

TARO.

ONOTO WATANNA.

The room was bright, cheerful, luxurious, very striking in its individuality. The chairs and couches looked inviting. From the ceiling, depending by long gilded iron chains, was a swinging lounge, covered with rich pillows; quaint, beautiful pictures on the wall mingled with paper posters of the oddest, most fantastic designs. In the center of the room a large desk, covered with scattering papers, manuscripts and books, and sitting at the desk—a girl. She was dreaming, and the mellow light of a beautiful early spring day played softly on her sweet, wistful face and tinged her hair to a rich, living gold.

"Well, Frances, you haven't begun to dress yet, and here I am all ready to start."

The speaker stood outside in the hall and looked through the swinging Japanese bamboo curtains at the quiet figure within the room. Her voice was reproachful and impatient. Frances woke from her reverie with a start.

"Why—I forgot all about it mother, and—but—really I don't want to go. Please excuse me."

The mother came into the room. She did not look a great deal older than her daughter, though they could not have passed for sisters, because of the dissimilarity in their appearance. The girl had a slim, dreamy ethereal beauty, though her face showed strength of character, and was clever looking. She dressed artistically, where the mother was fashionably gowned, her fine, well-rounded figure showing off to advantage in a dark green tailor-made suit.

"Now, Frances, this is a shame of you." She sat down with aggrieved face. "Everybody will be there, and—"

"Mamma, I detest receptions of any kind, and afternoon ones are especially unpleasant to me. I don't see why people can't be content with parties and receptions in the evenings, without making it necessary for us to attend them in the afternoons too. I don't want to go."

"Well then I shan't go if you won't" The mother showed signs of temper. "That Japanese will come while I'm gone and—"

"Now mother!"

"Well, Frances, you know how I feel about this. I haven't felt easy about you ever since Roy brought him here. I have not, indeed."

"You liked him yourself at first, and Roy thinks everything of him."

"Yes, I did. He was a—er—curiosity."

"Oh, mother!"

"Well, what right had he to dare to make love to you?"

The girl's face hardened and there was an ominous glint of stubbornness in her eyes. Her mother knew that expression well. It always made her falter.

"He did not make love to me."

"I don't know what you call it, then."

There was silence for a moment, then the girl said quietly: "Why should he not have the same right as any one else?"

Her mother rose, an exasperated look on her face, pulling her veil down over her nose, and then buttoning her gloves slowly:

"Well—it's no use talking to you."

"No—it's no use, mother," she paused, and then added, slowly, "I will do as I like about this."

"And you will accept him?"

"Yes."

"That's enough," her mother answered, very bitterly, as she went out.

Frances drew a scribbling pad towards her and began writing on it hastily, but she kept scratching out what she had written and rewriting passages over and over. Suddenly she threw down the pencil restlessly. "I'll just have to wait till Taro comes," she said.

About a quarter of an hour later she heard a tap on the door, and the next instant a tall, handsome, manly young fellow had come into the room.

Frances half rose to welcome him, thinking he was Taro, and then seeing who her visitor was, sat down again, giv-

ing him merely a careless, familiar smile and nod.

"Oh, it's *you*, Bob."

"I think so."

"That's right. Find the most comfortable seat, crush all my pillows and begin to scatter cigar ash." This when he had stretched on the swinging couch and was biting the end of a cigar off. Frances had once liked the smell of cigar smoke and had given her brother and Bob *carte blanche* to smoke whenever they chose in her study. Of late she had taken a great aversion to it.

Bob put the cigar back in his pocket.

"I beg pardon, Fanny, I forgot."

Silence. Then—"I suppose—er—Mr. Taro Takamichi *never* smokes."

"No."

"Nor disarranges your pillows?"

"No."

"Thinks they are only to look at."

"Perhaps."

Silence again.

"Frances!"—very tenderly.

"Well?"

"You *don't* care for that fellow."

"How do *you* know?"

"He isn't like us at all."

"That don't matter. So much the better. I detest commonplace people."

"He may be commonplace in Japan."

"He is not—here."

"If you married him you would have to live in Japan."

Her eyes glowed. "Yes, that would be *lovely*."

"You'd tire of it."

"Oh, no!—never! Have you read—"

"Yes; your description of Fuji—something-or-other—and Matsu what-you-call-um Bay—all imaginary. *You've* never been there."

"That makes no difference," she said, witheringly. "Lew Wallace wrote Ben Hur when—"

"Oh, yes, I understand all that, but—well, it was all different."

He got up suddenly and came over beside her.

"Fanny, *what* do you want to write for?"

"What do I want to *write* for! What does any one?"

"I know—but—about Japan, for instance."

"I am intensely interested in that country."

"You weren't a year ago."

"No, but since then Taro—Mr. Takamichi told me so much I couldn't help being."

"You used to care more for—"

"What?"

"Well—er—me!—for instance."

"Oh, don't be so silly! The idea of comparing yourself with Japan!"

"But it *isn't* Japan. It's that d—I beg pardon—that confounded Jap—I mean Taro!"

"Look here," she said, with grave dignity, "if you can't speak kindly of my friends, I wish you would cease discussing them altogether."

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The dazzling glory of a Japanese sun was gilding the land. Everywhere the fields, hills and valleys were pink and white and blue, rich and fragrant with the exquisite tint of spring flowers, the cherry blossom predominating.

Yuki gathered the fallen blossoms, carrying her little basket back and forth to the house and filling every nook and corner with the exquisitely tinted blossom; for they were symbolic of happiness; and Yuki, and, indeed, all her family with her were very happy at this time.

"Cherry blossoms shall be *everywhere*," she had said to her parents only the previous night, and the next morning she had risen early and gone out to gather them herself. So the little house looked very bright, cheery and inviting. The andon was lighted later in the day and glowed in a flickering, inconstant, alluring way, and then the whole family sat together and chatted very happily. Neighbors and friends dropped in through the day with congratulations and simple gifts. Takamichi Taro, the betrothed of Yuki had returned to Japan. He had telegraphed them from Yokohama to expect him at any moment now. They were prepared to receive him as royally as possible.

And when he finally did come, and passed into the dainty, pretty little house, saw the happy, smiling faces of his relatives and the sweet flower, ~~the~~ one girl to whom he had been betrothed since childhood, but whom he had not seen in many years, he felt a strange lump rise

in his throat, and feelings of burning contrition and shame overpowered him. He was angry with himself for not having resumed their dress when calling on them, and felt awkward and out of place among them in the stiff European clothes. For the first time since he had been in America he felt a regret that he had ever left his home, and so had changed himself. For Taro was a typical Japo-American. He had lived in America over ten years, had become as one of them, and had even taken out his citizenship papers. Now he was visiting his home once more. He found himself in a rather peculiar position. Arguing in American fashion he had scoffed at the idea of being bound by a childhood betrothal. He had even expected to find Yuki married, although she was but seventeen years. Yet the first subject his parents had broached to him was that of his marriage to Yuki. It is no easy matter for a son to contradict or do otherwise than entirely agree with and obey the parent in Japan. Besides, a great wave of tenderness and love had come over Taro, for his home, his own people. He had not the heart to deny his parents' wish, and he knew that they had patiently waited for its fulfillment for years. How could he tell them of his betrothal to an American girl, who, after all, never could be more to them than a stranger. And now his parents who had met him in Yokohama, had persuaded him to accompany them on a visit to the girl's home. He was in their midst, surrounded by their influence. Everywhere Taro saw nothing but goodwill towards him printed on the faces of her people.

They say no one is ever thoroughly converted from his own people; that though they might become, for a time, as those among whom they live, yet the memories of childhood are the strongest of all, and brought back in the midst of them, newer scenes fade into oblivion by the renewed acquaintance with what is, after all, their oldest and strongest memory.

And then Yuki! She was the prettiest, daintiest little thing Taro had ever seen. Her little airs of authority towards him were irresistible. Where had he seen any like her? And so this much-traveled, modern, Americanized Japanese, became a backslider. He succumbed to the woo-

ing influence of his own home, his own kith and kin. He fell in love with Yuki, and the American girl who had sacrificed so much for him, had alienated herself from her own people, and embittered them towards her, became to him only a memory; and as the weeks and months passed slowly, dreamily, happily, as they pass in Japan, the memory became dimmer and dimmer, till finally she was only to Taro one of the American women whom he compared with his own countrywomen, with inward satisfaction to himself. Still Taro considered himself a gentleman—a Japanese and an American gentleman. That is why the day before his marriage to Yuki he wrote a long letter to the American girl, telling her the truth.

Now, Frances Meredith was very unhappy at heart, though she would not have admitted it to any one. In the first place a constraint had sprung up between her and her mother, and she fancied this had communicated itself even to her brother, Roy. She had given her word to Takamichi Taro and she intended to keep it. But she was not happy. And she had given her answer also to Bob Carrington, very gently at first, when he refused to believe it, for he had loved her for years now and once—well, that was a ~~vague dream~~ *merely a memory now*—but, once Bob had fancied she returned his affection. Then the girl had taken a craze for things oriental and Japanese. Taro had caught her fancy, and in a romantic moment she conceived the idea that she *might* enjoy life as the wife of a Japanese. Bob had not been near her for days now. She missed him; for even though she did only want him as a friend, yet—well, Bob had become almost a part of her life. Life seemed odd, unreal now, without Bob in it.

Frances felt lonely and deserted. The little study did not look half as inviting as usual. The posters on the wall looked hideous and unnatural to her now. She wondered how she could ever have put them up. It was a craze with her, this sudden liking for odd, fantastic things, and she had overdone it and worn the liking out.

She was sitting alone again in the study, but there was something wet on

her cheek, and a good deal of the determination was gone from the girl's face.

She had not had a letter from Taro in days now. She was waiting for the mail at the moment. Then Roy had come in to the room, bringing with him the letter. She opened it with her paper cutter and read it slowly through. Roy was smoking on the swinging lounge, the place Bob had always liked so well. For a long time the girl sat with the letter before her. She read it through slowly, and though she was quite calm the truth at first only half forced its way home to her intelligence. She even smiled a trifle at her stupidity.

"Got a letter from Taro?"

"Yes."

"What does he say?"

"Why—" she had risen and the sheets of the letter fell from her hands scattering at her feet. "He—is going to be married!" she said slowly. Then she began to laugh in a dazed mirthless fashion. Her brother sat up in horror.

"What! Why, Fanny, what on earth do you mean?"

"I am glad," she said wildly, "glad, glad, glad. I was longing for it—waiting, dreading—I—"

Roy had crossed the room and picked the letter up, but she snatched it from

him fiercely and began tearing it into tiny fragments. Then she broke down.

"Oh I have been a fool—a fool," she wailed. "I—I—never really cared—never loved him—only I wanted to be different. I knew you were all against it. That's one reason why I persisted and I—" her voice was hardly intelligible through her sobs now. Then it dragged painfully as though she was dreading to say what had been slumbering at her heart for so long now.

"I gave Bob—up—for—him! think of it—Bob for him a thing like him! Just compare them, Roy. Think of it."

She was getting hysterical. Roy put his arm about her and tried to comfort her, but the girl was full of remorse and self reproach and shame now.

"Roy, don't tell mamma, not that *he* gave *me* up."

"No—no one need know."

"But Bob?"

"No, not even Bob."

But that evening when Bob, at a telephone message from Roy, had come to the house, and was holding the girl's little hands gently in his, she told him the truth, and because she really loved him I think she asked him to forgive her. What man who really loved a woman would *not* forgive? Certainly not a man like Bob Carrington.

WHEN THE SUN BREAKS THROUGH.

MONROE G. WHITNEY.

I know to thee the world seems blue,
So long no flowers thy pathway knew;
And though thou strive as best thou might
To break the spell, there seems no light.
Hope on! clouds change: 'twill all come right,
When the sun breaks through.

Thou set thyself a life's ideal
On some great height—no less would do.
Thy life's ideal, like mountain peak,
By clouds is often lost to view.
Hope on! clouds change: 'twill reappear,
When the sun breaks through.

Thus life's best plans may seem to fail;
Thy tedious years of toil and thought
May seem to thee to end in naught.
But through thy life's unfulfilled plan
Thou'st grown a better, nobler man.
And though oft there seems approaching night,
Hope on! clouds change: 'twill all come right,
When the sun breaks through.