

T A M A

elated at the prospect of his coming, their joy was hardly shared by his household. It was in a flutter of excited fear. Even the stolid, impassive-faced samourai guard discussed in undertones among themselves the degrading service to which they were reduced in these degenerate days. To guard the body of a mere Tojin! Well, such was the will of the Daimio of Echizen, and a samourai is the right hand of his Prince. His tne task to obey even the caprice of his lord, or take his own life in preference to service too far beneath his honor.

In the humbler regions of the Shiro, however, the servants discussed the matter less pessimistically. Some rumor of the generosity and wealth of foreigners had floated across the vague tide of gossip. Anyhow, the preparations for his coming went blithely on here, and already odors of vigorous