

"Hallo! Takie—you there?" he said, cordially. "Thought you'd be laid up. You're a pretty good sailor, I see." Then he turned to the girl and said very solemnly and as if they had never even discussed the subject of an introduction, "Cleo, this is my old college friend, Mr. Takashima—Takie, my cousin, Miss Ballard."

"Will you tell me why," said the young Japanese, very seriously, "you did not want that I should know your cousin?"

"Don't mind Tom," the girl answered, with embarrassment, as that gentleman threw away his cigar deliberately; and she saw by his face that he intended saying something that would mislead Takashima, for he had often told her of the direct, serious and strange questions the Japanese would ask, and how he was in the habit of leading him off the track, just for the fun of the thing, and because Takashima took everything so seriously.

"Why—a—" said Tom, "the truth of the matter is—my cousin is a—a flirt!"

"Tom!" said the girl, with flaming cheeks.

"A flirt!" repeated the Japanese, half-musingly. "Ah! I do not like a flirt—that is not a nice word," he added, gently.

"Tom is just teasing me," she said; and added, "But how did you know Tom did not want you to know me?"

"I heard you tell him that you want to know me, and I puzzle much myself why he did not want."

"I was sorry for you in advance, Takie," said Tom, wickedly, and then seeing by the girl's face