

TYPHOON

BY
MELCHIOR LENGYEL

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TYPHOON

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

BY

MELCHIOR LENGYEL

ENGLISH VERSION BY
LAURENCE IRVING

METHUEN & CO. LTD.
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.
LONDON



First Published in 1913

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

Japanese Colony in Paris :—

BARON YOSHIKAWA

TOKERAMO, *Doctor of Letters*

KOBAYASHI, *Doctor of Letters*

OMAYI, *Doctor of Laws*

KITAMARU, *Doctor of Medicine*

YAMOSHI, *Doctor of Laws*

HIRONARI

AMAMARI

MIYAKE

TANAKA

YOSHINO

YOTOMO

GEORGES, *Tokeramo's Servant*

RENARD-BEINSKY

PROFESSOR DUPONT

BENOIT, *Investigating Judge*

MARCHLAND, *Judge of the High Court*

SIMON, *Judge's Clerk*

USHER

THÉRÈSE

HELÈNE

ACTS I II AND IV

At Tokeramo's Flat in Paris

ACT III

*Room of an Investigating Judge
(Palais de Justice)*

*The action of the play takes place in Paris at the
present day*

NOTICE

It will be noted that in the scenes where the Japanese are conversing with each other, and therefore supposed to be speaking in their own language, they use no accent, though pitch and intonation have a certain national peculiarity, but in the scene where they are conversing with Europeans and are therefore supposed to be speaking in a foreign language, a very strong accent will be marked.

CAST OF THE PLAY

As produced at the Haymarket Theatre on April 2, 1913

BARON YOSHIKAWA	...	...	...	Robin Shiells
TOKERAMO	...	...	...	Laurence Irving
KOBAYASHI	...	...	...	Henry Crocker
OMAYI	...	...	...	Claude Rains
KITAMARU	...	...	...	Azooma Sheko
YAMOSHI	...	...	...	Charles Terric
HIRONARI	...	...	...	Leon M. Lion
AMAMARI	...	...	...	Arthur Stanley
MIYAKE	...	...	...	S. Isogai
TANAKA	...	...	...	A. Tsuchiya
YOSHINO	...	...	...	K. Sumoge
YOTOMO	...	...	...	George Carr
GEORGES	...	...	...	H. O. Nicholson
RENARD-BEINSKY	...	...	...	Leon Quartermaine
PROFESSOR DUPONT	...	...	...	E. Lyall Swete
BENOIT	...	...	...	Arthur Whitby
MARCHLAND	...	...	...	Allan Jeayes
SIMON	...	...	...	Herbert Hewetson
USHER	...	...	...	Stuart Musgrove
THÉRÈSE	...	...	...	Marjorie Waterlow
HELÈNE	...	...	...	Mabel Hackney

The play produced for FREDERICK HARRISON by Mr. LAURENCE IRVING with the assistance of Mr. A. S. TSUBOUCHI and Mr. YOSHIO MARKINO.

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ACT I

SCENE: *Paris. Sitting-room of TOKERAMO'S flat, richly furnished, but several Japanese objects contrast oddly with the ordinary French furniture. At the spectator's right is a folding door which leads into the hall and the outer door of the flat. Glass has been let into the panels of this door, so that without casting a shadow upon the panels no one could approach it from the outside. Beyond the door a large French window with curtains and a blind, leading into a balcony; in the window there hangs a Japanese wind-bell, which tinkles when the breeze stirs it. In the centre of the back wall is a curtained picture of the late Mikado. Facing the window, at the spectator's left, an archway hung with heavy curtains leads into the bedroom. When the curtains are parted a large bed may be partly seen. Below this archway is another door leading into the interior of the flat. The chief piece of furniture in the room is an imposing writing-desk with a reading-lamp on it; in the window is another table with a large deed-box on it. Sofa, chairs, etc. Several bowls and vases containing flowers, not arranged in close clumps but in the more sparse Japanese manner.*

(From the outside door of the flat prolonged, violent pushing of the electric bell is heard,

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which brings GEORGES—a tall young red-haired man-servant—out of the bedroom, and he goes off to open the flat door. Voices are heard in altercation.)

GEORGES. (*Outside.*) The master is not at home, mademoiselle.

HELÈNE. (*Outside.*) Then I'll wait.

GEORGES. (*Outside.*) When the master's not at home I mayn't let any one in.

(GEORGES is pushed backwards into the room by HELÈNE, who drags in THÉRÈSE by the hand. HELÈNE is a very flamboyant-looking young woman, with a restless, almost boyish manner; she is dictatorial, quite devoid of reflective powers, but with all the charm of a highly strung, impulsive, if shallow nature. THÉRÈSE is younger, submissive, and sentimental; she has none of her friend's captivating brazenness.)

HELÈNE. Oh, be damned! Come on, Thérèse!

THÉRÈSE. But perhaps we ought not.

HELÈNE. (*Taking up mirror and looking at herself.*) Pooh! don't be a little fool! I'm at home here—very much at home; part proprietor, in fact. Georges, when'll your master be home?

GEORGES. (*In desperation.*) He's there—in his bath.

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HELÈNE. (*Seizing GEORGE'S car.*) Then why did you say he's out when he's in?

GEORGES. I'll tell him you're here, mademoiselle.

HELÈNE. You'll keep your mouth shut. (*Pushing cigarette into his mouth.*) There's something to occupy it. (*HELÈNE thrusts a handful of cigarettes into his jacket pocket.*) And now off you go! (*Clapping her hands.*) Quick march! Skidaddle! Bonjour; love to all at home.

(*GEORGES disappears, grinning at these antics in spite of himself, and in spite of his perilous infringement of his Japanese master's strict injunctions.*)

One fool less in the room, anyhow. (*Chucks cigarette to THÉRÈSE.*) If anything takes your fancy, pocket it. I give you leave. (*Picking up portrait frame, looks at it with a tinge of regret.*) Me at seventeen. . . . (*Goes off into loud, half-bitter laugh.*) Look! It's the only one in existence. . . . (*Contemplating the portrait desirously.*) Dear little innocent. . . . I went over to Folkestone pier once to a beauty competition, and that did me in.

THÉRÈSE. You didn't win it?

HELÈNE. Oh, yes, I won the competition—though I did get a minus for my nose—I won the competition. . . . Don't you loathe men?

THÉRÈSE. (*With naïve candour.*) Oh, no.

HELÈNE. Wait, you will. . . . (*Moving about the room restlessly.*) Yet I don't know. In a sort of way I loathe 'em, and in a sort of a way I rather like 'em. . . . My Jap's always a long time over his evening bath. If we don't see him to-day we can see him to-morrow. (*Puffing cigarette, lolling with her feet on couch.*)

THÉRÈSE. (*Imparting information with the exuberance of one possessed of very little.*) I don't want to miss seeing him. I've been reading all about Japan in a magazine, and, do you know, it says there that they don't ever think anything about *themselves*, only about their *country*; their *one* thought and object is to *obey Japan* and make it *great*. And it says they find Europeans always bothering about *themselves*, fussy and irritable, . . . and thinking too much about *our* health and comfort and the rest of it; but when *we're* in moments of great danger, and when *we're* worked up, *then we* think of *our* country before ourselves; . . . but with the Japanese that's just their ordinary state of mind. . . . Oh! and fancy, it says when they were at war with Russia an order had to be given by that poor general who killed himself, with his wife—telling the officers that if they were beaten *not* to commit suicide. You see, they thought they owed it to Japan *not* to be beaten, and if they were they must make it up to Japan by taking their

own lives. Our men aren't like that, are they?

HELÈNE. Oh yes, and every Jap soldier carries a tooth-brush in his cap. Kill me, but let my teeth be clean! (*Throws herself into a comical attitude.*)

THÉRÈSE. Don't be silly.

HELÈNE. It's true! They're awfully clean: so's Tokeramo, and he's very kind.

THÉRÈSE. Is he?

HELÈNE. Never rough, never like other beastly men are. He's always grinning and grinning.

THÉRÈSE. He sounds a perfect dear.

HELÈNE. Oh, one can have too much grin, you know. Sometimes I wish he would take me by the shoulders and shake me, damn me up and down hill. I'd understand that.

THÉRÈSE. (*Regarding this desire for violent handling as a sign of strong attachment.*) You must be *very* fond of him.

HELÈNE. On the whole I like him better than I loathe him: and that's the highest compliment I ever paid any man. . . . Japanese sweets; have one?

THÉRÈSE. What does he look like?

HELÈNE. Tall—for a Jap.

THÉRÈSE. Tall?

HELÈNE. He's from the North Island where they grow 'em tall, so he says. One day I sup-

pose he'll pack up his trunks and drop me—wunk! But he hasn't felt my teeth yet. One day I'll give him such a bite . . . or perhaps I won't. . . . I wonder if I told him about me and Renard-Beinsky—the poet Beinsky—how he'd take it.

THÉRÈSE. Helene, I've heard no end of scandal about you and Beinsky.

HELÈNE. Have you? He wants to marry me. Silly ass!

THÉRÈSE. (*With a world of frustrated aspiration in her tone.*) One ought to marry.

HELÈNE. No one marries poets: they arn't men. And he's never sober. (*Reflecting—her head bent to one side.*) Now my Eastern curio—if only he'd marry me: . . . but he won't! . . . I told Beinsky about him and me. . . .

THÉRÈSE. (*Eagerly.*) You did! What happened?

HELÈNE. He gave up brandy—and took to absinthe. (*Laughs merrily.*) And now he's tearing about Paris hunting for his Jap rival. What fun if they met.

THÉRÈSE. They might kill each other.

HELÈNE. And I should be in all the papers. "Portrait of the beautiful girl who, etc., etc."

THÉRÈSE. But what does your Japanese do here in Paris?

HELÈNE. You ask him. And he'll go—(*mimicking TOKERAMO*) oh, oh, oh, oh. . . . He scribbles and scribbles, and reads and reads—and funny

people come in by the back way and he locks himself up with them—

THÉRÈSE. Japanese people?

HELÈNE. No, our kind. And people glide in and glide out and they're always locking doors: and he's had glass put in the panels of the door, and he wants you to knock before coming in, and to wait till he (*imitating TOK.*) gives you permission. (*With the petulance of baffled feminine curiosity.*) I will find out what he's up to, what's under that parchment grin. . . . Every drawer locked, you see! . . . (Tugging at drawers.)

(GEORGES enters, carrying some clothes and a clothes brush.)

GEORGES. (*Appalled to see what the irrepressible Helène is doing.*) Mademoiselle, that's forbidden.

HELÈNE. You shut up. . . . Oh, here's one open. (*Eagerly dives into drawer.*)

(GEORGES is about to pass through the bedroom curtains when TOKERAMO quietly glides into the room. He is a good-looking young Japanese of the aristocratic, long-faced type, dressed in well-cut European clothes; his complexion of a dark creamish rather than a yellow tinge; hair coal-black and glossy; his legs, like those of most of his countrymen, are somewhat bowed; his gestures are few but sinuous, showing a great suppleness from the wrist, his fingers

thin and long; his walk is noticeable by the fact that he draws his feet along the ground without raising them. When conversing with Europeans a certain embarrassed formality marks his manner; he tries to adopt their easy demeanour, but does it with a certain rigidity. Conversing in a foreign tongue, his speech seems very laboured and causes a generous disclosure of his teeth; his smile is truly Japanese in its plenitude. When amongst his own countrymen, supposed to be conversing in his own tongue, all the embarrassment falls away: and a calm courteous, soft-spoken, high-born Japanese gentleman remains.)

TOKERAMO. (*Having stood for a moment watching HELÈNE'S infraction of all rules.*) Helène!

HELÈNE. (*With a violent start.*) Ah!

TOK. (*With a soft severity.*) I have asked you my dear Helène, more than once that you do not disturb my papers.

HELÈNE. (*Showing a spitfire disposition out of all proportion to the provocation.*) You gave me such a turn! To pounce on people like that——

TOK. (*Smiling good-humouredly.*) Did I? I not-e think-e. Will you present me?

HELÈNE. (*Off-hand.*) My best friend — my other best friend. (TOKERAMO and THÉRÈSE shake hands, both a good deal embarrassed.) There! . . . Don't stand making goo-goo eyes

at one another. Go on, sit down. (*They do so.*)

TOK. My dear Helène, treat me as you like ; but in my house please to treat your friend with more consideration, please. (*Sits.*)

HELÈNE. (*With a toss of the head.*) Aren't we chivalrous !

THÉRÈSE. Helène and I are such old chums. . . .

HELÈNE. Gasser ! (*Bangs THÉRÈSE'S hat over her eyes with a magazine.*)

THÉRÈSE. (*Assuming her best company manners.*) I have so long wished to make your acquaintance.

TOK. (*Stroking his hand over the back of his head as he does often when embarrassed.*) Oh, please . . . I am just like every other Japanese man.

THÉRÈSE. But you know really you don't look so very yellow to me. (*She has blurted this out without realizing its possible offensiveness.*)

TOK. (*Laughs silently and consumedly, throwing his head back.*) I use much soap ; perhaps the colour comes off.

THÉRÈSE. Helène, do you hear that ?

HELÈNE. My children, what drivel ! . . . (*A ring. They all rise.*) Come on, Thérèse, some one might find us here. (*Going towards door.*)

TOK. And if they did ?

HELÈNE. I don't want it . . . Good-bye, pet.

TOK. (*In a whisper, retaining her by the arm.*)

Have you any of the money left that I gave you last week ?

HELÈNE. No : there are such a lot of pretty dresses in the shops, and so many poor devils like me outside them. I'll come back this evening.

TOK. No, my child. I have to do work.

HELÈNE. (*With a fresh burst of sudden temper.*)

And I can go hang ! All right.

TOK. (*Detaining her by the arm, speaking coaxingly and with affection.*) You know you are my dear child. Only to-night I have a certain meeting. That is all.

HELÈNE. (*Suddenly furious.*) Then it is all !

(*Baron YOSHIKAWA and KOBAYASHI have been admitted into the room. Both are men of between fifty and sixty with the darkening shade of complexion that age generally brings to the Japanese. The Baron has a cold, haughty, by no means prepossessing manner ; KOBAYASHI, on the other hand, is externally ingratiating.*)

(*The ladies vanish laughing. Door heard to slam. The three Japanese intersperse their greetings with bows, graduated according to the rank of the recipient.*)

YOSH. Happy, dear friend, in being able to visit you once more.

KOB. An opportunity I was equally delighted to seize.

TOK. To meet you both is a delight always. Will you be seated? (TOKERAMO *locks the door.*) Will you be pleased to smoke? (*Much ceremonious deference passes between the three.*)

TOK. (*Seated.*) Have you any fresh news from home?

KOB. (*Seated.*) Nothing of moment. Oh, there has been another storm in the Tokyo district—a *typhoon*. Many houses have been blown down; many men have perished. But we shall build up the houses; and other men will step into the breach.

TOK. Yes. Nippon recovers easily from such blows.

YOSH. (*Seated.*) If I might ask, who were those two ladies who met us coming in?

TOK. Just acquaintances—passing acquaintances—a man has to make them.

KOB. Quite so. You have been here a year and a half.

YOSH. Tokeramo-san, beware, if I might advise you, of such ladies. You are the first in intellect among us all. The Mikado (*At the utterance of the sacred name all rise and with their feet parallel to each other, giving at the knees, drawing in the breath audibly through the lips, they bow in this most humble and respectful of all modes towards the curtained picture of the Mikado.*) and Nippon

expect services from you far beyond our reach. Remember every scrap of information you collect is another stone in that glorious edifice of our country's future omnipotence. Forgive my saying this.

TOK. (*Standing.*) I am grateful. That girl does not for one moment distract me from my labours. I shall fulfil them to the last letter. (*A ring.*) Who can that be? (TOKERAMO *puts on spectacles and goes to door.*)

YOSH. (*Aside to KOBAYASHI, evincing dissatisfaction that it is so.*) I know nothing of these two ladies.

KOB. I know all about one. It is put down in my report.

YOSH. (*With cold haughtiness.*) When shall I receive it?

KOB. (*With precipitate deference.*) To-night at the latest.

(*As TOKERAMO approaches the door a knock is heard. TOKERAMO unlocks and throws open the folding door. To his joyous amazement and their vast amusement the eight Japanese, who have been crouching down so as to give him a surprise, all start up, exclaiming "Wah!" Amidst great glee TOKERAMO invites them into the room. The eight newcomers represent a great variety of types; their ages range between twenty and forty. Now that they are away from the Europeans they appear full of high spirits*

and almost childish mirth, though never for a moment omitting to show the greatest deference to YOSHIKAWA and TOKERAMO. They present a great variety of features and of shades of complexion; the universal trait is the straight black hair; several wear spectacles, carry presents and toys. Two on poles bear the red paper fish emblematic of the particular festival.)

TOK. (*Bowing his compatriots into the room.*) Why, all Japan is here!

(Japanese enter. Hearty greetings.)

My dear children, what is the meaning of this mighty throng?

OMAYI. It is the 5th day of the 5th month, Tokeramo Nabome-no-sekko.

(The paper fish have been fixed by the window, the breeze fills and waves them; the Japanese laugh and rejoice in this reminiscence of home.)

TOK. Of course, the feast of boys—and I'd forgotten it—the feast of our dear lads! If we had but one here with us that we might lavish all our love on him.

OMAYI. We have one, Tokeramo-san, not indeed a child—almost a man—he comes fresh from Nippon. Hironari-san!

(HIRONARI, a good-looking youth of 18, advances, and dropping on his knees simultaneously bows his head and places his palms against the ground.)

TOK. (Raising HIRONARI.) We don't do that here. May good fortune attend you, my dear son.

(In conversing, HIRONARI, according to the Japanese custom, keeps his face averted from his interlocutor. Should he happen to turn his face towards him he places his fingers over his mouth with the idea that he may thereby prevent his breath from reaching the person he is addressing. At intervals in the conversation he further emphasizes his gratification and respect by drawing his breath with a hissing sound through his lips.)

YOSH. (To whom TOKERAMO has presented HIRONARI.) I know thy beloved family, my child. How fares it with thy honourable father?

(HIRONARI draws in breath.)

HIRONARI. I thank you for the honour you pay me. The Mikado—(All as before do obeisance to the curtained picture.) before whose serene countenance I was most graciously permitted to appear—sends to you, Tokeramo-san, his especial greeting.

TOK. You appeared before the Mikado ?

HIR. At the big reception, when he graciously receives those travelling to Europe.

TOK. Have you a particular mission ?

HIR. No, I have not so far chosen a career. I shall attend the University. (*For the third or fourth time HIRONARI draws his breath in audibly.*)

TOK. We do not show respect in that way when the Europeans are present ; they would not understand it. Where are you lodging ?

HIR. With the others in the boarding-house, round the corner.

TOK. My dear boy, and you all my friends—I have said it is not wise for you to live together.

OMAYI. It is so pleasant—just as if we were at home.

TOK. You must mix with the foreigners. How else can you learn their language ?

YOSH. (*Trenchantly.*) From the first of next month we will live separately.

(*All submissively concur.*)

TOK. And you, my dear Hironari-san, observe everything, let nothing escape you. Go often to church. (*Bell off.*)

HIR. To church ?

TOK. Not for what you will learn there, but because there you will see how quiet and polite the Europeans are capable of being.

HIR. I will follow your counsel.

TOK. (*Ringing bell and unlocking door.*) Friends, to-day we will spend the afternoon together celebrating the beautiful festival.

(GEORGES *knocks.*)

TOK. Come in.

GEORGES. You rang, monsieur ?

TOK. Tea for all.

GEORGES. These gentlemen, monsieur, are waiting in the hall.

TOK. (*Takes the cards.*) Monsieur Renard-Beinsky—Professor Theodore Dupont. (TOKERAMO moves across to the main group of the younger Japanese, and by his announcement at once quells the laughter and chatter that has been rippling on amongst them.) It is the author of that book we've all been reading ; he seems a rather foolish and pompous man, but his work shows real research. Let us be very polite to him. I must receive them. (*The Japanese assume their manners for foreign consumption—much smiling. To GEORGES, who has been waiting.*) Tea for two now, our own later, also the brandy and liqueur glasses. (*Flinging door open.*) Please, gentlemen, come in ! I did not know that you were waiting. Please, please come in !

(*Enter Professor DUPONT, a man of fifty or so, bursting with pride and excitement over*

the approaching publication of his magnum opus. Being a Professor, one of his ambitions is to look like a man about town.)

DUPONT. (*Raising his hands.*) What a magnificent assembly!

TOK. My friends and countrymen.

DUPONT. May I present Monsieur Renard-Beinsky, the author. Come in! . . . He is at present writing on Japan, and therefore begged me to bring him here—um? Come in! come in!

(*BEINSKY at last responds to the Professor's injunctions and to the smiling invitation of TOKERAMO. He is a youngish man, queerly dressed; the originally rather fine quality of his nature has been seriously impaired by dissipation and drink; but he has an extraordinarily winning smile; though at the moment he shows a reluctant, lowering countenance.*)

TOK. Please, please come in. We are all delighted. Please be seated. And may I have the pleasure of offering you ——?

(*Offers cigarettes to DUPONT, then to BEINSKY, who refuses, and seats himself apart, a picture of smouldering irritability.*)

DUPONT. Monsieur Renard-Beinsky is a highly gifted author, though his interest in Japan is rather literary than scientific like my own. I was also anxious to know, Doctor Tokeramo,

whether you have found time to go through the proofs of my new work? I fear I must take them away with me to-day.

TOK. I have read them.

DUPONT. Already? You read it carefully?

TOK. Every word.

DUPONT. (*Thirsting after compliments.*) Did you like it?

TOK. It enraptured me. (*Hands light on desk to BEINSKY, who rudely snatches it.*)

DUPONT. (*Preening himself.*) I thought it would—especially the part on Japan. Then I may have the manuscript back?

TOK. Anticipating your courteous consent I ventured to pass on the manuscript to my friend, Monsieur Omayi. He is a lawyer, and therefore much of the work especially interests him.

DUPONT. (*In some perturbation.*) But, gentlemen—if anything happened to this manuscript—it is the work of thirty years.

OMAYI. A most marvellous work!

ALL. Oh, yes!

DUPONT. You have had time to read it too—really—right through?

OMAYI. Every word!

DUPONT. And you—you liked it?

OMAYI. So much I liked it that I could not help passing it on to my friend Mr. Kitamaru, Doctor of Medicine.

(KITAMARU *advances.*)

DUPONT. (*In increasing perturbation.*) But, gentlemen, my work it is not yet published—there are matters I wish kept secret.

TOK. Your secrets will be kept, Professor.

ALL. Oh, yes!

KITAMARU. It so completely got hold of us.

DUPONT. You have read it too?

KIT. And was enraptured!

DUPONT. (*Gratified vanity being gradually swallowed up in apprehension.*) I am glad, very glad. I think it is a big work.

ALL. Oh, yes.

DUPONT. Then here is my card. I will expect the manuscript to-morrow morning.

KIT. I thought you would not mind, and I have been so interested—

DUPONT. (*In exasperated desperation.*) Good heavens, please which of you has my manuscript?

KIT. This gentleman.

YAMO. (*Advancing.*) Mine is that honour. It is in my hands. (*GEORGES enters with tea.*) I have read it every word, and was enraptured.

DUPONT. Then you'll let me have it to that address without fail to-morrow morning?

JAPS. Without fail.

DUPONT. (*Addressing BEINSKY, completely re-*

assured.) Note this. There's what makes a race — this keenness for knowledge. (*The Japanese all bow.*) A people with a wonderful power of attraction—for men and for women too . . . (*Confidentially to TOKERAMO, who is helping him to tea, etc.*) Indeed, I've twice met a veiled young lady coming from your floor. Is she also interested in Japan, eh?

BEINSKY. (*With a sour, jeering twist of his lip.*) You must put her in the next edition of your book, Professor.

DUPONT. (*Turning witheringly to BEINSKY.*) I don't think I quite take your meaning.

BEINSKY. You needn't.

DUPONT. (*With the intention of inflicting a Fovian snub.*) I'm not given to joking where my work is concerned.

(DUPONT addresses the smiling circle of Japanese in his best class-room manner.)

The Japanese, I maintain, are a people of the very highest qualities! They are in no way inferior. . . .

BEINSKY. Oh, Professor, don't—don't please patronize Japan!

TOK. We are grateful for any favourable opinion.

BEINSKY. I'm afraid, you know, I don't quite believe that!

DUPONT. Oh, really, really!

BEINSKY. It seems to me it's about time that we

Europeans gave up regarding the Japanese as quaint little curiosities, clever little schoolboys, only wanting a nice pat on the head. These gentlemen can very well endure a little plain speaking ; yes, and they know how to indulge in it at our expense. Has it ever struck you (*raising his voice*), Professor, to wonder what is the motive that brings these clever, observant, home-loving people to dwell here amongst us foreigners, in their tens, their twenties, and their thirties — noting, recording, planning, smiling and saying nothing? (*Shouting at DUPONT, whose back is ostentatiously turned to him.*) I ask you if you've ever wondered what their motive is?

DUPONT. (*Contemptuously to BEINSKY over his shoulder.*) Every one knows it—it is the love of civilization.

BEINSKY. Oh no. They've got all the civilization they want. In fifteen years they picked the brains of their imported European preceptors clean ; and then by way of gratitude sent the poor simpletons packing home again. Oh, yes, they're keen—they're sharp as monkeys and supple as cats.

DUPONT. I protest. . . . I introduce you to this circle of eminent foreigners. . . .

BEINSKY. And I say they're clever—the most consummate actors I ever saw. Look at them ! By this time a European would have been

shouting, protesting, banging the table ; but there they are, thinking Lord knows what—dumb as fishes.

TOK. Dear sir, our high esteem for the Europeans . . .

BEINSKY. No, no—not high esteem. (*Letting the tide of his own anger gradually carry him away ; it ebbs now and then, but at last dominates him completely.*) There's certainly nothing to esteem about me, and not much about the Professor. And I tell you quite frankly I've no esteem for you at all. Your self-control—well, that's forced on you ; at home you live in little wood and paper houses ; and if you blow your nose it's heard in the next street ; so you've got to be self-controlled. If I must admire a Yellow race, then give me China. There's a damned strong originality about them. They loathe the Europeans, and they make no bones about it ; they don't come purring and rubbing themselves up against us like cats. (*First signs of angry ferment amongst the Japanese.*)

DUPONT. This is too much ! You shall not go on.

BEINSKY. You know how to die for your country—yes. That's a poor kind of job. But you can't look life in the face. Any savage can die for his country and do it just as well.

TOK. (*Quiet, smiling, almost deferential.*) You do not then care for your country, Monsieur Renard-Beinsky ?

BEINSKY. That for my country!

TOK. Then what do you care for? For your God?

BEINSKY. It's ages since He and I were on speaking terms.

TOK. For your own self?

BEINSKY. I'm dead sick of myself! I'm not worth a dam.

TOK. Ah, then . . . since you hold such opinion of your country, your God, and even of yourself—how can we expect that you should think better of the Japanese. (*A smile overspreads his countenance, and spreads from his to the group of Japanese.*)

DUPONT. Bravo, bravo!

BEINSKY. Shall I tell you a people I do admire? (*TOKERAMO, with a smile—Oh, please!*) The Russians—do you take me?—the Russians! (*Ominous mutterings break through the self-restraint of the Japanese.*) With their sensitiveness, their deep probing scrutiny, with their grim melancholy—why, they simply tower over the Japanese.

(*JAPANESE press excitedly round TOKERAMO, who motions them to keep calm. BEINSKY faces them in a challenging attitude.*)

And what's more, I have my doubts about your vaunted heroism; if you'd been so very brave you would have thrown me out long ago.

TOKERAMO. But why, when so soon you will be going of your own accord?

(BEINSKY snaps his fingers in TOKERAMO'S face. One of the Japanese, thinking a blow is being aimed at his leader, leaps forward and by a stroke of ju-jitsu, twists BEINSKY'S arm, causing him to collapse over the writing-desk. TOKERAMO in the twinkling of an eye has restrained and replaced his impetuous compatriot, so that in recovering from his momentary shock BEINSKY is confronted by the broadly smiling countenance of his imperturbable host.)

BEINSKY. Yes, it's about time I went.

TOK. Do not; you speak so interesting. Will you not take some tea with a little rum?

BEINSKY. (*Precipitately.*) Rum, yes, but cut the tea.

TOK. Or a little glass of brandy, perhaps?
(*Fills two liqueur glasses, hands one to BEINSKY, who grasps it in an unsteady hand.*)

To the Europeans, our instructors, coupled with the name of *Monsieur RENARD-BEINSKY.*

BEINSKY. You are humorous, dear master.
(*Gulps the brandy. TOKERAMO has raised his glass as though to empty—then deftly emptied it unobserved into an empty teacup.*)

DUPONT. Please, *Monsieur Beinsky* does not represent the mind of Europe.

BEINSKY. I suppose you do, eh, Professor ?

(BEINSKY *drinks again.*)

DUPONT. I may certainly claim to interpret——

BEINSKY. Oh, yes, you may claim, but then nobody understands you ; anyhow, nobody understands your books——

DUPONT. These gentlemen have read my book ; I put it to them——

JAPANESE. Marvellous work ! Ah, yes.

BEINSKY. Oh, hang your book !

DUPONT. My book, let me tell you, is a serious scientific work——

BEINSKY. Bosh!!!

DUPONT. (*Beside himself.*) Not like your sloppy poet-impressionist twaddle.

BEINSKY. (*Furious.*) You—you—you—— (*They stand gesticulating and shouting to one another.*)

TOK. Oh, gentlemen, please—though there are fifty millions of we poor Japanese, at least we manage to agree together. But here are you two eminent Europeans, and it almost seems as if you were on the point of—er—punching each other—er—on the noses. (*Covert hilarity amongst the Japanese.*)

BEINSKY. (*Revealing the easy-going, lovable bias of his nature ; keenly alive to the humorous side of his own infirmities.*) Here, I like you, you know. You are really intelligent.

TOK. (*Bowing.*) You're too good.

BEINSKY. Just now I talked a lot of rot, and lost my head . . . (*Eagerly.*) I did come here for a reason. The Professor said just now that you were visited by a lady—a veiled lady.

(*TOKERAMO smiles.*)

Who is she? I must ask you to tell me her name.

TOK. My dear sir, how would you answer such a question?

BEINSKY. I suppose I'd refuse to point-blank.

TOK. Well, I not-a-refuse. There is nothing to tell. I came here on matters that occupy my whole time and energies.

BEINSKY. (*After a pause.*) Well, I take your word. Perhaps one of the others—

TOK. (*A broad smile expanding over his features.*) Such things do happen.

BEINSKY. Oh! do they?—Here, you—(*Two of the Japanese, one his recent assailant, look very uninvitingly over their shoulders at him. BEINSKY bethinks himself.*) I'll come back another time. I'll make sure. Now I'm going.

TOK. We are always delighted to see you. (*BEINSKY makes a grimace of ironical incredulity and takes his departure.*)

DUPONT. (*Exuberantly taking his leave and expressing his regrets.*) Gentlemen, I can't apologize enough for this madman's conduct.

TOK. Oh, do not worry. He is a very nice gentlemen; to-day a little—er—mixed.

DUPONT. An impossible man.

(*TOKERAMO goes to door and holds it open for DUPONT.*)

I beg your pardon—sincerely—and I take my leave.

(*Japanese accompany DUPONT to door with every mark of respect. As DUPONT passes into hall Japanese show a tendency to laugh, TOKERAMO hushes them. A few seconds' pause; BEINSKY and DUPONT heard quarrelling again; outer door heard to shut. The Japanese go into fits of laughter. One or two strut about parodying the two Frenchmen.*)

TOK. How stupid!

SEVERAL. The idiots! The comic creatures!

YAM. You have read it—right through?—really right through?

KIT. (*Mimicking BEINSKY's nervous movements.*)
The Russians—do you take me?—the Russians!

ALL. The blockheads!

TOK. But let us remember that couple is not Europe. There are fools amongst us too. Europe is great and powerful. If we are to overtake her and overpower her we must work and work and work. (*Above table.*)

KOB. His book took him thirty years to write, and in five days we have skimmed all the good off it.

TOK. That is the secret of our success ; we search out the wisdom of the world. Generations have turned to dust, martyrs have died in agony to build up this mighty European civilization ; yet all that is of value in it, we have annexed in fifteen years.

OMAYI. Ours is the youth—the strength.

YOSH. Asia is our heritage. We are the first of her children to reach maturity. She is in chains and we must set her free. The first step is taken. Russia has covered before us. Europe would have put her foot upon our neck when we were defenceless ; now we are in arms and irresistible.

TOK. Sometimes does Nippon so glow in me, I feel that in foreign countries and in foreign cities we are her first soldiers. When the conquest will be completed, that we may not know ; but the fifty millions of Japanese, they, brothers, must dominate the world.

HIRONARI. Advance, Nippon !

ALL. Nippon, Nippon !

TOK. Dai, Nippon !

ALL. Dai, Nippon !

(A proud, awestruck pause.)

YOTOMO. *(An idiot boy emits a short, high laugh.)*

Hoh-hoh !

SEVERAL. 'Sh ! Yotomo ! be quiet ! Sesukanee !
Sesukanee !

TOK. What makes you laugh, Yotomo?

YOTOMO. (*Timidly.*) Nothing—I just laughed.

KOB. Let him be. He can take in nothing we say.

YOSH. Is it wise to have this poor half-witted creature with us?

TOK. Oh, yes. It shows the foreigners that a Japanese may be harmless. (*Rings.*) 'Sh, no more now. (*A knock.*) Come in. (*GEORGES enters.*) Tea for all and then you may go home.

GEORGES. Yes, sir. (*Exit.*)

TOK. Now we will go to Japan. (*TOKERAMO moves to the back of the room, which is now almost in darkness; he turns on a light above the picture of the Mikado, which, drawing aside its curtain, he discloses; the Japanese do it obeisance.*) . . . One—two—three! help me; you know where everything is.

(With shouting and laughter the Japanese run hither and thither, getting into their kimonas, putting down mats, producing lamps and lanterns, arranging screens, dragging forward a takenoma, till when the lights are turned on the room has entirely lost its European aspect, the Japanese being seated in a close circle on cushions on the ground, shut in by screens, in native attire, tea and cigarettes on the floor ready to hand. Their whole attitude

and expression is one of relief and joyous contentment: they have cast off their trammels.)

AMAMARI. This is our room.

TOK. Our clothes.

KOB. Our tea!

YOSH. (*To HIRONARI.*) Does that not charm you, eh, my son?

HIRONARI. It is wonderful! . . . I am at home. . . .

TOK. (*Pouring tea for his guests.*) Sometimes on feast-days we indulge in this happy little game.

YOSH. And at the feast of Noborie-no-sekko it is customary to tell over our old country legends. Do you recollect any, Hironari-san?

HIRONARI. Nowadays at the feast of Noborie-no-sekko our youngsters tell very different tales.

SEVERAL. Let's hear. Tell us, tell us!

HIRONARI. (*Simply.*) When the war broke out, a young man was called to the colours, who only a few days before had taken to himself a wife. His was a love-match; though they had only been married a couple of days, yet they did not part in tears, but smiling. But after, the soldier was so tortured with a yearning for his wife that he could not think of his country and duty. So on a certain night he

stole back home, stole up to where his wife lay quietly sleeping, kissed her, and then dealt her one mortal stab, so that she changed her world. Then he trudged back to his battalion, and became the best of soldiers. He fell in Manchuria.

YOSH: And who was the man?

HIRONARI. (*With a smile.*) He was my brother.
(*A general murmur. Silence. All smoke cigarettes.*)

KOB. Can you tell us anything else beautiful?

TOK. Will you permit me?

JAPS. Please, please!

TOK. In the war with Russia, at the Battle of Mukden, one of our soldiers lay mortally wounded; his side was rent and his hands both blown off. A surgeon crawled out to where he lay in the zone of fire. He saw the soldier would soon change his world, and asked if he could discharge any dying request for him. The soldier said with a smile "I have no hands to put into my pocket, so will you please, Dr. San, put your hand in and take out two silver coins which are there." The doctor did so, and unwrapped the coins. The soldier said, "Will you please, Dr. San, send those two silver pieces to the Red Cross Society of Russia!" The doctor thought he had heard wrong—that the man spoke in delirium. He bent down to the soldier and said: "You

mean of course the Japanese Red Cross Society?" "No, no," the soldier answered, "The Red Cross of Russia. We have good clever doctors and all we need, but I hear that over there on the other side they are suffering terribly." Then he changed his world.

(Pause, KOBAYASHI and YOSHIKAWA communicate together in undertones.)

KOB. You think that story beautiful, Tokeramo-san?

TOK. I thought it beautiful.

KOB. There is something, Tokeramo, in that story which, whilst admitting your superior ability, I do not quite approve. Do you, Baron Yoshikawa?

YOSH. I do not approve it at all. It is too European. We cannot afford to sympathize with those who oppose Nippon. The soldier who dies for Nippon should rejoice—he should think of his ancestors, of his Heaven-descended Mikado. Do you not agree, Tokeramo-san?

TOK. *(With complete sincerity.)* I defer wholly to your venerable opinion.

KOB. *(Whispering to YOSHIKAWA.)* This is not well. I do fear Europe is telling even on Tokeramo-san. It seems only we older men can quite withstand it.

YOSH. (*In like manner to KOBAYASHI.*) I mean to suggest in my next report that those sent on foreign missions shall not stay so long.

TOK. Kitamaru-san, we have a biwa. Would you play us something and take our hearts back to beautiful Nippon? There, too, it is evening now, and the lamps are beginning to twinkle. . . . Nippon! . . . Nippon!

(One of the Japanese, to the twanging of the biwa, softly sings a Japanese song. All join in. They do not notice the door softly opened and HELÈNE standing there.)

HELÈNE. (*Marvelling at the, to her, inharmonic sounds.*) What are you doing?

TOK. (*Springs up.*) Who's there?

HELÈNE. Only me, dear friend. In the way? *De trop?* Then I'll just clear out.

(The Japanese have risen embarrassed.)

TOK. (*Turns on electric light, passes across to HELÈNE, speaks calmly and deliberately.*) I told you already once, child, that my friends should be with me to-day. A meeting.

HELÈNE. (*Pouts.*) All right—well, as you think more of your friends—all right. If I mean anything at all to you you'd let me squat down with your friends, and give me a cup of tea too. How nice that would be—and how cosy the room is now! You should have it always like this! And those bath-things; but they're fine!

—the very finest silk, aren't they? Where can one buy it? Can you have it sent straight from Japan? Get some for me, will you? Do you promise? Oh, if I were you, I'd never dress in anything else—you look splendid dressed like that. (*Gesture.*) In European clothes—you don't mind my saying so?—you're a teeny bit awkward in them. Somehow all your coat collars seem to stick out at the back. (*Sniffs.*) A nice smell—tea? Real Japanese tea! Somebody give me a cup.

TOK. A little quieter, please, Helène. I have not yet presented these gentlemen to you, Helène.

HELÈNE. Oh, stuff—a lot of nonsense! They're Japs—

TOK. I have told you, Helène, you do not say Japs.

HELÈNE. What'll I say, then? They're your pals, my pals, too; that settles that.

(The Japanese, still somewhat embarrassed, now thaw a little, smile, and bow.)

(To KOBAYASHI, flicking her gloves at him playfully.) Oh, you're a nice old gentleman! I've an uncle in Bordeaux, and he looks quite like you. Tell me, please, how do they treat women in Japan? How would it be if I were to set up to be a Jap?

TOK. Helène!

HELÈNE. (*Remembering his recent rebuke.*) . . .
anese.

KITAMARU. (*Seriously.*) The Japanese woman, mademoiselle, is the first of the world's women. She serves and she ministers to her husband, and is the guardian of the children she bears to her country.

HELÈNE. Pffh! Thank you; not in my line.
(*Turns away.*)

YOSH. (*To TOKERAMO, rather shocked.*) Did you hear her words? Well, do you approve that?

TOK. (*With an indulgent gesture of his hand.*) Oh, of course——

HELÈNE. (*Going to YOTOMO.*) You're always laughing; are you always so jolly?

YOTOMO. Ho! ho!

HELÈNE. (*Starting from him.*) Oh, Lord, how jumpy!

TOK. Don't be alarmed, Helène, he's a poor half-witted lad; he'll do nothing to you. But here is another—fresh and intelligent—just arrived from Japan, Hironari-san.

(HIRONARI advances with evidently a great sense of pride in him. TOKERAMO presents him to HELÈNE, then withdraws, leaving HIRONARI, horribly embarrassed, to converse with HELÈNE.)

HELÈNE. You have only just come from Japan?

HIRON. (*Fidgety and shy like a small boy.*) Two days ago.

HELÈNE. How old are you?

HIRON. Eighteen years.

HELÈNE. A little Jap golliwog. It must be funny to you, this huge Paris, and all the bustle of it. Don't you find it hard to get used to it?

HIRON. (*Despite his embarrassment wanting to stand up for Nippon.*) Not any way. Tokio has just ever so much bustle.

HELÈNE. No.

HIRON. Oh, yes! Tokio is as big as Paris.

HELÈNE. (*Really amazed.*) Really? How funny! I thought there were only tiny houses with tiny little gardens, and tiny little men all running in and out like mice. Tokeramo said Japan was just one huge garden.

HIRON. With fifty million people living in it.

HELÈNE. Really! (*Suddenly realizing the opportunity of finding out something about TOKERAMO and satisfying her insatiable curiosity.*) Tell me, do you know Tokeramo's family? Is he a man who has a wife or fiancée at home?

HIRON. No.

HELÈNE. But he has had a lot of love affairs—come now!

HIRON. Of that I know nothing. Tokeramo is an eminent man and he fills a high station. He occupies himself with the political sciences.

HELÈNE. How jolly! (*Attracted by his ingenuous*

manner.) And you, child, were you ever in love?

HIRON. (*Embarrassed.*) No!

HELÈNE. (*Much interested.*) 'Tisn't true! You've never had anything to do with women? (*She snuggles close to him.*)

HIRON. (*With lowered eyes.*) No.

HELÈNE. (*Finding this most attractive.*) Now you're like a little girl—a little Japanese flapper. (*Bends over him, snuggles up to him.*) Little man, you must promise to say nothing to Tokeramono of what we're talking about. Promise! (*She presses her leg against his, which he instantly withdraws.*)

HIRON. Yes.

HELÈNE. (*Excited.*) Look here, little man, we must manage to meet somewhere—just we two—alone. . . . (*Without looking she reads in HIRONARI'S face the approach of some one from behind her. She instantly turns the conversation.*) And is Japan rich in minerals and all that?

HIRON. Yes.

TOK. (*Much amused*) Well, Helène, have you found out all about Japan?

HELÈNE. Yes; I've to dig out of other people what you won't tell me yourself. Where's my tea—I want my tea.

OMAYI. (*Passes her cup.*) Here, if you please.

HIRON. (*Agitated, whispering to TOKERAMO.*) My honourable friend, what kind of woman is that?

TOK. (*Warily.*) That is a little European geisha.

HIRON. Of yours?

TOK. Yes. You see—yes ; of mine.

HIRON. I must tell you that she a moment ago—
over there—made me unmistakable advances.

TOK. You must not take that seriously. She is
not to be taken seriously at all.

(HELENE, who has been disporting herself
amongst the amazed Japanese, throwing
her body backwards and flapping her arms,
does some steps of the cake-walk, winking at
the two elder Japanese.)

YOSHI. (*In a low voice to KOBAYASHI.*) A horrible
creature! This confirms my suspicions.

Tokeramo-san must be made to give her up.

KOB. If you order so, I will devise a means.

YOSH. Use strategy, but let it be done.

(*The Japanese, having divested themselves of
their kimonos, begin to withdraw.*)

HELENE. Going already? Am I driving you
away?

TOK. Oh, stay a little longer!

JAPANESE. We must be going home.

(*The Japanese have gradually bowed them-
selves out, and been bowed out by
TOKERAMO.*)

HELENE. It's a shame for them to go. They
looked so nice with the room like that; they

just matched the tea. I've driven them all away. And you're angry with me.

(TOKERAMO *denies, but the blankness of his face does certainly not denote pleasure.*)

Oh, yes you are. . . . If only you'd shout at me, shake me, hit me! Oh, you're no good—yes, you are, you're a darling—a darling! (*Throws herself on TOKERAMO'S neck; he submits quietly.*)

TOK. So, what do you want from me now?

HELÈNE. (*Coaxingly.*) Nothing. I came here to you full of love, and you ask me what I want. You know in that kimono you look handsome—really! And now you're alone with a little foreign girl. Am I quite a foreigner to you? No, not quite. No, I love you, and that makes me already half a little Jap—anese girl. I'll be a whole one. Just wait and see. (*Throws off hat and stands before glass.*) It's quite easy—my hair looks very well done Japanese—where's a kimono? (*Wraps herself in it.*) There! Now we'll sit down. No, it wasn't like that that you did it. Now you come too, you nice, dear, straight-haired, slant-eyed angry gentleman. Come along!

TOK. I'm not angry at all, Helène.

HELÈNE. (*Puts her arms round him and kisses him.*) Thank Heaven for that! Now do speak to me right straight from your heart for once.

Oh, with fire ! Don't be so reserved—so shut-up !

TOK. Oh, oh, oh.

HELÈNE. (*She mimics his "oh, oh, oh."*) That cold smile—always that cold, icy smile. Oh, I hate you !—No, I don't. I love you, I love you !

TOK. Perhaps I was not so patient as I should like. But to-day I am a little tired out.

HELÈNE. (*Heartfelt.*) Oh, you are tired, darling. (*Turns off light and sits by him.*) Come now, you shall lay your head in my lap. There. . . . Now I'll kiss your lips. Do you like that ? Now your eyes. There, close them. Did you like Thérèse ?

TOK. What Thérèse ?

HELÈNE. Oh, what Thérèse ? You know—Thérèse who came here with me.

TOK. Oh, yes, I liked her.

HELÈNE. (*Roused.*) Oh, you did, eh ? (*Pushing him out of his recumbent position.*) Anything in petticoats does for you—

TOK. Please, Helène—

HELÈNE. No, I said I'd be good to-day. What makes you so tired, darling ? These people—do they give you a lot to do ? You're the chief amongst them—the highest, aren't you ? You do *that* . . . , and they all scurry about like little puppies. They're so funny.

TOK. Those are good, industrious men, Helène.

HELÈNE. What is it makes them come here to you? What do you all talk about? You ought to tell me everything like you would your wife or your mother.

(TOKERAMO by various devices tries to distract her attention, but HELÈNE will not be put off.)

But you're all of you so shut-up—that's because at home in Japan you live in little houses of wood and paper, and if you blow your nose you can be heard in the next street.

TOK. Where did you hear that?

HELÈNE. (*Rather taken aback.*) Oh, I read it in a book. Do speak out and tell me everything.

TOK. No. . . . I may not.

HELÈNE. You may with me.

TOK. (*With closed eyes, stroking her hands and face, thinking by compliments to divert her curiosity.*) Such soft, dainty little hands—just as if you really were—

HELÈNE. And your hand is so soft too . . . so white . . . and the soft blue veins . . .

TOK. Your big dark eyes and your dear little warm face . . . What's that you have at your bosom—a flower?

HELÈNE. Yes, violets. Perhaps you have prettier flowers in Japan?

TOK. Yes, prettier and more. Everything there is different—so quite different. . . .

HELÈNE. Why do you stop? . . . Tell me, tell me . . . kiss me and tell me quietly.

TOK. (*Speaking for the first time as if from his heart.*) What shall I tell you?

HELÈNE. (*In breathless excitement.*) All, all, my own sweet one, my own . . .

(*Laying her head in his lap.*)

You are in your room in Tokio, and I am a little Japanese girl. And in at the window steals the soft air, heavy with the scent of flowers, and it's twilight . . . and all that's nice. (*This "all that's nice" is a key to the kind of fiction HELÈNE likes best.*)

TOK. Yes, and suddenly a thousand little lamps begin to start up one by one, and the breeze stirs them . . . and I can just see the peach blossoms and cherry blossoms—how thick they are—and they wave dimly amongst the dancing lights . . . and women are being borne along in rickshaws, and musical instruments tinkle . . . tinkle . . .

HELÈNE. (*In a sitting posture.*) Oh, how pretty!
(*Putting her arm round his neck.*)

You never spoke so prettily before. Now tell me all about yourself. Oh, how I love you! how I love you!—everything about yourself.

TOK. (*Pointing towards the window through which are heard the distant rumble of traffic, the toot-toot of motors, etc.*) In that street outside, and in

a thousand streets in a thousand cities men are hurrying past one another, straining each other towards his goal, putting forth their utmost strength and power—and these men are formed into nations—and each man has his aim and each nation has its aim . . . and I and my nation—our aim is one . . . and that aim is entrusted to me. . . . (*A great pride suffuses his features.*)

HELÈNE. Yes, darling—tell me what was entrusted to you. . . . Come now, speak on.

TOK. (*Once more parrying her still unsatisfied curiosity.*) One year and a half I have laboured . . . and I grow a little weary. . . . I need a little rest.

HELÈNE. Yes, in my lap.

TOK. Dear one—dear one—yes, with you.

(*A long kiss.*)

HELÈNE. Now you are mine for the first time, —truly, wholly mine.

TOK. Yes, yes, I am yours. . . .

HELÈNE. Love me, and bind me to you, my dear, my tender darling lover! Tell me all lying in my lap, folded in my arms. (*Triumphant.*) You are in my power!

(*TOKERAMO, in the act of drawing her lips to his, suddenly stops short, comes to himself, gets up, is prosaic, strokes his forehead, and says quietly—*)

TOK. We must have a little light.

(Turns on electric light, puts on glasses, begins to write. HELÈNE, who had thought at last he was going to give her his entire confidence, shows the anger of a spoilt and baffled child. TOKERAMO glances up from his writing once or twice.)

[CURTAIN.]

ACT II

SCENE: *Same as Act I.* TOKERAMO in his gold spectacles, by the light of the reading-lamp, sits copying some important plan, perilously acquired. The wind-bell tinkles. The bell rings. With wary and dexterous alacrity TOKERAMO slips off his glasses, slips his stylograph back into his waistcoat pocket, deposits the plan and the copy into the table drawer, locks it, moves to door, sees the shadow of his two elder compatriots on the glass door panels, to his evident surprise.

TOK. *(As though taken completely and pleasantly unawares, bowing and bowed.)* Good friends, I greet you with all my heart.

KOB. I fear we are bringing your work to a standstill.

TOK. A pause has sometimes a greater value than the work itself.

YOSH. Rather an European point of view.

TOK. Will you be seated and will you be pleased to smoke.

*(The three are seated round writing-table.
An embarrassed pause.)*

KOB. *(Elaborately tentative.)* Tokeramo-san, we would not venture in any way to dictate to you as regards a private matter.

TOK. Please.

KOB. But we entertain a fear that through some channel the objects of your mission here are being penetrated and your actions spied upon.

TOK. (*With very genuine concern.*) Please through what channel?

KOB. Well, through the channel we perhaps thought of—that girl who sometimes visits you here.

TOK. (*With smiling assurance parrying the suggestion, for which the Baron's remarks in Act I had not failed to prepare him.*) No, no; believe me, you are mistaken.

KOB. (*Apologetically affirmative.*) Excuse me, Tokeramo-san, but we gathered that she is in close and almost daily intercourse with that man who so abused Nippon in this room.

TOK. Renard-Beinsky. No, she has told me that she only met him once or twice.

YOSH. (*Icily trenchant.*) She has very likely lied to you.

(*TOKERAMO internally winces.*)

KOB. What we fear is that this Renard-Beinsky may be a police agent.

TOK. I think your suspicions are unfounded.

YOSH. Tokeramo-san, I will speak to you plainly from my heart. Any intimacy between us and the Europeans—whether as between men, much more so as between us and their women—can only end in injury to us, because in every high quality of soul, in every noble virtue, we excel them. Do not you agree, Tokeramo-san?

TOK. I hardly would go as far as that.

YOSH. I am sorry for it. In everything they are beneath us. Except in the use of their destructive weapons, what had they to teach us? And those weapons they invented because of their innate cowardice, because of their utter lack of the true warrior soul. Now we have learnt to turn their weapons on themselves, in what do they excel us? In filial piety? What do they do but wrangle in their families. They have even to form societies to protect their children from barbarous treatment. In politeness? How can there be politeness when gain is their only motive? Have they decency? Their men and women are not ashamed to go arm in arm in the streets; and they exhibit their men and women toying with one another on the public stage. Their women! The highest among them go about with their faces painted like our commonest geishas and in dresses designed to show off every curve of their pampered and bulbous bodies. As for heroism—they cannot understand it.

TOK. They have had great heroes.

YOSH. Not like our heroes. Our noble custom of suicide they call foolish. But I tell you in time of war when the Europeans come on the first Japanese who has killed himself rather than fall into their hands—that act alone is worth more than a million men. Their officers think it no shame to yield themselves prisoners by

the hundred. Are such men antagonists for us? Why! a Japanese girls' school could teach them resolution.

TOK. Baron Yoshikawa, you surely speak with excessive heat.

YOSH. (*With repressed but mounting ire.*) I speak from the heart of ancient Nippon. As one who in his youth has seen our heroic two-sword men blown to pieces by these skulking pirates of the sea.—And the pursuit of a noble vengeance that also is a Japanese virtue. Compared to these men I tell you we truly ARE a Heaven-descended race—confronting our destiny, fearless of death, unheeding of pain. And of these Europeans, their one hope is to see us dragged in the mud of their creed of self before country, of money before honour, of expediency before the lofty self-obliteration of our Bushido. They pray that they may corrupt us.

TOK. (*Softly deprecatory.*) Do you think they concern themselves so much with us?

YOSH. Now you question our position in the world.

TOK. Baron Yoshikawa, you twist my words from their right meaning.

YOSH. I tell you, Tokeramō-san, whatever high mental qualities we may possess, if by a hair's breadth you swerve from the immutable creed of our Bushido, by so much shall we cease to be an ornament to Nippon, and become as it were

a festering *canker* in her side. Please excuse the heat of my expressions.

(TOKERAMO *has been stung to the quick, especially by the last phrase. The involuntary movements of his features and the tensity of his folded arms have alone evinced his inner ferment.*)

(*Stand by bell.*)

TOK. What course do you wish me to pursue?

KOB. (*Very suave.*) Well, Tokeramo San, I happened to run into Renard-Beinsky to-day, and I ventured to tell him that you would like to see him this evening upon an important matter at eight-thirty; it is just that now. I know that if his conversation leads you to realize that he is in intimate relations with this particular girl, and that, in fact, he may be trying to fathom the special nature of your mission here, we know that you will act as one of Nippon's foremost sons is bound to do.

TOK. (*Calm but intending by implication to assert the supreme responsibility entrusted to him by his Government.*) It is well, Kobayashi San, I will now look into the whole matter. (*Rings.*) I will myself test this Monsieur Renard-Beinsky. (GEORGES *knocks.*) Come in. (GEORGES *enters.*) (*Aloud to GEORGES.*) Put out the brandy. (*In a whisper to GEORGES.*) When mademoiselle comes take

her through the back corridor into the drawing-room, and let her wait there, then you can go home. (*Aloud again.*) Also three glasses.

KOB. In two minutes we will turn this European inside out. (*A ring at flat door.*) That's he. His punctuality is suspicious.

TOK. My dear friend, just now you find everything suspicious. (*Putting on spectacles.*)

GEORGES. (*Announces.*) Monsieur Renard-Beinsky.

BEINSKY. (*With a breezy elation not wholly innocent of alcohol.*) Good evening, gentleman.

TOK. (*All smiles.*) Good evening, Monsieur Renard-Beinsky.

BEIN. Monsieur Kobayaski was kind enough to give me your invitation. I hope I am punctual.

TOK. I only hope, Monsieur Renard-Beinsky, I have not interfered with any work of your own.

BEIN. Ah! I just work by fits and starts, when the mood takes me, which isn't often. If I hadn't been here I should have been jabbering literature outside the Café de l'Opéra. I can do that any day of the year.

TOK. I did not wish to let slip, Monsieur Renard-Beinsky, the opportunity of doing you a slight, though I hope a real, service.

BEIN Good Lord! I am curious to know

what kind of a service any one can render me. If you only knew how few things in this world still interest me at all!

TOK. You take an interest in Japanese matters, such as may provide you with material for literature. It is very possible that I shall quite soon leave Paris. (TOKERAMO takes keys from desk.) Before I leave I shall be very glad to place all my knowledge at your disposal—all my papers. (As he throws open the deed-box he turns a scrutinizing look, thoroughly masked under a smile, on BEINSKY.)

BEIN. Oh! really, you allow me . . . ?

(BEINSKY hurries to box.)

TOK. There, please, you will find them all—all neat and in good order. (Turning on the electric light.) Lay aside whatever seems to you of use.

BEIN. (Rummaging hastily, nervously.) I am making such a muddle—I shall put them all in disorder!

TOK. Don't worry! Don't worry!

KOB. (In trepidation at TOKERAMO'S elbow.) But these papers—these statistics——!

TOK. All that is important is under the flooring in my bedroom. (TOKERAMO'S tone subtly suggests and intends to show KOBAYASHI that he understands the spy-suspicion to be merely a blind to conceal some ulterior purpose on his two

countrymen's part.) But as regards his having any secret design on me you were misled. Were it so, in the first place he would have been greatly startled at my openness; in the second, being on his guard, he would not have rushed up to the safe. At least in that respect from that man there is no danger. Now we shall see what our friend finds interesting.

BEIN. (*Brings books, etc., forward to desk, opens one.*) Ah, that's very pretty!

TOK. That is just an album of drawings. Now here is a statistical study of my own. . . .

BEIN. Statistics—give them to Dupont. No, these drawings here — beautiful — delicate — original——

TOK. Types of Japanese womanhood.

BEIN. A good title. I like it. Could you get me permission to reproduce these drawings? I could write the text.

TOK. Of course. And please accept the book as a little token of my regard! (*Proffering it to BEINSKY.*)

BEIN. You are a good chap! My publisher will be delighted. A new book—there's nothing so bucks me up; I feel quite inspired. May I have a cigarette?

(*A ring at the outer door.*)

TOK. Please.

BEIN. (*Smoking vigorously.*) I think we might put the rest back! (*Does so.*)

KOB. (*Suspecting who has arrived.*) Some one rang!

TOK. (*Having really very well heard it.*) I did not hear it.

KOB. (*Not taken in by TOKERAMO.*) I did hear it. (*Steps towards door.*)

TOK. Don't bother. No doubt a mistake. If any one came Georges would at once hear them. (*Both have deciphered the thoughts of the other, but the matter is allowed to drop.*)

YOSH. (*Intending to lure BEINSKY into admissions.*) Monsieur Renard-Beinsky, may I offer you a drop of brandy?

BEIN. Brandy! Ah, yes. (*Crosses eagerly to the stimulant.*)

YOSH. (*Filling the three glasses.*) To the success of the new book!

BEIN. Types of Japanese womanhood—God bless 'em! (*He drinks; during the following scene behind BEINSKY'S back YOSHIKAWA keeps on filling up his glass, which BEINSKY, half-unconsciously, by force of habit, keeps on emptying.*)

KOB. If I may be allowed to ask—what was it made you first interest yourself in Japanese matters?—what inflicted upon us the honour of your society?

BEIN. Inflicted?

KOB. Have I said something wrong?

TOK. You should have said bestowed.

BEIN. No, no, I like inflicted; inflicted is good.

Well, to tell the truth, it was one of the opposite sex.

KOB. (*Cautiously.*) A lady?

BEIN. Yes, yes—a girl of sorts; something found only in Europe. Have you had much to do with women here?

KOB. Consider, I am the father of family, and no longer young man!

BEIN. You see at that time she was very much gone on one of you. A crazy business; but it's all smoothed over now. I'm going to marry her.

KOB. What, the same lady that was so kind to draw your attention to us? How interesting!

BEIN. You see at that time she told me that she had a Japanese friend who belonged to your set. And I got tearingly jealous. And that was the reason I came here that first time—and made such an objectionable ass of myself. . . . But now it turns out it was not she at all, but a friend of hers, who had a love affair with one of you. That's how she came to know all about you. And through this friend she got hold of a lot of Japanese letters——

KOB. What sort of Japanese letters?

BEIN. Papers of sorts—a lot of rubbish. I threw them into the fire.

KOB. Really. So it seems that one of us was on intimate terms with a friend of your friend?

BEIN. With Thérèse Mehnier—you know her, I think?

TOK. No! (*Sits in arm-chair below settee.*)

BEIN. Get to know her—take the tip from me. She's friendly with one of you; get her away from him.

KOB. But I had no idea there was amongst us such a Don Juan!

TOK. I think, my friend, your curiosity. . . .

BEIN. No. I like discussing women. It's the only thing on earth that interests me.

TOK. And your new book.

BEIN. Oh, come—a book. That's a very poor second. A beautiful, living, subtle, passionate, loving young woman—what else is worth living for? And my little girl—there's a woman, I tell you, slight, Titian hair, wild, hysterical, unaccountable, adorable, precious, cruel, good-hearted—the most astounding woman, dear sirs—the most exalted, or the most degraded, who knows. Here's to Helène! Helène of Troy or Helène of Paris! Or Paris's Helène. Quite a good pun, that, eh?

KOB. To Helène, your future bride!

(Appears about to drink, but covertly tilts the contents of his glass into a flower-bowl. They have attained their end. TOKERAMO knows that HELÈNE has been deceiving him about this BEINSKY.)

BEIN. Helène, my future bride! . . . Why have you got so silent? Come, Dr. Tokeramo, you'll have a glass of brandy?

TOK. Many thanks, monsieur. (*Takes up bottle.*)
It is—see—empty!

BEIN. (*Laughs; he is slightly intoxicated.*) I've emptied it all to myself.

TOK. We'll open another.

BEIN. No, no! I'm just mellow—perhaps a trifle over mellow. What's the time?

TOK. Half-past eight.

BEIN. Then I must be off!

TOK. I may expect the pleasure of seeing you here again?

BEIN. Yes. Directly the book's done. Interesting little book—it'll be an interesting little book. May I have another cigarette? (*Smokes.*) Life isn't really so very rotten. No, no, by Jupiter! Thank you ever so much for the book of pictures, monsieur. You've been damned good to me. (*Getting rather maudlin.*) You're a damned good sort . . . a damned good sort. . . .

(*Moves towards door leading to room in which
HELÈNE is waiting.*)

TOK. (*Directing him.*) This way, please; this is the way out!

BEIN. You're a damned good sort.

(*BEINSKY goes out muttering, "You're a damned good sort, you're a damned good sort." Door heard to slam.*)

TOK. (*In a low voice, with perfectly genuine feeling, bowing low.*) I thank you.

KOB. (*Softly, indulgently.*) Tokeramo-san, it had to be done.

TOK. Yes, now I see it—it had to be done. At home our brothers are toiling and striving, whilst I—I—am . . . (*He shakes his head, and between his tight-shut lips emits a low murmuring sound of self-condemnation.*)

KOB. (*Puts his hand on TOKERAMO.*) Tokeramo-san, it is a small matter. Once we recognize the danger, we need no longer fear it. (*Glancing in the direction where he guesses HELÈNE to be.*) We thrust it out of the way.

YOSH. It can easily be thrust out of the way, can't it?

TOK. It must be done easily.

KOB. (*Warmly.*) Our blessing on you, brother!

TOK. (*With perfect sincerity.*) My thanks go with you, old friends.

(*More bowing, and TOKERAMO is left alone. He reflects a moment, goes to door, opens it, and calls out.*)

Helène!

(*HELÈNE sweeps in. She is in evening-dress, hat and gloves on, a long scarf round her neck.*)

HELÈNE. Ah, thank Heaven, at last! Nice of you making me wait all this time! And why was I locked in? (*Takes up brandy-bottle. Laughs.*) And why don't you say something?

Ah, you horrible man! Loathsome—yes, that's what you are, loathsome—when you look like that. . . . My dear little black-haired darling, I'll stay with you to-day, shall I? You're glad, aren't you? Be glad, monster! (*She goes to writing-table, and starts taking her hat and gloves off.*)

TOK. (*Ominously quiet and motionless.*) You shall not stay here, Helène!

HELÈNE. (*Staggered, but only for a moment.*)
Easily said. I do stay here, so there!
(*Quickly taking off gloves and hat.*)

TOK. You cannot stay. Put them on again.

HELÈNE. (*Astonished—looks questioningly at him—nearly crying.*) What do you mean?

TOK. Go now—and come back here never again.

HELÈNE. Never again?

TOK. Never again!

HELÈNE. Why? (*She is dismayed: all her vague hopes are dispelled in an instant: she feels that this gentle alien at one wrench has torn away all the webs in which she had striven to enmesh him: her future grows utterly dark; she suffers greatly.*)

TOK. I would not say to you one angry word, Helène. I want to the very last to be good to you. Therefore I only say we must see each other no more.

(*TOKERAMO silent, biting his lips together.*)

HELÈNE. (*She pulls herself together; his soft disclaimer gives her strength.*) Look here! I'm

not the sort you can chuck out like so much dirty water ; do you understand ? You don't get quit of me that way. No one can—no one. Much less—you can't kick me out like a dog.

TOK. I am not doing what you say. If you want money, I will give it to you.

HELÈNE. (*With returning confidence.*) Well, we'll leave that till another time—till I want to leave you. But now I don't want your money. Be careful I don't get you all—all of you—hunted out of here——

TOK. Be off from here ! (*With sudden and menacing harshness, which he instantly repents of and fights down.*)

HELÈNE. (*Cowed, suddenly submissive.*) Very well—I'll go. You've work to do, and you feel out of sorts—I see, my dear. I won't be a bother to you. (*Pause.*) I'll come again to-morrow or the next day. (*Suddenly animated, affectionately.*) Or even to-night. (*She tries to kiss TOKERAMO ; he steps back.*) By then you'll have finished your work. (*Pause.*) Or I'll creep away into a little corner and lie rolled up like a little dormouse till you've finished. Look, I can scrunch myself all up together in a tiny little space—like a sparrow. Please to kiss me good-bye.

TOK. (*More softly.*) No, Helène, it cannot be ; you must go from here.

HELÈNE. (*Paces distractedly ; her dismay being sincere but her expression of it partly histri-*

onic.) There, there ! Didn't I know it ! That you did not love me. Then how could you have taken everything from me ? You knew it wasn't for your money I loved you. (*Apprehensive again.*) It is you I want ; you with your nice black hair and your pretty colour, my Japanese darling. (*Goes to embrace him ; he repulses her.*) Don't be horrid to me, sweetheart. Don't tease me any more or I shall begin to cry. You know all my thoughts and feelings they are yours—always—only !

TOK. (*Calmly gazing at her head bowed on arm of settee.*) Why do you lie ?

HELÈNE. I tell you the truth—I swear it.

TOK. That is impossible. You have betrayed me.

You have passed on papers of mine to another.

HELÈNE. Papers ! . . . Some rubbishy old letters—just for fun. . . . Are you going to spoil my life for that ?

TOK. Also you have deceived me. (*Makes exclamation through clenched lips, nodding his head.*)

HELÈNE. I have deceived you—I ! (*Rises up theatrically.*)

TOK. You have.

HELÈNE. And more than once ! There ! so there !

TOK. (*Moving to door.*) Now you know why you must go.

HELÈNE. (*Shams despair, gripping his two arms.*)

Does that prove that I don't love you ?

TOK. Does it not ?

HELÈNE. Are you quite blind? Didn't you see—didn't you feel that I wanted to break away from you—to tear myself away from you? I didn't care how, I didn't care with whom. I knew sooner or later you'd chuck me off mercilessly. (*Walks to and fro.*) And you will never find a woman who will love you as I loved you; though you gave me only the second or third place in your affections. Ahead of me came all your queer nameless schemes and plans . . .

TOK. Them you cannot understand.

HELÈNE. (*Wildly.*) Madness, sheer madness!

TOK. (*Proudly drawing a deep breath.*) My life's aims!

HELÈNE. A man to ruin his life—and my life too. Life's aims! Give up a fine young life for that, and spoil mine too for that. You're a clever man—think, think what you're throwing over. Why, Beinsky would have married me—pines to now—just as I am—past and all—just as I am. Then why, do you think, when a man offers me the greatest honour a man can offer to a woman—why do I always come back to you? Have you thought about that? (*Goes down on her knees.*) I'll be your servant—your obedient, uncomplaining servant. And perhaps I shall be able to help you. Keep me by you—don't send me away—(*kisses TOKERAMO's hand*)—don't send me away from you—— (*TOKERAMO gazes down at her convulsed and tear-stained face. Some-*

thing begins to plead within against his sense of duty—the injunction of his compatriots.)

TOK. (*Trying to loosen her arms.*) No, no it cannot . . . go on . . . it cannot . . . you have deceived me!

HELÈNE. No! . . . it's not true . . . not true!

TOK. He said it himself!

HELÈNE. (*Leaping to her feet.*) Then he's a liar! He said it to get me away from you. . . to get me to desert you . . .

TOK. You just now acknowledged it!

HELÈNE. I! How do I know what I am saying! I tell you it isn't true. (*HELÈNE takes TOKERAMO by the arms.*) Only one thing's true—that I love you—that I love you!

(*TOKERAMO looks at her perplexed and doubtful.*)

Tokeramo, at this moment our whole fate is decided. If you don't believe me now—if you doubt me now—now that for once I have spoken to you right straight from my very heart—if now you do not believe me—then you have lost me for ever—lost me for ever and ever! (*Holds her breath and stares at him.*)

(*Pause.*)

TOK. (*Speaking as one in a dream.*) I would like to—to believe you. (*Making a violent effort to regain his self-mastery.*) But I cannot—I must not—it would destroy me!

HELÈNE. (*Very soothingly, sitting and drawing TOKERAMO down to his knees.*) Ah, how you suffer! How you torture yourself! Where is all your beautiful happy peace—your clear, wise, sensible understanding? Rest yourself here in my lap.

(*She draws him to her on sofa, strokes his head as she would a child's. She feels she will soon conquer, have this man in her power. Now she is the forceful little woman—an actress calculating, observant.*)

TOK. (*Raising his face distorted and ruddled with conflicting emotions.*) It is my ruin, Helène. I cannot leave you—I cannot send you away. Now you are more to me than anything, Helène . . . I am lost. . . I am lost. . . Nippon, Nippon. . .

HELÈNE. (*Laughs.*) So at last you suffer too! And you would cast me off! You—you—you! (*Springs up.*) You would have kicked me out—kicked me out—!

(*TOKERAMO catches her by the wrist; she throws him off.*)

TOK. Helène!

HELÈNE. Spurned me, and kicked me out like a puppy-dog!

TOK. (*Implores.*) Helène!

HELÈNE. Don't whine! (*A short lull supervenes in her rage: raillery takes its place.*) See! Where's the fuss! Perhaps I'll be kind to you—per

haps I'll take pity on you—maybe I'll stay with you. . . if you beg me very nicely—if you behave prettily.

TOK. (*Bewildered.*) Helène, what has come to you? Don't joke now—you must not now. Say, do you love me?

HELÈNE. (*Bursts out laughing.*) No!

TOK. But then—then—what was all this?

HELÈNE. (*Laughs.*) Fooling!

TOK. Fooling? . . . fool. . . (*passes his hand over his head—then goes to her like one to whom the whole thing seems a horrible joke—he would take her in his arms passionately.*) Helène—Helène!

HELÈNE. (*Pushes him away.*) Leave me alone!

TOK. (*Still with hope.*) Helène!

HELÈNE. Let me alone—do you hear?

TOK. Then what—what do you want?

HELÈNE. Nothing—you make me sick! You give me the creeps, booby! Do you understand now? You're utterly disgusting!

TOK. But why?

HELÈNE. Because you're dirty. (*TOKERAMO emits an ominous growling sound.*) Look in the glass—if you want to know.

TOK. (*In a passion.*) You. . . .

HELÈNE. Quiet, you—lizard! Don't roar! 'Sh! 'sh!—quiet, quiet! Grin, little dog, grin! You must take it all quietly. You would have kicked me out! You! You must grow a little to do that.

TOK. (*Throwing open the doors.*) Now—go!

HELÈNE. I'm going—going of myself. Because I wish to. Because I chuck you. I don't like you. (*Crosses to TOKERAMO.*) You're weak and a blackguard, too. Just like all the others. But I don't like you. Never—never cared a curse about you. (*Snaps fingers in TOKERAMO'S face.*) Then why have I done it, eh! For money! But now I am going to marry. (*Quite hysterical.*) Now I give you the chuck! (*Throws down muff and hat, keeps gloves.*)

TOK. (*Roused to the highest pitch.*) Get out—go—go!

HELÈNE. Quiet, little monkey!

TOK. Go!

HELÈNE. Beast!

TOK. Go!

HELÈNE. Disgusting! (*With quite hysterical laughter.*) Ha!—so you're shaken out of yourself *at last—at last* I've wakened you up, Beast——

TOK. Stop!

HELÈNE. (*Like a child throwing squibs into a bonfire.*) Disgusting——

TOK. Stop!!

HELÈNE. Lizard—monkey!

(*TOKERAMO is quite beside himself, his head tilted on one side, his knees trembling.*

HELÈNE, facing him, aggravates him further, with wide-open eyes, smiling mouth, quivering nostrils. She feels a desire to hold him on the rack and torture him.)

TOK. (*In a voice no longer human.*) Stop ! Silence !
Silence !

HELÈNE. You—you ape—you !

TOK. (*Gasping.*) Silence !

HELÈNE. Pooh ! Filth ! Look at you—look at you ! (*Distends her eyes with her fingers burlesqueing Japanese features.*)

TOK. (*Gasps.*) You !

(*As a supreme insult HELÈNE flings her rolled-up gloves at the picture of the Mikado. At this outrage TOKERAMO'S passion bursts all bounds. He goes slowly to her, reeling—raises his hands ready to strangle ; they tremble, the fingers like stiff claws. HELÈNE, terrified now, looks at him with wild eyes, tries to speak ; the words die on her lips ; a look of deathly fear passes over her face ; she moves heavily towards the alcove.*)

HELÈNE. N—n—no . . . I . . . I . . . I—love you. . . .

(*She would flee into bedroom. TOKERAMO is upon her and swings her round, and grasping her scarf in his two crossed hands, with one lunge forward, driving his knuckles against the sides of her neck, he takes her life. They disappear through the bedroom curtains.*)

(*A pause.*)

(*TOKERAMO reappears ; slowly his frenzy sub-*

sides. He is recalled to himself by the tinkle of the wind-bell ; he moves unsteadily to the window and lowers the blind . . . stands dazed . . . he remembers the telephone ; the immediately necessary step of summoning his countrymen flashes upon him.)

TOK. Are you there?—3827 Sud——please—thanks. The Maréchal boarding-house? . . . I'm Tokeramo . . . Dr. Tokeramo. Is Baron Yoshikawa at home? . . . Yes, please, Baron Yoshikawa. . . . Thanks! . . . *(His eyes fall on HELENE'S hat and muff ; he puts them from him.)* Baron Yoshikawa? . . . yes—Tokeramo! Are you all at home? Yes! . . . Come all of you—all—to me at once. No, nothing of importance. Only I must see you all at once—without fail. Take taxi-cabs. Yes, at once.

(Hangs up receiver, sinks back ; then moves towards curtains. Bell rings. TOKERAMO stands stock still. Bell again.)

BEIN. *(From outside door.)* Tokeramo, Tokeramo! It's me, Beinsky! . . . *(Shakes door-handle.)* I've forgotten my book. *(Kicks and pushes door.)* Are you out? *(More noise of kicking at door.)* Damn it, he's out!

(BEINSKY heard to withdraw. TOKERAMO sits by table—takes out watch. Taxis heard to draw up. TOKERAMO evinces something akin to relief at the arrival of

his countrymen. He smooths his hair and tidies his clothes. Goes out of the room to open the outer door. Japanese heard speaking gaily in hall. Sudden silence. Japanese all enter, evidently perturbed. TOKERAMO follows them into room and locks door. The Japanese are grouped in the middle of the room, expectant, but quite calm.)

YOSH. Now we are all assembled, Tokeramosan, in accordance with your wish.

TOK. Thank you, good friends, thank you. There has suddenly arisen something. . . . I wished to acquaint you with it—all of you! I can no longer carry on my mission. I here deliver it up to you.

(He is silent; emotion prevents him speaking further. The Japanese stand quite silent, serious, expectant.)

YOSH. Is it a physical ill—your health?

TOK. No, I am going to tell you—but please a little patience. . . . *(Short pause, he regains his self-control.)* I don't know how it could have happened. I did not control myself. You all knew that girl who sometimes used to visit me. She came again to-day. Kobayashi-san knows the matters that led up to it.

YOSH. We both know them; and after?

TOK. She so kept goading me that I lost my

head—entirely lost it—I fell upon her—and—
and——

KOB. You turned her out ?

TOK. No.

YOSH. You killed her ?

TOK. Yes. . . .

YOSH. Where is she ?

TOK. (*With a vague gesture.*) There !

(*Movement among the Japanese.*)

YOSH. (*Signing for silence.*) Dr. Kitamaru ! (KITAMARU and OMAI come forward.) Examine her ! Don't move ! (*To the others.*) (KITAMARU and OMAI go into alcove.) We must keep quite calm. Tokeramo-san, you also must keep calm.

OMAI. (*Comes forward.*) Strangulation—instantaneous strangulation. One grip sufficed !

YOSH. So ! Now we must weigh matters carefully.

TOK. To—have—done—that !

YOSH. 'Sh ! Keep calm ! The creature had to be disposed of—she is disposed of !

KOB. Something must be done with the body. I must disappear.

YOSH. No !—search will be made for her. Clues will lead here, and then Tokeramo-san will be arrested. No !

OMAI. But if Tokeramo-san, this very night—now at once—starts for Nippon ?

JAPANESE. Yes, yes, yes.

TOK. I cannot go back to Nippon. I had here a task, I had not fulfilled it. Better prison—or death!

JAPANESE. (*Softly.*) Yes, yes, he's right—yes!

YOSH. Now keep calm. Tokeramo-san is quite right! We must find some other way out!

TOK. I must give myself up.

YOSH. No, that is what we must avoid. To you the greatest task is allotted. You must be able to complete your work in peace. You must be got out of this dilemma. That is what we are here for. Omayi-san and you, Yamoshi-san, you are both lawyers—advise us, tell us how we must act to safeguard Tokeramo-san. We place ourselves in your hands.

KOB. Is the front door locked?

TOK. Yes, I locked it.

KOB. Is the back door closed?

TOK. Yes, I think so. (*One goes off to make sure and soon returns.*)

OMAYI. (*To TOKERAMO.*) Was any one else here when it occurred?

TOK. No, no one.

OMAYI. Was your servant in?

TOK. No, he had gone home.

KOB. (*Apart to YOSHIKAWA.*) I have managed the whole thing badly.

YOSH. (*Apart to KOBAYASHI.*) Oh, no!

KOB. Yes—I ought to have killed her.

YOSH. Yes—that would have been better.

(*Pause, then eagerly.*) See, I have the solution. This! that—one—of us—who can better serve Nippon by replacing Tokeramo-san than by continuing his own work, shall take the deed upon himself. Who is ready to do so?

JAPANESE. (*As one man; inspired.*) I . . . I . . . !

YOSH. We are all ready!

TOK. No—that I cannot allow!

YOSH. (*Astonished.*) Tokeramo-san, would you then behave differently in like circumstances? What follows now is not your concern; leave it wholly to us. Our best way will be to cast lots.

(*YOSHIKAWA, KOBAYASHI, and OMAI seat themselves at the writing-table, as Generals might do at a council of war; the remainder stand around them in a group. TOKERAMO is apart on the sofa.*)

ALL JAPANESE. Yes, yes. Cast lots.

AMAMARI. (*Coming forward, bows.*) Pardon me, Baron Yoshikawa, but that I think is quite unnecessary. I am an engineer, and my friend Miyake San is the same. He is the greater expert. It will be enough if henceforth only one Japanese studies engineering. I beg you—let me assume this act. I will do so with joy.

ALL JAPANESE. No, let me—let me.

MIYAKE. No—I—let me—I beg you!

YOSH. Calmly! We must weigh everything.

KOB. Consider, Baron Yoshikawa, these are all young men. How greatly they still have to toil and suffer for Nippon. I am old ; there is little ahead of me now ; let me undertake it.

YOSH. You are right, Kobayashi-san—we are the two old men here—yet I am older than thou—I will. . . .

JAPANESE. No—not you—not you. . . .

YOSH. Calmly—all calmly !

OMAYI. The doer of such a deed. . . .

YOSH. Hear Omayi-san !

OMAYI. . . . would be of necessity a young man and he should know the law so that he may bear himself well in court. Being a lawyer, I am the most suitable. Let me.

JAPANESE. We will casts lots—lots !

YOSH. (HIRONARI *goes to YOSHIKAWA.*) What would you, my son ?

HIR. (*Spoken with much diffidence at first but gradually rising to an exalted pitch of supplication.*) Friends, brothers (*bows*), permit me also to say a word. Each of you has his task here, his mission ; also his wife and children at home. I came here to pass away the time. I have nothing to perform here. Yes, I feel shame when I'm amongst you. And I burn with zeal to do some service to you—and through you to Nippon. I—I have waited, oh ! so long for such a chance as this. At twelve I wanted to go to the war ; I was forbidden. But now I'm

grown up—ripe for some deed of merit. You will fill me with happiness if you single me out and confide to me this trust. You should not deny this to a young man whom it would make happy . . . you should not—no, you ought not to deny it to me. (*Casting himself on his knees with head bowed to the ground.*)

TOK. (*Having stood broken up a little way away from the group, sunk in thought, now HIRONARI'S spirited words recall him to himself. He goes to him, raises HIRONARI.*) My good good lad—no, you cannot—you must not. Your beautiful blossoming youth. . . .

HIR. It is to help you, Tokeramo-san, and through you Nippon.

TOK. No, you must not. Do not allow this child. . . .

YOSH. (*An astounded rebuke.*) Tokeramo-san—I do not understand you. We can only rejoice over the spirit of heroism that is in this child. (*To HIRONARI.*) Dear son, be this task confided to you. (*In numb submission to the ethics of his race TOKERAMO moves again to one side.*)

HIR. (*Foyfully.*) I thank you—I thank you. And now tell me what I must do!

OMAYI. In a few minutes we must all, Tokeramo-san and all of us, leave here cautiously by the back door, you alone remaining. There is the telephone, when you are alone you will ring up the police. When they come in answer

to your call you will give yourself up. You will relate that you came into Tokeramo's apartments. . . .

YOSH. 'Sh! Softly!

OMAYI. . . . You did not find him in . . . now attend all—for you must all keep to the same story.

(OMAYI in one corner gives instructions to Japanese gathered round him. TOKERAMO stands apart, gaping dismally before him.)

YOSH. (Goes to TOKERAMO, lays his hand on his shoulder. TOKERAMO starts.) My dearest friend—your work can go forward. We are settling everything. Dismiss her, my son, utterly from your mind—the vermin! (Joins the Japanese group, laying his hand approvingly on HIRONARI.)

TOK. (Standing apart his rigid look fades, his eyes fill with tears which run down his cheeks, his mouth is distorted with crying, his lips tremble.) . . . Helène! Helène!

[CURTAIN.]

(The curtain rises again, showing HIRONARI with a sergent-de-ville at either side of him, another holding the door open; a police commissary looking off into the bedroom.)

ACT III

SCENE: *The room of an investigating judge in the Palais de Justice. Windows with neatly arranged green curtains, a green carpet under the long table, at one of which is the judge's arm-chair; other chairs about the table. Two smaller tables, one for the usher the other for the judge, who takes down the evidence. On the usher's table are the hat, muff, and gloves worn by HELÈNE in Act II. At the back are folding doors leading to the room in which the witnesses are waiting; at the right and left are smaller doors leading respectively to the prisoner's room, and through a waiting-room into other parts at the Palais de Justice. A clock against one wall.)*

(BENOIT, the investigating judge, enters in a hat and light overcoat, with a portfolio under his arm. He is a portly, elderly man, with a bustling active manner, a great fund of self-appreciation, fond of making little jokes, and always leading the laugh at them. He has the rapid, clean-cut gestures of a Frenchman, and a considerable share of real perspicuity.)

BENOIT. (*Speaking to some one in the room he has just come out of.*) If you're in any difficulty, my dear colleague, just pop in. You won't be disturbing me at all. I always have time for a colleague.

(Closes door; helped off with overcoat, relieved of his hat by USHER, who hangs them up.)

CLERK. (Having risen as BENOIT entered.) Good-day, Monsieur le Juge.

BENOIT. Good-day, Simon, good-day. A little late. My new colleague next door, he's examining a complicated fraud—rather out of his depth. An investigating judge, my dear Simon, has to know a little of everything. (Comfortably seating himself.) And now for our Japanese mystery.

CLERK. (Arranging papers.) I don't think there's much mystery about it.

BENOIT. (Taking a cigar out of his case and lighting it.) Not on the surface, but there's a mystery underneath and I'm going to tackle it.

CLERK. Here is a list of witnesses.

BENOIT. (Smoking.) Nearly all Japanese, and they volunteer their evidence. A truly obliging race.

CLERK. The prisoner is with his counsel now.

BENOIT. Ah, he has at last chosen a counsel, has he?

CLERK. Here is his card.

BENOIT. (Reads.) Yamoshi, Doctor of Laws.

CLERK. And here is a letter from the Japanese Consulate recommending a gentleman as interpreter; he's now in the witnesses' room.

BENOIT. Excellent, excellent. (To USHER.) Bring in the Doctor of Laws and the Interpreter.

(*The two men are brought in; both are familiar to the audience; the interpreter being KOBAYASHI.*)

(*Referring to his card, rising from chair.*)
 Monsieur le Docteur Yamoshi. I am delighted that the prisoner Hironari has at last seen the wisdom of being represented by counsel. (*Shakes hands with YAMOSHI, eyeing him with amused curiosity.*) The best of us may be apt to let judicial zeal outrun judicial impartiality. (*With a smile of possible sarcastic intent.*) So please sit there and watch us closely. (YAMOSHI is handed a chair by the CLERK.) I will now resume the prisoner's interrogatory. Bring in the prisoner.

(USHER goes to do so. BENOIT turns to YAMOSHI, offering him at the same time a cigar.)

Tell me, monsieur, do you contest the truth of the prisoner's confession? (*Cigar declined.*)

YAM. Oh, no, no.

BENOIT. You think it is true?

YAM. Oh, beyond a doubt, do not you, Monsieur le Juge?

(The prisoner has been brought in between two gardes republicanes.)

BENOIT. Well, not beyond a doubt.

YAM. *(Leaning forward to BENOIT.)* My line of defence will be that he is open to violent impulses and not strong in the head.

BENOIT. *(Looking at HIRONARI.)* He made no such impression on me yesterday. Come forward. *(HIRONARI brought forward. BENOIT moves over to CLERK'S table.)* Interpreter, please sit here, we may require your assistance. *(KOBAYASHI sits.) (Dictating to CLERK.)* On this 14th . . . 15th day of June, 1912, was resumed before us, Benoit, Investigating Judge, the interrogatory of Hironari Inose, accused of murder on April 12th of the same year upon the person of Helène Laroche. *(BENOIT returning to arm-chair.)* Now, accused, do you still adhere to the confession you made yesterday?

HIRO. *(Firmly.)* I do.

BENOIT. Do you wish to add or retract anything?

HIRO. No, nothing.

BENOIT. You say that after Helène Laroche had been admitted by you to Dr. Tokeramo's flat, where you were waiting for this Dr. Tokeramo to come in—you say that you did not close the door after her, that it was open during and after the murder and remained open until the police

came at your summons to arrest you. Is that what you say?

HIRO. Yes.

BENOIT. (*Unctuously, with a very broad smile raising his eyebrows and leaning forward,*) Then it will surprise you to learn that the Commissary of Police and the four men with him all swear that they found the door chained and hasped, the two who came by the back way, which was open, having to admit the other three by the front. Explain that.

(*Pause.*)

HIRO. I was so excited. I do not well know what I did.

BENOIT. Very good. You also say that the quarrel that led up to the fatal act started the moment you admitted Helène Laroche and that within a minute or two of her entrance in your jealous frenzy you had killed her. That is what you say?

HIRO. (*After a hesitation.*) Yes.

BENOIT. Then please account for the hat and muff of the deceased being found on the table, her gloves in front of the fireplace, the gloves neatly *rolled-up*. Either during what you describe as most furious quarrel the deceased unpins, takes off, and lays down her hat, takes off, *rolls-up* and throws aside her gloves — ? (*Interrupting his own question.*) Did she do so?

HIRO. No, she did not.

BENOIT. Then in that case you must have taken them off the body after the commission of the crime—(*turning with bland self-satisfaction to YAMOSHI*)—which seems to me conduct illogical to the verge of impossibility.

YAM. The prisoner seems not quite to understand. Might he be told in Japanese?

BENOIT. By all means, Interpreter!

(KOBAYASHI *speaks in Japanese to HIRONARI, who answers. During which BENOIT turns to CLERK and says :*)

Have you got that down?

KOB. He thinks the hat fell off in the struggle. He says he hears noises in his head and does not know what he is doing. (HIRONARI, *at KOBAYASHI'S instructions, has begun to assume a dazed and rather idiotic manner.*)

BENOIT. He seemed peculiarly self-possessed yesterday. I suppose his mental system varies with his system of defence. Remove the prisoner. I will conclude his interrogatory later.

HIRON. (*As he is taken away.*) I am guilty. Punish me.

(BENOIT *waves his hand. HIRONARI disappears.*)

YAMOSHI. May I confer with the prisoner?

BENOIT. Certainly.

(YAMOSHI *follows prisoner out.*)

Call Dr. Tokeramo.

(USHER *does so.* BENOIT *throws himself back, puffing at his cigar.* To CLERK.)

There is something here that I haven't fathomed . . . something very odd.

(DR. TOKERAMO *has entered.*)

Be seated. Your name, first name, age, religion, and occupation?

TOK: Tokeramo—Nitcobe—32—Buddhist religion.

BENOIT. And occupation?

TOK. Linguist.

BENOIT. You swear to speak the truth and nothing but the truth. Say "I swear it."

TOK. I swear it.

BENOIT. You are in no way related or connected with the accused; you are not in his employ nor he in yours?

TOK. No.

BENOIT. This crime was committed in your apartments?

TOK. Yes.

BENOIT. On the night of the murder you had gone out—at what time?

TOK. At about 8.30, just after I had received the visit of a gentleman named Renard-Beinsky.

BENOIT. He is cited as a witness. (*Referring to paper.*) Were you well acquainted with the murdered woman?

TOK. No, not well. She came once or twice to see me—on some pretext or other.

BENOIT. And the accused—were you well acquainted with him?

TOK. Not well—a little.

BENOIT. He is an intelligent and capable young man according to Japanese standards?

TOK. (*Showing a concern in contrast to the apparent impassiveness of his other answers.*) No. I think he is not strong in his head—not responsible quite.

BENOIT (*With veiled sarcasm.*) You think that? Have you spoken of this case with any other Japanese?

TOK. No, I have not.

BENOIT. Then what were you talking of together in the waiting-room? I suppose you did talk together?

TOK. We Japanese we do not talk a great lot.

BENOIT. Hum! You recognize that hat, muff, and gloves as having belonged to the murdered woman?

(*Pause.*)

Hand them to the witness.

(*USHER brings down hat, muff, and gloves. Painful, horrible, remorseful recollections surge into TOKERAMO'S mind.*)

Do you recognize them? Take them in your hands.

TOK. (*Holding the mute accusatory objects, for a moment forgetting where he is, thrown off his guard.*)

They were Helène's . . .

BENOIT. (*Looking up from paper, taking him up sharply.*) Helène's?

TOK. (*Sheltering his emotions behind a broad smile.*)
The murdered woman's.

BENOIT. You seem to be labouring under some strong emotion.

TOK. I have lately been ill. May I withdraw?

BENOIT. One moment. On the night of the murder this hat and muff were on your writing-table—was the hat any more crumpled than it is now? Look at it.

TOK. I hardly remember. I do not think so.

BENOIT. You may now withdraw, but you must not go away. Your interrogatory will be read over to you and you will sign it.

(*TOKERAMO goes out, casting a glance back at the muff, etc., now replaced on the CLERK'S table. BENOIT gets up, goes to small table at back, mixes himself some claret and water, takes list with him.*)

Call the witness Renard-Beinsky. (*To CLERK.*)

That man knows something. . . .

CLERK. He seemed to keep something back.

BENOIT. Yes; "Helène" he called her and he'd seen her only once or twice. . . . I haven't got the thread of this affair. . . .

USHER. (*Speaking in doorway of witnesses' room.*)
The witness Renard-Beinsky has not arrived yet.

BENOIT. He was summoned for eleven o'clock. What does he mean by it? (*Referring to paper.*)
Call Thérèse Meunier. . . .

(*THÉRÈSE appears in a pitifully nervous condition. Behind her is a scowling, perturbed group of Japanese.*)

(*Reads from paper.*) Meunier, Thérèse, 25, Catholic Religion, actress.) (*He glances up.*)
She looks it—smells of it. Keep out those other witnesses. What are they pressing in here for? Usher, shut the door. (*It is done.*)

(*BENOIT signs THÉRÈSE to be seated and he seats himself.*)

(*Fingering letter.*) Mademoiselle, you sent us a letter yesterday saying that you wished to be heard as a witness. Are you in any distress of mind or body?

THÉRÈSE. I'm so frightened. And those Japanese—they looked at me so savagely.

BENOIT. Oh, they meant nothing. They can't help their looks, can they? Now, mademoiselle, if your testimony is of any value I will afterwards take it formally. Now, what is it?

THÉRÈSE. (*Pouring out the words.*) I was her

best friend . . . her best friend. . . . I knew all about her love affairs. . . . But oh, she was a frightful tease. . . . And when she lost her temper she did use most awful language, though she'd never let a beggar pass if she'd a sou in her pocket . . . she was kind and a dear, but she loved tormenting people . . . she must have tormented this poor young Japanese. . . .

BENOIT. . . . with his weak intellect ?

THÉRÈSE. Oh, no, he was very clever and hard-working. (*BENOIT glances significantly at the CLERK.*) And I thought him so kind—I only saw him once—but he had such a sweet smile. Helène said he was always grinning and wanted him to shout at her. . . . I was her best friend . . . but she could be a most awful cat !! . . . They'd known each other for over a year. . . .

BENOIT. (*Interrupting.*) You say Helène Laroche had been intimate with the accused, Hironari, for over a year ?

THÉRÈSE. (*Staring with amazement.*) With whom ?

BENOIT. With the accused Inose Hironari.

THÉRÈSE. (*Stares at BENOIT.*) Oh, my God !
What have I done ?

BENOIT. Explain yourself.

THÉRÈSE. Oh, Good Heavens ! I thought——

BENOIT. Yes, you thought——

THÉRÈSE. I was on tour ; and I just saw in the paper that a young Japanese gentleman . . .

BENOIT. You did not know that Hironari is the accused? And it is some other Japanese with whom your friend was intimate? The name of the Japanese?

THÉRÈSE. I can't remember . . . I forget it . . . they are such funny names.

BENOIT. If you saw him could you identify him?

(THÉRÈSE attempts to get up.)

Sit down. (*She does so.*) Be careful, and do not trifle with justice. Bring in all the Japanese witnesses.

(*As they are brought in another Fuge d'Instruction appears in the doorway with papers in his hand.*)

JUDGE. I just wanted to ask—

BENOIT. One moment, my dear colleague—just a moment. Now, mademoiselle, do you recognize amongst these Japanese the one with whom for more than a year your friend Helène had been intimate. Do you recognize him?

(*A long pause. The Japanese try to shut out TOKERAMO. THÉRÈSE'S eyes rest on TOKERAMO.*)

It was Tokeramo?

THÉRÈSE. (*Half-fainting.*) Yes.

BENOIT. Dr. Tokeramo—just now you said—

TOK. (*Advancing.*) I must speak out! I can no longer—

BENOIT. (*His attention suddenly diverted to THÉRÈSE, who sinks with a moan into the chair.*) Usher, attend to the lady. Let her retire. . . . Now, Dr. Tokeramo.

(KITAMARU *has been whispering in TOKERAMO'S ear.*)

No whispering here !

KITA. (*Calls out to the excited group of Japanese.*)
Yoroshi ; sorede osusumi nasai.

BENOIT. Interpreter, translate what the witness called out.

KOB. (*Deliberately.*) He called out "Control yourselves. Do not get excited."

JUDGE. (*Sharply, raising his head from papers and staring at KOBAYASHI.*) What a damned lie !
(*All stare at him.*) He called out nothing of the kind. He called out, "Yoroshi sorede osusumi nasai." Do not excite yourself would be "Ochitsuki tamaye." Where's the resemblance ?

BENOIT. Good heavens ! don't ask me.

JUDGE. I know what I am saying. I was ten years assessor to the Commercial Court in Tonkin, and I learned Japanese thoroughly.

BENOIT. Then what was the meaning of what he called out according to you ?

JUDGE. It is not easy to translate, but the general sense would be, "Keep on to that tack," or "Veer round to that breeze."

BENOIT. What do you say, Interpreter ?

KOB. He said nothing like that.

JUDGE. I swear he did. I swear it.

BENOIT. (*Reflectively.*) "Follow along these lines" or "Veer round to that breeze." (*Pause.*) Now I would warn all you Japanese gentlemen, Dr. Tokeramo above all, that Article 361 of the Criminal Code renders false witnesses punishable with penal servitude.

KOB. (*Politely.*) Shall I translate?

BENOIT. No, you will not. You will take your place with the witnesses in the other room; and will be examined later. You, Dr. Tokeramo, will kindly wait in that room; apart from the other witnesses. . . . (*They do as instructed.*) There is some secret understanding between these Japanese.

JUDGE. Evidently.

BENOIT. Something that centres round this Tokeramo. "Veer round to that breeze."

JUDGE. That's what he said.

BENOIT. What breeze? Tokeramo had just said "I will speak out." I haven't got it yet. You wanted to ask me— (*They consult about paper.*)

USHER. (*Appearing from witnesses' room.*) The witness Renard-Beinsky is here.

BENOIT. Bring him in. (*Alluding to paper.*) It's quite right, my dear colleague, exactly right. (*With apologies for interrupting him the JUDGE withdraws as*

RENARD-BEINSKY *enters.*)

You are an hour behind your time.

BEIN. My usual hour of rising is one. On your account I get up to-day at twelve. I feel tired in consequence and must request you to treat me civilly.

BENOIT. Sit there. Take that cigarette out of your mouth.

BEIN. (*With cool impertinence.*) Why?

BENOIT. Because *I* tell you to. (*Reluctantly BEINSKY relinquishes cigarette.*) Be careful, or I'll fine you. (*BEINSKY shrugs his shoulders.*) Your name?

BEIN. Renard-Beinsky.

BENOIT. First name?

BEIN. Charles Victor Hugo.

BENOIT. If you are trying to joke with me—

BEIN. To be called Victor Hugo isn't a joke—it's a responsibility. Victor Hugo was a kind of poet—what passed for a poet, when I was born.

BENOIT. Thank you, I have heard of Victor Hugo.

BEIN. You would have.

BENOIT. Confine yourself to my questions. Your religion?

BEIN. Ask me another.

BENOIT. Your religion?

BEIN. Fire-worshipper.

BENOIT. Put him down Protestant. Your occupation?

BEIN. I am an artificer in beautiful words.

BENOIT. A journalist?

BEIN. Oh, God! don't insult me. I transcribe the ethereal harmony of things.

BENOIT. Put him down as some kind of reporter.

BEIN. (*Wearily getting up.*) Really, is it any use our continuing this conversation?

BENOIT. I warn you for the last time—the evidence you are about to give shall be the truth and nothing but the truth. Say "I swear."

BEIN. I swear.

BENOIT. You are not related to or connected with the accused; he is not in your employ nor you in his?

BEIN. Do you think I'd be related to a Japanese?

BENOIT. (*Intensely tickled at this remark of his.*) It wouldn't rest with you if you were.

BEIN. (*With real intensity.*) I loath 'em. Why, if I could bring this wretch—this tiger—to justice, I would willingly cut off my right hand. I swear to you, Monsieur le Juge—

BENOIT. Please don't excite yourself.

BEIN. Monsieur le Juge, if one of these hideous wretches had pressed the life out of a woman *you* loved—the woman you were betrothed to—— (*Sinks his head in his hands and then on to the table.*)

BENOIT. Oh, I did not know that. I sympathize with your grief.

BEIN. I thank you, Monsieur le Juge (*clasping BENOIT'S arm*), you are a noble fellow—you're a noble fellow.

BENOIT. Now, can you cast any light on this crime?

BEIN. Yes, I think I can.

BENOIT. (*Pleased, expectant.*) Ah!

BEIN. On the very night of the murder I had visited this man called Tokeramo in the very room where she was killed.

BENOIT. What is your opinion of Tokeramo?

BEIN. I have an opinion of all Japanese—Mongolian Jesuits—that's what they are—clandestine — secretly leagued together — a mafia.

BENOIT. (*Nodding his head.*) I am beginning to share your opinion.

BEIN. Well, I left Tokeramo's house at about 8.30. I'd not gone more than a hundred yards or two when I remembered that I had left behind a book which he had very kindly given me. It was damned good of him, I must say that. As I retraced my steps it was striking nine.

BENOIT. It took you half an hour to go a hundred yards?

BEIN. (*With something irresistibly charming in his way of making the admission.*) I had finished a bottle of brandy.—I made my way upstairs, rang at the flat door, called out, no one answered. As I was going out of the house I saw two Japanese coming in.

BENOIT. You're sure there were two?

BEIN. Oh, yes, it doesn't take me that way.

Two distinct and separate Japanese. I called out gaily—I was very gay—to one of them ; he turned round, stared at me a moment——

BENOIT. Could you identify that one ? (*Sharply.*)

BEIN. It's rather like identifying turnips, but I'd like to try.

BENOIT. Good. (*To USHER.*) Bring in all the Japanese witnesses, also Tokeramo. Now run your eye over them ; see if you recognize your man. But keep calm.

BEIN. (*Much agitated.*) I'll try to, I'll try to.

BENOIT. And don't speak till I address you.

(The Japanese have been brought in.)

Dr. Tokeramo, in the house where you lived were there any other Japanese residing besides yourself ? If you dislike answering, the police or even the directory can enlighten us.

TOK. No, there were not—I believe—none.

BENOIT. (*In BEINSKY'S ear.*) Do you recognize the man ?

BEIN. That short man there, whispering to Tokeramo ; he is the man.

BENOIT. Your name, first name, age, religion, occupation.

KITA. Kitamaru.

BENOIT. First name ?

KITA. Keegeen.

BENOIT. Age ?

KITA. Thirty.

BENOIT. Religion ?

KITA. Shinto religion.

BENOIT. Occupation ?

KITA. Doctor of medicine.

BENOIT. Shortly after nine o'clock on the night of the murder this gentleman saw you entering Dr. Tokeramo's house. What was your business there ?

(Long pause.)

KITA. *(Acting a violent, anguished, internal struggle.)*

I must speak out, I must ! I can shield Tokeramo no longer. *(The Japanese all play up to him, feigning despair at his resolve.)*

BENOIT. Let all the other witnesses withdraw, but Tokeramo separately from the rest.

(BENOIT, BEINSKY, KITAMARU, CLERK, and USHER are left in the room.)

Monsieur Beinsky, your interrogatory will be read over to you and you will sign it. I think at last we are going to clear up this affair. And for your evidence I thank you in the name of Justice.

BEIN. *(Holding BENOIT's hand and staring at him.)* No, no, Monsieur le Juge, there is Justice nowhere. Not in courts nor codes of law—nowhere but in the soul of man. And the soul

of man it forgives, it has got to forgive. Though my fingers may yearn to wreak vengeance upon the murderer, though my brain ache for it, though my heart pant after it, yet if I met the murderer soul to soul, I must forgive him. One day God will ask forgiveness of the soul of man for all the misery of this world. Then all will be pardoned; we will pardon God and God will pardon us. . . . That is the real last Judgment . . . It's not clear—I can't make it clear. (*Eyes rest on clock.*) It's time I had my one o'clock absinthe.

(*Exit.*)

BENOIT. (*Half to CLERK.*) It's certainly time he had something. Sit down, monsieur. (*KITAMARU sits.*) You swear the evidence you are about to give shall be the truth and nothing but the truth. Say "I swear."

KITA. I swear.

BENOIT. You are not related to or connected with the accused; you are not in his employ nor he in yours?

KITA. No. I am going to tell everything. I am determined to tell the truth.

BENOIT. If your determination to tell the truth equals my determination to get at it, we ought to make rapid progress. What did you mean by saying that you would no longer shield Tokeramo?

KITA. Because to tell why I went to his house that night is to disclose facts that are much to Tokeramo's discredit.

BENOIT. What are these facts?

KITA. Tokeramo, I am sorry to say, is not a respectable man. He does shady things with money, and that is why on the night of the murder we made with him appointment at his house to protest with him that he is a horrible gambler and brings discredit to us all.

BENOIT. Quite so.

KITA. But he never kept appointment, which is quite like him.

BENOIT. In fact, you regard him as a scoundrel?

KITA. Oh, I think scoundrel is too hot word. He is clever and capable of noble acts.

BENOIT. An enigmatic personage.

KITA. Already in Japan he has brought his family into great straits by his extravagance. And you know to a Japanese that is everything. A Japanese man thinks of his family above everything.

BENOIT. (*Seeing light at last.*) Ah, yes, yes, yes, yes. (*Pushing back his chair, radiant with suppressed glee that he has at last unravelled this skein of Oriental cunning.*) Even a bad Japanese man would think of his family before everything.

KITA. Yes; it is his religion. All the Japanese would say the same.

BENOIT. And Tokeramo's family, as you say, is poor.

KITA. Oh, yes, they are very poor. That is the truth.

BENOIT. I am sure it is. And what about Hironari's family?

KITA. Oh, first-class family; Samurai.

BENOIT. And what does Hironari do here?

KITA. He does just come to see the West—for his pleasure.

BENOIT. When did you last hear from Hironari's family?

KITA. (*Acting a man trapped and detected.*) I hear from——?

BENOIT. When did you last receive a registered letter—a remittance of money—from Japan?

KITA. Then you know that——?

BENOIT. Well, I do now. Let that pass. Would you consider this well-born gentleman capable of murder?

KITA. Oh, no. It is not possible. Ask all the Japanese. They would say the same.

BENOIT. How do you know they would? Have you asked them? (*KITAMARU does not answer.*) How do you account for Hironari's giving himself up for a crime that he has not committed?

KITA. That is, I explain it, an instance of what we call Bushido; it is a young man's passion for suffering—for sacrifice.

BENOIT. But a sacrifice has a motive. For whom is this sacrifice?

KITA. He takes upon himself the act of Tokeramo.

BENOIT. (*Gets up from chair.*) Then you accuse Tokeramo of being the murderer?

KITA. I am afraid he is. We Japanese all think it.

BENOIT. (*Standing over KITAMARU.*) Don't think it—be sure of it. And Hironari is ready to sacrifice his liberty for the sake of a needy blackguard whom you all despise?

KITA. You see, with us Japanese——

BENOIT. (*Brings his chair close to KITAMARU'S.*) Monsieur Kitamaru, I will tell you a little anecdote. There was once a member of the great family of yellow races to which you belong who was being closely pursued by the police. He dived into the shop of a compatriot, in whose shop were a number of sacks containing broken glass and old crockery. The fugitive crawled into one of the empty sacks and ranged himself among the full ones. In due course the pursuing policeman came into the shop, went straight up to the sham sack and gave it a kick with his foot. A voice from inside said, "Tinkle, tinkle, clash, clash. . . ." (*Pause. BENOIT puffs at cigar. CLERK and USHER laugh.*)

KITA. Why did he say "Tinkle, tinkle, clash, clash?"

BENOIT. Because in his childish mind he thought by saying "tinkle, tinkle, clash, clash," he

would be taken for a sack of glass. . . . (USHER and CLERK both laugh.) . . . (To KITMARU.)

You smile now ?

KITA. I smile that he was so stupid.

BENOIT. No stupider, Dr. Kitamaru, than you, who in accusing Tokeramo to me have once for all convinced me of Hironari's guilt.

KITA. How have I—— ?

BENOIT. Thus. Hironari is here, as you put it, for pleasure to see the West. Therefore he is the son of wealthy parents. Tokeramo, you have told us, is needy, extravagant ; but as you obligingly inform us, he is capable of a noble action ; for, as you in your delightful way of imparting knowledge have said, even a bad Japanese will do anything for his family. For their sake this particular Japanese Tokeramo is accusing himself of Hironari's crime, whose wealthy family will recompense Tokeramo's poor one in Japan for their son's self-sacrifice.—And your position in the matter ? You are a kind of tutor or guardian to Hironari, which is proved by the reception of those registered letters that you so naïvely acknowledged in response to my quite fortuitous deduction. . . . Part of the money they contained you have used to suborn witnesses and I am not afraid to aver that second-rate actress, Thérèse Meunier, to be one of the witnesses suborned by you to put me on the false scent that was to lead up to the con-

viction of Tokeramo.—I might punish you severely, but knowing how remote your ideas of right and wrong (if you have any) must be from our own, I will simply show you the door. (*Both rise.*) You have played your part—not well. But your Tokeramo, he is a wonderful actor. His affectation of remorse—his bursting out “I will speak”—it is really a fine performance. Study him, my dear monsieur, before you again attempt to pit your wits against those of an expert European judge. Your interrogatory will be read over to you and you will sign it. Withdraw. (*KITAMARU bows and does so.*) Bring in Tokeramo and Hironari. Now we will confront them. And you will see that at last Tokeramo will be constrained to gasp out in the broken accents his pent-up self-accusation. (*HIRONARI and TOKERAMO are brought in. To CLERK.*) Look at him; he does it wonderfully.—Hironari! advance and look on Tokeramo! Tokeramo! advance and look on Hironari! Closer—go closer to him! You avoid his eyes, Dr. Tokeramo. Look straight at him. Hironari, do you still assert you murdered Helène Laroche?

HIRON. Yes; but about the door, and the hat, and the gloves—the truth is I lured her into the flat. I did fasten the door. And I heard people moving outside. So I gave her time to take off those things.

BENOIT. (*To YAMOSHI.*) The prisoner knows that by avowing premeditation he endangers his life?

YAMO. I warned him ; he persists in it.

BENOIT. Dr. Tokeramó, some of your countrymen assert that you are the murderer.

HIRON. No, no! I did it. I rejoice in my punishment.

(*Pause. Violent internal struggle in TOKERAMO.*)

BENOIT. Have you anything to say, Dr. Tokeramó? . . . Nothing. . . . (*Aside to CLERK.*) He does it with genius. . . . Hironari, your preliminary investigation is closed. Your interrogatory will be read over to you and you will sign it. (*Takes up cigar-case, etc.*) You are committed for trial for the deliberate murder of Helène Laroche. We'll take the lunch interval now. Remove the prisoner. (*Guards remove HIRONARI somewhat resisting.*)

TOK. I must speak out. He is innocent.

BENOIT. (*To CLERK.*) Ah, here it is.

TOK. I am the murderer.

BENOIT. Quite so. You may withdraw.

TOK. (*For a moment TOKERAMO is nonplussed.*)

No, no, you must believe me. It is not, not this poor innocent young man but I—I . . .—
(BENOIT *moves up*)—I must be heard.

(HIRONARI, *having broken away from his guards, bursts into the room again, the guards close on his heels.*)

HIRON. I—I cannot, I will not, take your sacrifice.

(HIRONARI is dragged away again.)

BENOIT. (*Getting into overcoat.*) Now are you satisfied?

TOK. I killed her. I killed her. I swear it. I killed Helène. With these hands I strangled her. I want to expiate.

BENOIT. (*Holding door open.*) Then expiate somewhere else. (*Closing doors after him.*)

(TOKERAMO remains alone. In twos and threes the Japanese glide cautiously into the room. They make sure no one will surprise. They crowd round TOKERAMO, speaking in excited enthusiastic whispers.)

KOB. We all seized your drift.

OMAYI. And we exulted!

DIFFERENT JAPANESE. Wonderful!—Glorious!—
It was wonderful!

ALL. (*Throwing out their hands.*) Banzai!
Banzai!!

[CURTAIN.]

ACT IV.

SCENE : *The same as in Acts I and II, though there has been some rearrangement of the furniture. It is evening. In full Japanese dress, with spectacles on, TOKERAMO sits on the ground at a Japanese table about a foot high, writing with a brush, by the light of the reading-lamp ; at his elbow is a Japanese writing-box containing Indian ink, etc. TOKERAMO'S features show traces of a prolonged mental strain ; but there seems, as it were, to hover above all the fatigues of mind and body a great spiritual serenity. A distant band of military music heard from the street. Very quietly GEORGES enters ; he is looking for something that has been mislaid.*

TOK. (*Pausing in his work.*) What music is that, Georges ?

GEORGES. (*Going to window, his face and manner glowing with enthusiasm.*) Monsieur, it is our Fête Nationale to-day—the 14th of July—the day of the Bastille. (*Looking out.*) It's the regiments returning from the Grand Review. (*Goes to window.*) Monsieur, may I open the window ?

(*TOKERAMO assents. GEORGES opens window. Cheers and singing ; GEORGES claps his hands.*)

It's the Republican Guard, look ! and the

sappers all carrying torches ! It's magnificent !
Do come and look, monsieur.

TOK. (*Without stirring, smoking a cigarette.*) Have you been a soldier, Georges ?

GEORGES. (*Still at window.*) Yes, monsieur, and I'll be one again when—well, when the day comes that every good Frenchman longs for. You say "Dai Nippon !" (Great Japan !) and we say "Vive la France !" "Vive l'armée !" We've to get back the two provinces they robbed us of.

TOK. And, Georges, what about the provinces you have robbed from other peoples ?

GEORGES. (*Taken aback.*) We have robbed——?

TOK. Yes, Georges. For example, the country called Tonkin.

GEORGES. (*Nonchalant.*) Oh, that's in Asia.

TOK. (*His features expanding into a smile.*) So is Japan, Georges, in Asia.

GEORGES. I suppose we've a right to have colonies like other countries. (*Scratching his head.*)

TOK. And I suppose we Japanese have the same right, have we not ?

GEORGES. I know, monsieur, but——

TOK. Georges, a famous statesman—his name was Bismarck (GEORGES *ejaculates* "Cochon !")—once said to another famous statesman when they were trying to define true patriotism—he said "true patriotism is to want something

that belongs to somebody else, to take it, to keep it, and go on doing the same again and again."

GEORGES. (*Greatly astounded.*) But you don't look on it like that, monsieur?

TOK. (*Laying down his cigarette and resuming his work.*) I am a Japanese, Georges; I am a Japanese.

GEORGES. (*Searching about room again.*) Monsieur, that little Japanese knife that used to be here—I can't find it anywhere . . .

TOK. (*Who has slipped the knife, which was lying by him, into his girdle, where his haori completely covers it.*) Don't worry; it will turn up, Georges.

(*A ring. The flare of the torches streams through the window, the music is at its loudest, then begins to recede, whilst TOKERAMO writes on. First KOBAYASHI and then YOSHIKAWA are admitted. They shut door. TOKERAMO does not notice them for a moment or two.*)

TOK. (*Looking up.*) Pardon me, my friends, for a few seconds.

KOB. We will come back later. (*They make to go.*)

TOK. (*Raising one hand, writing with the other.*) That is the last word. My work is ended. (*Stands up, speaking with a sense of enormous satisfaction and relief.*)

KOB. and YOSH. Ended! My dear friend! What splendid news!

TOK. That was why I sent for you all at nine o'clock. That we might drink saké together—and celebrate the conclusion of my labours.

KOB. Indeed a joyous occasion! Now at last you may rest.

TOK. Yes, I shall rest now. Please will you be seated? (*The two visitors seat themselves.*) Will you be pleased to smoke?

(KOBAYASHI and YOSHIKAWA refuse cigarettes. TOKERAMO turns on the lights and resumes his position on the ground. KOBAYASHI and YOSHIKAWA glance at one another covertly.)

KOB. We came somewhat before our time, Tokeramo-san, because we wished to converse with you——

TOK. Please.

YOSH. (*With a barely veiled challenge in his manner.*) Tokeramo-san, I like to see you writing after our native fashion.

TOK. When one is very tired a chair assists one to go to sleep, which our posture prevents.

YOSH. (*Fanning himself the while.*) Yes, that must be why these saucer-eyed Europeans so soon grow soft and fat and their women so monstrously distended. Is it not so, Tokeramo-san?

TOK. I have not viewed the Europeans in that light.

YOSH. In *what* light *have* you viewed them?

TOK. In a more favourable light.

YOSH. I am sorry for it.

TOK. Your dislike to the Europeans, Baron Yoshikawa, is well known.

YOSH. And it is well founded. (*Pause.*) I will conceal *nothing*. Whilst *our* society has lately seemed to you *less* than agreeable—we have all noticed it, have we not?—we know that you have spent long hours in the company of that degraded European who so abused our country, the man Renard-Beinsky. (*With savage censure.*) Is that serving Nippon?

(*For a moment TOKERAMO bridles resentfully at the elder man's manner. KOBAYASHI, ever conciliatory, suggests by gesture that they should all sit and discuss matters without heat—which the three do.*)

KOB. (*Blandly and with hesitation.*) Tokeramosan, we fail to understand—

TOK. I find him illuminating because with all his faults he has certain qualities that it is so hard for a Japanese to understand.

(*KOBAYASHI and YOSHIKAWA look at each other as much as to say—"This is worse than we imagined."*)

YOSH. (*Suddenly assuming the Japanese sitting*

posture side by side with TOKERAMO.) Beware, Tokeramo-san. Has not your close contact with these Europeans, as already in the case of this creature you killed, this harlot——

TOK. (*Rising to his feet, speaking not imperatively but deprecatingly.*) That I must forbid you to say.

YOSH. (*All rise.*) She jeopardized the work of Nippon. Is such a——

TOK. I cannot let you abuse the woman I killed. And know that before the judge, I truly confessed. I used, as you thought, no Japanese strategy. I wished to atone my crime. (*The outer bell rings.*)

YOSH. Then listen to me, Tokeramo-san. (*Looks at KOBAYASHI before speaking.*) In the Name of Nippon and in the Name of the Mikado (*all turn and bow to Mikado*) I charge you to cease the acquaintance of this European.

TOK. (*A knock on the door.*) Come in!

GEORGES. (*In doorway.*) Monsieur Renard-Beinsky, monsieur.

(BEINSKY heard singing "*The Marseillaise*" in the hall.)

TOK. Ask him to wait a moment. (*Exit GEORGES.*)

YOSH. (*Coldly menacing.*) You will not see him?

TOK. (*With most genuine regret.*) I grieve to offend you, but I must see him.

YOSH. and KOB. (*This spoken with a bow, conveying, or intended to convey, a sentence of excommunication.*) Then, Tokeramō-san, we—— (*They turn to go.*)

TOK. Please head me carefully. I have lived as a Japanese, discharging my duty to Nippon. When I can no longer discharge that duty with my whole heart, I shall know how to offer Nippon the supreme offering.

(*KOBAYASHI would speak ; YOSHIKAWA checks him.*)

YOSH. (*Looking fixedly at TOKERAMO.*) You need say no more. (*Both bow.*) We shall return with the others at nine.

KOB. Let us go by the back way, that we may not encounter that depraved gentleman.

(*Exeunt KOBAYASHI and YOSHIKAWA. YOSHIKAWA speaking earnestly to KOBAYASHI, who glances back at TOKERAMO. TOKERAMO remains motionless in the middle of the room, then resumes his sitting posture.*)

TOK. (*Calls out.*) Come in, please, Monsieur Renard-Beinsky.

(*BEINSKY enters, with a strand of paper floral street decorations wound round his neck, smoking a long Italian cigar, mopping his forehead.*)

BEIN. Hullo ! Tok, what's up here ? Gone back to Japan !

TOK. (*Smiling.*) Yes, I am going back to Japan.

Georges, will you put these papers tidy?

BEIN. Here, I'm going to have a shy at that.

(*Tries to sit in the Japanese fashion, tucking his feet in under him. Utters sounds of pain.*)

TOK. (*With a broad smile.*) It will come—it will come.

BEIN. (*Reversing chair and sitting astride it.*)

Thanks; in the meantime I will underprop my effete body with this insidious implement of Western degeneration.

TOK. And you have been well, Monsieur Renard-Beinsky?

BEIN. Damned seedy. Sitting up with you and talking Helène, it's kept me sober for three nights, and I'm beginning to feel it. But do you know what I've been doing? I've been dancing (*dances*) on the Place Pigalle with work-girls and trottings and God knows who. Why? Because a hundred years ago the Bastille fell. And my friend Tokeramo, Bastilles have got to *go on* falling—the world's all over them, but they will fall. Look at you! This Japan of yours—it's a Bastille. It won't let the light of your soul, life, sorrow, joy, brandy, love—it shuts them all off from you. Every country's a Bastille, yes, and every instinct of patriotism, it's only another fortress with its guns trained on the soul of man. Tear them down! (*Gets up, raises his hand in a prophetic manner.*)

- Dr. Tokeramo, the last crime on this earth will be when some one drops a bomb amongst a group of vivisectors. He will have exploded Hell. Then we'll all dance together—men, women, dogs and cats—all kick up our heels together on the day of the last Bastille. . . . Tokeramo, I'll tell you a joke—the best joke you have ever heard. It's flashed upon me these last few nights. I, Charles Victor Hugo Renard-Beinsky, half Pole, half Frenchman, drunken mongrel, lazy waster, and the rest of it—I am a Christian! Rather a damaged specimen, but I am one of Christ's Christians according to the gospel of St. Tolstoi. I love all nations; spit on all Governments (*hand on TOKERAMO'S shoulder*), and (*pause*) I forgive my enemies! (*Reseats himself; suddenly speaks with complete seriousness and composure.*) Well, now, you asked me to come here to-night—what for?
- TOK. (*Taking out photograph frame wrapped in paper from the writing-table.*) I wished to take my leave of you. (*Rises.*)
- BEIN. You are leaving France? (*Rises.*)
- TOK. Japan claims me. . . . (*Proffering the little parcel.*) Before I go I want to give you this. It is a picture of Helène when she was a young girl; it was the only one, she said, there did exist; you loved her—she most loved you of any one. I could give you nothing more valuable. I beg you to accept it.

BEIN. Yes, Dr. Tokeramo. Now sit down—just as you were ; and I'll sit here. (*TOKERAMO seated as before on ground, BEINSKY on chair.*) This is our last meeting. After Helène was dead I went to the little flat in which she lived. In a large wardrobe vomiting gay dresses—almost her whole possessions—was a small metal box. In it were some picture-postcards, some Japanese trinkets, and two bundles of letters—the only ones she had kept : and neither of those bundles was from me. Here they are. (*Handing packet to TOKERAMO.*) What is written on that one ?

TOK. (*Reading.*) “From the beast who wrecked my life.”

BEIN. And on this ?

TOK. (*Reading.*) “From my Japanese darling.”
(*A wistful, distant look comes over TOKERAMO'S face.*)

BEIN. Now who is the man she cared for most ? (*The two men's eyes meet for some seconds.*)

TOK. Poor, poor Helène ! Poor, poor little soul ! My poor little Helène ! (*Then in Japanese.*) Choobèen yana Helène ! Choobèen yana Helène ! (*With his hand covering his tear-filled eyes, his head sinks forward on to the table.*)

BEIN. (*Kneeling beside TOKERAMO on the ground.*) My friend, you weep ! My brother,

your self-mastery is gone at last! You are more than a Japanese—you are a human being. You are akin to me in soul. Let us lay bare our hearts. (TOKERAMO *raises his head and looks straight at BEINSKY.*) When I began to come to you, what do you think I came for?

TOK. (*The two faces very close together.*) I thought you had come to kill me.

BEIN. To kill you?

TOK. As I killed Helène—

BEIN. (*Having attained the ardent desire of their long vigils, throwing one arm round TOKERAMO'S neck.*) At last! Now your heart shall be purged! The wounds of your heart shall be staunchéd! (*Pause.*)

TOK. Why did you not take vengeance on me?

BEIN. Because I knew you had loved Helène. I knew she had loved you—these letters witnessed it. Love was there—human love—animal love—I don't care what kind of love—but love. And Love must conquer Hate. And Love *did* conquer it! (*Both rise.*) And, Dr. Tokeramo, with all my whole heart, I forgive you.

(*The two men are standing. BEINSKY'S emotion completely overmasters him; his shoulders heave; he sobs.*)

TOK. (*Moved, but in a different way. There is*

something soothing and protective in his manner; something suggestive of a nurse with a wailing infant.) My good French friend, I thank you, and bid you farewell.

BEIN. You are returning at once to Japan?

TOK. Almost at once. I had suffered, as you guessed it, great stress of heart. Now my soul is at peace, and I am ready to go onward in the circle of rebirths.

BEIN. *(Come back to prose again.)* I don't quite get that.

TOK. That is our Buddhist faith. Stretching your hand to me out in forgiveness, many steps have you climbed, and many steps have you raised me, towards that goal—Nirvana as we call it—that goal of perfect calm which draws us back at the last, after thousands of earthly existences have been cast aside, back to the perfect essence of our being. Farewell, Monsieur Renard-Beinsky, till in Nirvana our spirits merge together.

BEIN. *(Deeply moved.)* Farewell, brother. *(Snatches TOKERAMO'S hand passionately, then in a burst of Slavonic emotion embraces him. Abruptly thrusts hands into pockets, searching through them.)* These trinkets—there I do believe—isn't that like me? I've left them at home—— *(TOKERAMO would speak.)* No, you must have them—take them with you to Japan. I'll fetch 'em. *(Hurries out.)*

(TOKERAMO touches bell. GEORGES enters from bedroom.)

TOK. Georges, it is almost nine ; is everything ready ?

GEORGES. Yes, monsieur.

TOK. Oh, Georges, will you bring in the large mat out of the bathroom ?

GEORGES. (*For once not able to conceal his amazement.*) The large mat—— ?

TOK. Yes, Georges.

(TOKERAMO arranges one of the screens so as to screen off the area immediately in front of the window from the rest of the room. He places the packet of HELÈNE'S letters inside the sleeve of his haori. As GEORGES returns with the mat, a ring is heard. TOKERAMO receives the mat.)

Please admit my friends, Georges. (GEORGES goes to do so.)

(TOKERAMO spreads the mat behind the screen and in front of the window, then out of a drawer in the Japanese low table takes a piece of Japanese paper which he puts into the bosom of his kimono. GEORGES admits the whole body of Japanese ; their entrance is quiet and ceremonious.)

My dear friends, I am delighted to receive you here to-day. I have asked you to drink saké with me, as *this time* I have a piece of good news

to communicate to you. Will you put on your kimonos? (*All bow and go into bedroom.*)

YOSH. (*Approaching TOKERAMO while the others put on their kimonos.*) Tokeramo-san, on getting home, Kobayashi-san found a letter awaiting him from the Grand Chancellor; in it he suggests that on the completion of your work, the Mikado may be serenely moved to bestow on you the order of the Chrysanthemum. (*Significantly.*) I thought this might change your plans.

TOK. (*Evidently elated by what he now looks on in the light of a posthumous honour.*) It cannot have that effect. (*With real sincere modesty.*) Such an honour is far beyond my deserts.

(KOBAYASHI in his kimono now replaces YOSHIKAWA, who retires to put on his.)

Have you any news of Hironari-san?

KOB. We visited him to-day in prison.

TOK. Did he speak of me?

KOB. Most reverently. He sent you a special message of thanks for the service you have so honourably permitted him by his seven years' imprisonment to render to our country. (*A smile illumines TOKERAMO'S face.*) I am glad of the pleasure you express at his message.

TOK. (*To YOSHIKAWA, who has come back in his kimono.*) My keys are lying on the writing table.

YOSH. Yes, so I see. Why do you——?

TOK. (*With eyes averted from YOSHIKAWA.*) I wished you to know it. That is all.

YOSH. It shall be as you decide.

TOK. Now, friends, let us go to Japan. (*He uncovers the Mikado's picture, as in Act I. All do it obeisance.*) Come, friends.

(All sit on cushions round the low table, on which GEORGES has set several small trays, each with a saké bottle and a number of cups on it, also lacquered boxes containing food and chop-sticks to eat it with.)

Friends, I have sent for you to tell you that the work I was sent here to perform lies here completed under my hand.

(Exclamations and congratulations from all. Cries of "Banzai!")

YOSH. To whom, Tokeramō-san, do you entrust the honourable task of taking it home?

TOK. I would prefer to leave that in your venerable hands.

KOB. We all covet that honour, therefore we are all ready to resign it.

TOK. Perhaps you, Kitamaru-san, would play us something upon the flute.

KITA. I should be very pleased.

(KITAMARU receives the instrument. As he starts playing the music of the bands is heard from outside.)

KITA. (*Breaking off in his playing.*) It is hard to play with that music.

TOK. I will close the window.

KITA. (*Resuming his playing.*) That is better. Thank you, Tokeramo-san.

(The approaching music is still audible, and the flickering light of the torches flares through the window.)

YAMOSHI. I cannot get used to the European music.

OMAYI. It seems to me so loud and confused.

YOSH. It is most oppressive to me.

(In the flickering light of the torches TOKERAMO, screened from the others, does his last obeisance to the Mikado's picture, then seats himself in the Japanese posture on the mat, unfastens and discards his haori, takes the dagger from his girdle, opens it about half an inch, lays it carefully on the ground in front of him. Takes a piece of Japanese paper from the inside of his kimono, lays it across the hilt of the dagger, hitches his kimono so as to free his left arm, then does the same for his right arm. He is now bare to the waist except for his Japanese underclothing. He folds the lower part of the kimono across his stomach. He takes up the dagger, draws it, lays the sheath to his left, places the

piece of Japanese paper on his left knee and rolls the blade of the dagger up in it, moving the dagger in the paper to do so. He grasps the blade of the dagger, leaving about three-quarters of an inch bare, then with a large gesture he extends his right hand, giving a big twist of the wrist. As he does so, with his left hand he finds the spot in which to strike the dagger, and slowly he brings his right arm back across his body. As he does this, the light of the torches has ceased to illuminate his form even fitfully . . . the act of self-immolation is veiled in darkness.

KOB. (*During the music, leaning towards YOSHIKAWA.*) I think you, yourself, should take the work home. There may be matters to report that will require very delicate handling.

YOSH. Yes, I understand you.

(A low sound is heard. The flute-playing breaks off. YOSHIKAWA rises, also the others, and extends his hand. He turns on a light.)

YOSH. My dear countrymen, do not stir any of you. Tokeramo-san has discharged his duty to Nippon. He was disturbed in his mind. (*The Japanese advance and stand round, gazing at TOKERAMO'S body.*) He has joined his glorious ancestors, dying as only a true Japanese samurai knows how.

KOB. (*Placing flowers on the body.*) Let his death be beautiful.

YOSH. There is incense on the table. Light it.

KITAMIRU. (*KITAMARU and another Japanese are placing a screen round the body.*) We must put it upside down. (*A ring.*)

YOSH. (*Alert and peremptory.*) There are the keys. Quickly! get all his papers together! The police will have to come.

(*The full lights are turned on. The Japanese scurry to and fro getting out, sorting, destroying, laying aside all sorts of papers, etc.*)

(*Enter RENARD-BEINSKY exuberant; he stands amazed at the presence of the Japanese.*)

BEIN. (*With misgiving.*) Where is Tokeramo? (*With increased misgiving.*) Where is Tokeramo? . . . What is behind that screen? (*Makes movement towards the screen, from behind which blue wisps of incense smoke are arising.*)

YOSH. You had better not touch it; you have only Western nerves. Tokeramo-san has chosen to change his world. (*Showing for once the full intensity of his scorn and hatred.*) Your bad climate has poisoned him.—(*Again quite impassible.*) Tokeramo-san has killed himself.

BEIN. Killed himself! My God! you have driven him to it—all of you! You are his

murderers. Dead! my poor friend—how horrible! Horrible!!

KOB. (*Pausing for a moment in his work of dealing with TOKERAMO'S papers.*) Horrible. Why is that horrible? Death is not horrible. What was born must die. That has got to be—and counts not greatly. What does count greatly is Life and Duty.

(The strains of "Père la Victoire" blare out louder and louder. All the Japanese have no further thought for BEINSKY: the papers engross them. BEINSKY stands, as it were, dazed and dubious between the conflicting life-standards of two continents.)

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