentance, she had sacrificed. She deserved full measure of grief and pity, and he was unworthy to bestow the same.

The moment that his anger and resentment were put away, there arose in their place that yearning love, which like a spring of water had dried up, but now filled his heart to overflowing.

Know you how bitter is the yearning for a Be-

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loved one who is dead? There is no longing in the world so hard to bear.

Kwanichi now knew that it so easier to live with hot resentment in his heart against the living, than to endure life full of passionate longing for the dead.

He kneeled beside her in an agony of remorse.

“I have one thing to offer you, dear one,” he sobbed, “and that is my heart. Hold it in your embrace, while your soul rests in the bosom of Buddha. This is the end, for you and me, of this present life, but in the next I will live with you as you desire and may the gods grant us a hundred years of life together. I shall not forget Miya,—I promise to remember you.”

Taking her ice-cold hand in his, he leaned over her and looked into her eyes, now closed in their long sleep, but he could not distinguish her features for his eyes were dimmed with tears.

“Once you sinned, Miya,” he continued, “yet what a noble spirit is yours, to be capable of a death like this. Brave woman! you are an example to all; your action is worthy of the highest.

“But what of me? I was born a man, and yet because I lost a woman’s love, I threw aside all noble ambitions and committed a life-long fault!

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Nor was I ashamed of my conduct, but continued to amass money by unlawful and inhuman means. Why did I do it? What do I want the money for?"

These questions Kwanichi asked himself again and again, but he could find no answer to satisfy his soul. He had done wrong, and there was no pleasure in it.

"Every man has, beside that in his own walk in life, a duty to perform to humanity. Am I doing so? When I lost Miya, I lost hope; and my lost hopes I threw away all that was good in me, all that makes of us men. My sense of duty to myself and to the world, I strangled."

"Miya, if you have repented for my sake, I must needs repent for my sins against humanity. Seeing how great and noble have been your amends, I feel ashamed and envious, for how can I hope to equal you.

"This life is hard and bitter, and no matter how hard it is, we have to live it here. In it, our pleasures, and our duties, those that concern ourselves and those to the world at large, each have their appointed place, and we must recognize them. I have never done so.

"When I lived at the Shigizawas with you, Miya,

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close beside me, I regarded life as a happy dream. Since then—ah! well, you know how I have lived. Which was the true way of life, this or that?

“ These last six years, there has not been a single day, that I have felt, I was living the life of a Man! —You would ask why did I continue to live and you may think it was because I have lacked the courage to die. It is not that I have *lived*, it is because I have failed to die; for my whole existence has been a failure.

“ Wanibuchi was burnt to death, and Miya has killed herself.

“ *What shall I do?*

“ With this weak character of mine, I shall spend all my days in grief, haunted by Miya’s sad face. My future will therefore be more cruel than my past. How can I live in such bitter grief?

“ To make amends, to live like a man, to pay the duty I owe to humanity?—What an effort! *That*, no doubt, is my duty as a *man*—but I am no longer a *man*. There is nothing human about me. Death! They say, now, that suicide is a crime. But can it be a crime for one, who is only alive because he breathes? A good-for-nothing to whom life is pain, and at whose death hundreds would re-

joice ?

“ It comes to this : I die because a single woman failed me, and I, in consequence, forgot what life requires of man. I demeaned myself to follow the trade of the thief and the usurer, and have not done a single action worthy of a human being. I made a bad start—and the evil of these years I cannot wipe out. Misfortune will cling to me while I live, and grief will overshadow my path. There is but one way : to die ; and live my life—a cleaner one—again—and then the burden of sorrow will fall from me ! ”

Kwanichi arose. He had found the way. The tears are drying on his cheeks, and into his eyes has come a strange brightness—he lifts his face—pale yet aspiring.

“ Miya, wait for my soul,” he cries, “ I follow you. You died for me, and I give my life to you. Receive it as the gift on our espousal in the future life—I know you will accept it, and, in leaving this life, I feel only a great content.”

He raises her gently and carries her on his back towards the wild deep water in which she lost her life. Strange! she is as light as sheet of paper. Wondering he turns his head—a strange sweet odour meets him, and on his shoulder lies a white

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lily in full bloom.

He stops in amaze—opens his wild eyes wondering—wakes and behold! it was a morning dream.

CHAPTER LIX

Despair.

SO strange and vivid a dream could not fail to make a deep impression upon Kwanichi. He could not banish it from his mind, and the thought of it, apart from the desire for Miya, filled him with restlessness. He began to long for its realization and to contemplate death.

That would end the knotty problem of his life, and in a new state of existence he would live more worthily. He wished he had a friend to whom he might speak freely, or that he knew some wise and experienced person of whom to take counsel. The anguish in his heart grew greater from day to day, and an inward voice whispered to him, that there was little hope of rising to higher things in the new life, for those, who ended a worthless life with a cowardly death.

“ Oh ! for a strong hand ”, he cried, “ to pluck out the evil which torments me, and to burn it in the fiercest fire ; Oh ! for the courage to draw a screen across the faulty part of my life ; to begin again and prepare myself, here, for the new life,

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passing over to it by the bridge of a noble death. Is my life worth repenting of!" Thus he questioned; but the answer came not. The present pain urged him to endure this life no longer; but his remorse for the way he had lived, cried to him to find a better way. He dared not seek death to escape from pain, and he lacked the fine courage that is willing to bear everything in order to repair a fault. Kwanichi wished for life, but could not enjoy it; he wished for death but dared not seek it.

Sitting he thought of standing, standing he thought of lying down; when he was resting, he wanted to be working; he longed for night but it brought him no sleep, and, waking, his thoughts tormented him. He spent these days doing nothing, his heart full of dark despair.

At this juncture, fortunately, there came an urgent business call, which he could not put off. A big loan had been negotiated, and the proceedings till now had advanced slowly. Suddenly the would-be debtor pressed for the conclusion of the contract, and Hazama found himself obliged to journey to Shiobara, for the purpose of making some private inquiries, which would take some time. He was very loath to go, and at first contemplated sending

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a deputy, but the rumoured beauty of the place and the hope of distracting his mind, made him decide to go himself.

Three days later, in the early misty morning, he was on his way to Uyeno, to leave by the first train; and five hours later he alighted at the station of Nishi-Nasuno, whence the road leads to Shiobara.

CHAPTER LX

The Journey.

FROM Nishi-Nasuno, Kwanichi struck out to the north-west through the wellknown wilderness of Nasuno-ga-hara, which is as wild as in the days of old. The broad sky, the endless plain, and a distant range of hills, beyond which lies Shio-bara, is all that meets the eye on the ten mile road which bisects the plain. Across here Kwanichi trudged, and then passing two villages, he crossed the bridge Nyushōkyō, which means "entrance to the fine scenery." A little way across the bridge, the atmosphere grew chilly, the hills rose higher and closer on each side, and the sun seemed to be darkened. There was a deep valley along which the road wound among a thick growth of trees, in which despite the gloom the birds sang happily, while at every step Kwanichi noticed lovely grasses in bloom. As he went up the valley, the upper course of the river, whose sound he had heard in the distance came in sight—a wonderful spectacle, rushing and tearing down over huge boulders, the white foam splashed into the air. It was

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as if a thousand thunders had fallen, the white lightening hissing over them.

On the right, high cliffs rose almost perpendicularly, covered with green moss, and interspersed with narrow waterfalls, which looked like delicate silver threads, and filled the valley with happy murmuring.

After Kwanichi had passed the hill of white feathers and passed the waterfall of Mikaeri, the scenery grew much wilder. He crossed many bridges, thirty in all, on that zigzag route which rises above the valley. The road grew rougher, the hills more craggy, and where before had been grass and moss, was now bare rock. Over these rocks tumbled water falls, seventy falls in all. Hot springs too abounded; in one village alone there were forty-five. After this Kwanichi passed many celebrated spots: Oami waterfall; the Root Mountain, the deep water where children die, the cave of White Cloud, the Dragon's nose, the Nodome-no-taki waterfall, the stone of five colours and the boat rock. Then he reached Fukuwata, the village of Happy Life, which nestles among the green hills. Here grew azaleas and the wild wistaria, and the water was clear and shallow, and over-hung with shady trees. When he reached

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this spot, Kwanichi stopped in amaze. It was exactly like the scene in his dream, where Miya, having jumped, had floated up again. The situation of the banks, the growth of the trees, the whirling water above, and the face of the rocks in the transparent water of the pools; the position, the surroundings of the whole place were exactly like it; and the more attentively he examined the spot the more marked was the resemblance.

A cold shudder passed over him. Strange! One may dream of past experiences, but is it possible to dream of something never seen before? .

See! there was the spot where Miyas body had lain, and there the way along which he had followed her. To his amazement and horror he could follow the way step by step. He turned round, and asked the man who carried his luggage, the name of the place. It was called the valley of Fudo (God of Wrath).

A terrible name! A likely place in which to die. Indeed he had made up his mind, in that dream to die there. Kwanichi touched his eyes to assure himself he was awake and then recollected with a shudder that it was not Miya, but a lily which had hung across his shoulder. He hurried on; and there rose before him a wonderful cliff, like a

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huge screen, surmounted by pines, most of which looked as if they would fall headlong into the precipice below. He gazed at it stupidly—it was the cliff from which he had sprung, in his effort to save Miya. What did it all mean? Had he really been here before—and jumped from this dreadful height. But no! had he done so, his slender bones would have been dashed to pieces. Was it meant as a warning?

As he still stood in doubt and fear, more at the reality of Shiobara than at the wonder of his dream, his bearer told him the place was called the stone of Tengu (tengu is a bobgoblin). He hurried on, uneasy at the thought, that more scenes like those of his ream might present themselves as it were a menace and a threat.

Coming to a sharp bend in the river, where the water, whirling and splashing seemed to rear like a group of angry steeds, he perceived with a thrill of almost terror, in the midst of the rapids, a large rock quite twenty feet high, upon whose flat weather-beaten surface a hundred people might easily have found standing place. Upon that rock, too, he had looked before; yes, in his pursuit of Miya's dead body, finding the water too deep to stand in, he had scrambled up it for a moment to draw breath be-

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fore continuing his perilous quest. A few steps further brought him to the pool where Miya had jumped in. On that branch her hair had caught for a moment; over this rock she had dragged her loosened girdle. It was too horrible! Kwanichi trembled, and his hair seemed to rise on end like so many needles—he averted his gaze and hastened on.

As a dream, it had been a terrible experience, but a new terror, that of the unknown and supernatural, was added to this. His heart throbbed painfully, almost choking him. Was it really a dream? he asked himself again and again and would it all come true? Was Miya there somewhere waiting for him and what new pains was he called upon to bear? At the next village he took a kuruma, and two fast runners, urging them to their utmost speed. Thus they rushed past Kotarō's deep water, past the Temple Mountain, and the Sweet Spring Valley, and reached Shiobara ere the sun had set.

CHAPTER LXI

At Shiobara.

IN the village of Shiobara there are twelve inns, five of which have hot mineral baths. It was at one of these that Kwanichi alighted. The Seikin-rō Inn faces south, and the garden runs down to the river, which babbles past, over its clear bed of pebbles, with a pleasant soothing sound. To the west, whence come the cool breezes, rises Fuji, his perfect crest appearing dreamlike above the clouds, and to the northeast a screen of hills protectt he house from the fierce summer sun. It is a lovely peaceful spot—here might harrassed mind, weary soul and sad heart find a haven and relief. Kwanichi had not been there an hour, before its soothing influence made itself felt. The tumult in his heart ceased, his fears died, and he felt strangely softened. He thought :

“What a sense of well-being I feel up here! Why did I not come sooner? How foolish was I to despise the idea that Nature could cure the disease of my soul. Nature to me has always meant dull earth and water. How beautiful are the

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mountains and yet they are but heaps of earth ; how cheering is the river, and yet it is but water ! How much more to be despised am I, than that which I disdained to know. Behold ! the verdure of the trees, the floating clouds, the peaks, the running streams, the soughing of the wind, the evening tints,—yes, even the crowing of the cocks seem not to belong to the sordid world, from which I have come. There Nature is sullied and perverted ; here all is pure and true. Nature is finding an inlet to my soul, and will drive out all its impurity. I shall forget my sorrow, forget my pain and weariness ; I shall feel as light as yonder cloud, my heart as fresh as the mountain spring.

“ Here is no love, no hate ; neither money nor worldly power ; no ambition, no competition ; degeneration, pride, infatuation, and disappointment cannot dwell here ; for here is innocent, unspoiled Nature ; here would I lead a simple life, and bury my past, as I would, some day, here bury my bones.”

He leaned on the balustrade, reflecting how unfamiliar he, the dweller in towns, was with nature. He was surprised at his own delight, surprised to find some unknown chord struck, that vibrated wildly in response to the new call. Like a child he felt, that having wandered among strangers, finds

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him suddenly face to face with his mother.

It grew dusky, and a keen wind from the mountain sprang up. Kwanichi deemed it wiser to seek his room. Listlessly he entered, but the first object, that met his eyes, set all his nerves quivering and his muscles became tense.

In the alcove, where his satchel had been laid, there was a wild lily, placed carelessly in a vase, so that, the stem inclining forward, the flower faced him, as it were.

The sensation, that Miya was in the room, was very strong upon Kwanichi. He looked round, but saw no one; the air was heavy with fragrance. This was no mere coincidence, he said to himself; the mysterious will of heaven was hidden in it—it was Karma, before which he must bow—there was no escape.

He approached and looked at the flower fearfully. How exactly it resembled the lily of his dream; the pure white petals fully opened, the overpowering fragrance and the dew still upon the leaves. Kwanichi, who had been almost happy but a few minutes ago, again felt the heavy mantle of his grief descend upon him—he bowed his head and hid his face in his hands.

“Sir; I will conduct you to the bath,” said a

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womnn's voice beside him. Looking up he perceived one of the waitresses, and exclaimed :

"Oh! woman, will you, please, remove this flower."

"Don't you like lilies, Sir?" asked the girl in surprise, "I found this one in the garden today. It is very early for lilies, they won't be out for another month. It is very unusual for one to be out so early; so I broke it off, Sir, and put it in here, thinking our next guest would like to amuse himself with a little flower arranging."

"Yes, it is early for lilies, but take it away, the fragrance gives me a headache."

"It must have opened by mistake," said the girl, taking the flower out of the vase.

"Yes, indeed—a great mistake," murmured Kwanichi, as he followed her down to the bath house.

In the dim light, he saw another guest of the hotel in the water, who coldly answered his salutation, stepped out of the water hastily, and sat down in a corner of the room, his gleaming white back turned to Kwanichi. The latter regarded such behaviour with mistrust, for the customs of the bath-house are sociable. Decidedly the man was avoiding him; but why, seeing they were

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strangers? The moment Kwanichi got out of the water, the stranger stepped into it—keeping his face averted, and splashing very quietly. He was slightly built and thin; he was evidently very shy—probably he was suffering from a mental disease, and had come up here to try the mineral baths. Kwanichi paid no more heed to him, and the man picked up his “yukata,” and went out.

Having nothing to do, Kwanichi spent a good hour in the hot, steaming bathhouse; and on returning to his room he found the candles lit, and his supper set on the little low table, beside which stood a brazier lest he should feel chilly. He had just lighted his pipe, when the waitress appeared with the dinner things, accompanied by the landlord who was voluble in his excuses over the poorness of the meal. It was so early in the season, they had not expected guests so soon, and nothing was ready. In a day or two the best of everything could be procured; he hoped the gentleman would stay a long time, and pardon him for the poor dinner he was setting before him to-night. He thanked for the tea-house money; sent the maid for some more bean soup, and with many compliments and excuses bowed himself out.

After he had gone, Kwanichi asked the maid,

who waited on him, how many guests were in the Inn.

“ Only one beside yourself, Sir ? ”

“ Is it gentleman I met in the bathhouse ? ”

“ Yes, Sir.”

“ I think he is ill.”

“ No Sir, I think he is quite well.”

“ Does he talk to you ? ”

“ Yes, Sir.”

“ Who talks more, he or I ? ”

“ He does not talk nearly as much as you, Sir.”

“ Aha ! then you think I am very talkative, do you ? ”

“ Oh ! no, I didn't mean that—I beg your pardon,—but the other gentleman is thinking a great deal, and he is impatiently expecting his companion to arrive.”

“ He looks very ill,” insisted Kwanichi.

“ Oh ! you are a doctor ! ” exclaimed the girl, at which, he burst out laughing :

“ No, no, indeed, I am no doctor ! Has he been staying here long ? ”

“ He only came yesterday ; from Tokio, he lives in Nihombashi.”

“ Then, I suppose he is a merchant.”

“ I can't tell you.”

Dinner being over Kwanichi politely expressed his thanks.

“It was very poor,” replied the maid, adding her excuses to those of the landlord. She left the room carrying the little table with her. Kwanichi flung himself down on the mats, and meditated on the loneliness of the spot, the isolation of the Inn, and how the noise of the wind and of the water made one think of Hōki—the Devil. In the next room but one, he heard his only fellow-guest tapping his pipe on the edge of the brazier. He wished he had been more sociable, and, pondering over his queer behaviour, and who and what his expected companion might be, he fell asleep.

CHAPTER LXII

The Companion.

AFTER breakfast the following morning, Kwan-ichi betook himself to the village, in pursuance of the business which had brought him to Shiobara. He carefully inspected the village as to its prosperity, and particularly inquired into the history and prospects of the Seikin-rō Inn. His business accomplished, he crossed the river, and climbed halfway up Mount Kijuroku to see Sumaki-no-taki, the hot waterfall. At noon, he returned to the Inn, very hot and tired, and, on his way to the bath-house, met the shy guest of the evening before. The man again tried to avoid him, and turned away hoping Kwanichi would not see his face.

“An evil conscience,” thought the latter, “what deed has he done, that he cannot look a fellow-being in the face.” But a glance at the stranger, for his ruse was not successful, convinced Kwanichi that his suspicions were incorrect. The owner of so ingenuous and open a countenance would be incapable of a wicked deed. Why were his eyes so full of misery? why did his mobile lips

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tremble.

A new "né-san" waited on Kwanichi at lunch, and here he plied with questions about the strange guest. She told him, that the man had gone out a moment ago without eating any lunch, and that he was very anxious at the non-arrival of his companion, whom he had expected the day before; also, that she had heard him say he must send off a telegram, to find out what was the matter.

"He must be very anxious," said Kwanichi, "we men have a great many things to worry us! Who can that companion of his be, that he worries so about him—ah! perhaps it is a woman! Do you know?"

"I don't know at all," and then, as Kwanichi sat pondering, his chopsticks in his hand, she added:

"It seems to make you anxious too—are you of a disposition that worries easily?"

"Yes, I am." smiling.

"If his companion turns out to be a male friend, or an old person it will be all right, but if it should be a beautiful young lady, you will feel dreadfully upset."

"What do you mean by "dreadfully upset?" asked Kwanichi, but the girl only laughed, and left the room without answering the question.

Kwanichi spent the afternoon roaming about the

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hills, drinking in the pure mountain air and sniffing at the fragrant grasses. Like a bird, that had suddenly been set at liberty, he felt and could have sung for sheer lightness of heart. But twilight, that strange disturber of peace, robbed him of his happiness and with listless heavy steps, he retraced his way to the Inn.

"This quiet is all very well," he said petulantly, when he sat down to his evening meal. "but it is very lonely when one is the only guest here."

"Ah! that is your own fault, Sir, for coming to a mountain resort all alone." laughed the né-san.

"I will bear what you say, in mind and profit by it on a future occasion!"

"Why a future occasion? Why not summon *your companion* by telegram to-morrow?"

"If I did, it is only an old maid of fifty-four that would step out of her kuruma."

"Haha! how funny you are? But don't summon the *old* maid, it is the young one you want."

"I am sorry to tell you, that in my house there is no one but that old maid."

"Well, then you have the young one somewhere else."

"Ah! yes, there are a great many young maids 'somewhere else'—"

“Your story is very interesting, Sir.”

“But on further inquiry I find, they all belong to someone else!”

“Oh! fie, that is not true! You should speak the truth, Sir.”

“Call it what you like, but that is the fact of the matter: if I had a pretty companion at home, I should not come out to this lonely spot.”

“Yes, indeed,” sighed the girl, “it is a lonely spot.”

“Not only lonely, but dreadful is it not? with its Hobgoblin’s Rock, and its God of Wrath and all the other queer places. You must think me quite a fool, to come, all by myself, to such a place as this.”

“Oh! no Sir, what nonsense!”

“Ah! but I am fool—a great fool—you will find me registered under that title in the hotel book!”

“Then, I hope I may be registered beside your name in smaller letters, as “a little fool—maid, Shiobara.” Kwanichi laughed.

“You are a fine joker,” he said, bowing to her.

“That is because I am a little fool,” she rejoined laughing too. That night Kwanichi was unable to sleep, he tossed restlessly upon his pillow, and heard the clock strike ten, then eleven, then

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twelve. The other guest had not yet returned, and Kwanichi found his thoughts again and again occupied with this man of whom he knew nothing, and whose foolish behaviour, he told himself, was keeping others from their sleep. He wondered where he had gone, and whether he had fallen down one of those precipices into the whirling waters of the river.

He woke late. The sun was high in the heavens, and filled his room with golden light. In the passage a maid was polishing the floor.

"You look very sleepy," said Kwanichi to her.

"And I am sleepy," replied she, "for I had to sit up last night for the other gentleman."

"At what hour did he return?"

"He never came back at all," she answered in a tone of disgust.

Seeing the doors of the stranger's room open, Kwanichi sauntered down the verandah past them, pretending to be engrossed in the beautiful scenery, but, in reality, to see if there was anything curious or suspicious about the room. In this he was disappointed, for what he saw there was very ordinary.

In the alcove lay a red leather bag and a bundle wrapped in a light blue cloth; also two or three

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newspapers, while on the clothes rack hung a silk lined coat, such as men wear in the Spring and Autumn, and, on the floor, near by, he saw a pair of dark blue stockings. From the hotel book he had ascertained that the man was a tailor of European clothes. Kwanichi felt rather ashamed of his suspicions and his curiosity—the latter he was in no wise able to control, and his thoughts flew impatiently towards the man's arrival, and the news he would bring about his companion's delay.

After the sombreness of night among the mountains, which is so dark and gloomy, that a disposition not cheerful and sanguine by nature, is often a prey to those haunting visions of the dark—sadness despair—after a night, during which one fancies the ghouls and goblins of the mountains and the eerie inhabitants of tree and river have held high revels—the day is doubly welcome. How the sunshine fills one's heart, chasing sad thoughts from their darkest recesses ; how the light breezes blow the cobwebs from the brain ; and the colours of the ever, changing sky tinge the mind with some of their beauty.

Basking in the sun, whose rays were brilliant as gold threads in a piece of finest brocade, Kwanichi enjoyed the fine music, made in the hills by the echo

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of voices, and in the valley of wind and water ; comparing it in his mind to the ringing sound of innumerable gems. A sound of running footsteps made him turn his head. The nésan who had talked with him the evening before, rushed up to him full of excitement :

“ I say, Sir,—he has arrived, has arrived, come and see, Sir, quickly ! ”

“ Who has come ? ”

“ Never mind who, but come at once and see.”

“ What is the matter—what is it ? ” demanded Kwanichi.

“ At the staircase, Sir.....”

“ Oh ! it is the other guest returned.”

The maid had rushed away, so Kwanichi's words were left ten yards behind her. In spite of his feigned indifference before the maid, he was almost as excited as she, and hurried along the verandah, as fast as his dignity would allow him.

Coming up the path, he saw, a man and a woman. The man he at once recognized as the nervous guest, although he wore a broad-brimmed felt hat to hide his face from curious eyes. The woman—or girl, for she looked not much over twenty—wore her hair in the unmarried women's style, and Kwanichi, at once, noticed a

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comb of tortoiseshell and gold lacquer, and a large hairpin set, with a sardonyx surrounded by brilliant gems of various colours. Beneath her silk coat she wore a fine striped kimono of reddish brown crêpe, showing, when she walked, its lining of pale blue silk—a sash of Dutch figured satin was bound about her waist, and round her neck hung a gold chain. Though she held one sleeve half across her face, it might be seen that she was not powdered, and her lips owed their carmine to no *béni*. There was a little, languishing air about her, like a flower ready to shed its petals; and she was possessed of a beauty and a natural charm, infinitely attractive.

Seeing Kwanichi looking down at them, they hastened their steps and the girl bent her graceful head.

“That is never his wife!” said Kwanichi to himself.

CHAPTER LXIII.

A Lovers' Quarrel.

THE man and woman sat side by side, the one pressing close to the other, and talked in whispers. Said she :

“ You can have no idea, how troubled I have been, and it was by no means so easy to accomplish, as you imagined. I know, that you have been full of anxiety, but, your anxiety was nothing compared to mine. My heart is still beating loudly, and I jump at every sound, fearing they should yet overtake me.”

“ Don't think about that now, for the plan has been a great success, and here we are together.”

“ Yes, yes,” sighed the girl, pressing nearer, “ but, oh ! how I suffered the night before last. I never believed I should be successful, and how I had sufficient courage, to run away from home, I don't know. I think, it is owing to the “ karma ” binding us.”

“ That binding karma has reduced us to a sad strait, my dear one. I never imagined, it would lead to this—but, there is no use in struggling against a bad karma.”

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The girl turned her face away, to hide the tears that rose to her eyes, and said :

“ There ! you are calling it “ bad karma ” again, but why is it a bad karma ? ”

“ Isn't *this* the result of a bad karma ? ”

“ No, no, no, ” was the vehement answer, “ you cold-hearted man. ”

“ What ! *I*—cold-hearted ! ”

“ Yes, *you* ! ”

“ Shizu dear, I don't think that it is for *you*, to reprove me for cold heartedness ! ”

“ I don't care, for you *are*. ”

“ What nonsense ! Tell me, at once, what you mean. ”

“ I mean, that it is your custom, to say “ bad karma ”, as often as you look at my face. I know perfectly well, without your driving it home, that the relationship between us is—bad karma. It is not only *you*, who have suffered in this affair ; I, too, have suffered more than words can say, and yet, whenever you speak, it is to cry out “ bad karma, bad karma ”, as though you were the only sufferer. Can you not imagine how painful it is to me, to hear this—painful under ordinary circumstances, but under *these*, almost intolerable ! It makes me think you regret.....and find me a

burden." She paused sobbing. Her lover persisted :

"It *is* bad karma,—I can't help that,—but, I don't regret. No, no."

"Alas, ! I don't care, even, if it is bad."

She paused weeping. The man watched her in silence, feeling it was useless to reason with her. Presently he put his hand on her sleeve, and said, gently :

"Shizu, dear Shizu."

"I know you are sorry I came," sobbed the girl, "I knew you hate it all—Where shall I turn for comfort?"

"Think, but a moment," was the reply, "and you will find your words are foolish. Should I have urged you to come, if there was any likelihood of my regretting this course? I am grieved that you call me cold-hearted, as though, I were a tradesman, dealing in love, and you, but a part of my merchandize !"

"It is not fair to speak to me, like that," cried the girl, drying her tears.

"You began it," retorted he.

"That was, because you seemed to regret, what we had done. Look at me, Sayama san,—I am sorry," The man turned his head, and looked

A Lovers' Quarrel.

into her eyes, but said nothing.

"What are you thinking of?" asked Shizu.

"I am thinking of the Fate of you and me."

"Don't think of it!" she pleaded, and, when he turned away, heaving a deep sigh, she added:

"Please, don't sigh like that, it makes me so unhappy."

"You are twenty-two, are you not?"

"Yes, and you are twenty eight. What does that matter?"

"It was summer—do you remember—and you were nineteen."

"Ah! well do I remember—it was this very month—and I wore an 'awase'; the evening was warm, and the moon was reflected in the pond—we stood on the brink together; yes, I was nineteen."

"It seems like yesterday—what a short three years."

"It is like dream."

"A sweet dream!"

"O'Shizu!"

"Dear Sayama!"

They held each other by the hand, and O'Shizu pressed her face against his breast. Thus they sat for a long time. Sayama was the first to break

the silence :

“ All these things, come to pass, according to the “ karma ” of each, but, if that fellow had not been in the way, they would have come to pass more easily and more naturally. It is evident that the “ divine lot,” which fell to our share, at the temple fortuneteller’s, the other day, would have been realized, and we should have come together at the proper time. All my plans for the future would have worked out well, had not that fellow stood in our path, * “ trying to tear paper the wrong way.” Thus much harm has been done, which cannot be mended—mostly to you, and through my fault.”

“ If fault there be, it is mutual,” corrected Shizu softly.

“ No, if I had been a little wiser, the results would have been different. It is a grave fault of mine, that I am unable to act boldly, and strike quickly, and through this fault, I have brought you to this strait, and for your sufferings, too, I am responsible. In spite of this, you have always been kind and tender to me—and I am very, very grateful to you.”

* to try and force things out of their natural lines or issues. Japanese paper will tear only *one* way.

A Lovers' Quarrel.

“How glad I am to hear you say that! Your words about “bad karma” always fill me with alarm, and I began to fear that not only was I a trouble to you, but, that you had repented your connection with me, as a girl, with whom it is better to have nothing to do. With these thoughts in my mind, I spoke unkind words to you, for which, I beg you to forgive me. It is “bad karma” as you say, but, forget it, for is it not also the thing we have desired?”

“It is well dear; and better far, than to have parted with you, like a living tree torn asunder!”

“Parting! The thought makes me tremble. There was no word of our parting, till he came, and stood in our path. How that word ‘parting’ was dinned into my ears at home! What long lectures did my mother read me! That we are here together, is because of that fellow—he drove me to it. May a curse rest upon him! And when I am dead, may my avenging soul haunt him, until he is driven, by horror, to his death.”

“What was he like—the fool?” inquired Sayama.

“A fool, a big fool! to think that a woman, who loves another man, would give herself to him! Each time he came, I received him with looks of

The Gold Dematt.

displeasure, which he was too stupid to understand. Don't you think, he must have been a fool, to pursue me, in spite of that, and then, to stand in the way of my love? And, I not only thoroughly hated him, but, I so resented all his actions, that I bestowed on him, my last present, before leaving this world, I mean, I broke his head!"

"Wha...a...t! How did you do that?"

"Ever since the day you left, he has pursued me ceaselessly. At last, I got very frightened, and pretending to be ill, I left my work and went home. There he followed me, immediately, and I was unable to get rid of him. Then, I saw, what had happened. He had seen my mother, and been approved of by her, and this visit, to my home, was a præ-arranged thing. Mother was so gushing to him, that I was perfectly ashamed; and he took advantage of her attitude, and her loathsome flattery, to assume the rôle of master of the house, commanding us to get him a bath, and cool the beer, and so on, never moving from his seat!

"Never shall I forget that evening! I had arranged to meet you; and I did not see how I could get away, for my mother would not let me out of her sight, that night. She had determined

A Father's Quarrel

I should accept him, and I had made up my mind I would not do so. I was thinking of you, all the time ; and the more I looked at *him*, the more I hated him. I got so desperate at last, that I determined, (seeing it was too late by then, to reach you,) to wait, till all were in bed, and then go out and drown myself. But I remembered Tanko and her Mother, who relied upon me for this and that, and I knew my death would bring trouble upon them. So I hesitated, and found, I *could* not do it.

And how long, do you think, he stuck to me?— Till two o'clock in the morning, and even then, we got rid of him with difficulty !

CHAPTER LXIV

The Importunate Suitor.

“THE next day, Mother lectured me on my undutiful behaviour, and told me, I was to hesitate no longer, and, that I had got to accept him promptly. This lecture lasted half the day, and was chiefly composed of eulogies on herself, for having brought me up,—oh! how sick I am of the phrase: “my kindness and benefaction in bringing you up!”—and threats and scoldings for me. In the end, she kicked me for having answered undutifully. Well, I didn’t care, then if she kicked and beat me too! You see, although I have worked hard and given her all my earnings, she shows no consideration for me. She is so greedy for money, she would make me work day and night, if she could; thinking only of herself, and denying me every little pleasure. I am not a money making machine, and I am not a slave whom she can bully as she likes.

“I am willing to work hard for her, if she will only be reasonable; but, when it comes to her trying to divide us, and forcing me to sell myself, to a man I hate, for his money, then, I protest.

The Importunate Suitor.

And so, she calls me disobedient, and stupid, and kicks me.

“Do you wonder, I grew hot with anger, and determined to run away there and then? But I had no luck. *He* arrived, and I was forced to go out with him. He would not go home till very late, and made me drink cup after cup of saké. As I was desperate, and he was insistent, I drunk as many cups as he offered, though I hate wine. I believe, he hoped to intoxicate me; but though my head felt queer, I showed no sign of having drunk too much.

“At the end, he began to talk in his usual odious manner, and grew more and more familiar. I was very frightened, and I spoke to him plainly. Then he became frantic, and began to hurl ‘poisonous phrases’ at me, calling me a dirty shop-keeper. I retorted boldly; he threw out more insults, and, at last, he said I could never free myself from him, because he had already “bound me,” to become his wife, with money. I replied: I am sorry for you; you must be blind, for what you have “bound,” was not I, but my mother. Thereupon he swore at me, and seized me by the collar to drag me down on the floor. I was so frightened and desperate, I hardly knew what I

was doing, for I seized a dish which stood on the mats and hit him on the forehead, between the eyebrows. The blood gushed out and streamed all over his face. I thought, if I stayed there, there would be more trouble, for some people, hearing the noise had come in, so I ran out, and escaped to the house of Tanko's mother. She had just returned from a journey, so I was lucky to find her—it was long after ten o'clock—and she promised to keep me there the night, for it was too late to catch a train.

“ Then she dressed my hair for me, and I told her I had to hide myself, and I left full instructions concerning Tanko. What a good woman that Mother is! She was so anxious about me, and did not speak of herself and *her* troubles at all. She *is* kindhearted! That she and my mother belong to the same species, is difficult to believe. If I had had a *real* mother, I should not have known so much trouble. She would have been kind to me, and glad to let me marry a man like yourself.

“ She was greatly distressed, when she heard I was going into the country. She begged for my address, so that she might come and see me, while on one of her business trips, and so, with tears we

The Importunate Suitor.

parted ! ”

“ There must be quite a commotion at your house, on account of your flight,” said Sayama, reflectively.

“ A great deal.”

“ In that case we must not delay too long.”

“ The sooner the better.” sobbed the girl.

“ Poor O’Shizu ! ”

Poor lovers ! they embraced each other, as though they embraced an endless sorrow.

In the meanwhile, Kwanichi, sat in the next room, and let his thoughts revolve around the couple, who so interested him. By a process of elimination, he tried to arrive at some conclusion, as to who they were, and what they were at the Inn together for. The woman was probably at the bottom of their difficulties. Women usually are at the bottom of every crime, sin or difficulty, was his harsh conclusion.

Yes ! That was it : the man had probably committed some crime on her account, and had got to suffer for it—and she had come up here to prove to him, that she, really, was not in the least to blame for it. But stop ; she seemed to share his sorrow. Was there such a thing as true love after all ? It is certain, they were not married. There

The Gold Demon.

was the girl, geisha style of dress—could he have stolen her and were both in hiding?

Then, as usual, his thoughts flew to Miya, and angrily, he flung himself down on his couch.

Through the thin partition, he could hear the chink of cups—whispers—then sobs. At ten o'clock Kwanichi went to sleep,—nor did he wake again till midnight.

CHAPTER LXV

Kwanichi intervenes.

AT half past eleven, when all the house was quiet, and the lights out, Sayama turned up the lamp, blew the charcoal to a glow, and said :

“Bring the saké.”

O'Shizu silently arranged the dishes on the table, placed the saké bottle in hot water, and the pair, then, changed their everyday for the ceremonial dress. As the girl tied her sash, it knotted.

“A lucky sign !” whispered Sayama.

“Ah ! I am glad ; I have been so afraid my courage might fail me at the last ; now, I know, all will be well. Listen to the rain !”

“You were always fond of the rain ; it has come to bid you farewell.”

“Dear, let us exchange rings,” begged Shizu, as they sat down beside the brazier. She slipped off her diamond ring and handed it to him. He seized her slender fingers, and placed on one his heavy signet ring.

“The farewell cup,” he murmured, and Shizu, with trembling hands, filled the bowls. The so

The Gold Demon.

familiar action seemed suddenly fraught with a deep significance, and she wondered why it had never appeared solemn to her before.

“One thing, I do regret, Sayama,” she said: “it is that I die as a singer and geisha, instead of as your wife—even if only your wife for a day. I want to thank you, for all you have been to me, could I but find words in which to express all I feel. I meant to be such a good wife to you, no work would have been too hard, no command but I would cheerfully have carried it out. My step-mother’s spite against you made it impossible for me to do anything at all for you. Well, it has all been like a bubble on the water—and now, the bubble breaks.”

“Don’t, don’t say such sad things,” pleaded her lover, “let us be content, that we may die together, in joy, you and I.” His lips touched her ear:

“Are you ready, O’Shizu?”

“I am ready, Sayama.”

He drew from his crêpe purse a folded paper and poured the contents—a white powder—into the two cups.

Each filled the cup for the other. O’Shizu, with closed eyes, invoked Buddha:

Kwanichi intervenes.

“ Namuamidabutsu, Namuamidabutsu,”

She then looked up at her lover ; they lifted the cups to their lips.

At that instant, the doors were flung violently apart, the girl screamed, and dropped her cup, while a voice like thunder, shouted :

“ What is this you are going to do? Speak, what is it? ”

Sayama stared, bewildered, a moment, and then said slowly :

“ Oh ! it is *you* ! ”

“ Yes, yes, it is I,” came the impatient reply, “ and I want to know what this is that you are doing. Yes, I will apologize for my intrusion later on.”

There was no answer, and the girl shrank behind her lover.

“ There must be some desperate reason for so desperate an act,” continued the intruder, “ tell me, why you felt you could live no longer? ”

No answer.

“ Is it because you could not marry her? ”

Sayama nodded.

“ And why not? ”

Again no answer.

“ If you tell me, I may be able to help you. I want to help you; but, if you are beyond help,

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I give you my word of honour, that I will not hinder you in your resolve to die. I will even be your "kaishaku," and help you carry out the death-blow. Still, let me first see if I can help you, for I have had a strong presentiment that I was sent here for that purpose. I assure you, it is not idle curiosity that prompts my question."

Scarcely knowing what he said, Sayama stammered :

"Thanks for your kindness."

"Will you tell me your story? Or wait, I will first tell you who I am. My name is Hazama Kwanichi; I am a sort of lawyer; I live in Kojimachi, Tokio. I am sure that it is by Buddha's providence we have been thrown together; that two lives may not be lost to the world, and that I may learn—" he stopped.

"What can I tell you first?" Sayama had found his voice.

"Why you might begin, with the reason, as to why you two could not be married."

"Yes; but then, I must first confess my disgrace. I stole a big sum of money from my master and employer. He is a paper merchant in Tokio and I was his manager. My name is Sayama Motosuke. "She," pointing to O'Shizu,

Atsuanichi intervenes.

who, at this point, crept forward, and bowed shyly, "she is "Aiko" of the Kashiwaya geisha house, and—and a gentleman wanted to redeem her—and she was obliged to receive him,—and—and I was prosecuted for the money I had embezzled. I knew, I should be sent to prison, unless I killed myself first. I was unable to help O'Shizu, and so, finding ourselves in this hopeless strait, we determined to die together."

"I see. Then it is all really a question of money. As to your embezzlement, I suppose it could be privately settled, if you could find the amount. And, as to the lady, I suppose we could just as easily redeem her as any one else. What is the amount of your debt?"

"About 3,000 yen."

"And the redemption money?"

"About eight hundred yen."

"Three thousand, eight hundred yen? And if you have this money you need not die?"

When it comes down to a matter of arithmetic, it seems our lives are not worth very much, was Hazama's thought. These two poor creatures are worth nineteen hundred yen apiece. He smiled at them, a trifle sadly.

"Then, it certainly isn't worth your while to

The Gold Demon.

die. I think, I can find you the sum of three or four thousand yen, easily enough. Can you tell me the details of your case?

What a happy moment for the two despairing lovers! They could not even, at that moment, consider whether this stranger would prove true or false;—both felt like a willow tree, whose branches, heavy and bowed down with rain, is seized by the refreshing wind, and dried, and lightly swayed in the sunshine again.

CHAPTER LXVI

Sayama's story.

“YOU have spoken such kind and encouraging words to us, whom you never saw before, that I will boldly tell you the whole of our sad, and not at all creditable tale. I am, indeed, heartily ashamed to disclose it. Well, sir, as I said before, I embezzled three thousand yen of my Master's money. I had first borrowed a little money to pay for some of my pleasures and amusements, and finding I could not replace this sum, I borrowed money from various people in order to do so. This was so easy a method that I continued it, till the amount of money I owed, swelled, to alarming proportions, and I suddenly found no one would trust me, or give me credit. Then I began to speculate; I lost my investments; I borrowed, or rather stole some more money from my employer, and speculated more wildly—until every sen was gone.

“These matters became known to my master and he summoned me to him and told me, that on account of my past services he would be lenient and forgive me—upon *one* condition.

The Gold Demon.

“ Now, he had living in his house, his wife’s niece, whom he had some time ago proposed as a wife for me. At the time, I put him off, under some pretext or other, and he now brought the proposal forward again—in plain words, if I married the girl he would forgive the debt.

It was a great kindness on his part, and I was wrong, in every way, to refuse it—but I could not bring my mind to accepting his offer. Hereupon, he was very angry, and declared, that unless I restored the three thousand yen, he would bring an action against me. A period for reflection he granted me, and then sent a confidential messenger, to say, that he had no wish to ruin my life and prospects by branding me with a criminal record, that I had better do, as he suggested. I stood out obstinately against him.”

“ Ah ! there you were wrong.”

“ Yes, true. On no point was I in the right. I left a letter to thank my master for his kind intentions, for, I had made up my mind to kill myself. In the meanwhile the redemption question for O’Shizu came up. Her mother, who is not her real mother at all, is a very cruel and avaricious woman, and treats O’Shizu almost inhumanly. She looks upon her as a machine, out of which she

squeezes as much money as she can. She knew of my relation to her daughter, and countenanced it, until she knew I was in pecuniary difficulties. Then she abused me to my face and behind my back, and lectured O'Shizu ceaselessly about caring for me. About a year ago, a gentleman appeared, who fell in love with Shizu, and proposed to redeem her. Do you know the Tomiyama Bank in Shitaya ; he is the director."

"Eh ! what ? what do you say ?" ejaculated Hazama.

"Do you know Tomiyama Tadatsugu ?"

"Tomiyama Tadatsugu !" burst out Hazama in a voice that betrayed all the hatred he felt at the sound of that accursed name. He gazed at the shrinking couple, who wondered what this outburst might mean. Recovering himself he asked in a more natural tone :

"And is this the man who would redeem O'Shizu san ?"

"Yes, it is he."

"And you refused to be bought by him ?"

"I refused," replied the girl.

"But you were his mistress for a year ?"

"No, never ; never" ; flashed she angrily, "I was summoned to wait on him at a certain restaurant

The Gold Demon.

—I have loved no man but Sayama,—I may be a geisha," she continued sobbing, "but I have had no lover but Sayama!" Hazama stared at her, and slowly his eyes filled, and as the first tear splashed onto his hand, he cried out:

"Oh! excellent woman! Then you would really rather lose your life than be faithless to your love?"

To the amazement of the lovers he bowed his head and wept.

When he had recovered he said:

"Yes, that is what a woman should be; nothing less than utterly faithful and true to one love, no matter how hard the way. In this crooked and perfidious world, I have never before met a woman like you. Have I not reason for tears, tears of gladness?"

"I am happier to-night, than I have been for years. But tell me some more about Tomiyama."

"He came very often and used to buy my time for the whole day, so that I was obliged to be in constant attendance on him. Then he made his proposal, which I, at first, politely refused. You know, he considers himself a great beau, and thinks himself very clever. He is, also, always talking about his wealth and how he can do this

Sayama's story.

and that. "I can pay a thousand yen for that." he used to say; or: "What would you do if I offered you ten thousand yen?" Everybody calls him "the Flarer," for his vainglorious speeches. He kept on proposing to me and I was obstinate in refusing, so, at last, he went to my Mother, and they must have come to some private agreement, for from that day, she lost no opportunity of trying to separate me from Sayama-san. It was then, for the first time, I felt the hardship and indignity of a geisha's trade. I awoke from a pleasant dream and began to hate my life, and wondered how I could escape from it. At this point Tomiyama offered to redeem me."

"And what was he going to do after that?"

"Well, he told me his wife was always ill; lying on her bed all day, and childless and good-for-nothing, and that he would get a separation from her and make me his wife instead." Hazama was startled:

"Do you really believe he would?" "He is such braggart one cannot depend on him;" replied the girl, "but it is true that his wife is ill and that he is not happy at home. Then came Sayama's difficulties, and my one idea was to save him. I wanted to apply to Tomiyama for the

The Gold Demon.

three thousand yen, and if he consented to give them, I should have gone to him for a while—it would have been like a terrible nightmare, and then run away and joined Sayama. But Sayama said it would be swindling.”

“He was right; it would have been very bad swindling.”

“And embezzling would be the smaller crime of the two.” added Sayama. “How could I consent to be saved by such a mean trick. Better far to die together than to live in the knowledge of having allowed one's—wife, to sell herself.”

“And that is your story, the story of a true and faithful love! Let me do what I can to help you. The few thousand yen will be easy to procure. To you, O'Shizu, I say that your love for Sayama is *your* greatest treasure, and *his* greatest treasure; guard it with every means in your power. There is very little love that is real in this world, I have found; but where it is, follows happiness beyond conception.”

He rose and silently left the room.

Sayama and O'Shizu gazed at each other, bewilderment giving place in their eyes to happiness. Who was this man who had turned the poison into a healing balm? And they were alive

Sahama's Story.

and all was well !

The eight times repeated cock-crow broke the stillness of the early dawn. The lamp had burned low, and through the chinks and cracks of the shutters, the light crept in. The dark star, which had threatened the two lives, was about to burst into a glorious sun. "Namuamidabutsu," breathed O'Shizu, and she gazed with tender eyes at an insect, that lay dead in the cup she would have drunk, but for that marvellous intervention.

CHAPTER LXVII
Miya's Diary.

THOUGH I have never in my life prayed fervently to Buddha or to God, I, now, pray with all my heart, that these words may be read by you. In exchange for so great a favour, I am willing to surrender my life to the gods, and will never complain that my days on earth were shortened. I know that you still hate me ; in spite of this, I beg you to read these lines, written by an unhappy woman, who died by her own hand, in expiation of her fault.

When I was allowed to see your face again, all the words, that I had prepared for the last ten years, were choked back, and I had only tears, and unutterable sorrow and yearning to give you. I would, now, that I had been able to speak and to make you speak to me. The only moment, I carry, of that morning, is your sad, wan face, which is forever before my eyes.

That you could have altered so much, was a terrible shock to me. Night after night, cruel dreams of you, besiege me, and I gaze trembling on your ravaged countenance. Your anger with

Miha's Diary.

a guilty woman I fully expected, but that our parting would be so bitterly disappointing, I did not divine. I returned home more full of grief than ever ; my head and my heart ached ; indeed, my heart was all but broken. I could neither eat nor sleep ; at the least word I choked with sobs ; the most trivial sights brought tears to my eyes. For four days I suffered unspeakable torments, and then, my weak frame succumbed, and till to-day I have lain sick unto death. I know I cannot live ; my life is being dragged from me into that dark corner, where lurks death. Would that I could die, my head upon your lap, at peace at last. But I have sinned too much to make me worthy of such a death ; so, before I faint away, I offer up this, my one and only prayer : “ May these lines be read by you, even though you hate me, that you may see my sincere repentance, my silent suffering, and my love for you.”

I am sorry that you never opened one of my letters, after our meeting in Viscount Tazumi's garden, for therein I set forth at length my thoughts after our parting at sad Atami ; also my meeting with Arao-san, whom, I found so changed. I cannot touch upon these subjects now, for it would be too painful, so I will only write what

occurs to me at the moment.

I should so like to know a little more of your ways and means of life. You must have passed through much hardship and many difficulties, in the rough waves of the world. Still, I found you free from cares, and in no difficulties; this is a comfort in all my sorrow. I know you have had your share of hardship, while I have lived a life of suffering. Even the crows and sparrows I envy, even the plants in the garden. Prisoners, who may not see the light of day, live in hope of their acquittal; for me there has been no hope; I doubt if even death can release me from the pain, I am doomed perhaps to bear forever.

As for Tomiyama, I have served him for ten years, each year feeling my hate increase, until I have completely alienated him. For three years now, we have lived apart. Arao blamed me; he said my thoughts of you were infidelity to Tomiyama. But since I am a fool, for only as a fool could I have been faithless to you, how could I, a fool, have learned loyalty to him? And this fool was kidnapped from you by another, and no one pitied her, when she was flung weeping upon the uttermost marge of the farthest sea, out of sight of the sky of her home! Can you not pity me?

Is the fault of a fool a more serious offence than the fault of the wise ?

And now, I must summon all my courage to speak to you of a matter, that lies heavily upon my heart. Did the world treat you so devilishly that you, a man of such noble qualities and so gentle a character, should have chosen that one trade out of so many ? Am I a fool, that I am utterly unable to understand it ? Though heaven and earth fell, I would have sworn that you could not have so soiled your hands.

We have one life, and of it we can make a gem, or a common brick. Return to your former self and the jewel will still shine. At present you are smirching your soul, and the excellent character you have, with the dust and dirt of a polluted world. Ah ! had I not left you, this would never have been. Why, oh ! why did I marry Tomiyama ? I cannot understand it. The iron hand of Fate must have pushed me, from a good, into an evil course. It had been better, if, in your fierce anger, you had killed me, rather than allowed me life, and such misery. Oh ! why did you not drag me by force into some mountain fastness, where we should be happy still ? Why are we not walking now on the moonlit shore of Atami ?

The Gold Demon.

If you could forgive perhaps we might! Ah! foolish thought! but it makes my heart leap with joy, and my body thrill and tremble.

I have a few treasures with which I will never part. They are three photographs of you, and to look at them carries me back ten years and for a while I am free from pain. The one I like best, I wonder if you remember it, is a picture, taken in profile, you look up, and are smiling. It is growing oh! so faint, but it does not matter, I shall not be here to see it much longer. My Mother has my will; I have asked here to place the three pictures, beneath my head, in the coffin.

.....A certain woman possessed a piece of unique brocade, and, as it was of no use to her in the hottest season, she was stupid enough to lend it to another person, who refused to return it, no matter how much the woman begged and prayed for it. The Autumn passed and the Winter came, and the woman was reduced to poverty, and thought with ever-increasing anxiety of her beautiful brocade. But, by this time, she did not even know into whose hands it had passed. One day, she chanced to meet a beautiful woman, and lo! and behold! she was dressed in the long-

Miha's Diary.

lost material. How rich and beautiful it was! It hung like a glory upon the other woman's shoulders, the woman, who did not know, that its real owner stood so close beside her. And she, who had so rashly lent it, though she knew that through her own fault it was lost to her, could not help hating and envying the woman, who displayed the beauties of that old brocade.

During my visit to you I met a lady at your house, who said, she was a relative of yours and came everyday to help you in your household. I trust my coming to you has not caused any serious trouble.

I have so much more to write, and however much I may write, it is difficult to end. I have left some big things unsaid, and written much that is worthless. It is four o'clock in the morning, I will stop here and write but the name that is dear to me.....Hazama.

To-morrow is your birthday, and I shall make a little feast for you. Will it bring joy or sorrow? May to-morrow bring you every happiness. This is the only hope I can entertain, while yet I live.

The Gold Demon.

From a foolish woman, to one from whom she is parted, and who is so dear, so dear to her.

The twenty-fifth day of May.

CHAPTER LXVIII

D'Chizu and Kwanichi.

THE roses were everywhere in bloom, and the breeze, that danced in Kwanichi's room that summer afternoon, was fragrant with their perfume. It danced, and lifted high the thin, trailing yards of a manuscript, casting a portion of it over Kwanichi's shoulder, and then winding it round his neck. With an angry gesture he pulled down the encircling parts, and then, tore them into pieces. It was Miya's Diary, which, with difficulty, stealthily and secretly, she had had conveyed to his house ; and now, in spite of his vows never to open a letter of hers again, he had read it. He was asking himself why he had done so. The letter affected him deeply, whether he would or no. He did not like to be moved in this way, he told himself angrily ; everything, that day, had combined against his calm, and peace of mind : the fragrance from the garden, and the sight of the flaming pomegranate blossoms stirred him strangely. Kwanichi seized the trailing letter,—it was four yards long, the length of a woman's sash,—and stepped into the garden. Here he

The Gold Demon.

tore it up into tiny pieces, and then, overcome with a sudden lassitude, as after some violent labour, leaned against an ilex tree.

Presently a young woman appeared on the verandah, her hair exquisitely arranged in the "marumage," the married woman's style. She tucked her long sleeves out of the way, and shook some water from her snow-white arms. On perceiving Kwanichi she smiled gaily, and cried:

"Master, the bath is ready!"

Now this pretty young woman was none other than O'Shizu, the only person who could charm Kwanichi from his melancholy.

She had constituted herself his devoted slave, waiting upon him from morning till evening.

Now she was ready to escort him to the bath, to assist him into and out of his clothes; arrange his looking glass, and perform numberless little services. Her husband too, Sayama, who lived with Kwanichi must never be neglected, and between the two, she felt as if New Year's Day and All Soul's Day had fallen together, as the saying goes, so busy was she all day.

Just now she was fanning Kwanichi on the verandah; he was hot after his bath. After watching him for a while, she said:

O'Shizu and Kwanichi.

"You look dreadfully tired; what is the matter with you?" "Nothing particular is the matter; I do not feel very cheerful." "Take a little beer!" suggested O'Shizu, "I have put some down the well, and it is nice and cool."

"Aha! That is for Sayama-san I suppose," smiled Kwanichi. "No, indeed," burst out the little wife, really vexed, "Sayama knows his position better than to help himself to your beer." "What nonsense!" replied Kwanichi, "tell him not to be so punctilious. Are we not all one family? Does he not feel at home here?"

"Yes, oh! yes;" cried O'Shizu, the tears springing to her eyes; "You have made this a real home to us. But now, let me get you some ice and some summer oranges, and here are some apples too."

With a light step she tripped off, and, in a little while, returned with a tray, followed by the old woman servant, bearing ice and beer. These O'Shizu arranged daintily on a small table in front of Kwanichi, and dismissing the old woman, poured out a foaming glass of beer, and then began to peel the apples and oranges.

"You don't expect me to eat and drink alone, do you?" questioned Kwanichi.

The Gold Demon.

“ Oh ! but I could not drink beer with you ! ” laughed the girl ; “ you had better take two or three glasses at once, then the beer will be effectual, and you will feel better, for indeed you look very ill.”

“ I am always ill, no wonder I look ill ; and no amount of beer will cure me. However I will take another glass.” O'Shizu filled the glass he held out to her, and clapped her hands to see him drink it at one mouthful.

“ This world is a very mysterious place ! ” began Kwanichi ; “ Here are you, two entire strangers, quite unknown to me a few weeks ago, living under my roof, as though you were part of my family. Mr. Sayama is such a pleasant companion, and *you* treat me with such genuine kindness, that I have come to look upon you as relatives. What a strange happening ! I hope we may continue the friendship all our lives. But I am a usurer, hated by everybody, one whom people call ‘ devil ’ and ‘ dragon ’ ; and I feel how loathsome you must find it to live beneath my roof. Moreover, it is the nature of a usurer’s trade to make money by draining other people’s hearts’ blood, so to speak ; and you must, naturally, wonder what my object was in paying

O'Shizu and Kwanichi.

for you, total strangers, so large a sum of dearly-valued money. Are you not asking yourselves all the time what was the wicked object I had in view?"

"Do have another glass of beer, Master?"

"Well, O'Shizu, what do you really think?"

"We owe our lives to you, and they belong to you alone; you must do as you like with us; Sayama says the same."

"Thank you. I earn my money in no delicate way, I tell you, and I earn it quickly. To help you, was a whim of mine, as it is now my wish to see you established again in your class. I have had no thought of reward, or way by which I might profit. I want you to feel re-assured on this point." With a sigh he continued: "Still, as you know what my trade is, you will, probably, listen to my words, as though they were the devil's own promise. In coming here, you have place of yourselves under a bad tree, as the proverb has it."

"Oh! sir, what have we done to displease you so?" cried O'Shizu, in real alarm; "never, since we came here, have you spoken like this! we are careless people, and may have offended through our carelessness; please, tell me, so that we may

The Gold Demon.

please you better in future."

"No, no, it is nothing ; and I am wrong to talk so foolishly ;" replied Hazama soothingly ; " You have been both attentive and kind, quite like real relatives, and I am grateful to you both. As I told you the other day, I have neither friends nor relations. There is no one in the world, who cares whether I take medicine, when I am ill ; or who cares if I am ill or well. That you should have tried to cheer me, this afternoon, has done me a great deal of good ; yours is a kindness by whose power even a dead tree might bloom again. I have spoken the truth to you, in token, whereof, and of our friendship, let us drink a glass together."

CHAPTER LXIX

O'Shizu's Views on Love.

WHEN the next bottle of beer was opened, Kwanichi reverted to the topic, that was uppermost in his mind.

"Now surely," he said, "a man like myself, a usurer, who, in order to wrest money from people, will, be they friend or foe, trample upon their very faces, must be liable to suspicion, when he acts, as I acted towards you. A day will come, when my reasons will be disclosed; when you will see what sort of man I really am. When the mystery is cleared up you will not be surprised, if I assist ten or twenty people, like yourselves, with all the money I possess. This sounds to you conceited and bombastic; but please, remember, that this is a confidential talk. You look very pensive, let us stop talking, if I have made you sad."

"Tell me your story!" begged O'Shizu; "Ever since we came here, Sayama and I have wondered why you look so gloomy, why you have so little life in you. We felt anxious."

"Since you came, you have put fresh life into my surroundings."

The Gold Demon.

"What must you have been like before?"

"Just like one who is dead!"

"What can be the matter with you?"

"It is a disease, I have."

"What sort of disease?"

"I can't help feeling gloomy; that is my disease."

"Why are you gloomy?"

"Owing to my disease."

"What disease is it?"

"It is that I am gloomy."

"That is nonsense; that is no answer!" replied O'Shizu, "we should go on with this dialogue forever, if you did not answer reasonably."

"I can't be reasonable, I have had too much beer."

"Please, don't lie down, you will go to sleep if you do so. I want an answer to my question." O'Shizu came round to Kwanichi and pushed him into a sitting posture.

"I wonder, what Tomiyama Tadatsugu would say if he saw you now," said Kwanichi irrelevantly.

"Bah! don't mention his name, it makes me shudder," exclaimed the girl.

"Makes you shudder? but why? It is not *his*

fault, that you hate him so."

"It *is* his fault; and it is a fault that he is alive at all!" cried O'Shizu violently. "Why should *he* have crossed my path? Are there no agreeable people among our forty million compatriots?"

"I meet no agreeable people!"

"And it is a horrid crowd of people, like Tomiyama, who go about the world doing harm, so that there is no peace for anyone in this earth! Why are such horrid, abominable people born?"

"Dear me! This is an unlucky day for Tomiyama!"

"It is very foolish to speak of him at all. Talk of something else."

"Very well; which is capable of deeper affection, a man or a woman?"

"Surely a woman—" began O'Shizu.

"You can't depend upon her?" interrupted Kwanichi.

"Give me a proof of *that*!" exclaimed O'Shizu.

"Ah! *you* are an exception! Other women are not like you. They are shallow-minded, and so they are changeable. Faithfulness or unfaithfulness do not mean much to them."

"It is true," agreed the woman, "that we are shallow-minded, but, if a woman *really* loves, she

The Gold Demon.

cannot change, and she cannot be unfaithful. In real love a woman is as strong and true as a man."

"Yes, there have been cases like that. But, tell me, when love proves to have been unreal, whose fault is it, the man's or the woman's?"

"That is a very difficult question. The fault may be on both sides. It depends on the woman's character, and above all on her age!"

"Her age? What do you mean?"

"We, geisha, usually classify love into "sight-love," "humour love," and "root love," the three modes of women's love. The "sight-love," is formed after very brief acquaintance, in fact, usually at sight, and is very common among young girls, who have not yet outgrown the *red collar. They go by a man's appearance, and there is neither bitter nor sweet in their love. Then, from seventeen to twenty-two or three, they begin to understand something about love, and as they are no longer attracted by merely a handsome face, or well-cut clothes, they think they know a great deal about it. The love, *they* feel, is "humour love," for, it is pleasant manners, an amiable temper, a trick of speech, or something

(* worn till 15 or 16 years of age).

D'Chizu's views on love.

of that sort, by which they are won. They are still fickle ; for they love *this* man, and then, *that* man for a while ; they do not yet understand the deepest love. This, indeed, is rarely understood before the age of twenty-four and twenty-five. It is then, that woman first tastes *real* love. Her mind is, by that time, fairly settled ; she has learned something of the world, and is able to judge for herself. Outside appearances no longer influence her entirely ; she has become serious. Nine woman out of ten do not change their minds at this stage of their life. As the song says : " While they yet wear the red collar and *' Shimada,' young women know naught of love ; but if an old maid pours out her love, it will go hard with the man, she dotes on."

" Very interesting ! Sight love, humour love, root love ! " Love depends on age ! Yes, yes, there is something in it."

" You seem very much struck with the idea."

" Yes, indeed, I am greatly struck."

" Then, I am sure, it has reminded you of some one."

" Ha ! ha ! ha ! why ? "

(Shimada : young woman's style of hairdressing).

The Gold Demon.

"You agree that I am right then?"

"Ha! ha! ha! Right? in what way?"

"I know, I am right," said O'Shizu, turning her wide-open eyes, on Kwanichi's flushed face. Certainly the beer had done its work. O'Shizu rose and went to the door.

"And if you were right, ha! ha! ha! what then?" he called, as she passed out. For a long time after, she heard his laugh re-echoing through the little house.

CHAPTER LXX

The End of Miya's Diary.

I DO not know why my unworthy life has been prolonged till now. Seven days ago, I hoped, the end had come, but alas! I am still here, and each day passes more wearily, more painfully, than the preceding one.

For the sake of avoiding suspicion, I have called in a doctor, but I do not take his medicines, I throw them all away. I am sure my disease can be found in no book of medicine, although the doctor, unhesitatingly called it hysteria. I confess I was angered to hear it called by so common a name.

By day, my head is heavy, my heart oppressed, all my senses seem benumbed, so that it worries me to see, or speak to anyone. I am, therefore, confined to my room, expecting daily to draw my last breath, and feeling the life within me, grow weaker and weaker, as the weary hours drag slowly past. At night my condition is quite different; a heavy weight is lifted from me, my mind is clear, and I do not feel the

The Gold Demon.

need of sleep at all. Need I tell you, upon whom, all through the night, my thoughts are concentrated?

These thoughts, though I would think no others, are yet a torment. I am like one, in a flame of fire, seeking for water. If this agony does not soon end, by my own hand I will end my life. There is but one thing that has kept me from this course. I have never been able to persuade myself, to give up the hope of seeing you, before I die. Good people, have, since the days of old, oftimes been vouchsafed the vision of Buddha before they died; and may I not hope, through the power of my love, to see you once, ere I close my eyes in death?

My mother-in-law paid me a visit yesterday; partly to inquire after my health, partly on Tadatsugu's account. He is never at home, nowadays, is always amusing himself elsewhere. An unpleasant report concerning him crept into the newspaper, and my mother-in-law, having seen it, came here to inquire into the matter. She gave me very good and kind advice; and she told me that Tadatsugu's dissolute ways were chiefly due to the unhappy condition of his home. She knew all about our affairs: I don't know

The end of Miha's Diary.

who had told her. I might have answered her rudely, so that she despaired of seeing me do better, and caused me to be divorced ; but that is more than I dare hope for. I could not bring such an angry answer across my lips, for my mother-in-law is a good woman, and has always overwhelmed me with kindness. The tears came into my eyes and I acknowledged my fault, and begged her to forgive me.

If my life were not entirely consecrated to you, I would have consecrated it to this dear lady. With her as a mother, and you as my husband, I could have slept happily upon the bare earth, and worn a straw mat for clothing. And this good woman I have deceived ; I am indeed a miserable creature and must expect a miserable death.

Strangely enough, death does not seem so terrible a thing, as people would have been believed. I shall be more happy dead ; oh ! that I could even this moment die. I feel a little sad, and a little cowardly, when I think how my parents will sorrow at my loss, and that I must die without merit. I vanish and leave no trace, while this pen, this ring, this light, this house, this summer night, and even the song of the mosquito remain unchanged. I shall be remembered scarcely

The Gold Demon.

longer than the wild grass, that has withered away upon the hillside."

THE END.



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著者又ターヂ博士は米國太平洋洋岸に於ける五萬有餘の我同胞が師父として
尊ぶを基とする日本の一大家人也、其國人にして彼地に渡航せるもの學生を
いばず、労働者といはず、其恩顧を蒙るものも稀なり、博士日本の風俗人
情に精通し深く其真髓に入る、即ち其長技なる特筆を揮つて此時集を作る、
收むる所の知識無算七十有餘、四人の世に映する日本魂果して如何なるもの
ぞ英文を能くするもの一體を備く能はざるものあらむ、卷末細註の附録あり、
初學者亦依つて以つて其語玩味するを得べし。

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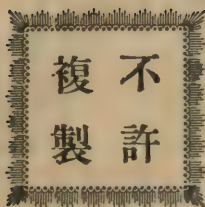
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