The Wooing Wistaria Wistaria Copyright 1905 by Harpe

CHAPTER XXIII

PON his return to the fortress, Keiki, as the capable and devoted leader of the cause of Imperialism, was deferred to by his brothers. He at once as-

to by his brothers. He at once assumed in his own right the command of the resources of the clan.

The household was put upon a footing even more military than before. Regular watch was kept at all points of the estate and at the boundaries of the province. Reports of all crossing the boundaries of the province in either direction were made to Keiki each morning.

An army of laborers impressed into service from the Mori as well as the friendly southern provinces were put to work strengthening the

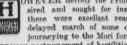
provinces were put to work strengthening the defenses of the Mori fortress, now become the headquarters of the Imperial 'party.

war headquarters of the Imperial 'party.

The castle itself, situated within the centre of the province, approach to which on all sides must be made through friendly provinces, with the exception of the Catzu, because of its natural defensive properties, became the nucleus for a host of outworks sheltering the activities of Keiki. Within the line of fortifications surrounding the immediate vicinity of the fortress were the factories and foundries now built by those who acknowledged Keiki as their leader. For while all this owed its inception to the Shining Prince, it could not be carried out with his resources alone. The neighboring clans, whose lords in the past had held equal and superior rank to the Shogun, sent of their best to the Prince of Mori. The clans of Satsuma, Ozumi, Hinga, Nagate, Suwo, the Liu Kiu Islands, and others ordered their artisans and mariners to Keiki's headquarters.

Hinga, Nagate, Suwo, the Liu Kiu Islands, and others ordered their artisans and mariners to Keikir's headquarters.

The old Prince of Satsuma, more learned in European civilization than Keiki (although Choshui was the home in Japan of Dutch reiences), was the Prince's preceptor. Under his direction the cannon foundries, whose weapons of war were to oust the Shogun, were built. A sort of light rifle designed by Satsuma was manufactured under his direction near Keiki's fortress. The castle, which in time of war would afford protection to all these works and foundries, was reduced in the number of its living apartments. These were situated within the immost recesses. All about the old portions of the house were built broad platforms. Upon their edges were set stone walls with openings for cannon. These, as fast as they came from the foundry, were set in tiers so arranged that they could command the approaches to the large circle, within which were set the factories and works of the Imperialists.





Toro shruged angry shoulders, a gesture to Keiki reminisered to make remu trouble for your result."

The good enough to have may Lord of Catzu taken to Catzu under such escort as he may require." To Tore he bowed perfunction; "Good away lord."

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"My lord is ill?"

"An insignificant pain in the brow," said the Prince.

The boy slipped behind the Prince softly and fell upon one knee.

"Dear lord, will you not permit me to relieve the pain of your august brow?"

The Prince stirred uneasily. Again the strange quality of the boy's voice touched some hidden spring of memory. Taking his silence as consent, the boy laid a soft, cool hand on either side of Keiki's temples, pressing them with his finger-tips. The action, the touch, recalled in an instant a memory that was better sleeping. It was thus the Lady Wistaria had been wont to woo away the pain that beset his brow when he had lain ill in her father's house.

Suddenly the Prince clasped his hands over those on his brow. Gradually he was drawing Jiro to a position facing him, when, eluding the Prince's grasp, Jiro sank to the floor and laid his head at Keiki's feet.

"Oh, my lord, I beseech you not to be angry with me for my forwardness. It was my solicitude for your pain—"

"Nay, rise," said the Prince, gently. "Pray do not confound me with apologies."

With his head still drooping, the boy retreated towards the door.

The Prince smiled at the fear apparent in Jiro's demeanor.

"You have done me no ill," he said, kindly: "you have done me no ill," he said, kindly: "you have actualy soothed away the pain. It thank you."

CHAPTER XXVI

PON his arrival in Yedo, Keiki made use of every present use of every precaution his ingenuity could devise, that the Imperialist might not discover his presence in the approach to the City had been attended only by Torre and It.

by Toro and Jiro, but during the last stage of the journey the three had separated, entering the journey the three had separated, entering the city from opposite directions to meet in an isolated quarter near the water-front. Here the Imperialist party found it advantageous to maintain a small establishment whose squalled exterior gave no promise of the comparative com-fort to be enjoyed beyond the threshold by those in possession of the password. From this house the movements and plans, the

thoughts even, of the shogunate government in its own Yedo capital were observed and report-ed to those seeking the return of rightful sever-eignty to the Mikado in his Kioto capital. Here at all hours of the night came men in mean dress, whose bearing, though consciously abased to that of merchants or laborers, was unmistak-ably that of the noble; here came strange, imably that of the noble; here came strange, imperious young men who might pose as water-carriers, but whose hands sought an imaginary swordbelt at the least obstacle, and slight youths whose loose garments too poorly hid the curves of feminine figures. Of late the activity and the going to and fro of these persons had increased, but apparently without exciting the attention of the municipal authorities.

Although the young Prince of Mori had em-ployed all artifice in gaining the Yedo head-quarters of his party, yet he was surprised to note that his person attracted scarcely any attention. His position of peril, and his natural observant mind, on guard to catch the slight-est suspicious augury, would have led him to exaggerate any apparently hostile glance. Every-where, the sole topic was of the foreigners, their strange behavior, their stated purposes, their mysterious ways, and their utter indifference to mysterious ways, an all Japanese usage.

To Be Continued Next Sunday

Think Every Day

No man has a poorer outlook than he who is on the lookout for himself only.

