

with you to me," explained the doctor. "Miss Toshio remembered your name as that of a friend of her school-mate, the honorable Miss Hunter's, and went with the lieutenant to where she saw you, and recognized you by a portrait in her friend's album."

"Then, if she is Miss Hunter's chum, O Noshi San, I have certainly heard of her," said Craig, "and it was a lucky chance that brought you near me. Frankly, I didn't realize in the least how you were able to manage things, and I made a fool of myself, taking chances that no sane man should."

"Any friend of Mr. Hunter's is mine, too," said Dr. Toshio, "and I would ask you to be my guest until the 'Goya Maru' sails. My daughter and Madame Kabokusai are returning to Nippon in her also, so you will be fellow passengers."

For the first time, Craig saw a mitigating circumstance in his enforced return to Nippon. There was a frank, good comradeship between him and Dolly Hunter, entirely unmixed with love-making, and he remembered very well her glowing descriptions of the friend she had always wished him to meet—O Noshi San—Dolly had never called her anything else, the daintiest, most bewitching little maid that even Nippon ever saw, the personification of all the flower-like beauty and sweetness of her countrywomen. Craig felt decidedly interested as he went with the doctor to Madame Kabokusai's rooms.

The reception room was dainty enough to match the maid of Dolly's description: pale, silvery-grey paper walls, patterned with delicate green willow leaves; spotlessly white mats. Craig hastily removed his boots at the door. On the tokonoma, or raised dais, was a branch of cherry blossoms in a bronze vase, and a beautiful little censer, from which a tiny curl of scented smoke rose up before a memorial tablet set in the wall.

"There will be another name added to those already on it," said Dr. Toshio, softly, "for we heard to-day that Oki Teisko, brother of our Consul in Gensan, whose house this is, died as a soldier of Nippon should, facing the enemies of our emperor."

The wall opened as he spoke, and Madame Kabokusai, a middle-aged, but very graceful woman, entered, followed by a young girl, whose appearance gave Craig a distinct feeling of disappointment.

It certainly was hard to discover the dainty flower maid of Dolly's descriptions, in that prim little woman, with her dark blue trousers and jacket, and close-cropped hair. Her sash was the only mark of her sex that she still kept, and she knelt on the mats, a little image with downcast eyes, only speaking when spoken to, and then as briefly as possible.

Craig would have hardly felt flattered had he known her thoughts as he talked to her father, for Noshi had guessed his disappointment, and misunderstood its cause.

"Because he heard I was with the soldiers in Korea," she thought resentfully, "I suppose he expected that I was a geisha, and looked to see me with painted face and bright hairpins, dressed up in gay colored robes, and seeking to lure to myself some lover. Can he not understand that women, as well as men, have honor, and do not play when out on the Emperor's service? I have known some time that he was a man without intelligence, and now it appears that he is without self-control also, for he did not like it when he saw my hair was cut, showing I was under a vow, and not for any man to touch. Bah, I suppose all white men are alike, having neither reason nor self-control, like the Russians."

"So it was not far from Gray Horse Mountain," Dr. Toshio was saying, "that Lieutenant Asso had the honorable pleasure of meeting you, Mr. Craig. That mountain will doubtless have a place in Nippon's history, for it was about it that our quarrel with Russia began. You have not heard all the story? No; well, it is rather a comical one, and furnishes some idea as to the real management of the Korean government. You know a little of Seoul?"

"I know what the court is," said Craig, "a corrupt swarm of eunuchs, soothsayers, fortune-tellers, and foreign parasites, with an Emperor that such a crowd would choose."

"Exactly, and the foreign policy of Korea has always been 'make love to the strongest nations, and obey them,' so when she saw the bloodshot eyes of Russia fixed upon her from beyond the Yalu, which, as you know, is part of the boundary between Korea and Manchuria, and heard her demand that she gave the Prino Lumber Co. license to cut timber on the Korean side of the river, she consented at once. This license, though secured in 1896, was neglected until 1903,