

THE WOOLING OF WISTARIA

act obedience from his child, even though that obedience lead her to utmost misery?"

"Such is the Japanese idea," returned Mori.

"Then, my lord, the parent of my kinswoman exacted a task from her. He forced her to betray her lover, though she, ignorant that he was the person implicated, yet sought to warn him of the danger to himself and the unknown."

Mori's eyebrows contracted darkly. He half rose from his seat. Then with a forced calm he dropped back into his place.

Jiro's face was now flushed a deep scarlet. He seemed to be using all his strength in an effort to control his emotions.

"My lord," he added, "my kinswoman was not only forced to betray her lover by her father, but she was driven further—into marrying, and, consequently, degrading him, because only in that way could she save his life from the hands of the public executioner."

Mori was white to the lips with his anger. But he controlled himself strongly. Jiro had claims upon his gratitude.

"You have failed to tell me," he said, coldly, "in what way I can serve you—and your kinswoman."

"My lord, the lover put away my kinswoman, being in ignorance of the treachery of her parent. Yet so grievously is he wounded that he could not be approached by one so slight as I. He would not listen to truth."