

Cherry Blossoms Fade

Mary Synon, in Extension Magazine.

If I had thought of Franklin Hoyt, after the time when we had worked together in Chicago I should have pictured him, bent over his drawing-board...

Hull down, out of Japan, the Empress of Asia was steaming eastward. In the tea room the Filipino orchestra played weird native melodies...

He wasn't glad to see me. Indifferently, almost brusquely, he returned my surprised greetings. Conversation, after my first efforts, dragged.

It was on that point that I ventured to make comment. "Queer," I told him as we watched together from the stern the lights of Honolulu glimmer down into the pin-points against the vast darkness of the ocean.

Pains in the Back

are symptoms of a weak, torpid or stagnant condition of the kidneys or liver, and are a warning that it is extremely hazardous to neglect, so important a healthy action of these organs.

"I was taken ill with kidney trouble, and became so weak I could scarcely get around. I took medicine without benefit, and finally decided to try Hood's Sarsaparilla. After the first bottle I felt so much better that I continued its use, and six bottles made me a new woman."

Hood's Sarsaparilla Cures kidney and liver troubles, relieves the back, and builds up the whole system.

"winging you back on your old course."

"Not the greatest," said Hoyt slowly. He looked not at me, but at the greenish crest of the churning wake, as he went on: "I don't know what you believe, but it's probably the tepid thing that we blaspheme by calling Christianity. The East, if you live there, takes that out of you. Sometimes though—" He broke off suddenly, turning to me directly. "Do you want to know why I'm going back?" he demanded, his eyes auring into my brain, and a fanaticism blazing in his face that shouted his need of passing on whatever message he had received from Infinity.

Even had I not desired to know what forces had transformed a mediocre newspaper artist into a lotus-eating expatriate, and what other forces were driving him back to his own land, I should have assented to his compelling query. But, as he swung into speech, I knew that it was not to me, but to some other side of himself, that he was making explanation. It was the artistic egotism demanding expression that animated his confidence. That he could talk to me in my own language only heightened the poignancy of his confession. For it was like a man in a trance that he spoke.

"I wasn't more than five years old when I began to dream of Japan," he said. "As other boys thought of engines, and machines, and printing presses, I used to think of cherry trees, and bamboo houses, and queer little brown men. I don't remember reading of Japan when I was a child. I was fourteen when I found my first book about it. It must have been something deeper, something inborn. No, it couldn't be atavism because no Hoyt was ever a sailor. Before we were Ohio farm folk we were Connecticut farm folk. Before that we were English farmers, both sides of the family. By all the laws of heredity, I should have been harrowing brown fields while I was working in Chicago, studying art at night at the Institute, and dreaming wonderful dreams of that little island I've just now left."

"Because the dream seemed almost unattainable, I cherished it more. I knew Hearn by heart, and I used to climb to the top-most gallery of the Auditorium whenever they played 'Butterfly' at the opera. I spent half my salary on Japanese prints. I studied Japanese from a boy who was going to the University, teaching him mechanical drawing as compensation. While I worked every day, there in the art department of the paper, I was really living in my hope of finding my way to Nippon. But because I meant my break to be final, absolute, I was waiting until I could see my way clear to go without the necessity of coming back. I was just beginning to see it when I met Frances Thorne."

"Do you remember her at all? She was the telephone switchboard operator in the office when you were there, a little girl with brown hair and with deep blue eyes that had a trick of looking not at you, but through you. There was something about her different from any of the girls I knew, an aura of spirituality I think I'd call it now. That was, I fancy, what drew me to her, although I was so absorbed in my dreams of Asia that, if I analyzed my feeling for Frances at all in

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those days, I should have set it down as a response to her sympathy. I fell into the habit of going down to the board to talk with her in the hours when neither of us was busy. I talked rather, and she listened. Then I drifted into waiting for her and walking homeward with her when she had finished work. After a while I began to find the evenings, filled as they were with my study and reading, dull, and I used to go to the apartment out on the West Side, where Frances lived with her married sister.

"I suppose that it was because I hadn't seen any home life, since I had left home five years before, that I found theirs beautiful. There was a serenity about that house, five-room flat that it was, that lifted it above its restrictions of brick, and stone, and wood, and cheap furniture. Unconsciously I must have been building ideals of a home of my own while I visited in this one, but I didn't realize it, for all the time I was looking out to the Orient."

"When I had the offer of that New York job I refused, because I saw that it would definitely hold me back from accomplishment of my ambition, even though it would give me opportunity for advancing in my work. I told Frances about it—I had a way of telling her about all my affairs—and she seemed glad that I had not taken the place; but when I told her that my refusal was due to my intention to go to Japan, she began to cry. I knew, in the instant, when I told myself that I could give up the dream rather than hurt her, I loved her."

"It seemed to me, knowing that she cared for me, that there could be no obstacle in the path of our happiness. Life seemed altogether simple, altogether delightful, altogether alluring. We would be married in a little while, and go to live in a cottage out in an unfashionable suburb, and be rapturously happy while I grew into fame and fortune in my work. Well, life isn't like that, you know. And it was Frances who raised the question of other issues."

I myself had no religion. I never went to church, and I believed in God in some vague way that I never tried to define. I've always had an ethical sense, and I'd run straight because it was somehow the right thing to do, but I had no more anchor than a butterfly. Well, Frances went worrying about my soul as soon as she knew that she had my heart. That's a trick of women, isn't it? She wanted me to study her religion."

Somehow Frances seemed grateful beyond reason that I was going to accede to her conditions. It was out of her gratitude that she made her sacrifice for me. "We are going to live in Japan," she told me one night when I talked of finding the cottage in the suburbs. "She held to the plan in spite of my perfunctory protests. It was she who drove me into making arrangements with syndicates and magazines so that I would be assured of a market for my work. It was she who forced me to buy steamer tickets instead of the cottage. I was she who engineered the plan from start to finish. You may imagine that I adored her more than ever for it."

He shifted a little, turning his intent gaze toward the greenish waves toward the stars that had replaced the Hawaiian lights. "I remember," he said in a deeper, more intimate tone, "our first night on the Pacific. It—it was heaven to both of us." Then his voice drifted back into that strange impersonal manner of narrative. "Did you ever come into the heart of a dream?" he said. "Did you ever find love and beauty, and inspiration all in one place, all that you had ever wanted in all your life? Did you ever feel, after having lived in a desert that you have come home into a land of loveliness? That was Japan for me."

"I had the feeling, on the day we landed at Nagasaki, that I had come home. Little things that I saw on the streets, voices that I heard, all came to me as if out of my recollection of another existence. Something in me deeper than thought also responded to the association. From the very first moment I was a Japanese. And I was utterly unquestionably happy in the realization."

"Sometimes since I have wondered if Frances did not realize this as quickly as I did. For a little time she seemed almost frightened by my joyousness of

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appreciation. After a little thought she accepted my belief with tolerant amusement. It was her gift of adaptability that made possible our happiness together. She herself never assimilated the feeling of Nippon. She was always alien but she managed to keep me happy in my own illusions. She made her own life, too, when we settled in Tokyo. She found her friends in the foreign quarter there, as I found mine among the natives. It was due to her that my work found the market it did back in the United States. She was the one who wrote to publishers and agents, who managed our banking and our household arrangements. She was one of the remarkable American girls who need only opportunity to develop into efficient capable women of the world. You may think, she parenthesized his paenegyric—"that I'm talking too much of my wife. I couldn't."

(To be continued) Father—It's tough when you have to pay 45 cents a pound for beefsteak. Daughter—Yes, but it's tougher, dad, when you pay eighteen.

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