

and said a few words of gentle greeting to Omi, in a clear, mellow voice that was very pleasing. Sachi's eyes sparkled with pride as he looked on his son. Unlike Orito, he was a very impulsive man, and without preparing the boy, he hastened to tell him at once of their plans for his future. While his father was speaking Orito's face did not alter from its calm, grave attention, although he was unusually moved. He only said, "What of Numè, my father?"

Sachi and Omi beamed on him.

"When you return from this America I will give you Numè as a bride," said Omi.

"And when will that be?" asked Orito, in a low voice.

"In eight years, my son, and you shall have all manner of learning there, which cannot be acquired here in Tokyo or in Kyushu, and the manner of learning will be different from that taught anywhere in Japan. You will have a foreign education, as well as what you have learned here at home. It shall be thorough, and therefore it will take some years. You must prepare at once, my son; I desire it."

Orito bowed gracefully and thanked his father, declaring it was the chief desire of his life to obey the will of his parent in all things.

Now Numè was a very peculiar child. Unlike most Japanese maidens, she was impetuous and wayward. Her mother had died when she was born, and she had never had any one to guide or direct her, so that she had grown up in a careless,