THE GIRL FROM NIPPON
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CHAPTER I.

It was a rather curious patchwork of a room into which Sir Basil Everard was shown by the small, soft-footed Japanese servant, a room in which East and West strove incongruously to blend. Here and there an Oriental vase stood cheek by jowl with a glaring exposition of cheap Western art, which seemed to struggle blatantly for domination, while the quaintly-designed kake-mono, delicately finished, betraying in grey monotone the everlasting snow-capped summit of the incomparable Fuji, appeared as though supplicating its immediate neighbour for gracious permission to breathe. A large satsuma bowl, negligently and yet artistically filled with sprays of apple-blossom, stood on a table in the middle of the room. Another bowl, but of bronze, rested on a small round table.
in the window. This also was filled with beautiful pink and white blossoms.

As Sir Basil looked about him his lips twitched curiously, and an angry frown deepened the line between his eyebrows. This suggestion of the Far East did not appeal to him. Since returning to England, and, incidentally, succeeding to certain properties, which carried with them no uncertain position in the social world, he had no wish to be reminded of wild days spent among the wilder heathen. He was not a particularly pleasant-looking man, his narrow cold blue eyes and heavy jaw being such as to render him, on occasion, almost repellent; and just then this suggestion of the Orient threw him in a mood by no means amiable.

However, he was given but slight opportunity to indulge in murmurings or complaints, for presently the door by which he had entered was quietly opened, so quietly, indeed, that he gave a sudden start as he turned round, and a woman entered, a strange, almost timid, look on her face.

A remarkable apparition this, and as such seemed greatly to startle the man. She was dressed in a kimono of pale blue silk edged with a delicate shade of coral pink. Round her waist was the obi, or sash, of the same delicate pink shade, hunched in a huge bow at the back in the Japanese manner, and on her feet were the tabi, or socks, which are
worn in the house. In her glossy black hair was set a sprig of apple-blossom, and though the hair itself was abundant, it was not pounded out in the approved native manner, but seemed as though the East and the West here also struggled for dominance.

And yet more marvellously striking than figure or hair was the extraordinary, the singularly weird beauty of this woman. Her face was white, almost unnaturally so, and betrayed no suspicion of colour, save in the lips, and they were almost outrageously red by comparison. The mouth pouted slightly with that supercilious curl which one will frequently see on the lips of a woman of Mongol blood. It might express much affection or much hate.

But perhaps the most wonderful feature of this astounding apparition was her eyes. They were blue, of that intense blue-grey colour which one sees in the skies on a summer day, and though large, and deeply expressive, were set in a slant. That this setting was Asiatic no one could doubt for a moment, though how an Asiatic came to possess eyes of a colour so distinctly European was a problem which might puzzle the uninitiated.

Recovering the momentary loss of his self-possession Sir Basil Everard bowed gravely, she replying in the native manner, her hands on her knees.
"O Iris-san!" he said.

"On the contrary," she answered gravely. "In this country I am an English girl, and I take my father's name of Mayford. O Iris-san was left behind at Kobe, with the other things that do not count in the West. You have not forgotten Kobe?" she asked in rather a plaintive tone.

She spoke the purest English, with just a suspicion of that throaty intonation which seems peculiar to the East. The Eurasian has it always, and even the white child seems to acquire it from the native servant.

No, he had not forgotten Kobe, and if one might guess from the expression of his face the memory of that far-off town was not of the pleasantest.

"There are some things one never forgets," he said with purposeful ambiguity.

"Yet you forgot to return as you promised."

He looked at her as if to catch the reproach in her eyes, in her face, for no suspicion of it could he detect in the tone. Yet gazing on her he might have been gazing on a carven image of Buddha, so impassive and unemotional did she seem. Whatever her thoughts, whatever her emotions, no suggestion of them was allowed to come to the surface. She might have been a cold, uninterested stranger who questioned him for the sake of making conversation.
"I meant to—then," he stammered.
"So I believed. Will you be pleased to take a seat?"
"Thanks; but I'm afraid I must be running away presently."
"I understand."
"You see, it's like this, O Iris-san——"
"Miss Mayford, if you do not mind," she corrected.
"But Miss Mayford would not dress like a Japanese."
"I thought you would like it," she said simply.
"Out there it was charming. In your uncle's orchard you were like the flower-goddess, O Iris-san—I beg your pardon—but here in dull, prosaic England it seems just a little unusual. By the way, how is Dr. Mohri?"
"My honourable uncle is very well, and wishes kindly to be remembered."
"Clever little fellow," he mused.
"You thought so when he loosened the grip that death had about your throat."
"Yes, that was a near thing," admitted the man.
"You also were kind to me then, O Iris-san. No, please don't get angry. You were O Iris-san to me then, and as O Iris-san I always think of you."
"Then you had not forgotten?"
"No, I had not forgotten; but I thought it better—you understand?"
"Perfectly. It was I who was foolish. I forgot that I am neither one thing nor the other, neither Japanese nor English, but just a half-breed—what you call a mongrel," she added in a dull monotony of scorn—"despised of all."

"You are a very beautiful woman," he said.

For a moment her eyes narrowed until they resembled nothing so much as two long blue slits, but beyond that she betrayed no expression of emotion.

"With the defects of both races and the merits of neither?" she protested. "I did not know this once," she continued in the same expressionless tone. "Indeed, I rather prided myself on the English blood that was in me, and looked upon this as my country; but I find that here I am an alien, and the worst of aliens—an Asiatic. It was not wise of us to leave Nippon. There, at any rate, I was respected as the niece of the famous Dr. Mohri."

"You must always be respected," he said, "wherever you go."

"It is your honourable condescension that would flatter."

"On the contrary, I mean every word of it. Have I not always been frank with you?"

"Very."

"Then let me continue to be frank. I am sure
THE GIRL FROM NIPPON.

we will understand each other better, honour each other the more. Out there, in Kobe, things were different. I was really most grateful to your uncle and you, and when I left my heart was full of gratitude, and still is; but once more among my own people I realised that it would be a great mistake to lead you into a marriage from which you could not hope to extract any sort of happiness. We are not of the same race, O Iris-san. The East and the West can never assimilate: much misery must result from such an alliance."

"I had not thought that I was wholly of the East."

"There might be more hope if you were."

"Of what?"

"An understanding."

"But do we not thoroughly understand each other already? What was possible over there in Kobe is quite impossible here in England. It is a very simple proposition—one which any child might understand. And I am no longer a child. You would be ashamed of a wife with Asiatic blood in her? The problem of race cannot be overcome by thinking of it; no, nor heroically defying it. I am one of inferior blood, despite my English father. This my uncle told me, but I would not listen to his wisdom. Sometimes I think he does not love the white races, though he reads their
books, studies their science, and borrows their wisdom."

He remembered that strange little Dr. Mohri, with his wizened, beardless face and his horrible black slits of eyes. Even though he owed his life to him, his gratitude was not wholly free of a certain sense of loathing.

"I am sorry," he began lamely.

"But there is no occasion to be. My obstinacy and ignorance are entirely to blame. And the matter is of no importance. Once I might have thought that I was not so inferior to you, but I now see the folly and the shame of it, and, believe me, I am truly repentant."

But neither in tone nor manner could he trace any sign of repentance. Coldly she spoke, coldly she regarded him, her face masked in an impenetrable Oriental calm. Without emotion she spoke: there was not even the remotest suggestion of the slighted woman. He might have been a cipher for all heed she paid to him, a puff of wind that for a moment blew across her eyes.

"Among your own people," he began, stung to retort by her unassailable indifference.

"My own people! Who are they? I have no people. I am neither of the East nor the West: there is no place for me in the world. Out there it was different. I did dream that I was an English
THE GIRL FROM NIPPON.

girl, and that one day I should come to England and take my place among my own kin: and this in spite of the fact that among the white people my father was said to have disgraced himself and his race by marrying my mother."

"Then he did marry her?"

"Oh, yes." Still no sign of anger or resentment. "He was one of those men, it seems, who honourably do foolish things. For such men there is no place in this world, nor for their children."

"It was a mistake for you to come to England, O Iris-san."

"So I begin to realise. You wish I had not, eh? But why let my presence disconcert you? I believed in your kisses and your words: I see now that you did not mean them. Well, perhaps I shall not die of grief. It was very sweet to dream, and if the dreaming ends in nothing—well, is not that the way of all dreams? I have been rightly served for my pride. I thought I was an English girl, and would not look at the natives, whom you call 'my people.' I find that English girls are not so proud here in England. Your pride of race is a sham, Sir Basil Everard, your pretensions hypocrisy, for you cannot make your own women conform to your own laws. Truly your notions of race, and the pride of race, are much beyond my conception. I
suppose they are pegs to hang your moral cloaks upon when the occasion suits?"

She hit him hard in that cold, passionless way of hers, and his rather ponderous jaw projected aggressively towards her. Argument, entreaty, supplication, were little likely to affect the imperceptability of this amazing product of the East and West. If she felt, she betrayed no sign of feeling: emotion was dead, or more probably had never existed. And yet odd memories floated in—memories of Dr. Mohri's garden, and the sun above the Kobe hills.

"These things come of their own accord," he said sententiously, "and are beyond our power to regulate. Out there all things were possible: here we are ruled by convention and must obey its laws."

"I beg of you honourably not to apologise. As it was with you, so it is with me. In Kobe you were one of the few; here you are but one of the many. The glamour has faded. Your greatness has vanished in the greater glory of more important personages. The mistake was mine, but I bear it tranquilly."

"I was afraid you might have thought differently. This philosophic attitude comes as a great relief."

"You forget that I have been educated in the school of Dr. Mohri, who is renowned for his philosophic outlook on life. Being a student of the
philosophy of every nation, he has learnt the worthlessness of them all. Yet out of their futilities he has founded a system which may one day startle the world."

"And you are his disciple? I congratulate both master and scholar. It is well known that all wisdom came from the East."

"It still comes," she said.

In spite of himself he was not a little impressed by this interview and the manner of this strange girl. At least he had expected tears, and, behold! this woman regarded him with a calm which brought the mysterious East, with all its terrific brooding, palpably before his eyes. What was he to make of it, of her, of that sense of the unforeseen which, like an intangible shadow, hovered in the distance? Had he been a man of sentiment he might have experienced weird sensations as he looked at this girl with her white face, her red lips, and her slanting, blue eyes; might almost have regarded her as the reincarnation of some long-dead goddess of Asia, and bowed as one does to the mystery of the unknown. But being what he was, he congratulated himself on thus satisfactorily solving a somewhat intricate problem.

When he had received the letter informing him that Dr. Mohri and his niece had taken a little house near Richmond for the summer months, and
that they would esteem it a great honour if he would condescend to call on them, his sensations were none of the pleasantest; for he had striven with all the assiduity of a determined mind to forget both Dr. Mohri and his niece. Indeed, he had striven, and had more or less succeeded, in forgetting many things which irked him to remember. But out there in the Far East that had happened which it was not easy to forget; and if the truth must be told, he both hated and feared this same Dr. Mohri, with his inscrutable smile and his beady little eyes with their lizard-like lids.

At first he would not go. That he had not returned to fulfil his promise ought surely to convince them that he wished the past to be forgotten. Why would not these people understand? Marry a half-breed! As well go and blow his brains out. And yet he knew he would go—that he must, because that little man with the lizard eyes was expecting him. But he was in no mood for feminine tantrums or Oriental pretensions. Had he been met with recrimination he would have known how to defend his conduct, would have brazened out the broken promise and justified himself with vigour; but to be met with the impenetrable calm of indifference—this was something he had not bargained for, something which lessened his pride and secretly set him seething.
"I hope you will have a pleasant stay in England," he ventured at last. "When do you think of returning to Japan?"

"That is for my uncle to say. At present he is seriously investigating certain Western phenomena which takes up much of his valuable time."

"You will kindly remember me to him, and express my regret at having called when he was from home."

"No doubt he will give you an opportunity of personally expressing that regret."

"Then he is not from home?"

"Oh, no; he is here now."

Instinctively he turned and beheld a small, black-coated figure standing in the doorway, blinking at him with strange, inhuman eyes; and though he resented the sensation, he knew that this apparition had startled him horribly.
CHAPTER II.

"DR. MOHRI!" he stammered.

The little man bowed still lower, and then looked up over his large, steel-rimmed spectacles.

"I have the honour to greet your excellency," he said in admirable English, and in a low, smooth tone in which the other distinguished the accentuated accent of the girl.

"This is indeed a great pleasure," said Sir Basil perfunctorily.

"The pleasure is mine once more to behold your illustrious countenance. Will you honourably please to be seated?"

"I was just going," said the baronet.

"Indeed! Then doubly am I to be commiserated."

The tone, the manner, brought back vivid pictures of other days and other lands. The unctuous hypocrisy of the yellow man swept over him with sickening effect. That attitude of humility, that
offensive courtesy—how he hated it all! Boldly he stared into the ugly little face, into those strange, flickering eyes, to see what he could read there. But that impassive countenance baffled him. He might as well have studied a bundle of old parchment.

Swiftly, and in a low tone, the girl spoke in Japanese, and though Sir Basil strained his ears, he caught only the one word, kekkon (marriage); he guessed the gist of her speech from that. The doctor bowed gravely, listening in an attitude of the utmost deference, but without exhibiting the faintest sign of interest or emotion. Then he answered in that soft, oily tone of his, and held wide the door for her to pass through. She bowed gravely to their honourable guest, then with equal gravity to her weird relative, and without another word left the room. Softly the little doctor closed the door after her, so softly, indeed, that the very absence of noise jarred the tense nerves of Sir Basil.

"My niece has informed me that there has been some slight misunderstanding," cooed the doctor in that throaty, sing-song tone of his, blinking up at the Englishman through his big, round glasses.

"Did you think it was to be avoided?" asked the other sharply.

"Never for a moment," replied the doctor promptly. "Indeed, I have never failed to realise the possibility of such an ending, and consequently
I have always striven to prepare her for some such contingency."

"You are a wise man, Dr. Mohri: you see that the thing would be impossible?"

"Quite. I am not one of those who believe that the East and the West can ever assimilate satisfactorily. You, too, have fully realised that truth since your return to your own people?"

"More than I ever thought I should. Of course you know that I have the greatest respect——"

"Undoubtedly," replied the little man, curbing the other's eagerness to explain. "Yet women are not so easily impressed by the commonsense of things, and it would distress me exceedingly if my niece were to take this matter seriously to heart."

"Oh," laughed the other, "I don't think you need let the thought of that occasion you any great concern. What your niece lacks in experience she makes up for by her singular quality of self-possession. In spite of the white blood in her veins she is a thorough Asiatic, and as such impervious alike to triumph or defeat."

"You think so?" The little voice tinkled in the most remarkable manner: a wheedling, coaxing tinkle of a voice that might have emanated from the striking of an antique bronze which had been hidden away for centuries in a Shinto temple. "Perhaps you are right. The East has not yet
learnt to question the profoundity of the West. It is quite possible that my niece possesses that singular quality with which you credit her. Certainly I have sought to instil in her the supreme virtues of her ancestors. But in these days, when the East and the West seem to become inextricably mixed, it is difficult to know exactly what a woman really thinks. You must bear with us, Sir Basil, and attribute our many shortcomings, not to vicious obstinacy, but to inherent misfortune.”

“I am glad to see you grasp so clearly the difficulties of the situation.”

“Oh, yes, I grasp them with the greatest of ease. They are a problem quite simple of solution if one only approaches them in the correct manner. In Kobe you asked me for the hand of my niece, and I said she shall please herself, though I would rather you both waited. Then came the sudden news of your accession to fortune. They said that you were wanted in England; that it would be better if you were to return at once. I think you agreed with me then that when I counselled waiting I was very wise? ”

“You were.”

Sir Basil looked sharply into the impassive face as if he would read the thought that lay behind these words; but beyond the blinking of the soul-less eyes he could detect no sign which might suggest
a deeper motive. In all he said this little man was evidently sincere, and his guest began to feel the ground grow firmer beneath his feet. What, after all, had he to dread? With true oriental fatalism these people accepted the inevitable without demur, bowed to the will of the gods, and were content.

"Perhaps she suffered a little: it is possible. Women are scantily endowed with a philosophic outlook on life. Nor do they properly understand this pride of race which plays so important a part in the destiny of nations. We who have read and thought deeply make many allowances for the incertitude of fate; but mankind, broadly speaking, ignores circumstance and judges only by result."

The little eyes blinked up curiously. "Yes, yes," muttered Sir Basil; but he was not sure that he saw the drift of these remarks, nor was he sure that even the orator was not a victim to his own love of voluble expression. Vanity, he knew, assailed us in many singular forms, and these newly-wise Japanese were obsessed by the thought of their own importance. Personally he resented that air of detached superiority which he seemed to trace in the manner of the little doctor. These mystical airs of wisdom assumed by the East had as much foundation in reality as any other shadowy superstition, and this impassive baboon was as great a fraud as the rest of his mystical brethren.
THE GIRL FROM NIPPON.

Nevertheless he could not rid himself of the thought that in the brain of this man was much more than his tongue expressed. Personally he would have expressed more than was in his brain, which is the way of the choleric European; and that was the wide gulf which separated the two men. Only in this instance he thought it better to restrain his natural ardour, and, though the thought annoyed him immeasurably, he was effectively conscious of the fact that there might be wisdom in the face of discretion.

And yet, wise as he wished to be, he strongly resented this sense of insecurity which dominated him against his will. Why should he pay such deference to this ridiculous little person? Why should that soft-spoken, impassive, presumptuous piece of parchment have the power to make him feel so absurdly ill at ease? And O Iris-san, or, as she would have it, Miss Mayford, she also had stung him with her indifference, made him feel that the loss of him was a matter of the minutest concern. Miss Mayford! A rather unpleasant smile played round his lips as he showed his teeth.

"I'm afraid I offended your niece," he said, "by calling her O Iris-san; but of course you realise that to me she must always be O Iris-san."

"Quite so. Always O Iris-san out there in Nippon, where her English name might cause
confusion; but here, in her own country, she is her father's daughter."

"Her own country!"

"Is not the father's country also the country of the child?"

"Perhaps you are right. But then you are always right, my wise doctor."

The little man shook his head, smiling in a manner of which Sir Basil was not altogether enamoured. That smile was the one thing about this diminutive Asiatic which left an uneasy doubt in the more robust mind of the other. Anger, facial or expletive, came well within the scope of a none too subtle intelligence; but this evasive quality of the alien mind left a singular sense of insecurity.

"Not always, I fear. Sometimes the profoundest calculations of wisdom are destroyed by the antics of a fool. We think, conceive, build, and in a moment is destroyed that which has taken us years to erect. This is the action of blind, fortuitous chance, which no reason or foresight can combat. But I see these speculations do not appeal to you; and really, why should any man weary himself, or others, with such? The world is really a very pleasant place if we have the instinct to make it so. That is why the rich man troubles himself not at all with abstract propositions. He has what he
wants: what has thought to give him more? Even thought is vanity."

Sir Basil was startled not a little to hear this heathen quote the Hebrew seer, though for the life of him he could not see why he should be, since it was known that even the devil could quote scripture. Always had this little person been more or less of a mystery to him. Out there he had heard strange rumours of Dr. Mohri, rumours which had not redounded to the credit of that mysterious individual. Among the more ignorant it was whispered that he had dealings with evil spirits; that even his ability to restore the almost dead had been bought at a price which one day he would have to pay the powers of darkness. It was even whispered that he made bargains on a death-bed. But, then, rumour was busy with the origin of his fortune, the acquisition of which had not unnaturally caused much envy. It is true he had paid little heed to these things, while his personal knowledge of the doctor had been meagre in the extreme; but, now, brought seriously in contact with him, he vaguely realised that he was dealing with a personality which might cause him infinite questionings.

He was, however, relieved to find that Dr. Mohri made so little of this broken engagement, though the knowledge was not conducive to an excess of vanity. His natural inclination was to talk, to
explain, to defend the attitude he had assumed. But saner thoughts prevailed. If they were prepared to make little of the affair, why should he insist on making much of it? And if he had let loose his tongue, spoken the words that were in his heart, he might easily have grown offensive. It was true O Iris-san was a unique creature, and out there she had seemed very desirable; but here, as a wife, she was frankly impossible. Not alone was there the stigma of the half-breed; but her ways were not the ways of his people, and through her he saw a life of continuous dread.

As he prepared to depart Dr. Mohri offered him a whisky and soda, and nothing loth he accepted. With his own hands the doctor poured out the liquor, Sir Basil signifying when he was to stop. Then the little man helped himself weakly, and they pledged each other.

"To ten thousand years of happiness," said the doctor.

"The same to you."

Both men drank, looking across the top of their glasses. Sir Basil Everard thought those little lizard eyes behind the big spectacles gleamed for a moment with an unnatural brilliance: but when he looked again it was to encounter the inscrutable smile of the unchanging East.
CHAPTER III.

It was with no eager step that Kenneth Everard went to pay the long-deferred call on his cousin, Sir Basil. It is true the two saw little of each other, and that little had not proved conducive to closer intimacy; but Kenneth, as the heir-presumptive, demanded certain recognition, and this Sir Basil grudgingly bestowed on him. Apart from that, there would have been no regret on either side had they never met again.

This elder cousin had always been something of a mystery to Kenneth. Rumour spoke of him as a wild, uncertain man, a wanderer over the face of the globe; now working in odd places and at odd tasks, and now being lost to sight for a year or two on end. Even when the sudden death of old Sir Gregory left the title vacant, it was months before the whereabouts of the wanderer was discovered. In the meantime there was talk of presupposing his death; Kenneth was even urged to take the matter to the courts, but this he sturdily
refused to do. While not ignoring the change that it would make in his life, he did not know that he was greatly desirous of it. It certainly would lift the briefless barrister out of the slough in which he had struggled for so many years; but, in the meantime, what if the wanderer were to turn up and claim his own? No, on second thoughts, he would not touch the thing unless he was sure of it. Then one day the news came: Basil Everard had been found in Japan.

As Kenneth mounted in the lift to the third floor—to the suite occupied by Sir Basil in Buckingham Gate—he had a presentiment that this would be the last time he would have the honour of calling on his cousin, and of a truth he experienced no sense of regret at the thought. The few interviews that had passed between them had never been of a truly amicable nature, though each had assumed an air of friendliness for the sake of appearances. Sir Basil had just returned from his visit to Richmond, and when Kenneth entered the little drawing-room he was greeted somewhat querulously by the baronet, who stared at him with lack-lustre eyes and a general appearance of lassitude which could not be ignored.

"Not well?" asked the younger man, after the conventional salutations had been somewhat perfunctorily gone through.

"What makes you ask that?" inquired the other suspiciously.
"Sorry. I thought you looked a bit off colour."
"Never better in my life."
"Glad to hear it."
The elder man looked as though he doubted this. Then he waved his cousin to a chair and dropped rather listlessly on to the sofa.
"I suppose it was a great blow to you, eh?" he asked suddenly.
"What?"
"My returning to life, as it were."
"On the contrary. Why should it be?"
"It did you out of a bit."
"I never let trifles like that worry me."
"Yet it seems you were rather eager to presuppose my death."
"Whoever said that told you an infernal lie," replied the younger man hotly.
"Then there was no talk of it?"
"There may have been talk, but it was not mine. I knew, of course, what would happen supposing you to be dead: but I had no wish to hear of your death."
"Really!"
"My dear fellow, if you think I am envious of you, you labour under a very great delusion. To be quite frank with you, Basil, I see nothing in you to envy."
"Perhaps it's just as well. I am going to marry next month."
"Congratulations. Do I know the lady?"
Sir Basil looked in vain for some sign of anger or annoyance; but the open countenance of the younger man remained unruffled. With frank clear eyes he returned the other's searching stare. The baronet smiled rather grimly to himself.

"I think not. However, it's quite immaterial. I merely wanted to tell you of the proposed change in my life, and of the improbability of your ever benefiting——"

"My dear fellow, please don't be a cad. Remember you represent an ancient and rather decent family."

"That cut me adrift to go to the devil as best I pleased. I like your decent family, your smug hypocrisy. What are you—a lawyer, aren't you?"

"Hoping to be."

"Pretty sort of business, that, for a decent man. I hate lawyers."

"Not, I believe, without reason."

"So you've heard of that, too, have you?"

"I have also heard that it was the cause of your going abroad."

An angry flush swept over Sir Basil's face.

"And hoped it would keep me there? Well it was all a faked-up lie."

"Awfully glad to hear it. But, my dear fellow what on earth has happened to put you in this intractable mood? I assure you that I see nothing but the humorous side of your opinion of me."
"Yet my coming to life again has done you out of everything."
"On the contrary, it has left me what you seem to have lost."
"Oh!"
"A certain amount of self-respect. I can't think what possesses you to imagine that I am filled with envy and hatred. You enjoy no more than what is legally yours—what you have a right to enjoy. I never expected to take your place, and, believe me, I have no wish to. On the whole, I think I would rather be myself than you. If you take my advice, you'll call in a doctor."
"Why should I?"
"Because you look very like a sick man."
"Then there is still the hope?"
"Look here, I've had enough of this." For the first time Kenneth looked like losing his temper.
"You're not a nice person, Basil, and I don't think your enforced stay abroad has done you much good. But I didn't come here to be insulted by you, and if you've forgotten entirely how to be agreeable, I'll clear out."

The baronet turned a curiously listless gaze on his cousin, and for a moment his dulled glance brightened, but not with amiability. He was mentally contrasting his present unaccountable lassitude with the robust and extremely healthy
young man who sat watching with an amused expression of tolerance on his handsome face.

"As a matter of fact," he admitted grudgingly, "I am feeling a bit played out at the moment. No, nothing to raise your hopes. I'm sorry, but I'm afraid you mustn't build on it."

"Tell me," said the other quietly; "were you always this sort of unspeakable person?"

"I have always had unbounded faith in the limitation of human virtues."

"You must have had a rotten time."

"Well, I'm going to make up for it now. I shall marry, settle down, rear children, and become as big a hypocrite as the rest of you."

"I don't envy her, old chap. Don't you think some one ought to warn her of the fate in store?"

"I daresay you would have no objection to undertaking so delicate a mission? But I don't think I'll trouble you, friend Kenneth. I appreciate too keenly the ardour of such an undertaking. But I can tell you what you might do. I have a most uncommon thirst on me. You'll find whisky and a siphon on that little table over in the corner. If you wouldn't mind."

"Certainly."

Kenneth walked over to the table, mixed a drink for his cousin, and one for himself.

"Hurry up!" growled the man on the sofa. Smilingly Kenneth returned and handed him
the drink. Sir Basil seized it and drank it like a man who was dying of thirst.

"Can't understand it," he said, looking up. "Was never so dry in all my life. That's better," he smiled as the drink began to take effect. "Blessed be the man who invented whisky and soda."

Kenneth nodded, finished his drink, and returned both glasses to the table. A silver cigarette-box was also lying close at hand, and, opening this, he took one out and lit it. Then he faced his cousin once more.

"Having finished this affectionate interview," he said with a smile, "nothing remains for me but to wish you every happiness in your new venture. And, please, don't distress further that cousinly mind of yours with thoughts of me and my disappointed hopes. Try to take a saner view of life; don't imagine that everybody is sick with envy of you and your unmerited good fortune, and then, perhaps, you'll manage to squeeze something pleasant out of life after all." He held out his hand in friendship, but the other looked up at him with a drawn and haggard face. "Good lord, what's the matter?" he cried in real alarm.

Sir Basil glared at him without speaking. Then of a sudden his face contorted with pain, and great glistening drops of sweat were plainly discernible on his forehead.

"I don't know . . . sudden spasm," he gasped.
"There it is again." He doubled his knees up almost to his chin, while his body contracted with pain. But the paroxysm seemed to pass almost as quickly as it came, and presently he lay back with a sigh of relief.

"I'd better ring for your man?"

"Do, please."

The man, a pale-faced, heavy-browed person with the true, obsequious air of his class, entered in answer to the bell, and to him Kenneth confided his master.

"Is there anything I can do for you?" asked Kenneth. "Shall I ring up your doctor?"

"No, thanks. I'm all right now."

The heir-presumptive, guessing such would be received with an ill-grace, forbore to express sympathy in any marked degree, and presently took his leave, his cousin nodding a curt dismissal. But not many minutes had passed before the paroxysm came again. The struggle was short, but violent, and left the victim pallid and panting for breath.

"What's the matter, sir?" asked the startled servant, whose face had grown as white as that of his master.

"Seems to me like poison," muttered the master, feebly. "Must be: nothing else could stab like this."

"Had I better not call up the doctor?"

"I think so."

While the man was at the telephone, Sir Basil lay in the acutest dread of a recurrence. He breathed
in a most alarming manner, from time to time passing the back of his hand across his forehead.

"Sandiland!"

"Yes, sir."

The man hastened to his side, his eyes staring with terror, his fingers trembling.

"I believe I'm going to die."

"Impossible, Sir Basil. Perhaps a pain—"

"I tell you I'm poisoned. Nothing but poison could torture me like this."

"But, sir, how can that be? Who would—"

His master hesitated for a moment. Then he said with marked emphasis:

"The one who has everything to gain by my death."

"You mean Mr. Kenneth, sir?"

He nodded. "If—if I should go before the doctor comes, tell them what I have told you—and have those glasses on the table thoroughly examined. He brought me a drink in one of them: mixed it, you understand. . . . Oli, my God, it's coming—it's coming!"

The horror in his face deepened. Then he stuffed a corner of the cushion in his mouth and bit at it like a mad dog. Sandiland looked on, wringing his hands in impotent despair.

When the doctor entered a few minutes later, his patient was beyond all hope of recovery.
CHAPTER IV.

THE tragically sudden death of Sir Basil Everard, coupled with the inquest which immediately followed, caused something of a sensation in town. To Kenneth it all passed like a horrid nightmare. The post-mortem had proved the presence of an irritant poison, though as to its precise nature the analysts could not speak with any decided authority. The fact, however, remained that Sir Basil had been poisoned, and the question now to be decided was—who had administered it?

Kenneth listened in horror to the damning story told by the man Sandiland. Questioned and cross-questioned in a dozen different ways, his evidence remained unshaken. Undoubtedly Sir Basil had accused his cousin of poisoning him: they were almost the very last words he had uttered. When the seriousness of this statement was gravely pointed out to him, the certain pains and penalties of perjury insisted on, he still retained his calm, obsequious
demeanour. He spoke the truth: he had no reason for speaking other than the truth. On the one or two occasions he had met him, Mr. Kenneth Everard had always been extremely civil. It is true Sir Basil did not seem to care much for his cousin: from what his master had told him there was no love lost between the two; but beyond this he knew nothing. Yet when he returned to his seat, there were those in that court who believed that he had put the rope round Kenneth Everard’s neck.

Recalled, Kenneth told the story over again, but this time in greater detail. He frankly admitted that his cousin and he were not on the best of terms; they rarely met, and when they did, they almost invariably quarrelled, Sir Basil expressing a singular antipathy towards his relative, for what reason he could offer no explanation that was likely to seem reasonable. Sir Basil laboured under the delusion that the witness was envious of him: that he, the witness, resented the other’s good fortune, and so forth, whereas he had always tried to laugh his cousin out of this unamiable attitude.

He then explained how he mixed the drinks, how Sir Basil complained of an excessive thirst, and how he had found him looking, as he thought, a very sick man.

"I understand," said the coroner, "that you are
the nearest relative of the deceased on the male side?"

"Yes."

"And that consequently you succeed to the title and estates?"

"That is so. But I wish to protest here and now that until this matter is thoroughly cleared up, I will have nothing to do with either."

"Was your cousin a rich man?"

"Not that I know of. In fact, I know very little about his affairs: and I may add that the succession seemed so far away from me that I never really seriously considered it. From my earliest recollection I never believed that one day I should become the head of the family."

"It is an old title?"

"Dates from the seventeenth century. Once it carried considerable estates with it in Sussex; but, like many old families, its importance has gradually diminished."

"Your cousin was a great traveller?"

"Yes: he had lived in the East for some considerable time."

"In the East, eh? Do you know anything of his life there?"

"Nothing. He never made me his confidant."

"Never hinted at a possible enemy?"

"Never. You must understand that we were,
never sufficiently intimate for him to take me into his confidence. Indeed, my last visit was only the third—fourth—time I had seen him since his return from Japan."

"Japan! Of course, you know nothing of his life there?"

"Absolutely nothing."

"It is possible that he may have made enemies?"

"Possible, of course; but of that I know nothing."

"You have no theory to suggest the cause of death?"

"Except by misadventure."

"You do not think he committed suicide?"

"He never struck me as a man of that sort. Besides, he informed me that he was about to marry, and I know he was proud of his title, and quite hopeful of his future prospects."

"Then in your opinion that entirely destroys the theory of suicide?"

"Entirely."

"Now you have heard this accusation made to his man Sandiland? Do you believe he made it?"

"I regret to say I do. It struck me that Sandiland was speaking the truth."

"You have no suggestion to offer as to the meaning of this very serious accusation?"

"None whatever, except, as I have already said, he seemed obsessed with the idea that I was envious
of him, and wished to take his place. Growing worse after he had drunk the whisky and soda, he may have suddenly conceived the mad thought that I had poisoned him. Assuming the analysis to be correct—that he was poisoned—I should like to ask the analyst if, in his opinion, the poison was one likely to act so precipitately?"

All eyes were turned to the chemist—a venerable grey-beard with a benevolently bald skull, who looked up through his glasses and answered promptly:

"As I have already stated, my analysis proves the presence of a foreign substance; but, speaking with some latitude, I am decidedly of the opinion that the irritant would not have acted so precipitately."

"In other words, it may have been administered an hour—two hours—or even longer, before taking effect?"

"Yes."

The coroner summed up; the jury returned a verdict of "wilful murder against some person or persons unknown," and Kenneth Everard left the court with his particular chum, Jeffrey Colburne, who, like himself, was an aspirant for forensic honours. Hailing a taxi, they drove at once to King's Bench Walk, where they shared chambers together, and various hopes. Little was said during the journey, neither being in the cue for talk, their minds too greatly preoccupied with the ordeal through which
they had passed. Kenneth was still quivering with suppressed excitement, and though to all appearances he smoked a cigarette with much of his ordinary sang-froid, his brain still hummed with the awful accusation that had been levelled at him. Colburne, though for an hour or so he had been trembling at the mental picture of his friend with a rope round his neck, was also too greatly relieved for words. Not until they reached their chambers did the awful restraint disappear. Then Jeffrey Colburne poured forth his gratitude in an unrestrained torrent of congratulation.

But Kenneth was supernaturally grave.

"You don't realise, old boy," he said, "that I was not completely exonerated. 'Person or persons unknown.' Am I one of those persons? You, of course, know; but what of the others—the world at large? This dying man accuses me of having murdered him. Fling mud enough and some of it sticks."

"But, my dear Ken, nobody who knows you——"

"But what of those who don't know me? Of those who think they know me? Man has a predilection for thinking evil of his fellow-man, and ever so many coats of whitewash won't hide certain stains. In spite of my practical acquittal of this charge, there are still many who will wonder. I cannot rest under such a stigma."
"But there is no stigma. Why, there wasn't even evidence enough to go to a jury. Nobody will believe for one moment that you could have done such an incredible thing."

"Still," said the other doggedly, "I must clear this matter up."

"If there is anything to be cleared up, you must trust the police to do it. Their solution of the mystery will prove your justification."

"But suppose they should fail to solve it, am I to go through life as the man against whom the charge of murder was not proven? And such a murder, for my own selfish ends? Every door would be shut against me, every honest man would turn his back on me as I approached. And there is Evelyn. How can I ask her to be the wife of a man over whose head hangs such a cloud of suspicion?"

"If she is what I take her for, there will be no difficulty in that quarter."

"Even if there were not, how could I possibly expect her to marry me in the circumstances?"

"If she believes in you——"

"That's not enough. I refuse to be taken on trust. There must be no doubt of my innocence, you understand, not the remotest suspicion. That anyone should think I could be capable of such a crime is intolerable. I can't sit down under it, old man, and I don't intend to."
“By all means let it be cleared up, if possible. At any rate, give the authorities a chance before you imagine the worst.”

“Somehow I am inclined to think that the authorities will be of little service to me here. By the way, did you notice that she wasn’t in court?”

Colburne had noticed it—made a mental note of it, in fact—and was not greatly impressed in her favour.

“An extremely delicate matter,” he hinted.

“Quite so.” But there was a suggestion of bitterness in the reply which did not escape the acute ear of his friend.

* * * *

At her home in St. John’s Wood, Evelyn Brereton greeted him with a curiously inquisitive “Well?”

“As you observe, I am still free,” he replied with a restrained laugh.

“What happened?”

“Wilful murder against some person or persons unknown.”

“You ran it pretty close,” she said.

“I did.”

She was a tall, slim, and rather handsome girl, with light brown hair showing here and there tints of a decidedly reddish hue. Her eyes were large, but of too pale a blue, her eyebrows and eyelashes of the same indeterminate colour as the hair. Her
complexion was rather pale, with that yellow tinge in it so often found among red-headed people. It suggested freckles under sunburn. Her mouth was well-cut, her teeth perfect.

It did not seem to him that this greeting was particularly warm or spontaneous. True, she was never what might be called a demonstrative girl, and though at times he may have regretted this, at others he rather admired her perfect self-control. This, however, was not one of those latter occasions. Just then his heart was hankering for a little touch of that womanly sympathy which to a man in trouble is more precious than rubies.

Presently she asked: “What are you going to do?”

“Naturally, I don’t intend to sit down under it.”

“I don’t see how you can. Father agrees with me, too.” Father was a big City solicitor who was supposed to hold half the secrets of London’s great financiers.

“I think you are both quite right, and of course I shall use my utmost endeavour to clear up the mystery. But in the meantime—”

“Yes?” She put the word eagerly. He looked hard at her, unable for the moment to frame the thought that was running through her mind.

“Well, you see, it places us in a rather awkward predicament.” She nodded encouragement. “I
know, of course, that you couldn't for one moment imagine me capable of such a crime."

"It's ridiculous!" she said.

"At the same time, I have been openly accused of it, and I must leave no stone unturned to prove my innocence beyond the shadow of a doubt."

Again she nodded, as though in complete accord with him.

"I quite agree with you, Kenneth, and so does father."

"Does he?" He was not sure that he felt flattered by father's acquiescence. As he still continued to look hard at her, she laughingly asked him what he wanted.

"I want you to help me out," he said.

"By refusing to go farther with this engagement of ours until——"

"Until I have proved beyond a doubt that I am in no way implicated in this awful business."

"Do you think that will be so hard, Sir Kenneth?"

"That's another point, Evelyn. I have decided not to use the title or estates—such as they are—until this mystery is cleared up."

Her mouth dropped. "Isn't that rather absurd?"

"I don't think so. At any rate, I have decided not to give people the chance to talk."

"I call it absurd," repeated the girl; "but of course you must please yourself."
"I rather hoped you would see the wisdom of it."
"I suppose I see the wisdom well enough, though I'm not sure that such quixotry appeals to my grosser sense."
"But you wouldn't have me step into the shoes of the man whom some people think I have murdered?"
"I fail to see how you are going to please everybody."
"I can at least show the world that I am not anxious to assume the privileges the law confers on me."
"Will the world credit you with such transcendent virtue?"
"You mean it may be regarded as a pose?"
"It's not improbable."
"Then it is our duty to show the world that it misjudges us."
"Our duty?"
"You do not suggest that this is not the better course?"
"On the contrary, my dear Kenneth, I think it is decidedly heroic."

For a moment he was at a loss to answer her—bewilderment, doubt, a complexity of unpleasant emotions seeming to confuse the plain issue. She, as if there was no need of further argument, walked across to the window and looked out into the garden.
with simulated interest. Then of a sudden a momentary indignation eclipsed all other feelings, and he turned as if to remonstrate with her, when the door opened and a servant entered showing in the most singularly attractive girl he had ever set eyes on.

Evelyn turned to the new-comer, and greeted her with an eagerness which Kenneth thought quite foreign to her nature.

"Then you have come," she said. "How nice of you!"

"Not at all. You know I promised."

"But you are always so busy."

"Not always."

Yet even as she spoke, her singular, slanting eyes were turned on the young man who stood waiting for the introduction.

"Mr. Kenneth Everard. Kenneth, this is Miss Mayford."

Kenneth bowed gravely, and then held out his hand. Miss Mayford also bowed, hesitated, and then let her hand sink limply into his. Noticing her hesitation, he wondered if it was owing to a certain happening. Was this a warning of what he might expect in the future?

Iris Mayford in her European clothes of the latest cut was a decidedly different person from the O Iris-san of the kimono. In fact, to the unsophisticated she conveyed no suggestion of the East, though the red lips, the pale face, and the
peculiar slant of the blue eyes made her a personage whom one would look at with wonder and indecision. In such a manner was Kenneth Everard regarding her now, and though he saw that there was something foreign about her, he could not for the life of him fix the nationality. And that uncertainty which he was experiencing added a decided piquancy to her personality. At first he thought her curiously attractive, then curiosity gradually merged itself in unbounded admiration. This girl was unique, unusual: like nothing he had ever imagined of woman in his most fantastic dreams.

At first Miss Mayford was rather reserved. An impassivity, unobtrusive and yet pronounced, seemed to encompass her. She was cold, calm, inscrutable: her eyes baffled him. But over the tea-cups she thawed, the natural woman seeming to assert herself.

Though strongly averse to discussing his own private affairs, he realised that they were no longer private, and he wondered if her knowledge of him, or her suspected knowledge, was the cause of that half-hesitancy, that apparent coldness.

"I ought to tell you, Miss Mayford," he began, laughing constrainedly, "that you are now taking tea with a very dangerous suspect."

"I imagined so. Then you are the Kenneth Everard——" she stopped, looking at him in a manner he failed entirely to comprehend.
"Who has been accused of murdering his own cousin."

"I read all about it in the paper as I came along. And did you murder him?" So ingenuously was the question put that he could not refrain from smiling.

"Good heavens, no!"

"Then you were not enemies?"

"Of course not—not real enemies. And even if we were, that would be no excuse for murder."

"The best of excuses, I should say. If one does not kill an enemy, then whom is one to kill?"

"Quite so," he laughed. "It does seem reasonable; only we are not a reasonable nation. Have you forgotten that we were taught to love our enemies?"

"But you go to war, and then you kill your enemies?"

"That's so. I suppose we obtain a special dispensation."

"You Christians are a strange, illogical people, professing to live by holy precept, and yet outraging your professions at every turn."

"We Christians?" he asked inquiringly.

"I am a Japanese," she said quietly, "and consequently a heathen."

"A Japanese—you?" Incredulously he pointed the question.

"Worse," she answered with one of those rare smiles which from time to time illumined her face.
"I am not even a Japanese: I am a half-breed. My father married a native. I was born at Kobe."

"How very curious," he said.

"What is?" she asked sharply.

"My cousin, the man who has just died, was in Japan—in Kobe—when the news came that he had succeeded to the title."

"There are many Europeans in Kobe."

"I suppose so. I wonder if you ever met him out there?"

"We never associated with foreigners. My uncle is a very studious man, a great doctor of medicine and philosophy. He knows all the wisdom of the East and the West."

She said this with such an air of unconscious finality as to leave him positively groping for a reply. That she had this absolute childlike faith in the knowledge of her uncle he did not doubt for an instant. She made the assertion in a manner so entirely ingenuous that he could pursue no other course than accept it with the same sincerity in which it was given.

"Perhaps I may one day have the honour of meeting your uncle?"

"My uncle is always delighted to meet men who are studious in the pursuit of knowledge."

He felt he might take this as a compliment or otherwise. There certainly was nothing in her
grave demeanour to suggest that she did not class him with the most worthy.

"And I shall be delighted to meet him. You do not think this unfortunate happening——"

"Is it really unfortunate?" she interrupted. "You get rid of a very detestable personage, and at once succeed to the only virtues he ever possessed. I think you are to be congratulated."

"Virtues?" questioned Evelyn. "What an extraordinary creature you are."

"Could I be other than what I am, being what I am?"

"I don't see why you should be," said Kenneth gallantly.

The strange blue eyes regarded him for a moment with singular concentration. Evelyn smiled: she was not jealous, but she thought this rather bold of her fiancé.

"You see, I have so much to learn concerning these conventions of yours," explained Iris, "and so many of them, if you will pardon me, seem so little worth learning. Now to me it would seem somewhat hypocritical to complain of a sudden accession of good-fortune. Yet because you have succeeded to the virtues of your cousin, you still find fault with providence."

"Not of what I succeed to, but to the manner of my succeeding."
"He even refuses to make use of those virtues," protested Evelyn, "until he has completely cleared himself of all suspicion."

"And suppose you never clear yourself?" asked Miss Mayford.

"Then I shall never accept the position."

"What do you think of that for a case of sheer downright obstinacy?" cried Evelyn in a tone charged with the utmost disgust.

Iris Mayford watched without speaking, those strange eyes of hers narrowing until they looked almost like blue slits.

"I don't profess to understand," she answered quietly; "which shows you how wide and deep is the gulf that separates the East from the West."

"But I cannot think of you as being of the East," he said. "You are no more Eastern than we are."

"Then you do not notice the difference?" she asked with a strange smile.

"I assure you not at all."

"Then it must be all inside."

"In that case I fail to see the necessity for comment."

"Perhaps the comment will come later."

Again she smiled enigmatically; but he only noticed the splendid curve of the mouth, and the row of gleaming teeth behind the full red lips.
CHAPTER V.

The longer he watched her the more it seemed that she exhaled a certain subtle essence of the Orient. At one moment she suggested the knowledge and the calm of the Sphinx, or perhaps it was the brooding, inscrutable face of a Buddha hidden away in the vast recesses of a gloomy forest: the next she was the very embodiment of sensuous grace and ease, the stormy world that went howling by not worth the trouble of opening those red lips to comment upon. What did such things matter to one who had entered the calm of the higher atmospheres? He was not particularly well acquainted with the Buddhist faith, but vague thoughts of Nirvana and of the vast solitudes void of the breath of desire stole insidiously through his brain as he watched her. Then as she spoke, flouting convention, trampling on our dear conceits, propounding a philosophy frankly heathen, he descended from the higher altitudes of pure thought and somewhat reluctantly admitted that the savage was not very far removed from the sage. For the life of him
he could not comprehend whether it was her moral or her intellectual outlook that was stunted. She was not sufficiently Eastern for him to attribute all to her nationality: indeed, he might even have forgotten that nationality had she not so strenuously insisted on it. It was as though she would leave no loophole for a second mistake; and though she did not insist on proclaiming the inferiority of her race, she let it clearly be seen that such a thought was in her mind.

When she at length arose and began to draw on her gloves, he also declared that it was time he was going; and as Evelyn suggested neither by look nor by word that she wished him to remain, he forthwith offered to escort Miss Mayford to a taxi. She protested against the trouble, to which he refused to listen. She made no more ado about the matter, but allowed him to accompany her into the street.

"Where?" he asked, as he stood by the open cab.

"I was to call at Cumberland Place, but I’m afraid I’m rather late. It doesn’t in the least matter," she added quickly. "My uncle will probably pick me up in the Park."

"May I go so far with you?"

"By all means. Perhaps I can drop you at your house."

"That would be going out of the way. I have chambers in the Temple."
"So," she said, when they were seated and the taxi was whirling along the Wellington Road, "you follow the law?"

"For my sins."

"My father often spoke of the Temple. He, too, had chambers there. In those days he was a man of ambition."

"We all are more or less," he laughed; "but few of our hopes materialise."

"In King's Bench Walk," she said. "There is such a place?"

"Yes; I live there. I may even occupy your father's rooms."

"That would be very strange."

For a while she sat gazing silently out through the window, and he knew as well as though she had told him that her mind was already back in that far-off country, and that she was thinking of the once ambitious man who had drifted Eastward never to return.

They alighted from the cab at the Marble Arch and entered the Park, which, the afternoon being fine, was crowded with pedestrians and motor-cars; and as they walked along Kenneth Everard noticed the many admiring glances which followed his companion. He, too, was conscious of being proud to be seen in the company of this remarkably attractive girl, who walked with the high assurance of
one who is conscious of being not quite as those about her.

Opposite Stanhope Gate they sat back among the pretty women who made a living lovely garden of the greensward; and she was generous in her praise of the delicate beauty of Englishwomen, especially of those in the possession of bronze-red hair and the superb pink and white complexion that so often accompanied it. And while he admitted the loveliness, the thought also ran through his mind that there were other forms of beauty equally adorable. Just then he was wondering if anything could be more perfect than the sheen of her thick black, sweet-smelling hair.

"I wish I was English," she said suddenly.

"But you are."

"Ah, no! I thought so out there, but here I know different. I am not at all like these girls either in thought or appearance."

"Is that any particular disadvantage?"

"I think so. Don't you find my sentiments rather alarming?"

"I think there is a lot of truth in them," he answered tactfully.

"That is my misfortune."

A few seats away from them a man was reading a late edition of one of the evening papers, and Everard's quick eye caught the leaded heading.
"What do you suppose that man is reading?"

"I know."

"I wonder what he would think if he knew who was sitting so close to him? Aren't you rather afraid of me?"

"I?" The question seemed to surprise her.

"That is where I differ so greatly from all these good folks. Tell me, do Christians willingly let their enemies triumph over them?"

"Not willingly," he admitted. "We are at constant strife one with the other, each trying to get the better of the other, dealing honestly with our brother only when we believe such to be the best policy."

"So that, you see, your Christianity is really not so very superior to our heathenism."

"But your father was a Christian?"

"I am not certain; and he died so long ago. You think me strange, eh? You wonder what I really am?"

"I shall find out."

"Please don't: don't even try. The East, like the West, has its destiny. Some day they may clash. That day may be nearer than we imagine. We must obtain full recognition of our merits from Europe, and the only way to do it is to kill you."

"Come," he laughed, "that seems a very drastic measure. I should have thought the better way
would be to win by the triumph of intellect and moral merit."

"Theoretically, yes; you Europeans pay homage to such, but in reality you only admire the power of arms. Might is right with you, and through might only can we gain your respect. Fear and courtesy go hand in hand."

"I dare say you are right: though at the same time I can't allow you to insist on this difference between us. You are no more Asiatic than I am."

"Look at my eyes," she said.

"I have looked at them."

"True Mongol. Did such a slant ever come out of Europe?"

He was looking at them even as she spoke, their intense blue, deeper than the skies of summer, and in their depths as mysteriously profound. A compliment sprang to his lips, but realising that she was serious in her protestation he refrained, knowing such would not be acceptable.

At the same moment she half rose from her seat, and he saw she was gazing anxiously towards the roadway.

"There's my uncle," she said; "there in that green car." He saw the green car plainly enough, but as it had already passed he could not distinguish its occupants.

"They will return presently. Let us walk by the rails."

When the car came round again she waved to its occupants, two Japanese, and as it drew in against
the kerb he saw that one of them was a particularly ugly little fellow, inclined to be fat, with a hairless, pockmarked face. Both wore spectacles.

She greeted them in Japanese, they gravely saluting. What was said Kenneth, of course, could not understand; but he noticed that the thinner man of the two looked at him stolidly with blinking lids.

"My uncle, Dr. Mohri," she said, indicating the man with the blinking lids. "Let me also present Mr. Takemoto." He thought she pronounced his own name in rather a singular manner.

Dr. Mohri was gravely attentive, endeavouring to make conversation with well-bred courtesy; but Mr. Takemoto, whose appearance was most unattractive, had eyes for no one but the girl. And what curious, repellent little slits of eyes they were. Black, soulless, emotionless, they resembled nothing so much as dull black beads encompassed by layers of puffy eyelid. Kenneth saw now the difference between East and West, understood more clearly the girl's attitude as he heard her patter in the native tongue to the little pockmarked image.

"I am delighted to meet you," said Dr. Mohri, in that soft, wheedling tone of his. "I hope I may have the honour of your further acquaintance."

"Indeed, I sincerely hope so."

Then this was the great Dr. Mohri, the extraordinary person whom Iris Mayford had described
as the repository of all knowledge. And she was this quaint little creature's niece! A curious sense of disillusionment swept over him. Alone she suggested the subtle mysteries of the East, imagination ran riot in fantastic grooves when thinking of her, but in the presence of these two solemn, ugly little men the enchantment seemed to vanish as if by stroke of magic.

She entered the car, Mr. Takemoto rising and bowing her to his seat. Something she said to her uncle in the native tongue, his answer being a grave inclination of the head. Then Kenneth shook hands with both uncle and niece, but for the life of him he could not do more than bow to Mr. Takemoto, who did not seem at all distressed by the omission. Indeed, he had scarcely opened his mouth during the whole of the time, but sat there, his beady little eyes riveted on the girl.

Dr. Mohri handed Kenneth his card.

"I am afraid it is a long way to ask you to come," he said; "but if you are ever in Richmond I hope you will do us the honour of calling."

"I frequently visit Richmond," was the strictly unveracious reply, "and shall be delighted to call."

After depositing the silent Takemoto at his hotel in Kensington, uncle and niece continued the journey in silence.

"Oji-san" (uncle), she said at last.

"My flower?"
"Is it not wonderful!"
"I have read the paper."
"Ah, yes, but think—the cousin of him who was. Is it not amazing?"
"Where did you meet him, O Iris-san?"
"At the house of Miss Brereton. He is to marry her."
"Does that concern thee?" The little eyes blinked curiously.
"Nay, why should it? But think: the cousin of him!"
"Another wolf in the path."
"The wolf that crosses thy path, oji-san, had better beware."

The little man made no reply: indeed, for any sign betrayed by him he may not even have heard her. Nor did the girl turn his way, but like him stared straight ahead, apparently absorbed by the panorama of the streets, or her own thoughts. Yet she did not doubt that behind that impassive exterior the brain was working as acutely as ever.

"Open as a book," he said, without looking at her.
"I think so."
"His eyes were turned on thee, little one."
She tossed her head. "They know not what to make of me. Am I so strange a monster?"
"He has suggested it?"
"No."
"Takemoto San."
"I hate him!"
"He has been pleased to suggest an honourable alliance."
"What, that baboon! I sicken at the sight of him."
"True, he is not shaped like a god, but he has many yen."
"I would rather go to my mother," she said, "your honourable sister."
"One of our blood."
"Of our blood!"
"Is it not so?"
"Nay, it is not so. I am an Englishwoman. I do not understand you, oji-san. Sometimes I wonder what you would make of me."
"And I, too, in that sex of thine find my greatest problem. Of us and yet not of us, I know not where I am with thee. The philosophies of Europe were easier understood than thou."
"I am a woman, oji-san. You could not read a woman were you to live for ever."

With a grave shake of his head the little man acknowledged the profundity of this remark. As the car sped over Barnes Common he was still thinking, nor did he speak again until they were whirling along the uplands of Richmond Park. But she seemed instinctively to follow his train of thought.
"He knows?"
"Nothing."
"You wish that he should know?"
"Not yet. But he declares that he will not rest until he has unravelled the mystery of his cousin's death. You did not offer to speak?"
"Why should I? What is it to us? This man died; he was worthless; the world is well rid of him."
"He died most strangely, oji-san."
"The world is full of strange deaths. We have no time to count them."
"Nor the inclination?"
He stared steadily ahead apparently gazing into space.
"Have you?"
"Am I not your niece, and in our hearts do we not hate these people with their assumption of superiority?"
"That superiority wanes, my child. They taught us the use of modern arms, and Russia can complete the story. There is still a little to learn, but our time is coming. Meanwhile, we shall continue to suck their brains and borrow their money. A patriotic people these, who build ships for us that we may use against them, who lend us money to buy arms with which to kill them."

Something approaching a smile crossed his face, to be lost immediately in his innumerable wrinkles.
"Sometimes I think you hate them very much."
"Sometimes," he answered, as if addressing the air, "I fear you do not profit greatly by my teaching."
"Oh, yes, I hate them," she said, "because they despise me."

"So, they despise you, little one? Well, we may yet make them learn to fear us. The people of this teeming city," he said, waving his hand back towards London, "what are they but an undisciplined rabble, one minute shrieking with joy over a petty triumph, and the next plunged in the depths of despair over a petty reverse? Their men dance like actors and their women bare their bodies like the girls of the yoshiwara. The Russians took Petersburg and Moscow with them into Manchuria—and they remain there."

She knew that deep in his heart an intense hatred of the white races smouldered sullenly; that it was a national hatred which one day would burst into an all-devouring flame. And though over and over again she too told herself that she also hated the European, she knew that there were forces struggling against that hatred with which it was most difficult to cope.
CHAPTER VI.

With the singular impassivity of his race Yoji Takemoto stared into the blinking eyes of Dr. Mohri, though for aught he found there contributory to his wishes he might as well have watched one of the inscrutable idols of his native land. The little doctor winked and blinked, and winked and blinked again with as much expression as a bubble on a silent stream. Nor was Takemoto either surprised or annoyed at this, for it was not the nature of these men to indulge their feelings in outward ebullition. Under a serene and grave aspect many of them pretended to a wisdom they did not possess: it was what the European calls the Oriental calm, a calm often engendered by the fact that there was nothing to ruffle, though the case of these two men did not come under this category. No living soul had been able to penetrate the secret grooves and windings of Hiro Mohri's mind, and if it rested with him no living soul ever should.
"It is like this, Mohri-san," the pockmarked one was saying, "I have no wish to remain longer in the West, where many things both confuse and irritate my mind. These people—our allies—are a frivolous and ill-assorted race who pass their days in idleness and their nights in dissipation. A people so void of intellectual resource as to grow frenzied over a horse-race is not the people whom one can take seriously. I think, when the time comes, they will fall into our lap like over-ripe apples. Meanwhile, I return to Nippon, never again to leave it, and I would take with me as my wife O Iris-san."

His listener blinked, blinked, but said never a word. Yet behind those large steel-rimmed spectacles the little beady eyes were watching with a peculiarly penetrating glow.

"I have the temerity to propose myself for the hand of your honourable niece, Mohri-san," continued the pockmarked one with a gravity befitting so momentous an occasion, "and with your august permission I am anxious to have the ceremony performed with as little delay as possible."

"And in return?" asked the doctor.

Takemoto at once enumerated the advantages of such an alliance, his references to moneys, gifts, and so forth, being on a prodigal scale. These practical details the two discussed for a considerable period, seeming to see nothing derogatory to the
philosophic attitude in the driving of a hard bargain. And Dr. Mohri, fully aware of the fact that he held the good Takemoto in the hollow of his hand, did not forget to press those sinuous fingers.

"It is my wish," he said, "that my niece should marry one of her own race, and I doubt that my choice could fall on one more worthy. Yet you realise, Takemoto-san, that she is not wholly of our race, and that she is imbued with certain Western principles which do not meet with my approval. Nevertheless, she shall be yours in due course, though, as you are aware, some little time must elapse before I can finish my work and we are ready to depart."

Takemoto bowed gravely, though as he lowered his lids a momentary flash of triumph illumined his eyes. Apparently, Dr. Mohri saw nothing objectionable in the pitted face, the thick mouth, or the generally contemptible appearance of his worthy friend. Nor in his mind had he a doubt that this grotesque person would one day possess the radiant Iris-san. In their native land the women had little to say in these matters, realising that the choice of her parents or guardians must necessarily prove to her advantage.

"And this Englishman?" asked Takemoto, after all preliminaries had been satisfactorily adjusted.

"There are so many," replied the doctor, but without the shadow of frivolity.
"He is here again?"

"At this moment I believe they take tea in the garden."

"Is that correct, Mohri-san?"

"Perfectly. He is a relation of my old Kobe acquaintance, Sir Basil Everard."

"Who died so suddenly?"

"Alas, yes! these misfortunes happen. When I last saw him he was in the flush of health and pride, even as you are now, Takemoto-san."

Takemoto-san did not seem to appreciate this personal parallel. Inquiringly, he looked up from under his puffy lids.

"They say there was a mystery?"

"Is not death itself the crowning mystery of all?"

"But this might have been explained. It was suggested that the man whom Iris-san at present entertains was the murderer."

"And what of murder? It is but another form of death—the death that comes to all. These Europeans place so great a value on life that they are positively afraid to die, and it seems to me that you unconsciously imbibe some of their strange notions. What is one to think of a people who consider suicide a crime, and punish the hero who would perform the honourable kari-kari?"

"Yet I think it scarcely wise that this man——"

"This man has his destiny like the rest of us.
If he is here, it is for certain reasons, though the wish of my niece is not one of them. No doubt she, too, has her reasons. Being a woman they are sure to be wrong. Yet, in many instances, woman is the finest instrument ever given to man for the achievement of his purpose."

"I did not know you had so high an opinion of the sex."

"Herein we may learn something from the Western enfranchisement of woman. These people use their women in many ways: we only in one way. They give them glory and worship it. There is nothing a man will so sincerely worship as his own creation."

"You speak in riddles."

"Rather do I fail to catch the approbation of your august intelligence."

"Yet I fail to see——"

"All in good time, my friend. There is much profit to be gained from intercourse with these people. Nippon, thanks to their guidance, has emerged from the slough of ages and now ranks as a foremost Power. Here be much wisdom, Takemoto-san, foolishly and prodigally scattered, and we mendicants of the East, we pick up the crumbs by the wayside. Many crumbs go to the making of a loaf. With the loaf in our hand we eat largely."
Meanwhile, beneath the shade of a red and white striped umbrella of gigantic proportions, Kenneth Everard drank tea from little egg-shell cups without handles and looked into Iris Mayford's eyes, the most wonderful eyes he had ever seen. Quick had he been to take advantage of Dr. Mohri's invitation to visit them at their temporary home near Richmond. And a quaint house it was, almost on the confines of Ham Common, stowed away by itself behind a high wall overgrown by evergreens. Though the front of the house gave almost immediately on to the gate, there was an extensive walled garden at the back which it was quite impossible to overlook. Entrance was effected to the house through a porch supported by Corinthian columns, and over the columns and the porch ramblers spread themselves as if in sheer wantonness. Above the porch a large semi-circular window bulged rather prominently. That, she explained, was her uncle's study or laboratory.

"But I understood he was a doctor of philosophy, not a chemist," said the young man.

"He is everything, that uncle of mine, and is at present working on an invention which he says will startle the world."

Everard nodded without smiling. He had heard of those inventors, the people who were always going to startle the world. They were as plentiful as the hopes of youth.
“I suppose he maintains the greatest secrecy over it?”
“Naturally.”
“I hope he’ll let me know when he intends to float the company. I may be useful to him.”

A soft-footed Japanese servant came to remove the tea-things. Everard lit a cigarette as he and the girl strolled slowly towards the bottom of the garden. He was not slow to note that this portion of the grounds had been sadly neglected; indeed, it looked as though a gardener had never been near the place for weeks. And this surprised him considerably, as he was under the impression that the Japanese had considerable reputation as expert horticulturists.

“Isn’t it disgraceful,” she protested; “but my uncle will not have the place touched.”

“Perhaps the philosophic mind soars above the trivialities of gardening.”

“On the contrary,” she answered. “Our place at Kobe is beautiful.”

“But then, you are here for so short a time,” he offered by way of explanation.

“I suppose that is the reason. But I never come down here: I think it detestable.”

A few sheds or outhouses were built against the wall at the extreme end of the garden, and in one of these, in a sort of improvised chicken-run, they
saw half a dozen gaunt fowls. The girl was evidently surprised.

"I did not know these were here," she said.

"Then this is not your hobby?"

"No. I wonder when they arrived? This is very curious."

But something still more curious was to happen a few paces further on. Here in a house, divided by wire partitions, were two dogs: one, a powerful Airedale, the other a fox-terrier. Yet, as the girl and the man approached, the two creatures cringed away to the extremity of their kennels, and looked up with eyes that plainly bespoke the most abject terror.

"Well, this is strange," she said. "I wonder why I was not told."

"Perhaps your uncle forgot: or perhaps they have only just arrived."

"But, why are they shut up like this; and why are they so frightened?"

That he could not say; but frightened, and most horribly frightened, too, they were beyond a doubt, for when she approached still closer to the terrier's cage and began speaking to him in soft, cajoling accents, the little fellow shook like a leaf and looked up at her with eyes that were full of terror. With the great Airedale it was the same, a powerful, sinewy-looking fellow who ought never
to have known the suspicion of fear. And yet he, too, shook as with an ague when Everard peered in at him, turning his beautiful brown eyes up to the man with a most pathetic appeal.

"What can be the matter with them?" asked the girl. She had expended all the soft expletives she knew in her endeavour to coax the pretty little terrier to her; but he only tried to get the further away, his eyes almost bolting from his head with fright.

"Are they mad or only stupid?" she asked at length.

"Mad with terror, I should say."

"Then you think they have been ill-treated?"

"I am sure of it."

"I wonder by whom? Surely no one but a brute would treat a dog unkindly?"

"I am afraid there are brutes who even treat their own flesh and blood unkindly. You did not know these dogs were here?"

"No."

He could see that she was greatly puzzled over the matter: indeed, she made no pretence of hiding her astonishment, but kept looking from him to the dogs with eyes in which the element of speculation was most pronounced. Then she called to the Airedale in a voice which might have banished terror from the most nervous of children, or of dogs, but
the big fellow only trembled the more, crouching before her in the most abject terror, his beautiful brown eyes mutely appealing for mercy.

"I don't understand it," she said at last. Nor did he, only he saw quite plainly that in some way or other the animals had been subjected to gross cruelty.

As they slowly returned to the more cultivated part of the garden he, looking up at the window above the porch, caught a glimpse of the little doctor, who was peering down at them from his study. A curious, shuddering conjecture swept through him, and instinctively his eyes sought those of the girl. She, too, had seen that face at the window, and he knew that it awoke certain thoughts which she deemed it not wise to express in words.
"IT is in this fashion, Iris-san," said the little doctor, blinking up at his niece like a yellow toad: "Yoji Takemoto is one in whom I have every confidence. I think he may go far in the social upheaval of our times, being a man of character, resource, and great fortune. With us, as with these Western peoples, the dog of unrest is let loose. The old order changes: it must change. That which once stirred the people to reverence now evokes nothing but ridicule. We cannot absorb the progressive science of the West without borrowing much of its socialism. That power and knowledge which we have applied so successfully in war must, in the natural order of things, be turned against ourselves. What satisfied the generations of long ago leaves the new order seething with discontent. With the few prevailing over the many we live like an armed camp that is in momentary expectation of a surprise."

"But," said she, wondering what all this had to
do with Takemoto, "the few have always prevailed over the many, and always will."

"In a way, yes; but there is a distinction. In most instances the few seize the power and hold it; in other cases that power is given the few by the many to hold as a sacred trust."

"Is that not the wise way?"

"The intelligent poor are beginning to think so, but the settled dynasties call it republicanism."

"You do not agree with the intelligent poor?"

"Though I absorb the new, it is that I may be of greater service to the old; for through the old man may achieve what man most covets—titles, distinctions, power!"

"I cannot help it, oji-san, but I sometimes fear that I am one of the new."

He nodded his head in solemn acquiescence, but betrayed no sign of how this admission affected him.

"Yoji Takemoto is one of the old," he said slowly. "A judicious blending of the old with the new might produce the most satisfactory results."

"What do you mean by that, oji-san?" Her eyes narrowed to long bright slits of blue. It was when this look came into her face that the European seemed utterly to vanish.

"I have decided that you shall be the wife of Takemoto-san."

"I his wife!"
THE GIRL FROM NIPPON.

The white face grew whiter, the eyes straighter; for a moment even the colour forsook her lips.

"He has thus honoured you," said the little man, imperturbable as ever.

"Naturally, I feel the honour greatly, oji-san," she said with an effort. "Indeed, I fear I am unworthy of even the smallest niche in his affections."

"He generously forgives all deficiencies out of regard for the great affection he bears you."

"How can one so unworthy accept such unexampled generosity?"

"He waives all that with a magnanimity much to be admired. Quite naturally, I protested against the honour he would show to one so utterly unworthy, but Takemoto-san is one in whom the virtue of generosity excels to a superlative degree."

"Might I not be granted an equal generosity in forbidding him to contract an alliance so unworthy his excessive virtues?"

The little yellow man blinked once, twice, thrice; but beyond that he betrayed no sign of being affected by her protest.

"Practically the same argument was advanced by me, though even my acutest wisdom failed to produce the slightest sign of wavering."

"There is another point, oji-san," she said in a deep, steady voice. "Is it not possible that I
may not wish to become the wife of the honourable Takemoto?"

"Such a wish cannot prevail with a true daughter of Nippon."

"But am I a true daughter of Nippon? My father was a white man, oji-san. You seem to forget that."

"I have tried hard to forget it," he admitted. "It is a misfortune I have never ceased to deplore, a misfortune we must try hard to forget."

"But if I cannot forget it—if I have no wish to forget it? My mother, your honourable sister, loved my father dearly. Always she told me to honour his memory. How can I honour it by forgetting him?"

"My honourable sister was true to her breeding. She honoured her husband as I have no doubt you will honour yours."

"But I could not honour Takemoto-san. His revolting presence affects me like a sickness."

"Iris-san," he answered gravely, but without the least sign of anger, "these are but the half-digested sentiments of the lawless Western woman, who knows not how to respect that chivalry which has granted her so much freedom. In the East we do not do these things. This future of yours has been the cause of much serious thought on my part. In Yoji Takemoto I have found all that a wife should desire."
"Yet if I care not for him?" she said.

"Another pernicious idea of the Western woman," he replied. "What more can a woman want than that her husband should care for her? It is a great honour he would pay you, Iris-san."

"If I look upon it with the eyes of a Western woman I see no honour in it at all, but rather a shame and a degradation."

"How is it possible for you to look on it with the eyes of a Western woman?"

"Because I am one," she answered boldly.

Thoughtfully he stroked the strip of loose skin below his chin, his blinking lids quite steady for the space of several seconds.

"Have you forgotten so soon?" he asked in that quiet, sing-song way of his.

"What?" But her heart misgave her. She saw like a flaming sword the thought that was running through his mind.

"One who was—but is not. He thought of you as something quite other."

"I cared not for him," she protested.

"Yet he made you suffer."

"Made my pride suffer, not me."

"But you hated him?"

"I have forgotten."

"Hated all his race?"

"My race, too," she said.
"It is not thus I would have you think," he answered gravely.

"How would you have a woman think but the way her heart dictates? I may obey you, oji-san, because it is my duty to obey you, but I could not think with you if my heart forbade it."

"If we would achieve our destiny," he answered, "it becomes our imperative duty to see that the heart becomes subservient to the mind. What we call sympathy, feeling, is but the illegitimate offspring of a degenerate alliance. No strong man, no strong nation, is ever swayed by such. The tiger is respected in the jungle, the lion in the forest. These Christians, following the precepts they profess, would fall into our laps like ripe fruit. There is no Christianity in the jungle. It is kill, kill!"

"The law of the brute."

He did not even smile. He rarely smiled, this little scrap of old parchment; but he thought it strange that the blood in her should thus assert itself despite his teaching.

"Man's law is the law of the brute, and through the brute only can he achieve victory over his fellows."

"With due respect, oji-san, I think you are not always quite correct. Why I think so I know not, nor could I hope to impress your august intelligence with my feeble reasoning."

For quite an appreciable space of time Mohri's
lids forgot to blink. Indeed, never had she seen those little eyes so wide and so full of wonder.

"It is not strange that you should fail to understand," he said. "I should advise a discontinuance of the endeavour. I am also of opinion that Yoji Takemoto would not altogether approve a wife who exceeded a wife's duties."

She tossed her head, but not disrespectfully.

"The honourable Takemoto has my sincerest sympathy," she said.

Looking fixedly at her his lips moved as though about to formulate a reply; but, as if acknowledging the wisdom of a second thought, he uttered no sound.

And yet this new phase of her character occasioned in him a curious sense of futility. What if the blood was to triumph after all; and he and all his knowledge were to offer no insuperable barrier to the rush of primitive instinct? It had not been to his liking that union of East and West out there, and when the girl-child came, the despised girl-child, instead of the son—in whom only is honour and glory—he saw the sardonic smile of destiny. At first he ignored the new-comer, seeing in it a strange hybrid totally beyond his range of sympathy; but with the death of the parents, when the strange thing came to him, he performed his duty coldly towards it according to his lights. With her growth, the child's singular intelligence appealed to him
in a perverted manner, and having no male relation to whom he could communicate his ideas, he took a sort of grotesque delight in talking to the child. Finding an apt pupil, his interest in her increased. That which he had at first treated as a whimsical idea became a serious part of his life. What if he should make of this woman-child something unique in the world of woman? Was it possible that the masterful mind of man might filter into one of the other sex? And how would the prodigy affect the world?

Maker of experiments, the idea strongly appealed to him, and had she been his younger and other self, he could not have devoted himself more assiduously to the moulding of her mind. He saw her grow up as he believed sexless, devoted only to the acquiring of wisdom and of that knowledge which makes for power. He knew that she was beautiful. He was tactfully approached by the makers of marriages with advantageous offers. She listened when he spoke, but coldly, and without interest—marriage-proof.

Of this wondrous creature he began to dream strange dreams. Fantastic possibilities filled his mind. To flood that brain with his wisdom meant the creating of a new kind of woman, one that might rise to inconceivable heights in the days to come, in the days of the great upheaval which he saw looming ahead. She was his, and he had created her, and the love of his own creation grew strong in him.
Then the stranger came—the white man from the West—and he knew that the woman was stronger than the scholar, the blood greater than the brain. Knowledge might be laboriously acquired, might steady the reason, stimulate the intelligence; but one rush of the sex-instinct swept it all away into the limbo of dead ideals. Not for him was the wealth and the glory of passion, the one thing that makes tolerable human strife, human endeavour. He looked with coldness on the passionate ways of man, deploring that weakness which seemed to afflict as with a pestilence the whole human race. Above these things he moved, looking down on them with pity and contempt. From his pinnacle in the clouds he saw men and women come and go, a dreary train of unsatisfied longings yearning for the lusts of the flesh; and he knew that these people, if one allowed them the indulgence of the beast or the fool, would prove so many stepping-stones to power. Perhaps one day, even, he might be called to the councils of his nation.

But in his own undemonstrative fashion he loved this strange product of the East and the West, and though of late he had experienced many qualms concerning her, he really had no doubt that, being a woman, she would ultimately prove amendable to his all-compelling reason.
CHAPTER VIII.

ARRIVING rather late one afternoon, and learning that Miss Mayford was out, but that she was expected shortly to return, Kenneth Everard followed the soft-footed Japanese servant, Yoban, through the hall into the garden, where in due course tea was brought to him in those quaint little cups without handles. Dr. Mohri also was abroad, a fact which did not render the young man utterly inconsolable. He was not quite sure that he understood this Dr. Mohri, and though he tried his hardest to like the strange little man, he knew that it would be frankly impossible for him ever to penetrate that cold reserve of manner which always seemed to enshroud the doctor.

But of a truth he thought little of Hiro Mohri as he sat there dreaming in that old-world garden. But of Hiro Mohri’s niece he thought a great deal. From the moment he had gazed into those bewildering blue eyes, Evelyn Brereton’s defection had failed to cause him any excessive concern. Indeed,
though against this slowly dawning truth honour made due protest, he was not sure that he regarded the defection as an insuperable obstacle to hope. That she could for one moment entertain even the remotest suspicion that he was in any way connected with his cousin's death proved conclusively on what a flimsy foundation her affection was built. He frankly admitted that at the time things had looked black against him, that was, to those who did not know him; but that those within the inner circle of his friendship could even suggest that there might be cause for explanation on his part came as a severe shock to him. And that of all persons she whom he had hoped to make his wife should apparently harbour doubt, made him seriously wonder if this was the sort of woman in whom he might expect to find those gracious attributes which he associated with wifehood.

And just at that moment of revulsion fate decreed that Iris Mayford should enter on the scene—Iris Mayford with her strange, pale face, her red lips, and eyes the most remarkable he had ever gazed into. And now, after much hard thinking, he had come to know what fate had in store for him. He felt convinced that Evelyn would not be sorry: she was not the sort of girl likely to wreck her life through an excess of affection. Probably that rich City man of whom she had so often hinted would
now step into the breach and apply the soft balm of his presence to her wounded vanity. Certainly the wound would not be a deep one, or not so deep but that it would yield to judicious salving. On the whole, he was prepared to give that City man a most cordial greeting.

He sat smoking for some time, glancing every few seconds towards the porch through which he expected to see her come. But as the time passed, and still no sign of her, he rose, stretched himself, and then sauntered slowly towards the bottom of the garden, the thought being in his mind that he would have a look at the two dogs, the singular behaviour of which had left such a curious impression on his mind. But when he reached the kennels, he found only one dog there—the fox-terrier. The cage in which the Airedale had been confined was empty, the door open.

The terrier, crouching in a corner of his cage, trembled violently when he called to it, nor would it stand up or come to him, though he cajoled it with the softest of accents. There it lay shivering, looking up at him with eyes in which terror was most painfully apparent.

Being a lover of animals, he was greatly inclined to burst open the door and set the creature free, or at least attempt to discover what ailed it. But even as he stood with his hand on the cage, an
action which seemed to convulse the dog with terror, the image of Dr. Mohri rose between him and his desire, and he drew back with an involuntary shudder. Then he tried to laugh, but for the life of him he could not tell why the attempt died so suddenly, so strangely.

Resuming his aimless peregrinations he returned to the seat he had vacated but a short time previously. Not a soul was to be seen in or about the house: save for the chirp of a bird not a sound broke the stillness of the garden. Occasionally from the distance there came to him the humming of a passing motor, and until it passed beyond hearing he had hopes that it was bringing her home.

He was beginning to wonder if he could with propriety remain any longer, when all at once there came to him a sound which caused him to look up and listen. Strange how he waited for the repetition. It seemed long in coming—seconds—minutes—and then it came again, distinct but low, like a child in pain.

Involuntarily he rose to his feet; but the cry, seeming to circle in the air, was extremely difficult to locate. Where was it, what was it? He listened and presently it came again—a long, low whine; but this time he had no difficulty in locating it. It came through the partly-open window of Dr. Mohri's laboratory.

A succession of strange thoughts flashed through
his mind. The empty cage, the great Airedale, the terror of the dogs. What could it mean? He looked round like one uncertain how to act, what to think, when through the open window came once more the whimper of pain, only this time, beginning in a low, melancholy whine, it quickly rose to a sharp succession of short yelps.

He went to the door and called to the servant Yoban, but his voice echoed strangely through the empty hall. Not a soul came in answer to his cry, and as he stepped further into the house he experienced a singular feeling of eeriness, a feeling which he with difficulty prevented from overmastering him. For a few moments he stood irresolute at the foot of the stairs, eager to penetrate this mystery and yet not daring to intrude on the privacy of his host, when once more the pitiful cry of pain reached him. Then, flinging discretion to the winds, he dashed up the stairs, along the short passage on the first landing, and flung open the door at the end.

Though now in Mohri's sanctum of sanctums, a room in which Iris never dared venture without the permission of her uncle, he had no time to look about him and examine the apartment, for on a low, flat, deal table in the middle of the room he saw the great Airedale strapped down and gagged. . . . There were little clots of blood on the white boards.
The dog's jaws were flecked with a bloody lather: his eyes, bloodshot and wild, were almost hanging out of their sockets. If the poor creature was not mad, then it must have been very near it.

Everard spoke to it kindly, softly, approaching with outstretched hand, at which the animal made a vain attempt to snap, though terror mingled with the wildness in his eyes. Nevertheless, the thought of the risk he ran never troubling him for a moment, Kenneth began to unbuckle the straps which held the dog, stroking him gently and speaking to him kindly all the time. Then with a quick movement he loosened the gag, the dog snapping savagely at his hand, and missing by a hair's breadth. The animal made a convulsive effort to get on his feet, staggered heavily across the table and rolled on to the floor. Once more Kenneth advanced coaxingly, with outstretched hand, but the dog, growling savagely, dragged himself to the far corner of the room, where he crouched as if ready to spring.

During all this a mental vision of the room had vividly stamped itself on Everard's mind: the rows of bottles, the little gas furnace, a bookshelf, and sundry glass tubes. Indeed, the various accessories of the chemist were all there, proving that the doctor indulged in practical chemistry as well as esoteric philosophy.

But though, in other circumstances, all this might
have interested him greatly, just then he was thinking principally of the dog and the tortures to which it had been subjected, and determined at all hazard to make friends with it, he once more began to speak softly, calling it "good fellow," "good boy," and a dozen other endearing epithets, the dog all the time watching him with suspicious, blood-shot eyes. Then of a sudden he noticed the creature's ears prick up, its muzzle come forward, and he knew that it was listening. As it shrank farther in against the wainscot he turned instinctively to the door, and there on the threshold stood Dr. Mohri.

The little man evinced not the slightest surprise on beholding the intruder; indeed, seeming to ignore his presence, he concentrated his glance upon the dog, his hand going quickly to the pocket of his coat. Then in the same imperturbable fashion he advanced into the room, closing the door behind him. This he did by pushing his hand backward, his eyes never for a moment removed from the dog, who now began to utter a low, fierce growl, which was yet curiously reminiscent of a whine.

It all happened in a flash. With Mohri's advance into the room the dog bared his teeth: the next moment he flew at him snarling savagely. Quick as light Mohri threw something at the creature: there was a mild explosion, a little puff of smoke, and almost before Kenneth knew what was
happening, the dog was writhing convulsively on the floor.

Too bewildered to speak, to ask a question, Kenneth stared from the man to the dog and from the dog to the man in mute amazement. With the toe of his boot Mohri rather contemptuously turned over the writhing body and then looked up at the young man with a smile which was full of strange meaning.

"I regret," he said with his customary suavity, "that I should have been out when you called; and I hope that you have not been greatly inconvenienced?"

"Not at all, I assure you."

To him this greeting sounded inconceivably trite and commonplace, a sort of anti-climax to a stirring situation. No question as to why the sanctum had been invaded, not even the slightest suggestion of annoyance. Dr. Mohri, taking all things as a matter of course, found in this invasion of his privacy nothing worthy of a remark. Everard at once began to stammer an apology.

"I must apologise, Dr. Mohri. I heard the dog whining and failed to understand what it meant. I called to your native servant, but could not make him hear me. Fearing that the animal might have met with an accident—"

"Precisely. You were a little astonished?"
“I confess it. I did not know you were a vivisectionist.”

“Say rather an experimentalist for the purpose of physiological research.”

Everard bowed, a little ironically perhaps. There might have been a distinction, but he was not one for the splitting of hairs.

“Is the creature dead?”

“I hope not.”

Kenneth sincerely hoped he was. He knew it would be far better for the dog.

“What was the meaning of his sudden collapse? You threw something? It seemed to explode like a shell.”

The little doctor blinked up at him, and Everard could have sworn that the shadow of a smile flickered over that impassive yellow face.

“If I were to publish all my secrets, Mr. Everard, the world would be as wise as I am. We must keep something in hand, we experimentalists, or we should rob the great occasion of half its glory.”

“The great occasion?”

“When knowledge is flung broadcast over the world. But see, the dog is reviving. I’m afraid it’s a very savage creature.”

A convulsive shudder swept through the animal’s body. It stretched itself in half-hearted fashion and made an ineffectual effort to get on its feet.
Mohri muttered something in Japanese, and the dog looked up at him in a dazed, half-conscious sort of fashion. Then painfully it dragged itself beneath the table, where it lay shivering horribly.

"You are not an advocate of physiological research?" asked the doctor, seeing the look of pity and loathing on the young man's face.

"Not if this is 'physiological research,'" was the prompt reply.

"Yet how are we to acquire knowledge? I admit the means are not all they might be, but we must seize such limited opportunities as the occasion provides. I am afraid this subject will be of little further use."

"Then give him to me?"

"With pleasure; though I doubt if you will thank me for the gift. You must exercise extreme care in handling him, as I think he is rather dangerous."

Kenneth Everard had an idea that of the two the danger lay not so much in the dog as in the man.
CHAPTER IX.

THE two men descended the stairs together, the little doctor chatting amicably of trivial matters, for all the world like one to whom the foregoing incident was a matter of absolute unconcern.

"I will have the creature sent to your address," he said when they at length entered the room in which Sir Basil Everard had been received on his first and only visit. "King’s Bench Walk, is it not?"

"Yes. I shall be most awfully obliged. Do you know, Dr. Mohri, I have made rather a singular discovery? I find that Mr. Mayford once had the very chambers which I and my friend now occupy."

"Indeed! I believe my brother-in-law was connected with the law. I never knew why he abandoned it. It seems a lucrative profession."

"For some," the other laughed. "But for the most of us——" He spread out his hands deprecatingly. "The old story of the fruit that ripens best in the sun."

94
“Still in your case the necessity is not imperative?”

“One doesn’t like being beaten.”

“But so many of us are beaten: so many of us were born to be beaten. It would be a curious world in which all were masters. There would be no room for the workmen.”

“I don’t think there is any great fear of that.”

“What do you fear, Mr. Everard—or ought it not to be Sir Kenneth?”

“Not yet. Remember, I am still more or less under a cloud.”

“Which, no doubt, will soon be dispersed?”

“I would like to think so, though to tell you the truth, I am no nearer a solution of the mystery now than I was at the beginning.”

“You have consulted Scotland Yard?”

“Yes, but they are as much at sea as I am. My cousin led a strange, roving sort of life, and they have not been able to trace his antecedents with any degree of accuracy. He seems to have wandered pretty well over the world.”

“As you say, it would be extremely difficult to trace his wanderings. I take it that you are not one of those who sneer at the acumen of Scotland Yard?”

“Quite the contrary. I know I shouldn’t like them to be on my track if I’d done anything wrong.”

“Then you think in time——”
"I haven't the slightest doubt of it."
"But so many mysteries remain unsolved."
"Yet I cannot help thinking that one day we shall know the truth of this."
"I wonder if it would be worth knowing?"
"To me—yes. It is necessary that I should know, that the world should know. I want my friends to know the truth—I want you to know."
"Why me in particular?"
"Because one day I am hoping that you may permit me to marry your niece."

In spite of himself the little doctor gave a start.
"That is very curious," he said. "I did not know. I thought—"

"Miss Brereton has not that faith in me which I had every reason to expect. I think she will not prove inconsolable."

The doctor blinked and nodded, but before he could reply the servant Yoban entered with more tea.

"Perhaps you would prefer something stronger?" suggested the doctor, as the servant turned and quietly quitted the room.

"No, thanks. I like this quaint custom of yours."

The little man bowed, and walking over to the cabinet returned with a curiously carved Oriental box, which he held open for his visitor.

"Perhaps you would like a cigarette?"
Kenneth dipped in his fingers and extracted one.
"You do not smoke?" he said.
"Only at stated intervals."

Politely he struck a match and held it out to the young man, who took three or four solemn puffs, as though analysing the flavour.

"A Japanese cigarette," said the doctor. "You do not like it?"

As a matter of fact he did not, though a certain sense of politeness forbade him to admit as much.

No doubt the fact of its being Japanese accounted for its singular flavour. In a way he thought the smell of it was reminiscent, though unable to remember where or when he had previously encountered it.

"A bit strong," he said.

"But soothing to the nerves. I believe they are impregnated with opium. The drug is rather a vice in the East. But pray don't continue: it may not agree with you. Try one of these: they are made of Virginia tobacco."

The little eyes blinked continuously behind the steel-rimmed spectacles, but never for a moment did they wander from the young man's face.

"If you don't mind." He laid the cigarette aside.

"I think they must be rather an acquired taste."

"Undoubtedly."

So this was opium! He had often read and heard
of the singular effect produced on the smoker by an over-indulgence of the drug, but if it affected them in this peculiarly numb and nauseous manner he failed utterly to see where the pleasure came in. However, the strange sensation passed away almost as quickly as it had come, though in that moment of bewilderment, of mental confusion, it had seemed to him as if the little doctor had suddenly presented a weird and forbidding appearance.

"You were speaking of my niece," cooed the soft, low voice. "Naturally both she and I must feel extremely flattered at the great and unmerited honour you would confer on us; but I regret to say that she is already betrothed to my august friend, the illustrious Yoji Takemoto."

"What that——" But here he wisely checked himself. He was going to say that "yellow lump of pock-marked iniquity"; he might have used a dozen epithets equally true and equally deplorable. Little provocation would have caused a candid outburst on the many demerits of the illustrious Takemoto. Instead, he rather tactlessly expressed his surprise at her consenting to such an alliance, which to him seemed highly incongruous, almost sacrilegious.

"Our women are sensible of the fact," said Mohri, "that in these matters we are the best judges of their welfare."
He did not like the way in which the little man said "our women." He would not have it that she was one of their women: the thought revolted him. Yet he was none the less curiously aware of the fact that this impassive yellow person, small as he was, loomed largely and forbiddingly across his path. It was ridiculous, of course. He could have taken the little man in his arms and tossed him up against the ceiling; and yet—and yet there was power in that tiny form: a potential power which affected him in a manner he could not explain, and which he would not admit even to himself.

"It is just possible," he said, a sense of obstinacy overcoming his discretion, "that your niece may not approve of your choice."

"You misunderstand the Japanese woman."

"But she is not a Japanese woman: she is English."

"In such matters I think you will find she is entirely Japanese."

"Have I your permission to try?"

He bowed. "You will find her in the garden. I heard her enter the house some time ago."

Kenneth Everard started, a remarkable sensation of the uncanny sweeping through him. When had she entered? How did he know she was in the garden? He believed his ears to be no less acute than the other man's, his sight as good: yet he
had detected neither sign nor sound which had apprised him of her arrival. There was something weird about this blinking little Asiatic that sent unpleasant shivers circling round the nape of his neck.

He found her in the garden, a book in her hand, a tray of sweets spread out on the table beside her. He liked the look of those sweets. The thought may have been foolish, but he rather fancied that people who ate sweets were peculiarly human in their tastes and desires.

She looked up, betraying the faintest surprise at seeing him.

"I did not know you were here."

"I have been here for some time."

"They did not tell me."

"Perhaps they never thought it worth while."

He saw her eyes wander from him to the window above the porch, and then come back again. But he made no reply to the mute inquiry, though he could not help wondering if she knew of her uncle's experiments.

"I have been talking to Dr. Mohri," he said, dropping into a vacant chair and facing her.

"And you found him interesting?"

"Very."

"He is always interesting, that uncle of mine,
and his knowledge is amazing. When he exerts himself to talk, few talk so well."

"You are very fond of him?"

"Naturally. He has been father, mother—everything to me. People have found him difficult to get on with, but to me he has always been kindness and gentleness personified. Sometimes I have thought he could forgive almost anything but a slight to me."

"You would be sorry for the man who slighted you?"

"Why should any man slight me?" she asked with some show of surprise.

"That I can't say: the supposition is too incredible."

"You think the Asiatic——" she began.

"On the contrary: you know I never associate you with the Asiatic."

"Yet I am one. Look at my eyes."

"Wonderful!" he gasped admiringly.

"My eyebrows. Did you ever see such an upward slant in a European?"

"I deny the upward slant. They are perfect."

"Really?"

"Really and truly." Leaning toward her, his face assumed a sudden seriousness. "Why does your uncle wish you to marry Mr. Takemoto?"

"You know?"
"He has just told me."

"He is not usually given to babbling his private affairs."

"I wrung it from him."

She assumed a look of incredulity. "I can imagine many things, but the wringing of private information from oji-san is not one of them."

"I asked his permission to marry you."

The strange eyes opened in amazement, the red mouth tightened; but beyond this the blunt avowal apparently failed to stimulate her Oriental calm.

"Tell me, Mr. Everard, is it honourable to ask for the hand of one woman while you are still engaged to another?"

"But I am no longer engaged to Miss Brereton. She has cast me off, flung me aside: her father thinks it best that our engagement should come to an end. For once I agree with him. Evelyn lost faith in me because I could not prove that I had not murdered my cousin. Though even if it were otherwise, it could make no difference now."

"Why?"

"Because I'm deadly, desperately in love with you, Iris Mayford, and I'm not going to let you marry that little pock-marked monkey Takemoto. The mere thought of such a tragedy outrages every Christian sentiment."
"Christian! But I am a heathen woman from the Far East, where Christianity does not flourish, and where women have never a soul to be saved."

"And if I think differently?"

"How can that alter the truth? You know that in your heart you do not regard me as an Englishwoman, but rather as a curious hybrid of the East and the West who appeals by reason of the bizarre, the grotesque in me."

"But you do not really think this?"

"At times I have tried not to: but in my heart, yes. Takemoto-san is of my people. I would understand him—he would understand me."

"But you could not love a thing like that?" His tone was full of horror, his eyes betrayed an amazing incredulity.

"Love! Women are honoured by the choice of their lord. What should a woman want more than the honour of wifehood? Takemoto-san is rich. In Hiogo he is considered a man of the first importance. His wife will receive great honour, much consideration."

"It's too horrible! I wonder you can even speak of such a thing."

"If I look on the East and its ways with Eastern eyes, is that unnatural? To you, perhaps. But is that not just the difference between us? In a way Takemoto-san will be proud of me."
"But not as proud as I should be."

"Ah, no, you would not be proud at all. You might be generous, brave in misfortune, but you could not be proud. You could only be proud of your wife if she were of your race. How would you feel if you heard the sneer, 'Oriental—Asiatic'? The knowledge that I was not a white woman—how it would rankle, how it would eat out the pride of your heart. Your children: you would search their eyes in terror of the Mongol slant. And if you found it—how you would hate them, and the woman you were fool enough to marry. Then you are a Christian, and the mother of your children would be a—heathen! I know what you think of those whom you call heathens. Takemotosan, according to you, is also a heathen. There may be some virtue in us—I do not know: but it is scarcely the virtue that finds honour in a Christian land. Yet it might surprise you to know that a heathen, despite the numerous disadvantages under which he exists, is not without merit of a kind."

"You are altogether wrong," he said, "and you misjudge me harshly. Call yourself by whatever name you choose—Christian, heathen, savage—you are still the woman whom I greatly honour, and whom I greatly love. And as for the difference between the East and the West, of which you make
so much, what is it, after all, but a fanciful distinction which in your case does not exist."

"Ah, but it does. I once heard the story of a girl such as I—a hybrid—a creature who was neither white nor yellow. A white man came to her, and she was honoured. She despised the people who had been kind to her and turned eagerly to the stranger, in whom she thought she saw the unexampled virtues of the dominant races. In the East he professed unbounded admiration: in the West the call of his own women proved irresistible. You can guess the end of that romance. As it was with her, so it is with me. Even were I to love a white man I should not marry him."

"I hate to hear you talk of 'white men' in this manner, as though they were different from you, something removed from you. To me you are a white woman: it is not even conceivable that I should think of you as anything else. How could I? Not alone are you a white woman, but you are the loveliest white woman I have ever seen. I adore you: I have adored you from the moment I first met you. Listen, Iris, because it is very curious. I had just been talking to Evelyn—about that affair, you understand—when I became cruelly aware of the fact that this woman whom I had promised to marry did not really love me. She was peevish, irritable, annoyed, antipathetic. For the first time,
I think, I saw her as she really was, and of a sudden my heart grew heavy with doubt. Then you came in: I looked into your wonderful eyes, and a strange feeling of relief came over me. I knew that I no longer regretted her defection. From then until now it has been the same. The other day she wrote suggesting that we should postpone our marriage for at least twelve months: it would give me time to right things. I answered suggesting why not postpone it for twelve years—or for ever. She thought the latter would be a wiser course. I had no doubt of it."

Strangely she regarded him during this recital; closely, penetratingly, as though she would read those other thoughts which lurked behind his words.

"And tragedies are so easily made!"

"But this is no tragedy for her. Rather call it a comedy-interlude which she will remember with a positive degree of satisfaction in the years to come. Therefore I do her no wrong."

"The wrong would matter little to me," she said in that appallingly frank manner of hers which had startled him more than once, "if my inclination were to tend that way; but to tell you the truth, Mr. Everard, in no circumstances could I marry a white man."

"Why not?"
"Because I hate them—I hate them in a way you could not understand. I hate them because of their affected superiority, because of their white faces—because of their women! To me the whole hateful white race exists only to be subdued—as one day it shall be by the despised yellow races. Even you, with all your protestations of affection, were secretly wondering if you were doing a wise thing. Then let me answer you: no! You would do an extremely foolish thing, and this, in your heart of hearts, you are firmly convinced of. A dozen, a hundred times, you have asked yourself, would I be wise, and your heart has told you, no, no, no! But you are not without generosity, and you have said to yourself, what does it matter: the taint in her is not so great; it shall be eradicated root and branch. And you have thought how best you could teach yourself to forget—how you could teach her to forget. And all the time you knew that there was no forgetting: nature itself would not allow you to forget."

"I still think you are mistaken."

"Perhaps," she added defiantly; "but I shall marry Mr. Takemoto."

Slowly he shook his head. "I don't think so. You may not marry me, but you will not marry Mr. Takemoto."

"Why not?"
He knew that tears were close behind those flaming glances.

"Because you do not love him, and you will marry no man you do not love."

"He is of my race, of my blood."

"So you tell yourself, without conviction. You know that Mr. Takemoto is not of your race, that he is repugnant to you. It is impossible that it should be otherwise. You are no mere mercenary schemer who would submit herself to any degradation for the sake of what is called 'position.' You have a heart, a brain, that would revolt against anything so shameful. That heart may not be for me, but I do not think it will be for Mr. Takemoto."

"What makes you think that?"

"Frankly, I could not pay myself so poor a compliment."

"Arrogance," she sneered, "the arrogance of the white man."

The story of his cousin's perfidy bubbled to her lips. She yearned to tell him of the shame the dead man had heaped on her, of distorted faith, of broken promises: that, if she hated the white man, above all others she hated the white man who bore the name of Everard. This was her revenge, this her triumph; this wiped out much of the humiliation that had stung her almost beyond endurance. She
did not tell him that she had been inordinately proud of the white blood that was in her, that she, too, had believed herself to be of the dominant white race. She would not flatter him so greatly, she could not so humiliate herself. But her eyes blazed with the joy of the occasion, and the deadly Eastern spirit of revenge.

And when he was gone, vanquished utterly, regret on his lips, sorrow in his eyes, it seemed as though she had suddenly lost her hold on hope. Dr. Mohri, blinking through the window of his laboratory, had followed with accumulated interest this scene to its dénouement. No words reached him, but he did not need words to explain the situation. It was curious, though, the fatality of this family of Everard. He was not quite sure that this strange freak of fortune met with his entire approval. Man of science, man of philosophy, man of the world, he had not wholly eradicated that sense of kismet which seems peculiar to the Eastern mind.
CHAPTER X.

YOJI TAKEMOTO failed to appreciate the doctor's reluctance to force matters. To him the girl was nothing more and nothing less than the niece of his esteemed friend Dr. Mohri, and that this same Hiro Mohri should hesitate in the consummation of so superb an alliance was the one incredible thought. He had offered himself, and the honours and riches which all that implied, and yet Hiro Mohri seemed to hesitate in a manner that was singular in one of his breed. Yoji Takemoto was not accustomed to being thwarted in matters which pertained to the gratification of his desires, and his repellent face marked his displeasure in no slight degree.

"Patience, my good friend!" said the little doctor in that mild, persuasive manner of his which at all times was calculated to appease the wrathful. "You must not forget that in this instance we have a very difficult problem to solve. In many ways Iris-san is not one of us. In her we have the con-
junction of the two races, two opposing currents of blood, the antagonism of the East and the West. Can they ever assimilate? Are they capable of assimilating?"

"You did wrong in bringing her to this country, Mohri-san: wrongly have you educated her, plaiting a lash for your own back. Better a thousand times for you, for her, for all of us, had you trained her as a woman should be trained, perfect in duty, adoration, and a love of the domestic arts. What more should a woman want? These brazen, assertive females of Europe would not be tolerated in any well-governed country."

Dr. Mohri blinked, perceiving the difference between him and his honourable guest. Here spoke the old reactionary, the dead, dull conservatism of the past: the sentiment that may have been proper enough five hundred years ago, but which seemed singularly inept in these times of stress.

"Also," he answered mildly, "though I realise and appreciate the wisdom of what you say, is there not another side of the question? Knowledge is power, Takemoto-san, and one must always pay for knowledge. Remember, we have risen to greatness by applying to our uses the knowledge of the West. Having taken the first step forward we must push on; and though, of a truth, the greater wisdom must always remain with our sex, I cannot
see how the possession of a finer understanding is going to harm any woman. A nation cannot live by tradition. It will choke the life of it as surely as sedges choke the movement of a stream. The stream is still there, to be sure, but how it struggles for life! Moreover, as a nation we have destroyed so many traditions, with such incalculable benefit to ourselves, that I do not think I grow frightened at the thought."

Takemoto shook his head.

"There be some who think we go too fast."

"The inability of middle-age to keep up with youth. Go fast, make mistakes, and rectify them: be fearful of the next step, and you rot where you stand. Youth pushes the world, Takemoto-san. Age may act as a drag on it, but, thank heaven, is quite unable to effect a permanent check. There is too much age in the world. It lives by youth and through youth, and yet is for ever striving to hold down that by which it exists."

Takemoto had no idea that his friend was such a revolutionary. As for youth, it was a fine thing in its way—especially in woman—but it had no power and no money. Age had the money; it could always buy youth.

"Still," he said in the dogged way of the unimaginative, "I am one of those who think that we may move too swiftly; and in this matter
of women. I cannot approve of these hateful Western methods."

The little doctor blinked profoundly.

"When we have learned, with wisdom, to regulate our own affairs, then may we, with wisdom, set about the regulating of other people's. At the same time, you imagine ills that do not exist. Rest content, my friend: that which you desire shall be."

"It is easy enough for you to promise," grumbled the other.

"I am one who usually fulfils his promises."

"Some promises are not easy of fulfilment."

"I did not say so. Here I recognise many difficulties which might not prove so insistent out there. She is full of the West, its schemes, its ideas. That which is called freedom seems to her a very dear thing. It is with them as it is with us: women are bought and sold, bartered and exchanged, only they are wise enough to let her think she is a consenting party. Believe me, she is usually wise enough to appreciate the advantages of a good bargain. The difference is that the Western woman likes to be won. Let her think that she is giving something of incalculable value—which is always herself—and the spirit of self-sacrifice will dominate every other sentiment. Were we in Nippon——"

"I would we were," said Takemoto. "When do you return?"
"When my work is accomplished."

"I have heard much of that work, Mohri-san. What is it?"

"All in good time, my friend. At the present moment we are in the West and must adopt Western methods. You will no doubt find her in the garden. I hope your honourable suit may prosper."

Bowing he held wide the door for Takemoto to pass through. Iris, looking over the top of her book, saw the perplexed lover approach, and a grotesque figure he seemed in his ill-fitting, ill-cut European clothes. Small, podgy, cumbersome of action, seeming to emit an imperceptible odour of the East, he appeared singularly out of place in this typically English garden.

She rose and bowed very graciously, betraying not the slightest sign of emotion. Without a word he dropped into a vacant chair and with a gaudy silk handkerchief wiped the imaginary perspiration from his brow. Then he looked up at her with his little pig eyes and nodded. She bowed and reseated herself. Takemoto crossed his podgy hands and sat apparently deep in thought.

The girl could not help contrasting this insignificant little person with the tall, clear-skinned, muscular young fellow who had so lately occupied that same seat. Almost sullenly she regarded the pockmarked face, her lips pouting. The beady little
eyes, wandering over her person, filled her with a sudden sense of loathing. She pictured herself tied to this ineffable image. What could possess her uncle that he should further the suit of this man?

"Iris-san," he said, speaking in a thick, oily voice, "your uncle has given me permission honourably to approach. As you are doubtless aware, I long to make you the star of my household, the light of my life."

"I am highly honoured, Takemoto-san," she answered with becoming humility. Come, thought Takemoto-san, this is not quite the difficult problem Dr. Mohri led me to expect.

"Your beauty, Iris-san, coupled with your innumerable merits, has led me to believe that there is much happiness in store for us."

"Indeed, I hope so," she said.

"I fail to see how it can be otherwise. Your honourable uncle sings your praises with no uncertain voice. Indeed, so greatly do you possess the supreme virtues of your sex that I have decided to make you my wife."

"You overwhelm me, Takemoto-san. The contemptible merits possessed by one so utterly unworthy could but dim the lustre of your radiance."

Takemoto nodded. He knew all about his radiance and its lustre. It gleamed yellow like gold, or white like diamonds—in a woman’s eyes a radiance
most engrossing. And he had feared, had doubted—he who could give a woman so much!

"I was not mistaken in you, Iris-san," he said, a look of supreme self-assurance wrinkling his face in a curiously satisfied smile.

"Were you not?" she asked.

"Like all true Japanese you but use the knowledge of the West for a purpose. In your heart you hate these people as I hate them, as your uncle hates them."

"What makes you think my uncle hates them?"

"I have eyes to see and ears to hear. Mohri-san is a good Japanese."

"And I?"

"You also, I trust, are proud of your nation."

"My nation? But have I a nation? Don’t you see, Takemoto-san, I am like one who stands at the boundary of two nations with no right to cross the frontier into either. Therefore, I fear I am utterly unworthy of the honour your illustrious condescension would confer on me."

Takemoto’s little eyes peered curiously through their puffy yellow ridges.

"There is no honour of which you are not worthy," he said. "It is I who am presumptuous in claiming for a mortal that which the gods alone should enjoy."

Again his beady little eyes wandered from her dazzling face to the superb contours of her figure.
Noting the keenness of that look she shuddered. That other, she knew, had admired equally, but there had been no sense of shame in his admiration.

Takemoto took no pains to conceal his thoughts. It never for one moment occurred to him that he should do so. The mad Western notion of woman being man's equal was a proposition so absurd as not to be worth a second thought. When a man looked with favour on a woman he honoured her greatly, and it became her at once to assume an attitude of gracious humility. He knew the white men pandered to the whims and fancies of their women, thereby creating difficulties innumerable; but that was not the way of the Asiatic, and it was not his way. Nevertheless, he recognised that in this instance the circumstances were somewhat altered, and that here in this English garden he might have to win in the English way. It was annoying, but it was also easy enough to give a little now in the hope of gaining much hereafter.

"You greatly flatter me," she said: "though I am not aware of any intense longing for the adoration of the gods. When my hour comes, Takemoto-san, as it comes to all of my unhappy sex, I daresay I shall be content with a mere human. Certainly, I have no hankering for the divinities."

"Then there is hope for the degraded slave who prostrates himself at your feet?"
“May be, Takemoto-san. I do not know until my hour comes.”

“It has come,” he whispered, in a voice half choked with passion.

“May be,” she said again; “but I do not realise it.”

“To make you realise it—that shall be my honourable duty. When we return to our native land, Iris-san, it will be to find great honours in store for you.”

To return with him—to endure him! In her wilfulness she had told Kenneth Everard that she would marry Takemoto. She had hurled it at him as a taunt, a defiance; but looking on this Takemoto’s cruelly pitted face, in his horrid slits of eyes, which burned with a light that caused her a deep sense of shame, she knew she would as soon take a leper in her arms.

“I shall not return with you,” she said. “I am not, I could never be, worthy of so great an honour. You must look among your own race for one worthy to uphold the many dignities you would confer on her.”

Takemoto’s ugly lower lip protruded in a decidedly unpleasant manner. His little eyes narrowed until they shone like black pin heads. A sudden flush of anger caused the pits on his face to gleam luridly.

“I have not looked beyond my own race,” he
said: "I should never dream of doing such a foolish thing."

It was now her turn to start, to flush. Very curiously her own eyes narrowed. She would have been amazed could she have seen how very similar her action was to his.

"Then allow me to congratulate you—and her."

"In congratulating her you congratulate yourself, Iris-san, for you are she."

"I! You mistake. I am not of your race: I am a white girl."

"Since when?" he asked.

"Always," she answered sharply.

"My mistake," he replied, but in a manner which left no doubt as to his meaning: "I apologise. I wonder if your white friends have fallen into the same error?" Then more solemnly, yet in a tone which suggested pity and a modicum of contempt:

"Why this pretence, Iris-san, of being what you are not? And wherein lies the supreme merit of belonging to the white race? If it were true I see no cause for boasting; as it is far from true, the pretension becomes absurd. These people do not regard you as one of them. In their pride of race they despise all who are not of their blood: for the half-breed they have nothing but contempt. But I—I have forgotten these things. Though you cannot claim purity of blood, even the despised blood
of Asia, I still believe you to possess many surprising merits. Be foolish no longer, Iris-san: put away from you that vanity which mars your life like an accursed thing. In Nippon we are of the same race, and happiness awaits you there."

As he spoke a flush of annoyance darkened her pale face. Quickly her bosom rose and fell: she seemed to breathe with difficulty through teeth clenched.

"I am a white girl," she repeated doggedly, "and could not degrade the honour of my race by mating with any Oriental, much less with an Oriental like you. Return to Nippon and find some yellow woman who will welcome the honour you propose. Look at yourself, Takemoto, again and again regard your face thoughtfully, and then pray to be forgiven for your great temerity. Once even I, knowing no better, might have done what you wished; but since coming among my own people—my father's people—I have learnt something of the pride of race, and all the wealth of the world would not lure me from my allegiance. Is that enough, Takemoto-san?"

"Nay," he said, "it is but the mere raving of foolishness, of a woman who has drunken deeply of strange wine and has become intoxicated. You of the white race! You are not even a Japanese."

"Did I not tell you so? Then seek one of your
own kind: she may be overwhelmed by the flattery of your proposal. I must deny myself that great honour."

"And think you then that this white man who comes brings honour for you?" Again a vivid flush passed over her face, but this time it was not wholly of indignation. "Remember, one of his breed came before, and the shame remained with you. Thus must it ever be when the yellow woman forgets her duty and her honour. But I leave you to the care of one whose wisdom is unexampled. Think over what I have said: remember that you are of the East, and that the clash between the two worlds is eternal."

He bowed very low, ceremonious still, notwithstanding the fact that he was inwardly seething with rage and anger. Then he turned his back on her, leaving her a mass of jangled nerves, of tangled conjectures. She sat very still, staring stolidly at nothing in particular. But there was anguish in her eyes, and in her heart a pain too deep for words.
CHAPTER XI.

KENNETH EVERARD found no difficulty in dodging the briefs that came hurtling through his door. Indeed, their visits were so few and so far between that had he been dependent on them for a living he could scarcely have occupied his present chambers. Nor did his connection with the mysterious murder of his cousin increase his forensic prospects. It was little likely that the litigant who wished to impress a jury with his own impeccability would employ as counsel one who had been publicly accused of such a crime. Everard knew this, and was content to bide his time. Only on the rarest occasions did he show himself at his club, and then merely from a sense of duty to himself. He saw the furtive glances, noted the coolness, and inwardly treasured up some rather bitter memories. He forsook his accustomed restaurant, dining in obscure, respectable places. Only on those friends whom he knew to be real friends did he ever call. But he was in continuous communication
with the authorities at Scotland Yard, and particularly with Detective-Inspector Bayles, who had charge of the investigation.

Bayles, notwithstanding the fact that he had started as a uniformed policeman, so little resembled one of the heavy-footed fraternity as to be able to pass unrecognised by eyes trained to discover the "'tec" in every lounging. He was a man of medium height, slight of build, wiry, and almost intellectual-looking; and in him Everard believed that he had the one man who could unravel the mystery—if it was ever to be unravelled.

Frederick Bayles frankly confessed that the affair puzzled him greatly.

"Had he been a different sort of person altogether," said Bayles; "one who was fed up with life, without hope or prospects, then I should have favoured the theory of suicide. But as far as we know he had everything to live for: money, position, and an apparently happy marriage in view. Men with these advantages don't commit suicide—especially when they have led more or less of a roisterer's life. There is always the man Sandilands. But what motive had he: what was he to gain by the act?"

"No one had anything to gain but me," said Kenneth.

"Quite so. This is where we begin to knock our heads against the wall of conjecture. Of course,
you know nothing of your cousin's life after his return from abroad?"

"Absolutely nothing. As I have told you, we were not the best of friends—for no reason that I know of. Frankly, I always thought him an impossible person, and at our last meeting he was more impossible than ever."

Whatever theories or suspicions the detective may have held he kept to himself, and Kenneth had of necessity to possess his soul in patience. But it was a bitter waiting, and but for this new romance that had so suddenly come to him would have made life perfectly intolerable. As it was, that final scene with Iris would have plunged him into the lowest depths had he believed in his heart that it really was final. But this was a contingency he would not acknowledge; and though he failed utterly to see how the reconciliation was to be effected, he could not, or would not, rid himself of the thought that matters would yet be smoothed out.

Having no briefs to study, he made a serious attempt to read, but the perusal of intricate legal problems held no attraction for him just then. Out of the stodgy page rose her white face with the curious compelling eyes, and red lips mocked his most strenuous efforts to forget. Occasionally, the great Airedale, which, in accordance with his promise, had been duly forwarded to him by Dr.
Mohri, would rise from its corner and creep timidly towards him, and with an air of apology lay its great head on his knee. The dog still started nervously at every sound, trembling with terror at an unknown voice; but when they were alone together, and no sound of voice or step broke the stillness, the dog wandered about the room sniffing with the curiosity of his kind. Kenneth had great hopes of curing the creature altogether, though he plainly saw that it would be a long time before the great fellow would utterly forget his terror.

About four o'clock one afternoon, as he and the dog sat looking at each other, there came a low and rather timid knock at his door. The dog looked up and uttered a low, soft growl. Waving it to its corner Kenneth rose, crossed to the door and opened it. Outside stood a woman, closely veiled, but not so closely as to hide her identity. His heart gave a sudden leap of recognition, and with an exclamation of joy he held out his hand.

"This is good of you," he said.

Frankly she gave him her hand, unhesitatingly entering the room. Carefully he closed the door, his face expressing both astonishment and delight.

"I have discovered that these were my father's chambers," she explained, though without the slightest betrayal of embarrassment, "and I wanted to see where he worked and how he lived."
"Yes," he said, "John Mayford rented these chambers some twenty-five years ago, and John Mayford's daughter is very welcome indeed."

"It's wonderful!" she mused. "I can just recollect him, a pale, tall man with a racking cough. But my mother used to tell me of him, and promised me that one day I should go and see his country. She would have liked to be here with me now, poor little thing, for she adored him as no woman should adore a man."

"Rather as a woman should," he contradicted with a smile, "if she would be very happy."

"Are women ever happy?"

"I hope so."

She turned away and looked out through the window into the gardens. He, standing beside her, forbore to utter the obvious. The great Airedale crept out from his corner and came slowly and suspiciously towards her, ultimately summoning up sufficient courage to sniff at her skirt. Suddenly she looked down, giving a curious start.

"Inu!" she exclaimed. "Where did you get this dog?"

"You remember it?"

"I seem—it is not——"

"Yes. Dr. Mohri gave it to me."

She looked at him as if asking for a further explanation, but he felt that such an explanation was
more than he dared venture on. How could he tell her of the cruel experiment, and all that had happened in Hiro Mohri's laboratory?

"I took rather a fancy to the poor creature," he said. "At some time or other of his life he seems to have been extremely ill-used, but I am glad to say his terror is gradually wearing off. You used the word inu. Does that mean dog?"

"Yes. When I fail to remember I am English I instinctively use another language." She looked up at him through her veil with something of defiance in her attitude, but he made no reply. To his thinking there was no further need to prolong the argument.

But the coming of the strange girl filled him with much curious conjecture. Also her absolute self-possession was not a little disconcerting. She seemed to make no more of stepping into this private room of his than if she had been paying a visit to a public gallery. There was no apology, no suggestion of such, no hint of what had passed between them. He could not even imagine that it was filial affection which had brought her. She came because she wished to come, because she had the right to come if the whim so took her. She would have walked into the street with the same air of possession, or of self-detachment.

"I am sure you would like some tea," he said.
"It would be very welcome," she admitted.
"I'm sorry I can't give it to you Japanese fashion."
"I would rather you did not."
He apologised further, setting out the spirit lamp as he spoke.
"Our housekeeper goes off at noon, so we have to do these little things for ourselves. Would you prefer that we should go out somewhere?"
"On the contrary, I should much prefer to stay here—and help you."
He murmured his appreciation of the suggestion. She pulled off her gloves, raised her veil, and at once set to in the most workmanlike manner. Tablecloth, tea-cups, plates, and so forth, he fished out of a cupboard, she deftly spreading the things. He rang up the nearest confectioner's for cakes and sandwiches, and by the time the water was boiling the provender had arrived.
He watched her with peculiar intentness as she moved swiftly and silently about the room, realising that this suggestion of tea was a most happy inspiration. Whatever of ceremonial stiffness may have been his, or hers, vanished under the genial influence of the occasion; and soon the two of them were chatting away as though nothing more serious than a plate of sandwiches had ever risen between them.
"I wonder if my father used to take tea like this?" she said.

"In all probability. Manners and customs change slowly here in the Temple."

"Of course our parents before us did exactly as we do, though it seems hard to realise that they were once young and——"

"Foolish?"

"Is it not the privilege of youth to be foolish?"

"Not to the destruction of itself—and others."

"As to that," she replied, glancing slyly over the tea-cup, "the others must look after themselves."

"There are occasions when it does not depend wholly on one's self—times when so much depends on another."

She was trying hard to trace some resemblance in him to that other who behaved so falsely. Of the same blood, breeding, faith—what had she to expect from this man more than the other had given her? Yet, strive as she would, she could trace no resemblance. Unless every sense misled her, this was a real man, a man who looked at one with honest eyes, who said a thing and meant it. And they had accused him of the murder of that other, and the woman who should have stood beside him had slunk away with a sneer on her lips.

She was sorry now she had not told him of her acquaintance with Sir Basil; but she had been
warned by her uncle never to breathe the man's name for fear of complications; and, on first meeting him, she had been animated by that which she now knew to be a spirit of revenge. Might she not pay back on this man the slight the other had offered her? He had called her an Asiatic, a half-breed; had not spared her in any particular, but with a brutality which was inconceivable had ground her in the dust. And now here was his heir ready to fall at her feet and worship the despised yellow woman. Yes, he had thought of her as a yellow woman, one whom the white man had condescended to toy with for an hour or so.

Frankly she admitted to herself that she had lured this other man on. She had meant to bring him to her feet, and when she found him there she could not resist the triumph that was hers. It had all happened just as she had planned. No, not quite as she had planned: that was the disturbing element in the conduct of her campaign. Victory had not made her as happy as victory should. It was comparatively easy, in her moment of passion, to twit him with the illustrious Takemoto, but the passion gone the triumph had seemed a very poor thing. Takemoto! Again she saw those beady little eyes crawling all over her, and in the subsequent revulsion of feeling this other came into a little of his own.
After his first astonishment at seeing her he quickly adapted himself to the situation. A vain man might have imagined vain things, but studying her closely he knew this was the sort of thing she might do. She called herself an English girl, but an English girl would not have run so great a risk. He knew not whether to flatter himself or to commiserate with himself. That she had come to him was indubitable, but that she had come for the sake of him was what he could not bring himself to believe. For all the embarrassment she showed she might have been talking in Dr. Mohri’s garden.

With dainty trifles she fed the dog, who after a time had ventured timidly from his corner, patting his great head and addressing him in a smooth flow of Japanese. Solemnly the big fellow regarded her: occasionally he wagged his tail in serious fashion. But as yet he was not sure that the hand which was lifted to caress might not mean to strike, and though he endured her strokings it was with a wince and a suspicious glance upward.

“What made my uncle send him to you?” she asked suddenly.

“I took a fancy to the creature, and Dr. Mohri seemed to have no further use for him.”

He thought his answer came pat enough; yet by the way she looked at him he feared there had been some slight hesitancy in his reply.
"I do not understand it," she said. "My uncle did not tell me of those dogs."
"Does he tell you everything?"
"Of course not; but he knows I am fond of animals."
"I can see that."
The dog's head now rested on her knee, and from time to time he looked up at her with a world of meaning in his clear brown eyes.
"You big, strong fellow," she said. "I should like to take you over the seas."
The dog wagged his tail and rubbed his jaw along her knee. Everard started, a sudden sense of apprehension setting his pulses throbbing.
"Then you are returning to Japan?"
"Of course."
He came closer, looking her straight in the eyes.
"With Takemoto?"
Defiantly she returned the look.
"If the whim takes me."
"It must not."
She looked surprised: then a smile began to creep slowly round the corners of her mouth.
"Is that for you to say?"
"Yes."
"Indeed! I seem to be learning things."
"Iris, you must not make this sacrifice. It is too hideous, too awful!"
"Really! Do you think the ordinary English girl would consider marriage with a millionaire such an appalling sacrifice?"
"Yes, if she were like you, and he like Takemoto."
"But she would do it, eh?"
"It would depend on the woman."
"Well, what merit have I above my kind?"
"In my eyes, every merit. Stay here in England and marry me."
"I thought we had already arrived at a complete understanding on that matter."
"There can be no complete understanding until you agree."

A strange, uncertain look crept into her blue eyes, and almost imperceptibly her lips began to twitch.
"We might agree to be friends," she said.
"That is not enough for me."
"I am afraid there can be nothing more."
"There shall be!" he whispered.
"No!" She drew herself back, her eyes flashing, her cheeks burning. "I could never marry you."
"Why not?"
"Because—because you are the last man I should think of marrying."
"I don't know why you should say that; but, frankly, I refuse to believe a word of it. I love you, Iris, and I'm going to marry you."
"Whether I wish it or not?"
"Exactly."

She tried to laugh, but something in the strong, serious face of the man checked the smile on her lips.

"You are quite sure that your courage does not outrun your discretion?"

"Absolutely. If you sanely and seriously consider the matter what else can happen? Here am I so madly in love with you that I want you as I have never wanted anything in this world. Now, when a man wants a thing so badly he's going to strain every effort to secure it."

"Even though it may not be worthy of the effort?"

"That's a thing he cannot believe: at any rate, he's prepared to risk it."

"Do you think it wise?"

"I think it must always be wise to achieve that which we have set our heart upon."

"Sometimes we set up a false god."

"Like Yoji Takemoto?"

A dark flush swept over her face, darkening her eyes.

"I hate him!" she whispered.

Kenneth Everard was never able to analyse the impulse which prompted the act, but even as she spoke she was in his arms and he was passionately kissing that red mouth of hers. She made no effort to repulse him. On the contrary, her eyes burned
luridly into his, and her breath came in quick, fierce gasps as though she breathed with difficulty. He could feel her heart beating against his own. For himself, he trembled like a child.

Suddenly she disengaged herself, and moving from him, stood with her back against the table, her hot eyes burning in a dead white face.

"Why did you do it?" she gasped. "I hate you!"

She passed her fingers over her lips as though to wipe out the stain of his kisses. Her eyes narrowed, her breast rose and fell wildly. Without hesitation he came close to her and laid his hands on her shoulders. He showed never a tremor of fear or regret as he returned the fury of her gaze.

"I did it because I could not help it, and because I love you. If I have offended you I humbly crave your forgiveness. No offence was intended. When a man kisses the woman he loves, he does not mean to offend her. On the contrary, he exalts, idealises her, sets her far above all other women."

"And treats her as though she were a geisha. I thought that you at least might be trusted."

"Not when I look into your eyes—those wonderful eyes that draw the very soul out of me. Is it surprising that I should love you, that I should forget myself—you, a woman of charm and mystery,
you, my beautiful Iris, whose soul is waiting for the dawn?"

A wavering uncertainty crept into those wonderful eyes.

"I cannot love you," she whispered. "I hate you—must hate you!"

"But you do not hate me, and there is no reason why you should."

"Every reason," she said, resisting desperately.

"Tell me one."

One only she knew, and that she dreaded to mention. Like one distraught she racked her brain to find a way out of the tangle. She felt that the meshes of fate were ensnaring her. Of all the men in the world, that this should be the one to take her in his arms and press her to him so passionately, so endearingly! And she trembled as she thought; for she knew that she did not resent those kisses, that her soul had escaped into his keeping, and that above all things she wished it to remain with him.

"Iris," he said, taking her hand, which he stroked with infinite tenderness, "try to love me just a little. I want your love, I want it more than anything else in the world." Oh, the wonderful pleading of those eyes! She felt as though the very life of her were passing into his hands. "Believe me, dear; try to believe in the honour and honesty of
what I say. Why should you doubt: what cause have I ever given you to doubt? That other woman? We came together, we thought we loved each other, but if that was love, then this is something for which we have not yet found a name. You do not hate me, dear?"

"I must," she whispered hoarsely.

"But why?" She felt her lids sting as though the tears behind were made of fire. "If I have in any way offended you it was not with the intention of offending." Then suddenly, as the horrid thought dawned on him: "You do not think that I am in any way responsible for my cousin's death?"

"No, no!" Almost wildly she shook her head, her eyes wide with horror at the mere suggestion.

"Then what is there that should come between us?"

"Let me go!" she said excitedly. "I ought not to have come here; I was mad to come."

"Thank heaven for such madness," he answered devoutly.

She wrenched her hands from him, and started for the door, but pausing midway, stopped and faced him.

"This is all a mistake, Mr. Everard," she said in a low, tense voice. "Could I have foreseen I would not have come. In any case I ought not to be here—with you. It is I who should apologise for the
intrusion, and I take on myself whatever of blame there may be. This that has happened we must forget, or remember only as an incident on the journey. There is no one to blame but me. I came out of bravado, and I return humiliated beyond words. I am sorry. Good-by!

Without giving him time to answer she rushed from the room, and as he stood nonplussed by the door he heard her hurrying footsteps on the stairs. For a time he stood there listening, wondering. Then mechanically closing the door he crossed to the window and stared moodily into the garden. As he stood there thinking all manner of dear, impossible things, he presently felt the great rough head of the Airedale thrust into his palm.

"Inu," he said softly. "She called you Inu. What does it mean, old fellow?"

The dog could not tell him, but he looked up with loving, wistful, brown eyes, and thrust his head still further forward into the palm of his master's hand.
LEAVING King’s Bench Walk, Iris Mayford made direct for the Temple Station, and took the first train for Richmond. Outwardly she was a very self-possessed young lady indeed, looking neither to the right nor the left of her; but inwardly every pulse beat as wildly as though she was one of those excitable Europeans she had been taught to despise. Never in all her life had she felt so singularly futile. Hitherto she had looked on life, such as she knew it, calmly critical or indifferent. Men came and went, women did strange, foolish things. To her it seemed fated they should do these things: it mattered nothing. She looked on and laughed, or frowned as the fancy took her. And now she, too, had joined the great army of the foolish and the futile; had succumbed to a deplorable weakness of which she knew she ought to be heartily ashamed.

But was she? She told herself, yes; repeatedly she assured herself of this fact. But she wasn’t,
and this knowledge angered her, made her bite her lip, made her think of his mouth on hers. The enemy, the hated enemy! And this was her revenge! It was the old trite commonplace of playing with fire. And she was commonplace, just like other women: perhaps worse. Pretence, chin up, pride in the eye, a vain belief in one's superiority: and underneath the smooth white satin of the skin just the common blood and nerves of common women.

On arriving home she found her uncle watering his favourite flowers in the garden. He was dressed in an old dun-coloured kimono, and on his feet were straw sandals. He looked round at her as she came through the gate, blinking unemotionally through his large glasses, and for the first time it struck her that this curious product of the East was singularly out of place in this old-fashioned garden. She called to him a word of greeting as she passed into the house, but she did not stop on her way, and he made no reply. She was rather glad of this, for just then she was in no mood for the conventional commonplaces, and she was rather afraid of the penetrating power of his glances. She wanted to be alone, to think over the happenings of the last few hours, and with that end in view made direct for her room, nor did she leave it again that night. Later Yoban came to inquire, but she sent a
message to the doctor that she was tired and had a headache.

But on the following morning, as they breakfasted together in the garden, instinct told her that the interrogation was coming, and for the first time in her life she felt nervous of him, having something to hide.

"Takemoto-san honoured our contemptible house with a visit," he said in his unemotional sing-song.

"Indeed."

"He regretted that you were not here to receive him."

"I did not know he was coming."

"So I informed him. He displayed much patience."

"That was condescending of him."

"Takemoto-san is a man of many virtues."

"There are always compensations," she replied. If he noticed the sneer, he betrayed no sign of it. That withered parchment of a face seemed incapable of expressing emotion. As well expect a rock to break into tears or smiles.

"A careful consideration of his many merits has led me to the conclusion that he is quite a remarkable man."

"I weary of his merits," she said, "just as I weary of him. His many virtues appal me."

"When he inquired for you I could not tell him
where you had gone because I did not know. This he thought somewhat singular."

"I wish Takemoto-san would mind his own business. What right has he to inquire for me? Why should he seek to know my whereabouts?"

Mohri blinked away behind his glasses with the twinkling calm of a summer sea.

"Your pardon," he murmured, "but I also have some slight interest."

"I went to see the sights," she answered with hesitation, "and the noise of the streets gave me a headache."

"I am sorry. You must take greater care of yourself. And did you find it interesting—that quaint place they call the Temple—and your father's old chambers?"

She started, being quite unable to control the sudden look of suspicion that leapt to her eyes. He put the question without the slightest suggestion of interest.

"What do you mean, oji-san?"

"Why, what should I mean but what I say? I had hoped it would not be necessary to question you. You must not be foolish, Iris-san. Yoji Takemoto might not approve."

"It is quite immaterial to me whether he approves or not. I did not think you would condescend to spy on me, oji-san; but since you have, I may
tell you that I found the Temple interesting, and my father's old chambers quite remarkably so."

There was a palpable note of defiance in her voice which, however, left the little man un

"We will not discuss it further," he said. "At the same time, I am glad you have been, as it will not be necessary for you to go again."

Inwardly she began to seethe, though outwardly she was no less calm than he.

"Why may I not go again if I choose?"

"Because I do not wish it, and because Takemoto-san might not approve."

"I hate him!"

"A woman cannot begin too soon to study the wishes of her husband."

"Takemoto-san is not my husband."

"Prospectively."

"I hate him!" she said again.

"And this other?"

"Why do you ask?" she stammered.

"Why does one usually ask a question?" He fixed his eyes on her, compelling an answer.

"If it were a question between him and Take

"It can never be that."

"You forget, oji-san, that I am not now in Nippon."
"Every good Japanese is a part of the sacred earth of Nippon."

"I am not a good Japanese—I am not a Japanese at all."

"We must try to make you one. Tell me, Iris-san, is it possible that you can forget?"

"I don't know," she said: "you must give me time to think. Why should I blame him for the wrong another did? Rather, am I not to be congratulated?"

"He meant it for a wrong: he meant to humiliate you. These white people profess unbounded admiration for our victories over Russia. They cry with one breath, 'Wonderful!' But they only think it wonderful that we, a heathen, coloured race, should have adopted their methods with such marked success. In their hearts they do not regard us as their equal, but only as a curious, barbaric people who humbled the great white giant of the North—the monster whose frown used to set all Europe shivering with terror. We achieved what they had not the courage to attempt: we pricked the bubble, slashed the bladder. As soldiers they accept us, but as a people they contemplate us with chins in the air. Our business is to lower those chins. Sir Basil Everard slighted you because you were a Japanese."

"I am not a Japanese," she insisted. He did not seem to notice the interruption.
"And he paid the penalty."

Widely her eyes opened, betraying a searching look of interrogation.

"What do you mean by that, oji-san?" she asked in a low voice.

"That he met the fate reserved for all who attempt to check our progress."

"I don't quite understand. He died suddenly, met his fate as we all must. Do you mean that the idols of Nippon triumphed over the God of the white people? Because if that is the case you are far from being the man whose wisdom I have learned to reverence."

"'The idols of Nippon,'" he quoted, "have their willing instruments the same as the white man's God. When it suits us we may each claim divine interception. With us the virtues of the Emperor triumph, with them the unseen Deity. It is a pretty piece of romance whichever way you look at it. Meanwhile, we arm ourselves with the very latest weapons of destruction, the live shell being the greatest of all living deities. To destroy seems to be the ultimate end of Nature and of God."

"Is that also your gospel, oji-san?"

"When it concerns my enemies, or the enemies of my country."

"Concerning this Sir Basil Everard?" she said suddenly.
"Being dead, what further interest can we have in him? Dead emperors or dead dogs, what's the difference between them once they're put under the earth? But the living—ah, the living may wound, and the wound may rankle till it ulcerate the whole body. I thought, Iris-san, that your extreme affability in the case of Mr. Kenneth Everard concealed a very ingenious stratagem. I was mistaken?"

"No. Profiting by your philosophy I employed the most contemptible means to gain my end."

"Success was assured you from the beginning. Having once brought your enemy to your feet, you immediately begin to trample on him, otherwise he will rise up and sting you."

"No, oji-san," she faltered. "I almost think he might trample on me."

"Am I then to assume that Sir Basil Everard was right, and that, being a half-breed, you are necessarily a degenerate?"

It was the first time he had ever spoken to her in a manner so cruel, and yet strangely enough she did not resent it. As a matter of fact she was wondering if there was not more virtue in the half-breed than in the full-blooded native. Certainly she would not have exchanged for the latter.

"These things come, oji-san," she said weakly, "and carry us with them against our better judg-
ment. At first other thoughts were mine. Being a woman, I am not ignorant of my power. I would bring him to my feet and then spurn him with ridicule. As you know, I did spurn him."

"Only to go in pursuit of him?"

She gave a little gasp: otherwise the Oriental calm remained unruffled.

"Who can hide anything from that august intelligence?"

Gravely he inclined his head in response to the compliment.

"It is nothing," he said. "Women have been foolish from the beginning of time. Yoji Takemoto need not know. Nothing else matters. My work accomplished, we will return to our own country. As the wife of the illustrious Takemoto you will be guarded against all future mishaps."

"I cannot be the wife of Takemoto-san," she protested. "I hate him! You would not have me marry a man I hate?"

"What difference can it make, once you are his wife? He wants you. Your love or your hate may sweeten or embitter, but beyond that it can matter little. The wishes of the husband must always be sacred to the wife."

"That is your Eastern notion, oji-san; but the Western peoples rank their women higher than the beast."
"The Western peoples know how to make arms, but they have forgotten how to govern women. In the future they will come to us for that knowledge."

"And you return to Nippon?" she asked, with just the slightest suspicion of a quaver in her voice.

"Soon now. My work is almost finished. A few more experiments, and when next I visit Europe it will be with our conquering armies."

What he meant by that she did not know, nor had she the curiosity to inquire. She knew that dream of old, the conquest of the white races, but of a truth it never fired her to any great enthusiasm. As an abstract theory it was not without interest—they had discussed it times out of number—but as a likely happening it lacked even a remote probability.

"I regret to say, oji-san, that I shall not be able to return with you to Nippon."

"Indeed!" he answered slowly, but without the slightest suggestion of emotion. "That would be very singular."

"Never again shall I set foot in Nippon. It does not call to me as once it did. This England is wonderful, oji-san: my father's country. Having once known it I could not leave it now without a pang."

"Since when, may I ask, have you learned to love it so greatly?"
"I think the love must have been bred in the blood. How else am I to account for it? These things come of their own accord, oji-san. We do not suspect their existence until we suddenly find that they are there."

A close observer might have seen the ghost of a smile flicker for a moment across Dr. Mohri's face. Certainly it would have needed a quick eye to detect it, a brain keen to anticipate. If she saw it, one would not have guessed so from her demeanour, which was as stolidly impassive as his own.

"That is so, Iris-san," he admitted, "though usually there is some cause relative to their discovery. It is a nice psychological point and worthy of some attention. I almost feared there might have been a more material reason for the change."

"And if there were?"

"Things material may be taken in hand and promptly dealt with; we possess the appliances for such; but things spiritual, Iris-san, are frequently too elusive for our gross touch."

"Are things material always so easy to handle?"

"To one who has the will and the power—perhaps."

"But the spiritual, the inner elusive essence of us—how are we to handle that? If my heart leads the way and I follow, what happens?"

"The stronger will always dominate the weaker.
There is a remedy for most ills, my child, if we only knew how to apply it."

She knew quite well that he saw through her speculations, and that however vaguely she presented her case he pierced the opaque reasonings and grasped the central facts.

"I have decided," she said shortly, "that I shall not marry at all."

Solemnly he blinked back at her, but his face expressed no emotion, neither amusement nor surprise. A perpetual calm seemed to encompass him. He was like a mountain lake, placid in the midst of storms: a land-locked sea on which the wind scarcely raised a ripple. To her nothing at all astounding, because she was accustomed to it, but to the more impatient native of the West an exasperating entity.

"Have we the power to decide even so trifling a matter?" he asked. "When fate approves a scheme she usually carries it to a successful conclusion, and I think she has already mapped out your destiny."

"But you are not fate, oji-san; neither is Takemoto."

"Who knows? A child may strike down an emperor."

She knew that a continuation of these subtleties would utterly destroy her. In the vague exposition
of hidden meanings, which were yet so singularly lucid, she knew that he would confound her utterly. Truly the pupil had trodden in the master’s steps, but it was the master who had hewn those steps.

“You understand clearly, oji-san, that I have decided not to marry Yoji Takemoto?”

“I understand you to say so, my child; but when you know it to be my wish, I am not without hope that you will alter that decision.”

“Why should you wish it, when you know that to me the idea is repellent?”

“There are many reasons, though I had not thought I should ever be called upon to name them. Nevertheless, I recognise that to a certain extent I am responsible for this curiously perverted attitude of yours, and therefore I condescend to explain. In the first place, all women should marry who are fit to bear children—men-children who shall one day carry their country to victory. Then they should marry well, if possible, and Takemoto has much of this world’s goods. What more could king or noble desire for his daughter than I have found for you? I admit that the woman-child is a necessary misfortune, but once she comes, she claims our duty irrespective of sex. But above all things Takemoto is rich. You may search the world from end to end and you will discover no greater virtue than riches.”
"There is no other reason?"
"Yes. I could not permit you to marry a white man."
"Why not?"
"Because I hate them."
"Why do you hate them?"
"Why do the nations hate each other—why are they born with the hatred in them? I confess that my philosophy has not provided me with an answer."

"But do you not realise, oji-san, that here in this country—my father's country—you have no power to forbid me marrying whom I please?"
"So," he answered rather sharply, "you learn quickly, my child?"

"Thanks to your inimitable training, oji-san. But you do not mean what you say about Takemoto? You would not doom me to live all my life with that hideously degraded creature? Your honourable sister, my august mother, left me in your charge, and you promised, oji-san—you know how you promised!"
"Have I failed?"
"No; but you would fail now. If she knew, what would she say? Should her spirit meet yours in the hereafter, what answer would you make?"

"My ambitions do not greatly concern the here-
after," he replied. "I leave all that to those who take an interest in it, who possibly have no other interest in life. I believe the poor whites have some hope of recompense then. No rich man would think of depriving them of this harmless consolation. But Takemoto is rich: I have work to do, and he has promised——"

"What is this work, oji-san? I hear so much of it, but I see so little."

"You shall see more: the whole world shall hear of it—and shudder with terror. Nippon shall be exalted above the nations: Tokio shall dictate to the universe."

His narrow, pinched face lit with sudden emotion: he seemed to swell with the importance of his prophecy. Behind the parched exterior of that yellow skin a strange light shone which set a flame the mask of reserve that had always hidden the real man. Deadly always, relentless as a tiger in the pursuit of his prey, she at last saw something of the man of whom strange stories had been whispered out there in Kobe.
CHAPTER XIII.

An account of the very remarkable incident appeared in all the newspapers, and naturally caused no little comment. Indeed, one might go further and say that among the travelling public it created a feeling akin to consternation. The papers called it "a singular," "an amazing," "an extraordinary" occurrence. Theories were propounded only to be abandoned with a serious note of conjecture. But the more alarmist members of the community loudly proclaimed their belief that a new terror had descended among us.

Brief were the facts, though voluminous the aforesaid theories. And the facts were these:

A certain train from Waterloo, which takes business men to their homes in the far suburbs, stops at Richmond, and here the first discovery was made. A passenger from Richmond to Twickenham, on opening the door of a first-class smoker, was amazed to see the occupants of the carriage sprawling about in all sorts of grotesque attitudes. His first thought was that they were all asleep, or drunk,
but on looking closer he saw that their faces were swollen and discoloured, and that they appeared to be in a state of serious collapse. Alarmed, he called the guard, and immediately the amazing discovery was made that all the occupants, five in number, were completely unconscious. Quickly they were borne into the waiting-room, which was turned into a temporary hospital, and medical aid sent for. But though everything was done to restore the five unfortunates, only three recovered. The other two must have been dead when lifted from the carriage.

As to the cause of the death the medical fraternity differed, as it always differs; but a few facts came out at the post-mortem. Not alone was the face of each swollen and discoloured, but the tongue and the throat were angrily inflamed, and a curious sort of yellow mucus lodged in the corners of the eyes.

What was it? People began to whisper the dreaded word "plague." Inquiries set on foot disclosed the fact that the five victims of this strange visitation were reputable business men. The doings of the three survivors during that day were quite satisfactorily accounted for. The first and natural theory was that of poisoning—ptomaine poisoning for preference. Being City men they had probably partaken of the same dish in the same eating-house. But a further investigation dispelled this theory,
for it was proved that the survivors, at all events, had lunched at different places.

What, then, was the cause of death, and how came it that three of the victims survived? True the rumour ran that the survivors were only attended to in time; that in two instances the delay of another minute or so in applying restoratives would have proved fatal to all chance of recovery. Ignorant medical men wrote ignorant letters to the papers: the government analysts were held up to the derision of the mob. It was a bad time for experts. The portentous notification that the authorities of Scotland Yard had taken the matter in hand caused a universal sneer. Then the affair gradually began to die down.

One curious fact, however, remained. Each of the three survivors was sure that the carriage had been full when the train had left Clapham Junction, which meant that there must have been six people in the compartment. The train did not stop between Clapham Junction and Richmond. Yet when the door was opened at Richmond only five persons were found. If there had been a sixth, what had become of him?

The men were questioned and cross-questioned on this point, and two of them were as sure of what they said as men could be of anything. The third was sure, or at least "almost sure." He would swear every one of the six seats was occupied: that is, he was "under that impression," though
he had not taken particular stock of his travelling companions. Speaking "off-hand," he would say that the compartment was full when it left Waterloo. What happened after he could not be absolutely certain, as he had settled himself down in his corner to a careful perusal of the "cricket scores."

What were the first signs or symptoms of the coming attack? This none of them seemed to know. All agreed that the afternoon was sultry, and that every man seemed to be smoking pipe, cigarette or cigar. Naturally the atmosphere soon became oppressive, nor would one of the men who sat in a corner put the window down. Which man was this? No one could say; but there could be no doubt that it was one of the dead men.

Not one of them seemed to have the slightest recollection of how he succumbed. In fact, there seemed to be only two cardinal points on which they did agree: one was that the atmosphere in the carriage was heavy with smoke, the other that the afternoon was extremely close. As for the sixth passenger, of course none of the public believed in him. He was a figment of the disordered brain; for if there had been such a person, he, too, would have been found among the victims.

The incident occurred on the 21st of June, and ran the accustomed nine days of wonder. Then, as is usual in such matters, public interest slackened.
So many strange things happen among millions of people in nine days that to sustain the interest the victims would need to be crowned heads. But on the following 5th of July, another remarkable occurrence was brought to light.

At the Corinthian Theatre, famous for its realistic productions, a rather lurid melodrama was being presented with marked success. In this piece there was a battle scene, in which the usual forlorn hope beat off the enemy amid the enthusiastic plaudits of the audience. Real cannon were fired off in this engagement, the smoke from which permeated the auditorium in quite a pungent cloud. People coughed and sniffed, said such objectionable realism was quite unnecessary, and enjoyed it all the time.

But on the evening of July 5th it is probable that more powder was expended than usual, or the composition of the explosive must have been defective, for when the lights were turned up at the end of the act, several people in the stalls, particularly women, were seen to be in a state of collapse.

At first those who were unaffected merely smiled, others looked serious and protested that in the theatre nowadays art and romance were being banished for the fetish of commonplace reality. But as the victims of this too realistic production were either led or carried from the theatre, protestation gave way to something like panic.
What had happened? No one knew; no one really did know until an account of it appeared in the morning papers. Of course even that was inconclusive, more or less garbled; but the appalling fact remained that during the great scene at the Corinthian Theatre, the "great battle scene," as it was called, several of the audience, overpowered by the noise and the smoke, had fainted, and that no less than five women and two men had in some unaccountable manner succumbed!

Here again among these seven dead the symptoms were curiously similar to those observed in the victims of the tragedy on the South Western Railway. There was the same swollen and discoloured face, the inflamed throat and tongue, and the yellow mucus in the corners of the eyes. Many more were, of course, affected, but not fatally. Quite a dozen were taken home by their friends or relatives in a more or less dazed condition, every one of them betraying the same remarkable symptoms.

Oddly enough, the actors, whom one would naturally expect to be the greatest sufferers, mingling as they did in the thick of the smoke, escaped scot-free. All the victims were discovered to have had seats in the first three rows of the stalls.

Needless to say, this tragic incident, coming on the top of the other, and betraying the same mysterious symptoms, caused a remarkable sensa-
tion throughout the land. Open-eyed, people asked each other what it meant. In the first case there was an element of uncertainty, of conjecture. It might have been an accident, truly an accident which had never been satisfactorily explained; but there was about it a certain amount of scientific postulating which the public had perforce to accept. But once the ammunition used in the theatre had been carefully analysed, and the report published; the public knew it had to look elsewhere for a clue to the mystery.

Then some one started the cry that a scientific monster, probably a madman, was loose in the land, a wretch bent on the destruction of his species. Terror reigned everywhere. People watched each other suspiciously in the streets; they were afraid to congregate in rooms or public buildings. The theatres and music halls stood open, empty, the public ignoring the insidious advertisements that "every precaution" had been taken. People were afraid to travel by train, especially in the old-fashioned compartment carriages; even in the tubes each man regarded his neighbour with a malignant scowl of suspicion. The extremely nervous never stirred abroad; even the ordinary unimaginative person refrained from travel unless compelled by necessity to do so. London and the suburbs positively swarmed with plain clothes police-
The Home Secretary and his factotum, the Chief Commissioner, were plainly told that they should resign before an indignant people caught them and strung them up to the lamps in Trafalgar Square. Some were equally as certain that it was God's judgment on us for permitting the existence of such a Government. It was the usual mob *in extremis*—shallow, ignorant, knowing nothing of what was being done by the authorities, yet howling in the mad rage of childish panic.

People looked at each other and asked when the next happening was to be, and who was to be counted among the victims. Many arrests were reported; even the police forgot their accustomed dignity in the great funk established by the unknown monster. Amateur detectives sprang up on every hand, pursuing—what?—a shadow. For, after all, this monster theory was nothing but a theory. They had not even proved the existence of the monster. It might have been one man or many; or the tragedies may not have been caused by men at all. There were some who believed that the devil, bursting his chains, had come to make havoc on earth.

It was all a wild chaos of conjecture. People who write to the papers on the least provocation aired their inane views at much length; scientific and quasi-scientific gentlemen strove hard to prove how little they knew of the matter. One popular
jingo journal accepted the theory that it was the work of a German Anglophobe, and strove to prove this hypothesis by extolling the scientific genius of the Teutonic race. As at that period certain people believed the Germans capable of any base, wicked, or deceitful act, this suggestion enjoyed much vogue.

One thing only was certain, and that was the dread of this unknown terror displayed on every face. Men and women showed it in their eyes, in their actions, in the quick, furtive glances they flung about them. A sudden familiar tap on the shoulder made a man almost jump out of his skin; if you looked at a woman too long or too closely she shot a terrified glance at you and hurried off as though suppressing with difficulty a cry for help. For the first time in her life she did not think that your glance was one of admiration. Children called strange terms to each other in the street. A mischievous boy bursting a paper bag set the neighbourhood in commotion. Chemists and non-chemists aired unprofitable views on poisons, and the man in the street bandied scientific terms, culled from the newspapers, with a freedom which suggested an intimate acquaintance with chemistry.

The terror held London in its grip for a week, ten days, a fortnight. Every precaution was taken to protect life and property. One saw in every stranger a potential maniac with homicidal ten-
dencies. Chemists and the scientific men were placed under a ban. But about the fourteenth or fifteenth day the tension began to relax, for nothing further happening people began to tell themselves that they had been unnecessarily alarmed. Indeed, might not this universal belief in the existence of a scientific monster be caused by nothing but the wild reasoning of fear? There was not the slightest proof that any such monster existed. No one had seen him, heard him. He was a myth, a bogey, a creature born of terror in a nightmare. No, the real solution would be found in the fact that some strange new epidemic, or plague, due, no doubt, to the importation of foreign foodstuffs, had suddenly appeared among us, and housewives were warned to be careful in the preparation of all food.

And then one Monday morning Londoners, on opening their papers, were startled to see that the monster was again at work. This time the venue chosen was a certain Roman Catholic church in Kensington, and the victims on this occasion numbered three women, all domestic servants.

It seems that just after the incense was carried round certain of the worshippers, overcome by excessive zeal, were seen suddenly to lean forward in what appeared to be an attitude of devotion. In this same attitude they were found at the end of the service, and when one of the minor assistants
approached he saw to his horror that they were dead. Then began a repetition of the general terror, only this time it was trebly intensified. A universal shriek of wrath and despair went up from the people. What was this thing that had suddenly descended on us, and how were we to combat it? It was monstrous that the Government did not act, and act quickly. What was the use of a Government that couldn't protect the people from this unknown scourge? It ought to resign forthwith and give the Opposition a chance to prove its metal. Impotent in both home and foreign policy, it had become a byword among the nations. At least so much was asserted by the Opposition papers. And all the time the Government officials were at their wits' end to discover a solution of the mystery.

But no solution came. Theories were more abundant than ever. The tens of thousands who had believed in poisonous foodstuffs were nonplussed in endeavouring to explain how the incense became impregnated with the poison; though the original supporters of this theory protested that, of course, the poison was not in the incense, but in the food partaken of by the domestics before going to church.

People began to starve themselves. We were promised a nation of the leanest beings ever seen. The Government issued proclamations against all such foolishness. Every precaution had been taken
with the people's food: an army of inspectors swarmed all over the great victualling departments. As all these dead people had shown the same symptoms, it was quite evident that some new form of disease had descended on us, to check which every precaution that was known to science and experience was being employed. In the meantime the public was warned to avoid all mobs and crowded places. They were to rest assured that these cases were under the closest scientific investigation, and that the authorities hoped soon to issue a very satisfactory announcement.

But the only announcement made was that of a further series of outrages. Birmingham was the scene of the next exploit, where no less than a dozen people met the same mysteriously awful end. Liverpool followed, then Manchester. Bradford and Leeds were visited in turn by the hideous yellow death. It seemed as though the monster, or monsters, meant to blaze a trail of destruction right across the country. Each town wondered if it was to receive the next visitation. London, relieved for the moment, looked to the provinces with aching eyes. At each new outrage the country fairly leapt with terror. Men went about with fear and horror in their looks; women rarely dare venture abroad. Crowds were avoided as though the pestilence lurked in them. No man knew when his end might come. People went to bed in terror and arose as from a nightmare. Fear, a great and universal fear, brooded over all things.
CHAPTER XIV.

“HAVE you noticed anything peculiar about these horrors?”

Kenneth Everard put the question to his friend, Jeffrey Colburne, as they sat smoking and discussing the prevalent topic in their chambers in the Temple. Like everyone else they had discussed the subject until there seemed nothing more to talk about; and as Everard put the question his friend could not refrain from smiling, though quite willing to admit that the affair was no smiling matter.

“Many things, my dear Ken; but as you have heard them all, and as I have no new solution to the mystery——” He shrugged his shoulders. The mystery that had baffled all was not likely to be solved by him. He was a good-looking, fresh-faced young fellow with a frank, engaging smile, a fearless eye, and a belief in his kind. Those who knew him said that his profession had been chosen wrongly.

“I don’t know that I have a new solution,” said
Kenneth; "but in reading of these horrible happenings I've noticed one thing, and curiously enough I've not seen it mentioned in any of the accounts. Of course I don't pretend that there is any value in the observation, but it strikes me as being rather singular that no one has referred to it."

"Well, out with it, my boy; don't keep me on tenterhooks. You know I always said you had in you the makings of a first-class detective."

"You think, of course, that if there had been any value in it, it wouldn't be left for me to make the discovery? Probably you're right. That practical, unimaginative mind of yours is not likely to be worried by idle speculations."

"I'm afraid, old boy, I have a penchant for virile reality. I really ought to make a first-class judge, though I'm afraid I shall never get anyone to see it. But this new idea of yours; what is it?"

"Smoke."

With a smile he blew a cloud to the ceiling and watched it slowly disperse.

"So I see. But what about your theory?"

"That too is smoke."

"I'm afraid I cannot penetrate it. Do you think you could be more explicit?"

"Quite easily. Mind you, I don't say there's anything more in it than there usually is in smoke. But take these occurrences seriously and what do we find?"
"Smoke?"

"Certainly. The people in the South Western railway carriage were all smoking; at the Corinthian Theatre the disaster occurred during the great battle scene, when the house was full of smoke; in the Roman Catholic church the tragedy followed on the burning of incense. In the provinces it was the same. All the occurrences were accompanied by smoke. Do you see the connection?"

"I see the smoke all right, but I fail to perceive the relevancy of the connection."

"It is that connecting link—the missing link, we might call it—which has yet to be discovered. But it strikes me as being just a little singular that all these happenings are more or less involved in—smoke."

"Where it seems they are likely to remain. But, of course, I see what you mean. You think that only in an atmosphere of smoke it is possible for this monster to work?"

"To me it seems a reasonable supposition. Suppose he frees some poisonous gas into an atmosphere already charged with a pungent essence, he would the better be able to escape detection; for if there was any strange smell in it the already prevalent odour would destroy it, and people would be less prone to suspect the presence of a foreign body."

Colburne regarded him with much admiration.
"Ingenious," he said, "but scarcely convincing."

"I admit the theory is a bit far-fetched; but if this murderer is a man of science, which seems to be the general belief, the thing, though almost incredible, is not improbable."

"In the future I shall strenuously avoid all smoky gatherings," laughed his friend. "Who would think, my dear fellow, that so much could come out of smoke?"

"My dear boy, because you are totally ignorant of the resources of chemistry you must not make a mock of its powers. I agree that if any of these happenings had occurred apart from the presence of smoke, my theory would topple to the ground. But they have not. On each occasion we get somewhat similar conditions, and the more I think of it the more I am convinced that smoke is a necessary auxiliary to the perpetration of these crimes."

"In that case, what is to prevent the monster from starting a cigarette factory and poisoning us wholesale?"

Kenneth Everard started, a strained, anxious look adding sudden solemnity to his expression. The great Airedale, Inu, came forward, and laying his head on his master's knee, looked up at him with strange, pathetic eyes.

"I believe that dog is half human," said Colburne. "At times I almost fancy he knows what we are
THE GIRL FROM NIPPON.

talking about. Perhaps you can give us a clue to the mystery, old fellow?"

He laughed lightly as though the thought amused him; but the dog's steady eyes never moved from his master's face, and that master was thinking hard. Strange thoughts, vague fancies, flitted through his mind.

"Isn't it rather curious," he said suddenly, "that while everyone attributes these crimes to a particular individual, no one has been able to supply the least hint as to his identity. Yet many must have seen him, sat close to him and spoken with him. About such a monster there must have been some distinctive feature. No man, lunatic or sane, who could do these things can be like ordinary folk. Somewhere on him he must carry the mark of the beast."

"Not necessarily. Nature does not always stamp its trade-mark on its manufactures."

"I think it does, more or less."

"A bad look-out for some of us," laughed the other.

"She compensates the unfortunate by endowing the rest of the community with partial blindness. As a rule men see only that which has already been discovered, and it is just possible that we are no wiser than our fellows."

Colburne shook his head, put on his hat and went out. He had heard it all before, listened to so many
theories. The papers teemed with them. One had this monster and his crimes dished up *ad nauseam*, and as far as he could see there was to be no relief for some time to come. The thing was like a prolonged nightmare, and he was getting weary of it.

Kenneth Everard in the meantime, sat smoking and thinking. The dog lay curled up on the rug at his feet, but in such a manner that when he opened his eyes he could see his master. In these days a great affection had sprung up between the man and the dog. It seemed to Kenneth that gradually the animal was losing its terror of the unknown. He came now of his own accord with tail wagging, nor did he cower beneath the hand that was raised to stroke him.

But just then he was not thinking particularly of the dog, but of the casual remark dropped by his friend Colburne, that the monster might start a cigarette factory and poison us wholesale. He would not let the thought intrude; he did his utmost to put it out and lock the door upon it. Yet in it came through the keyhole, slid under the jamb, found its way through unimagined cracks and crevices. It could not be possible; he would not entertain the thought for a moment; and yet he knew it was there, and that it carried him to a certain house near Richmond, and above all to a little yellow man who blinked unceasingly through a pair of steel-rimmed spectacles.
Suddenly the dog began to move uneasily, then he looked up, his face to the door, and started to sniff. Next he stood up, stretched himself, and began to stiffen his back.

"What is it, old fellow?" asked his master; but though at the sound of that voice the dog began to whimper, never for an instant did his eyes turn from the door. Thinking this rather curious Kenneth was about to rise and investigate when the bell rang out clearly and distinctly. The dog gave a low whine of terror and showed his teeth. Commanding him to lie down, Kenneth went to the door and opened it. On the threshold stood Dr. Mohri, his wrinkled, yellow face as calmly impassive as ever.

Though not a little startled, Kenneth bowed him in, closing the door carefully behind them. A low, vicious growl came from the hearthrug, the dog standing there with bared fangs, the embodiment of savage fury. Seizing a cane Kenneth drove him into another room and closed the door, returning with an apology on his lips.

But Hiro Mohri did not seem to be in the least perturbed by this ebullition of savagery on the part of the dog. Even with the creature ready to spring on him he appeared perfectly oblivious of his danger. Everard wondered if anything on earth could ruffle the placidity of that extraordinary little man.
“I must apologise,” he said. “The dog did not seem to recognise you.”

The doctor may have smiled inwardly, but certainly he betrayed no outward sign of being amused.

“Perhaps he remembered me only too well. But I am glad to see his courage is returning. I always thought it a pity that so strong a creature should be such an arrant coward.”

Kenneth may have thought the dog had good cause to remember Dr. Mohri, but if so, he kept the thought to himself.

“Having business in the neighbourhood,” said the little man, accepting the seat Kenneth offered him, “I thought I would do myself the honour—and the pleasure—of calling on you.”

“The honour and pleasure are mine,” said Everard, though of truth he felt neither. The presence of Dr. Mohri always affected him in a totally different manner. “May I offer you some refreshment?”

“No, thanks; but if you have no objection I will smoke.” He took out his cigarette case, and offered it to Kenneth, who politely declined the offer, saying he had already smoked himself almost silly. As a matter of fact he still retained a distinct recollection of the last occasion on which he had smoked one of Dr. Mohri’s cigarettes.

The yellow man, sublimely placid as ever, blinked up through his large spectacles; but the atmosphere
of Oriental calm in which he seemed to dwell was not shared by the younger man. As the personality of Mohri had always affected him strangely, so he now found himself perplexed, ill at ease, finding much difficulty in carrying on what appeared to be a one-sided conversation. Nor did his visitor seem to make the slightest effort to help him out, but sat like an Eastern idol, placidly contemplative. It was only when the subject of the outrage was broached that they seemed to find a common topic of interest.

"As a chemist, Dr. Mohri, I suppose you have found this matter of much interest?"

"Why as a chemist?"

"Most people seem to think that the murderer is more or less a man of science, with a special knowledge of chemistry."

"People think so many foolish things in their ignorance, assuming this and that in preference to acclaiming a natural law."

"What exactly do you mean by a natural law?"

"The true course of nature."

"Then you do not believe that any one man has been guilty of these crimes?"

"I know of no evidence to justify such a belief. My own opinion is that these people have all died from natural causes, through the medium of a disease which your medical men have not yet been able accurately to diagnose."
"You do not hold an exalted opinion of their intelligence?"

"How can I when there is so much evidence to the contrary? The letters written on this subject by your medical and scientific authorities would entirely condemn them in the eyes of any intelligent community. Because they are face to face with that of which they have no knowledge, they at once begin to scream like a mob of hysterical women. Take it from me, these people have all died from natural causes. It is merely on account of the strangeness of the cause that we are afflicted with these elaborate attempts to hide ignorance."

"There may be something in that."

"May be?"

"But I do not think it explains the matter quite satisfactorily."

"You have a theory then?"

"We all have."

"Yours is ingenious?"

"I did not say so."

"But I feel sure it must be. By the way, are you any nearer the solution of your cousin's death?"

"Unfortunately, no. But Bayles still has the matter in hand. I have every confidence in him."

"Bayles?"

"Detective Bayles of Scotland Yard, one of the shrewdest men in the Force."
"And what are the methods of Mr. Bayles?" The question was put with about as much interest as one would ask the time of the day.  
"He goes backwards."
"Like a crab. That sounds ingenious."
"I believe he has some faith in the method. You see, as far as we are all concerned, my cousin's life for many years is a complete blank. To the best of his ability, Bayles will fill in that blank."
"There seems to be more method in that walking backward than one at first imagined. I'm sure I wish him every success. You must feel very deeply the stigma that attaches to you?"
"I can assure you that I am not conscious of any such stigma. I had almost forgotten the accusation."
"I am more than pleased to hear you say so. Naturally those who knew you would never credit it for a moment. At the same time there are others who make it their business to believe evil, and they are, unfortunately, a large percentage of every population. One despises them, of course, and yet is forced to consider their various idiosyncrasies. In such circumstances you quite realise how extremely difficult was my position in regard to my niece."

Kenneth saw it coming and thought it rather ingeniously led up to. Wondering how much this impassive little person knew, and if this was the
real object of his visit, he replied somewhat ambiguously, though protesting that he would never think of asking Miss Mayford to marry a man who lived under a cloud.

"Yet you do not wait to dispel that cloud. Is this customary among men of honour?"

"You misapprehend entirely, Dr. Mohri. I am not conscious of any act that reflects on my honour."

"Perhaps we view these matters differently. It is not my wish that you could encourage these hopes as they are bound to prove a bitter disappointment."

"Pardon me, but is that for you to say?"

"Entirely. I do not wish you to see, or attempt to see, my niece again."

"What is your objection to me?"

"Have I not already told you? It is not my wish."

"And do you expect me to obey such an unreasonable request?"

"I have every confidence in your good sense."

"You are sure you do not overrate it?"

"Quite."

Never a sign of anger, a spark of annoyance, a touch of emotion. There he sat with a placid unconcern which the other found highly irritating.

"With all due respect, Dr. Mohri, you ask the impossible. I love your niece, and will come to her the moment she calls."
“She will not call.”
“Then I will call to her. It is the same thing.”
“Not at all; the things are totally different. Should she call, it is I who will hear you—and answer.”
“What do you mean by that?”
“You must attach any meaning to it that appeals to your intelligence. Have I not already told you that she is to marry Mr. Takemoto?”
“You said so.”
“And what I say I mean. That which I determine I usually carry to a successful issue. I wish you no harm, Mr. Everard. That you love my little girl is just so much in your favour; but it is nothing more. You must not attempt to come between me and my resolve. Many men have tried, and I have stepped right over them. Don’t try.”
“I must try, because I must keep faith with myself—with her. I love her and I have told her so. You understand that there can be no receding for me until she tells me to go. I am sorry, Dr. Mohri, frightfully sorry that you should object to me; but you must understand that no man who is worth the name—no white man—goes back on a woman at the dictation of another.”
“We have heard the white man talk before,” he replied in his exasperating, unemotional sing-song, “and were not impressed. To be frank, we are no
longer impressed by his presumption. You should not use the term to me, because I do not love it, conveying as it does an implied superiority. White man—white woman! Among the unenlightened peoples of the East your race is still something of a myth; but for us who know the glory and the greatness have all departed.”

So, after all, it was not impossible to lead the little man out of himself! Yet, though his words conveyed a distinct sense of irritation, the manner remained unruffled. He spoke as one who betrays the inner light, yet not altogether conscious that he is betraying it.

“I claim neither greatness nor glory,” said Kenneth; “no thought of it ever entered my mind. I regret that you should disapprove, but I have my own happiness to think of—and hers. If she is dear to you how could you wish to sacrifice her to a man like Takemoto, whose very appearance is revolting in the extreme?”

“I thought I had already told you that I do not favour mixed marriages. But I see you are decidedly obstinate by nature, Mr. Everard.” He rose slowly, stretching out for his hat and gloves. “That is a pity, because it will probably cause you much inconvenience in the future.” He paused at the door and looked up, blinking at the young man. “Perhaps you will take this as a warning. It
may prove of service to you. I do not wish you
to have any further communication with my niece;
I strictly forbid it. Presently, almost instantly, I
may say, we return to our own country. Meanwhile
I must ask you to respect my wishes.”

“How can I respect the wishes of one who acts
with such unreason? Would you, Dr. Mohri, if
you were in my place?”

“My niece has promised——”

“Nothing. But, with your permission, I have no
fear of the future.”

“You seem to me, Mr. Everard, to be one of those
reckless persons who do not carefully test the ground
before taking the next step. This is always a mistake.
If you would only try to realise it, every step in life
is more or less vital. There are forces, seen and
unseen, continually barring the road to our desires.
No man overcomes them utterly, though now and
again he is permitted a partial gleam of success.
Don’t let that fact lead you to believe in the inevit-
able triumph. No man triumphs utterly, and even
the greatest of victories are bought with an infinity
of suffering.” He paused, looking at the young
man in a fashion that Kenneth found to be singularly
impressive. “I would not have taken the trouble to
tell others this,” he continued unemotionally; “for,
frankly, I have a very mean estimate of mankind,
in whom I see little to respect and nothing to love.
Their only use is that we, who hold the will and the intelligence, rise to power through them. They bend their necks for our feet, they are beaten aside to clear the way for us; they sweat in the heat that we may remain cool, they starve that we may trifle with every luxury, they go clothed in rags that we may have an abundance of fine linen, and when we ride by in all our glory they applaud us as though we were demi-gods. Now, can one respect such a rabble? By sending them out of the world in battalions one confers on them the greatest of favours, for which, if they had the intelligence to return thanks, they would be exceedingly grateful. Unhappily, it is one of man's misfortunes never to know when he is well off. Never will he take the path that leads to comparative immunity, but always he is thrusting forward that foolish neck of his to meet the downward stroke of the axe."

He bowed low and passed through the door, taking the trouble to close it carefully behind him. For a moment Kenneth stood looking the way he had gone. Then he opened the door to call him back, for there was an implied threat in all this that needed a clearer explanation. But the little man was not to be seen, nor was there the slightest sound of his footsteps on the stairs.
A WEEK went by during which Kenneth waited anxiously for some sign from her. But no communication of any sort reached him. Eagerly he scrutinised his letters, but without seeing that one which would have meant so much to him. He even waylaid the postman on the stairs: he questioned telegraph boys as they crossed the road. For an hour at a time he would sit, pretending to read, but in reality waiting for his telephone to ring. True, she had promised nothing; but deep in the heart of him was the firm belief that sooner or later she would communicate.

Meanwhile, London was lulled once more to security, forgetting or trying to forget, that the unknown terror had ever descended upon it. In a great city events that startle to-day are almost forgotten to-morrow, and with the horror quiescent people were only too glad to banish it from their minds. Moreover, most of them had fallen into a state of sheer hopelessness concerning it all. Having defied the authorities for so long it would continue
to defy them. No one had any more faith in the prescience or energy of the powers that be. A cynical irritation born of their futility was experienced, and expressed, by every citizen. It was maddening to think of the impotence of authority. The most expensive of police systems, and supposed to be the best organised, had proved its utter incompetence before the whole world.

Kenneth called on Bayles and learned from him that he had been forced to abandon the investigation concerning Sir Basil's death for this larger and more important business. He found the detective guarded in his remarks. Of course, they were following up clues—they always were—but Everard knew quite well that Frederick Bayles was as much nonplussed over this mystery as the merest tyro in detection.

Of course, he believed that we had seen the last of these outrages. The criminal, or criminals, responsible for them, had got a scare and would never again venture on such incredible horrors. So authority told the public, begging it to rest quietly in its bed. All that skill, experience, foresight could do to protect the public was being done. But the public heard without heeding. It had little faith in authority, and none at all in the imaginary terror of the murderer.

Kenneth Everard, walking along Piccadilly from
his club in St. James's Street, had reached that point opposite the Burlington Arcade when he caught a glimpse of a face in a taxi-cab. At first he was not sure, the passage of the cab was so rapid, the glimpse so fleeting. Instinctively he came to a standstill and looked after the vehicle which, being fortunate in obtaining a clear road, was already some distance away. But a moment's reflection convinced him. The man in the taxi was Dr. Mohri.

Nothing startling in that, of course, except that the mere presence of the mysterious little yellow man always gave him something of a shock. But as he approached Piccadilly Circus he saw that the traffic was held up, again no uncommon sight, and worthy in itself of no remark. But in this instance he noticed that while some people crowded towards the corner others came rushing by him with scared faces. A little farther on and he was able to see that a line of police was drawn across the road and the pavement.

"What has happened?" he called out, but no one paid the slightest heed to his inquiry. In the crowd he rubbed shoulders with a man who was trying to break through. To him he put the question. The man turned a white face to him, muttering: "The Unknown Terror!" Then he bolted as though that terror was already at his heels.

People with white, scared faces pressed forward:
women began to scream, making hysterical efforts to claw their way out of the crowd. Kenneth found himself merged in a seething, excited mass. White lips clamoured for news, wild eyes looked inquiringly into wild eyes. Those behind pressed forward until it seemed as though the mob would break through the line of police, which probably would have been the case had not a strong reinforcement hurried up. Never was such a pandemonium, one half of the mob being panic-stricken without knowing why.

Backwards and forwards Kenneth was carried in this tumultous crowd, but without getting nearer the scene of the tragedy or learning precisely what had happened. That there had been a tragedy, and a terrible one at that, no one seemed to have the shadow of a doubt, the rumour running that at least a hundred people had been blown up by a bomb at a corner of Regent Street, and that part of the building itself had been demolished. Indeed, there was no end to rumour, the most grotesque, incredible stories being swallowed without question.

Kenneth doubted that half the things these hysterical people shouted were true; but he had a sickening fear that there was considerable truth in them, and as he slowly worked his way out of the crowd another and deeper sensation of dread took hold of him.

Eagerly he awaited the publication of the news,
returning post haste to his club to watch the tape tick out the message. Here, as elsewhere, all was confusion. Men looked at each other and shook their heads; the older members, trembling with senile passion, denounced the authorities; the club servants huddled in little groups with white, scared faces. One man came raging out into the hall to know why the bell had not been answered.

Then the machine began to tick out the details.

As everyone acquainted with the West End of London knows, there is always a row of motor-omnibuses drawn up at Swan and Edgar's corner. Also, the pavement just there is invariably crowded, especially in the afternoon, with pedestrians, and others waiting to mount the 'buses. Also, it may have been observed, that these huge vehicles at starting frequently throw off dense clouds of vapour. It was while this vapour was at its thickest that the thing happened. No one quite knew how, but when the cloud of petrol vapour had passed away, those in the immediate vicinity noticed several people lying prone on the pavement, while many more staggered about with their hands to their eyes screaming in terror that they were blinded. Others were racked with a violent fit of coughing which left them gasping for breath. Many hurried off wiping their eyes as though they were crying. Naturally, there was the utmost confusion, out
of which emerged the awful fact that half a dozen people had been stricken down, four of whom were already dead, and that they all showed the same symptoms as those of the earlier victims.

The sensation created by this latest outrage was inconceivable. Men and women went in positive terror of their lives, the unknown monster murdering indiscriminately, sparing neither sex. At every turning one seemed to confront a sudden and terrifying death. The more nervous of the populace sat at home with bolted doors: behind every strange face was the potential assassin. It was curious to note how quickly small crowds dispersed. A people reduced to panic is a pitiful sight, and London with its millions, which could do so much if armed and led and shown the enemy, quavered like the inert mass of a huge jelly fish. People went stark, staring mad with terror. There were many who saw in these mysterious deaths the avenging hand of God raised against the city. London was now to be punished for her wickedness. And it was astonishing what wickedness they suddenly seemed to discover in the world’s chief city. They could find no parallel, though they searched the histories of the wickedest cities of the earth.

Of course, authority could not sneer at these religious protestations. It is never safe to sneer at a people’s religious beliefs, even though in every
other particular you have them under your heels. Authority, however, let it be known once more that every effort was being made to apprehend the murderer or murderers.

Again the papers reeked with stale theories. Scare headlines told of this and that suspicion, of this and that arrest. Many who were in the immediate vicinity of the outrage were questioned and cross-questioned, though no two told the same story. The scare paper that had started the German scientist theory stuck to it like grim death, and some million or so of its readers daily accepted its pronouncements as gospel. Indeed, was not every solitary person interviewed by that paper of the same opinion? One was sure he had seen a mysterious-looking German at the corner, a fat fellow with a big moustache and spectacles. He also noticed that the German had a furtive glance. This was corroborated by a lady, who said that glance had been directed on her, and that the fellow had even dared to address her. He spoke indifferent English with a guttural accent.

Kenneth Everard read and re-read these theories, but they left him cold. He was not thinking of colossal Germans in spectacles, but of a little yellow-faced man whom he had seen whiz by in a taxi; a man who had given him a most unpleasant cigarette to smoke; a man who had struck down a savage
dog with some mysterious power. He trembled as the memory of that scene flashed upon him: then he grew hot, then cold, for he knew that this thought had been with him for a long time, though he had striven his utmost to put it away. Was Dr. Mohri in any way concerned with these outrages? What did it mean, that hurried flight from the terror-stricken crowd? But was it flight, or mere chance?

All that he had learned, or thought, of that strange little man came bubbling to the surface. Again and again he entered in fancy the doctor's laboratory, heard the whining of the dog, saw the creature's terror and fury, and its sudden collapse at the feet of the experimentalist. But, of course, all this might mean nothing. He would not let himself think there was anything in it. He did not like the man, and he knew him to be his enemy—he vaguely suspected him to be the enemy of the white race—but he was a frank enemy, openly avowed.

Her uncle! He came to a standstill at this formidable thought. Then with rather a shaky laugh he checked the exuberance of his imagination. Naturally, the presence of the doctor in Piccadilly was merely a coincidence. What else could it be? Had he, too, gone mad like the rest of the world?

And yet on the following afternoon he took the train to Richmond, determining, if possible, to set one or two doubts at rest. Yoban, the silent
watcher, opened the door in answer to his ring, and ceremoniously ushered him into the room where Sir Basil had had his memorable interview. There tea was brought him in those quaint little cups without handles, and a box of cigarettes opened. But he touched neither the doctor's tea nor his cigarettes, having a sort of vague belief that the way of discretion might be the safer one to follow.

For quite a long time he sat in the window staring out into the little front garden. Of Iris he had questioned the servant, but that person, his face as blank as a sheet of paper, merely shook his head in token of not understanding; but though he repeated the question over and over, in at least half a dozen different ways, he received nothing in return but a repetition of that shake and an uncompromising vacant stare.

How long it was the intention of Dr. Mohri to keep him in suspense he could not, of course, know; but presently he began to wander round the room, making a pretence of examining the few Japanese curios that were scattered about, when suddenly the strange silence that pervaded the house suggested that the servant had nothing to tell him after all. It was just possible that neither Dr. Mohri nor his niece was in, though either might have been expected at any moment. He went to the door and opened it; he even called to Yoban without receiving a
reply. But if neither the master nor the mistress was at home, why had the man admitted him without telling him so?

The mystery surrounding these people stimulated his curiosity, there being for ever at the back of his brain that palpitating terror which he trembled to formulate. Was it possible to satisfy that curiosity? His instinctive sense of honour warned him in no uncertain fashion, but the desire to know, to get at the bottom of the mystery, impelled him forward even against his better judgment.

Out in the hall he trod guiltily, like one intent on committing a felony. Not the slightest suspicion of a sound reached him. What exactly he meant to do he could not have told himself, but instinctively he made for the staircase which led direct to the laboratory. Once before he had trodden it in answer to the dog's whining, and to him the way seemed strangely familiar. He reached the landing, crossed the small intervening space, and seized the handle of the door. The latter opening to his touch revealed Dr. Mohri coming towards him.

He started back with a gasp; but, apparently noticing nothing unusual in the occurrence, the doctor, bowing gravely in his usual unemotional manner, bade him enter.

"I deeply regret," he said, "that I should have kept you waiting, but as you arrived I was in the
midst of a most important experiment. I hope my servant has carefully attended to your requirements?"

Kenneth muttered some sort of apology, what he did not quite know, feeling as though he had been caught red-handed in some nefarious proceeding; but the little man smiled in a grave, inscrutable fashion, and expressed the great pleasure this unexpected visit had given him.

"Then you had thought it possible I should not come here again?"

"I had hoped your wisdom would have been greater."

"What has wisdom to do in a case like this? Tell me, Dr. Mohri, have you ever been in love?"

For several moments the doctor regarded him intently without replying. The little eyes blinked up curiously through the big spectacles, but otherwise the face remained impassive.

"This love," he said, "has puzzled the wise of all ages; for while we may generally attribute it to desire, I think there are times when there is something more than mere desire in it. Men have done strange things for love. I assume your question refers to the love of woman?"

"To the love of woman."

"There is a greater love than that of woman—a purer, a nobler, though I am ready to admit that for the majority of mankind that greater love is a
sealed book. Still, the question is open to debate, as all men do not see all things in the same light."

"And that greater love?" he was asked, somewhat mockingly, may be.

"The love of race, blood, country: the ambition to do great things so that one's country may reap the benefit. We have a term for it in Japanese—bushido—perhaps you have heard the word? To do all for the sake of one's country, to sink self in the perpetuation of her glory: to have no experience apart from her, to know of no life but hers, no hope but hers, to merge oneself in her utterly, wholly, completely."

"Even to the perpetration of crimes for her?"

"There is no crime committed in her name, no evil wrought. The object sanctifies the act. The motive for crime is self-aggrandisement or revenge. Eliminate such motive, and what becomes of your crime?"

"We should call it crime in this country."

"In this country! Ah, but what sort of country is this where men work only for the hope of pecuniary or social reward? If you ever had any ideals, they are dead. Two things only have you a reverence for: gold and rank; and what do you think will be the ultimate end of a nation whose ideals soar no higher than that?"

"Then you Japanese disdain both gold and rank?"

"On the contrary; but we have that besides which
you have not, something you cannot grasp, conceive, imagine, but by and through which we move on a plane of super-excellence. Just now you asked me if I had ever been in love. I have been, I am, I always will be; but it is a love which a people without ideals would never understand."

"The ideal which sanctifies murder, for example, would never be tolerated by us."

"If this thing you call murder is necessary to the salvation of your country, then murder ceases to be a crime and becomes a heroism. When the fate of nations sways in the balance it is by murder, wholesale, brutal, fierce, degrading, that the balance is steadied. If we kill for the glory of our country we kill in a noble cause, and are justified before those whom we love."

"I am afraid, Dr. Mohri, that the ideals of the East must ever clash with those of the West. Take, for instance, these massacres which are the present terror of England. Even they might be excused, or justified, according to your principles?"

"Precisely, if governed by my ideals."

"Yet we should incontinently hang their perpetrator. I was in Piccadilly the day of the last outrage."

Closely he watched the little man, wondering what the answer to this would be.

"I was fortunate enough to pass through a few minutes before the occurrence."
"I saw you."
"I regret I had not the extreme pleasure of seeing you. There was much confusion, I am told."
"Yes, rather. By the way, are you still of opinion these people die from natural causes?"
"I see no reason to alter that opinion."
"I think there are few who share it with you."
"You will find, Mr. Everard, that the few who are right are always denounced by the many who are wrong. If you would learn wisdom, cultivate the minority. These people are led like sheep, and like sheep they bleat in unison with the universal bleatings of their kind. One starts the cry and the others answer. If, as many believe, this is the work of an individual, how does he manage to escape the fate he deals out to others?"
"It is just possible that he may have some preventive against infection."
Gravely he shook his head.
"The idea may be sound, though I have not seen it advanced. The Germans have a great reputation for scientific research."
"I do not believe it is a German."
"And what induces you to believe that it is not a German? Are they not supposed to be the enemies of England?"
"Even if they are, they are scarcely murderous savages."
"Have you ever seen war, Mr. Everard?"

"No."

"Then you must not attempt to discriminate between civilisation and savagery. The line that divides the two may be snapped by the weak hand of an infant."

He made towards the door and opened it. "This has been a very pleasant conversation, Mr. Everard. I am extremely obliged for the great honour you have conferred on me."

It was a dismissal, courteous enough but none the less exasperating. Kenneth Everard realised that all his talk, all his resolution, had ended in nothing. With his suave sophistries this little man would talk round anything, or talk it away. Was there no finality in him: was he to attain no finality?

"If you will pardon me, Dr. Mohri, there is one other matter—your niece. May I see her?"

"I offer many apologies, but I fear my niece is not receiving to-day."

"You mean," said the other, "that you refuse to let me see her?"

"Oh, no! I would not presume so greatly."

"Then will you let her know I am here, and that I wish to see her?"

"Have I not, in my contemptible opinion, already remarked on the unwisdom of doing so?"

"Then I can only assure you that in spite of your opinion—"
"No one in this house goes in spite of my opinion. No doubt it is an error on my part, but I usually mean what I say. You do not understand a man or a people who mean what they say? Perhaps you will learn."
"What she says is to me equally important."
"What would a Japanese woman say but what her men dictate."
"She is not a Japanese woman."
"Need we discuss that point?"
"We must: it is imperative."
"If you will pardon me, I think it more imperative you should remember that you are in my house. Please do not think lightly of my hospitality, but there are so many urgent calls on my time. Perhaps some other day you will honour me by allowing me to listen to your exalted utterances."

From that impassive yellow face Kenneth's eyes wandered round the laboratory in despair, and for the first time he seemed to notice a strange form which lay on an adjacent bench covered by a cloth. Something he saw beneath the edge of that cloth made him step forward. The next moment he had whipped the cloth aside, laying bare the dead body of a dog.

It was the pretty little terrier he had seen when in company with Iris they happened on the great Airedale. Looking closer he saw that its tongue, which lolled out, was inflamed and spotted, and that in the corners of its eyes was a curious yellow mucus.
CHAPTER XVI.

He turned on the doctor a long, searching look, and Mohri knew that he had stumbled on the secret. Yet, save for an involuntary twitching of the fingers, perhaps also a rather fierce compression of the lips, that amazing little person betrayed no sign of the thoughts that were running like fire through his mind. There may have been a keener look in his eyes, but if so the thick glasses masked it.

"Does she know?" was the first question.

"She?"

"Your niece."

"Know what?"

"That you are the Unknown Terror?"

"I do not quite follow. Could you explain yourself?"

Kenneth pointed to the dog.

"Yes; unfortunately it will be of no further use to me. It was a good subject—I am sorry. Misfortunes will happen in the cause of scientific research."

Everard’s face betrayed both loathing and horror. He believed that he had stumbled on the secret
which had baffled two hemispheres, and he staggered beneath the weight of such a discovery.

"The symptoms are the same," he said in a voice that was full of meaning.

"To what do you refer?"

"The people who have been murdered by this Unknown."

"Indeed. That is very curious. I presume you are an authority on these matters. I did not know. This is rather interesting."

"Then you deny it?"

"Deny what? You have not yet formulated your charge."

"That you are the man for whom all London is searching?"

"I did not know all London was so interested in my identity."

"This won't do, Dr. Mohri. You know quite well what I mean, that I have seen things undreamt of by others. That day in Piccadilly you were fleeing from the havoc you had created."

"Was I indeed! Viewed with your eyes I must appear a very remarkable personage. Perhaps I am, though scarcely so remarkable as to tolerate with equanimity this curious insolence of my guest. I do not know that I need to detain you longer. Perhaps, hitherto, I have not made myself quite clear: if so I should like to do so without further
delay. In the future I hope you will not condescend to honour my contemptible house.”

He said all this with as much unconcern as though he was asking his guest to take tea. Had there been more anger in his manner, a fiercer denial in his words, Kenneth might have hoped, by some lucky stroke, to probe the bottom of this mystery; but this little man appeared to be so completely master of himself that there was no destroying his exasperating equanimity. Consequently, his accuser was torn by all manner of doubt, conjecture. He had made what appeared to him a most appalling charge, and it was summarily dismissed as the mere petulance of a wayward child.

“Dr. Mohri,” he said, making an effort to repress his indignation, realising that self-restraint was his greatest asset in this encounter, “I have not the slightest wish to intrude on your privacy; but certain doubts have arisen in my mind, and these must be set at rest. You forget that I saw you strike down the great Airedale with some mysterious power. You gave me a cigarette to smoke which inflamed my throat, made my eyes sting, and rendered me quite silly for a few moments. The symptoms exhibited by the victims of this new terror are the same as those shown by that dog yonder. I saw you fleeing along Piccadilly a few moments after the last outrage had been perpetrated. That seems to be something of a coincidence.”
The little man smiled. "It is rather curious—to one obsessed by an hallucination. I thought I had explained, though for the life of me I cannot see why I should."

"There is one other point. For the perpetration of these outrages it is necessary that there should be vapour of more or less density."

"Really, that seems to be a remarkable discovery." But he saw that behind the glasses the little eyes had narrowed to burning pin-points. "You have adopted the wrong branch of the law as a profession, Mr. Everard. You ought to have joined the detective force. There your extraordinary powers of deductive reasoning would prove of the greatest advantage—to the criminal classes. But, to finish with this nonsense, and put the proposition plainly: you accuse me of being the author of these mysterious crimes?"

"Mysterious to the many, but no longer so to me."

"It is always some satisfaction to feel sure of oneself, a sensation rarely experienced by the wise man."

"I do not accuse you, Dr. Mohri—heaven forbid; but there seems to me much that needs explaining."

"And if, in the interests of science, I should be the author of these so-called outrages—what then?"

"Simply this, that you would be a monster quite unfit to live."

"And suppose I thought not so much of this living as you appear to think of it?"
"Your punishment, nevertheless, should be swift and exemplary."
"That might be a pity."
"You would probably think so."
"Oh, no, not I. The pity is not in dying, but in dying before one's work is accomplished. That would be an error which in no circumstance ought to be permitted. For the life of one man may be of greater value than the lives of a thousand men. What, after all, are the majority of men but so many instruments by which we rise to knowledge and power? For the many there can be nothing but what we choose to give them, and they grow fat or lean according to our generosity. Compare life to a battlefield and you have a very apposite parallel. If the cause need it the officer in command takes no account of life. Men are the raw material of progress, and you use them up as you would use any other commodity. The manner may be different, but the end is always the same. By experimenting on humanity we further its cause."
"Even to the extent of murdering them?"
"What is the word 'murder' that we should all turn squeamish at the sound of it? The love of murder riots in the blood of your civilisation. You cannot hang a criminal without the whole population revelling in the details. Where you fail in your civilisation is in not putting murder and murderers to a good use."
"You talk like one who might do these things, who has no respect for the sanctity of life."

"Who has? Life is for those who know how to make profit out of it. What other useful purpose can it serve? Your captains of war or industry, do they refrain from self-aggrandisement because of the sanctity of life? Do they grind men and women to the dust, starve little children, because of the sanctity of life? Come, come, is this all you have learnt from the wisdom of the ages? One who has gone beyond the wisdom of the alphabet of thinking should know better than utter such banalities."

"I think the monster who committed these outrages might express himself in this manner."

"In this and no other manner?"

"And you are he! I know it beyond the shadow of a doubt."

Even this accusation failed to move the little man. An earthquake would not have ruffled the serenity of that impassive countenance. Monster or saint, he preserved a demeanour of indifference impervious to taunt or denunciation.

"Suppose what you say is true, assuming that I am the author of these experiments, what would you suggest as an alternative?"

He put the proposition in that curiously impersonal manner which was one of the secrets of his power. This air of indifference, of self-detachment, made
the most momentous of human problems seem a thing trivial and insignificant.

"There can be but one alternative."

"Surely two? You know, there are always two."

"My duty as a citizen——"

"Just so." The ghost of a smile flickered over his wrinkled face. "Our civic virtues are usually subservient to our personal interests. Your personal interests would be served by denouncing me?"

Kenneth's mind began to wander: weird thoughts flickered confusedly through his brain. This torrent of sophistical reasoning, how could he stem it? Could this inoffensive-looking little person, who spoke with the ease of one who argued some abstract theory, be the unspeakable wretch who murdered wholesale? And if so, what was there terrific in murder? He found his horror of that crime merging itself into a vague wondering as to its reality. Could murder be so slight a thing after all?

Suddenly he awoke, conscious of the fact that those little black eyes were piercing him through and through, and that to the subtle brain of this man his mind was an open book.

"Nevertheless," he said angrily, conscious of cutting a rather poor figure, "this matter must be probed to the bottom, my doubts set at rest."

"It is always a sign of congenital weakness when a man is troubled with doubt."
"Then I have no doubt."

"In that case the ground beneath us hardens: we are able to plant our feet with security. Frankly, you set yourself up as my enemy? Do you know what that means? I think you cannot, for never was an enemy at so great a disadvantage. Obstinacy is not valour, Mr. Everard: you should have hesitated before intruding on my privacy."

"Then you do not deny that you are the author of these crimes?"

"You arrive at your conclusions with such undue reflection that I do not consider them worthy of a denial. At the same time I see in you a person who, unless checked, may cause incalculable mischief, and I have no further wish to be annoyed with your pertinacity. Apparently, denial is useless: argument, probability, fails to influence your peculiar cast of thought. It is such unreasoning busybodies as you who appeal with irresistible force to ignorance—the brute beast that in its panic tramples under foot the rare seeds of intelligence. Cannot you grasp the fact that one man who lifts himself above the mob is worth the thousands who grovel below?"

"Who lifts himself by murder, outrage, crimes unspeakable!"

"What man ever rose to power except through crime?"

"You shall not rise to such power at our expense."
"If I will it, and the power is in me, neither you nor your nation shall stop me. Nothing shall stop me. I become a king—a conquering emperor! The world is in my hands, and I mould it to my will."

"If words were deeds—"

"My words are deeds. You stand there now, a young man in all the flush of physical strength. Your muscles are taut, your brain quick, your hands ready. I am a little old man, of no physique, whose muscles, compared with yours, are like a child's; and yet I am as surely your master as though you were the child and I the giant. Haven't you learned the elementary truth that it is intellect, not sinew, that rules the world? You are a microcosm of a nation given over to the worship of vain and foolish things, and unless you seek change, change will assuredly seek you."

"I think you will find this nation, though it be given over to the worship of vain and foolish things, has yet some say in the affairs of the world."

A smile, half of pity, half of contempt, flickered for a moment over the parchment-like face. Kenneth, seeing that look, flushed angrily. The cool insolence of the little man was fast fraying his nerves. All this talk of power, omnipotence, what was it but the vapourings of one who sought to mask by ingenious triflings the fundamental fact of crime? Under the guise of a specious philosophy this wretch was terrorising the country; for with every
moment he grew the more convinced that this man, Dr. Mohri, was the unspeakable monster without a heart or a conscience, one who would allow neither pity nor fear to sway him by a hair's breadth from his purpose.

"Presumably. Men and nations pose until someone comes along who pricks the bubble of reputation, as we did with the Russians in Manchuria, as we shall with all the white races, one by one; while Europe, torn by dissensions, hatreds, jealousies will look on, realising when too late the meaning of it all, cursing the folly of their own shortsightedness, deploring the lack of cohesion by which alone they could hope to hold us in check." He stopped, and for several moments looked at Everard without speaking. Then he said: "I have finished. I don't know why I should tell you my secret: I would not have done so had I thought you were likely to heed it. As I know you will not, it can make no difference."

"And you hope to see that day?"

"The dawn of it."

"That you never will."

"You frighten me, O honourable guest!"

The little face was mocking now, mocking with such impish devilment that Kenneth, losing control of the admirable calm which had carried him thus far, stepped forward angrily. The next moment something seemed to explode in his eyes. He staggered back, clapping his hands to his face, and then with a moan collapsed in a heap on the floor.
WHEN Kenneth awoke once more to consciousness he lay for some time in doubt as to whether he was alive or dead, or in some confused state of dream. Vaguely that interview with Doctor Mohri stole through his brain. All sorts of grotesque fancies bewildered him, and like one who stretches out to touch the reality of things—an accustomed wall, the bedclothes—so went out his hands and felt—nothing. For a moment or so he entertained the vague sensation of being suspended in space, and a convulsive shudder swept him from head to foot. Then he opened his eyes and saw the stars blinking down at him.

His hands touching the damp grass by his side awoke him to the fact that he was not in his own bed, nor in the laboratory of Dr. Mohri, but out in the open with a dark but clear sky above him. Sitting up suddenly, stiff and cold, he felt his clothes saturated with dew. Before him stretched a wide expanse of open darkness: behind him rose a large
clump of gorse. Not a sound, human, animal, or elemental, reached him. Again he shuddered, but whether with cold or sickness he could not say. Perhaps it was a little of both, or perhaps of the vague sensation of evil which surrounded him.

Where was he? His eyes smarted horribly; his throat was parched and sore. He felt like one who has just emerged from a severe illness, and is not quite sure of having shaken it off.

But little by little the full knowledge of his position returned to him. He knew now what happened up to the moment Mohri had stricken him down. Mohri the implacable, the relentless one, the wretch who murdered philosophically. Shuddering like one with an ague he stood up and looked about him, and as he did so the first streak of dawn began to break through the East.

As the day opened more clearly, and the land around him was disclosed, he began to recognise more or less familiar objects; and presently he knew that he was standing in one of the less frequented parts of the common, and that over there in the far corner, hidden by a clump of trees, was the home of Dr. Mohri. Dr. Mohri! He shivered, but whether with terror or with cold he could not say. Instantly he realised what had happened, how he must have been carried to this spot by the doctor and his faithful servants, and there left to
recover or die as the case might be. Most probably to die. But why had the doctor not made sure of him? How could he have spared one who was in possession of his terrible secret—for that he was in possession of it he had now no manner of doubt. One and one answer only could he find to this question: the doctor probably thought he would die, and had carried him out on the common so that he might be found there, and his death attributed to suicide, or natural causes.

The horror of it all, weakened as he was by exposure, filled him with a most curious and paralysing sensation of alarm. Here was an enemy against whom a host might tremble. If this mysterious force could be used with equal facility against the many, what was to prevent the utter destruction of the city? The man was a nightmare, his power hateful and hellish—and he was the near, and dear, male relative of the beloved woman!

He had thoughts of returning to the house and investigating, but soon convinced of the futility of such a proceeding he set out on his tramp to Richmond, returning to town by a workmen's train. A hot bath and bed followed, and when he awoke some five or six hours later he knew he had suffered no ill consequences from his adventure.

And now how to act? Naturally his first thoughts flew to the authorities. He knew this to be his
duty as a good citizen. Such information as he possessed should at once be unfolded in the proper quarter. Of that there could be no doubt: he did not even contest the proposition. But he also remembered Mohri's sneer about our civic virtues being subservient to our own interests, and he knew that for her sake he dare not speak. Perhaps it was one for her and two for him, but if this were so he was supremely unconscious of it. Just then he was wondering if she knew, though this was a thought he could not bring himself seriously to entertain. It was not possible: nothing should make him think it possible but the admission from her own lips.

Then he thought of Bayles, and wondered if he might take him into his confidence. But here again the same objection stared him in the face. Bayles, after all, was a limb of the law, one who was not likely to let private friendship stand in the way of public duty. No, Bayles was entirely out of the question, at least, for the present.

After a light luncheon he took the train for Richmond, advancing cautiously upon the doctor's house. For quite an hour he skirted it, but without discovering the least sign of life. This did not strike him as being at all strange, knowing something of the mysterious habits of the inmates. And yet he could not rid himself of the thought
that there was something more than this in the uncanny stillness; and putting this belief to the test he advanced boldly upon the gate and rang the bell. Eagerly he waited for the answer which did not come. Again and again he rang, alternately knocking loudly on the heavy door; but no one stirred, not a sound was heard but that of his own making. As he stared round desperately, wondering what next he should do, a postman approached on a bicycle, and seeing him there called out that the people had left. Kenneth signalled for him to halt and the man dismounted. He could not say when the occupants had gone, but he rather fancied it must have been last night, or early that morning.

Nothing now remained for him but to return to town and there await developments. What had happened to them, or where they had gone, he naturally had not the remotest idea; but deep down in him was the belief that he had not yet seen the last of Dr. Mohri or his niece, and though of the one he neither wished to see nor hear more, of the other there was always the hope that in some manner, and under happier auspices, they would meet again. Convinced as he was that she was ignorant of her uncle's true character, his one thought was to save her from participating in the fate which surely awaited that devilish little monster.
Mingled with these thoughts was the ever-prevalent fear that they had quitted the country, and that consequently he might never see her again; for though it would prove an incalculable relief to know that Mohri had taken himself and his diabolical invention back to his native land, the thought that she was still of his company was not lightly to be endured.

And yet the days sped into a week, bringing no word or sign from her. He was distracted with anxiety. Had she forgotten him altogether, was it her wish that he should forget her, or was she debarred the power of communicating with him? How was he to know, what could he do to find out? The suspense, the dreadful uncertainty, was intolerable. He had visions of her coerced, frightened, held prisoner; while ever before her was the hideous, bestial face of Takemoto. Takemoto! The thought maddened him, for he had seen in her eyes, though she had striven hard to prevent his seeing it, a wavering, indeterminate light which had left him not without hope. She had said she could not love him, that she hated him—that she must hate him. But she had not said why, and now he was for ever trying to guess the reason. Could it be the knowledge of what her uncle was? Even that he tried to think but could not. He was sure it could not be that. Whatever it was it was not that.
And then one morning the papers were filled with an account of a still further outrage, in all respects similar to those that had gone before, with this exception: in this instance the miscreant had dispensed with the auxiliary of smoke.

It happened during a riot outside the Pavilion Music Hall, subsequent to a meeting held by the militant suffragists. While the police and the public were engaged in a desperate hand-to-hand struggle, in which the women fought their natural enemies, the police, with a valour worthy of the bravest, a loud explosion was heard. Immediately the cry of "A bomb! A bomb!" was raised, and when the panic subsided they found a dozen women, and about half that number of police, stretched out on the roadway. Many of both sexes were already dead, but those who had a breath of life in them were immediately hurried off to the Charing Cross Hospital.

At first it was generally believed that the crime was committed by some desperate militant; and many women, fleeing with their clothes torn from their backs, narrowly escaped lynching at the hands of the crowd; but a closer examination of the victims disclosed those terrifying symptoms, already so well known, the mere repetition of which sent a convulsive shudder through the land.

Again the great city was in an uproar, and
Kenneth Everard, reading an account of it, felt almost as if he were the perpetrator. Would nothing stop the progress of this homicidal maniac? Could he, dare he, in the hope of shielding her, allow this monster to ply his dreadful trade? And yet, even had he the wish, how could he bring him to book? The man had gone—flown he knew not whither. True he might lay the full extent of his knowledge before the authorities; but what, after all, did that knowledge amount to, and was he so sure that his surmises were correct? He knew that he was trifling with the matter, trifling on account of her, of her who had told him that she hated him, that she must hate him. But there had been a quiver on her lips when she said it, a look in her eye that had suggested regret more than hatred.

There was Colburne, of course: Jeff the bright-faced, the irresponsible, the man who had made fun of his theory of smoke. But he had not been intimate with Jeff Colburne for years without knowing the true character of the man, nor without guessing that underneath his laughter was always a serious purpose. Jeff, the briefless, laughed at ill-luck for the reason that if he had not it might have mastered him, and being a true sportsman he took defeat with a smile. Kenneth knew he could trust him, and that, if occasion required, he was a man on whom he might implicitly rely.
"Seen this?" he asked, as he entered with the open paper in his hand.

Kenneth nodded, guessing what he referred to.

Colburne continued excitedly: "The streets are in a ferment with it: everybody rushing the paper boys. Afraid to look at anyone as I came along for fear of being denounced and lynched on the spot."

"You look a bit like a murderer."

"I feel like one, old boy, and should be if I could lay my hands on the wretch who is doing these things. You've read all about it?"

"Yes."

"Well," he asked quizzingly, "what becomes of your theory of smoke? Pretty rotten, isn't it?"

"Why?"

"This was done in the open."

"During a riot. The opportunity was easy, and the chances of detection minimised accordingly."

"Then you still think your original theory correct?"

"I know it to be."

"My dear old Ken, you're not at all conceited."

"I hope not."

"I must say you're a tantalising sort of chap with your air of 'I could if I would.' But here is a distinct case of your theory being entirely at fault. How do you explain that away?"
"I'm not going to try. One doesn't explain away a thing one knows to be true."

"I'm glad you know it's true, old boy; but the evidence? Having more or less of a legal mind, I crave your evidence."

"Look here, Jeff," said the other seriously, "what would you say if I told you I know the author of these crimes?"

"In the language of the street, dear old boy, I should say that you were up the pole."

"Well, I do know him."

"Ken!"

"It's a fact—absolute. I do know him: I have eaten and drunk with him, I have talked with him—I have smoked with him."

"Smoked!"

A slow smile broke over his friend's face. He had heard of men going mad on many subjects, but never had he known one so obsessed by the thought of smoke.

"Yes, and I shall never forget the sensation."

"Then you are serious?"

"As death."

Colburne gave vent to his feelings in a long, low whistle. Inu came from his corner and laid his great head on his master's knee.

"This dog knows him, too."

The dog looked up with steady, brown eyes. It
seemed almost as though he knew what they were talking about.

"Shouldn’t wonder," said Colburne. "The beggar strikes me as being half human. Sometimes I think he tries his hardest to talk."

"If he could Dr. Mohri would never have given him to me."

"I suppose not," laughed the other. "A talking dog! Lord, he’d be worth a huge fortune on the halls."

"Jeff, I love you, but you’re a fool. Why should I mention Dr. Mohri?"

"Your little Japanese friend? Why shouldn’t you? Mohri—dog: dog—Mohri." Then, slyly: "I believe the little gentleman has also a very beautiful niece."

"That is the reason why I am taking you into my confidence; why one day, at any hour, I may require your help."

"You know——" began the other.

"Quite well. Jeff, for more than a week now I’ve kept this dreadful secret to myself, but I can’t bear the strain of it any longer. I must confide in somebody, or go mad. I had hoped that once he knew I had hold of his secret he would not dare venture on another outrage. You see, the man is a devil, a maniac out of hell, and nothing will stop him."
"Then you do know him, Ken?" There was no laughter in Jeffrey Colburne's face now.

"I wish to God I didn't."

He came close, looking into Kenneth's face with eager, serious eyes.

"Who is it?" he whispered.

"Dr. Mohri."

"Dr. Mohri! You mean that?"

"I wish to heaven I didn't."

Then he told all that had happened between the doctor and him. Of his discovery of the dogs at the bottom of the garden, and how subsequently he had seen the little doctor strike down the great Airedale. Through each particular he went down to the moment when he awoke in the secluded corner of Ham Common.

The story fairly took Colburne's breath away. At one moment it seemed as impossible as a fancy from the Arabian Nights, and the next was as stark, staring true as death itself.

Dr. Mohri! He had heard of him, of course—of his reputed cleverness and wisdom: but that he should be the monster who had terrorised London for so long seemed perfectly incredible. And that wonderful niece of whom his friend had raved—was she also an accomplice in these crimes? He looked the thought he was afraid to utter; but the other guessed instinctively what was running through his mind.
"You may leave her out of the proposition," he said. "I should require irrefragable proof of her complicity before I believed a word."

"By George!" said Colburne suddenly, bringing his fist down with a bang on the table. Sharply Kenneth looked up at him.

"What's the matter now?"

"Hasn't it struck you that your cousin might have known these people in Japan?"

"Long ago: but I know they never met him."

"They told you so?"

"What on earth do you mean?" It was now Kenneth's turn to show an increased anxiety.

"Have you forgotten that the symptoms shown by Sir Basil were not unlike those of the other victims?"

"Good heavens!"

The utmost fear and horror leapt to his face, burned in his eyes. Then he tried to laugh away the suggestion, but the effort was something of a failure. Could there be any truth in it? Had they met his cousin out there in the Far East? Was this the reason why she said she hated him, why she must hate him?

"It seems quite possible." Colburne was breathing excitedly. "If Dr. Mohri and the monster are one—a matter on which you seem to have no doubt—then this same Dr. Mohri is capable
of any iniquity. On your own showing your cousin was the sort of fellow who might have played off any dirty trick. Suppose he played such a trick on Mohri? Remember, the poison administered was so subtle as to defy the analytical experts—and Dr. Mohri, among his other"—he hesitated—"qualifications, is something of a chemist."

"By God, Jeff—if it should be!"

"It clears you at once, old chap—in the eyes of those who do not know you," he added quickly, seeing the horror and consternation on his friend's face.

"And implicates her!"

"Has she denied ever meeting your cousin?"

"I am under the impression: yes. But I can't be quite sure how she denied it—whether by evasion or distinct denial. She gave me the impression that she had not met him."

"Then probably my theory is all wrong: it naturally would be—being mine."

"On the contrary," said the other, his face preternaturally grave, "I have a horrible feeling that it's right, and that when she told me she hated me—that she must hate me—she was thinking of him."

"So she told you she hated you? That's an awfully good sign, old man. I shall marry the first girl who tells me furiously that she hates me."
But this sally brought no smile to his friend's face. If she had lied to him in this one particular, might she not be lying through all? She might even be cognisant of her uncle's awful crimes! The thought made him shudder and turn sick. Could it be possible that this woman whom he loved, in whom he had found so much to love, was such a monster?

"Of course," he said, as if speaking to himself, "it can't be true—the thing is incredible. She can't possibly know anything of all this. Somehow, in some way, she would have betrayed herself. My reason, instinct, must have warned me. I can't believe she knew; and yet—"

He looked round bewildered, his eyes resting at last on the dog. Here, at least, was something in her favour. He remembered her pity, her affectionate protests. Other things, also, he remembered. She had seemed hard, indifferent, analytical, making a mock of the things so many held in repute. But what, after all, were these but the exercises of a virile brain? Had he not rather admired her independent outlook on life, her strenuous denunciation of hypocrisies?

"Why should you believe anything against her without positive proof?"

"But if it should be?"

"That she and her uncle are one in these crimes?"
"He nodded.

"Then, my dear fellow, the less you think of her the better, for she must be a monster unfit to live. But between you and me, old man, I don't believe any woman could be such a monster, or any sane man either, for the matter of that."

"If it's the man I think, he's sane enough—far too sane to be at large in a half-imbecile world. You will respect my confidence?"

"My dear fellow!"

"I know, of course! Pardon me? But this is a matter we must work out—alone."

"I think it would be much wiser to call in the police."

"No, you don't: you know perfectly well that the police must never be called in."

"Then we are to let this little monster rage and ravage unchecked?"

"Until I know the truth of Iris-san."
IRIS, accustomed as she was implicitly to obey her uncle, had packed her light travelling trunk and was standing beside it fully dressed when the servant, Yoban, softly entered the apartment. The note left by Dr. Mohri had been brief, and to the effect that she was to put a few things together and submit herself to the guidance of Yoban, who had full instructions how to act. As the man knelt down to strap the box, she put questions innumerable to him, to all of which he returned vague, unsatisfactory answers. At times she felt like revolting against this inconsiderate treatment, wanting to know where her uncle was, the reason of this sudden departure, and what he intended to do. But she might as well have questioned the wind; for though devoted to her, Yoban would sooner have performed the honourable hari-kari than dream of disobeying his master.

He swung the box on his shoulder and nodded for her to follow him. The car stood outside the
gate, its two acetylene lamps glaring like savage eyes into the darkness. She had not noticed—she would not—that the number of the car had been changed. Even had she observed the number, she would not have noticed the alteration. Yoban, opening the door for her, she stepped in without demur, though still a little perplexed and annoyed with this mysterious happening. Then he put the trunk inside the car and softly closed the door—he did all things softly—sprang to the driver’s seat, and presently they were purring swiftly through the night towards Richmond.

It was a long journey northwards. They crossed Kew Bridge and cut along the tram-lines to Hammersmith. At Hammersmith Broadway they were held up by the traffic, and she saw the policeman on the shelter look rather keenly at Yoban who, in cap, goggles, with his great coat muffled up round his ears, sat crouching over the wheel like a tenacious monkey. He was a wonderful driver, that same Yoban, and as he slipped in and out amongst the traffic he gave her many a pleasant thrill.

On the rise from Kensington he slipped into the Park, emerging again at the Marble Arch, and thence glided steadily and surely along the flaring, glaring Edgware Road. Then he shot off to the right into a quieter neighbourhood, presently
emerging into the broad thoroughfare of the Finchley Road. This he pursued until he had passed Golder's Green, when suddenly he swung down a narrow road on his left. Here the way was unlighted, but though he slackened speed he went as surely as though he were driving by daylight.

Presently the car stopped before a cottage seen but indistinctly through the gloom. Yoban sprang from his seat and opened the door for her. As she stepped from the car she noticed that its lights had been switched off.

He held wide a little gate, and preceded her up a pathway to the cottage. In the open doorway stood one of their own Japanese servants with a lamp in his hand.

No word of welcome, no genial smile greeted her—nothing but the accustomed obsequious urbanity of the menial. She felt a shudder sweep through her as she entered the house, but was careful to hide it from those patient, watchful lynx eyes. The man handed her a note, which she saw at once was from her uncle. It was like all his missives—brief, purposely vague. Business detained him: he would return later. Meanwhile there was no cause for alarm. Nothing was told which might satisfy her curiosity, no explanation given of the sudden change of address.

Though she had always regarded him as a man
with many singular idiosyncrasies, one who came and went unquestioned, who never gave a reason for the numerous strange things he did, she was none the less exceedingly agitated over this last mysterious move, and when she eventually retired it was to toss restlessly through the long hours, and to dream of the most appalling mischances.

When she saw him the next morning he was in the garden contemplating in a sort of ecstasy a cluster of sweet peas.

"Was ever anything more delicious?" he asked, holding out a fragrant bunch for her acceptance. "Look, the dew is still on it, Iris-san, and it sparkles almost as brilliantly as your eyes."

"My eyes are tired," she said. "All the brilliance has gone from them."

"Tired! Youth is never tired. Sleep restores it as the dew these blossoms."

She took the flowers and kissed them, the cold drops of dew refreshing her hot lips.

"What if one does not sleep?"

"Is it so with you?"

"Last night," she said, looking at him with solemn, questioning eyes, "I did not sleep. Why are we here, oji-san? Why did we leave so hurriedly?"

"I have the best of reasons for believing that my secret is not safe. In some manner, unknown
to me, the English Government has heard of my experiments and are eager to learn my secret—that secret which is to place our beloved Nippon at the head of the nations. Takemoto-san has been hearing whispers—and I myself, from my laboratory, saw a suspicious person in our vicinity.

"But the English Government is not a robber government. It does not break into a man's house and steal."

"None the less it reserves to itself the right to search on suspicion. I thought it wiser to remove temptation from its path—for the few days that are left us."

A sudden chill attacked her heart; but she echoed in a low, steady voice: "The few days that are left us?"

"I am about to make preparations for our immediate departure," he said. "I do not think my secret can much longer be successfully kept. Things leak out, whispers penetrate the farthest corners. It was necessary that I should test my experiments to the fullest before laying my proposition before our government. I am glad to say that they have fulfilled my highest expectations."

"And those experiments, oji-san: are they still to remain a secret to me?"

"For a little while longer. I dare not reveal them even to my dearest."
"Then you no longer trust me?"

"There are some things with which we are afraid to trust even ourselves. . . . I think, when we have bestowed some artistic care upon the training of these blossoms, we shall have a group of the most bewitching beauty."

She turned away with a discontented sigh. He watched her curiously, though pretending absorption in the flowers. After all, the care of his sister's child had been something of a check on freedom. The man who tied a woman round his neck, whether wife, mother, sister, niece, gave a great hostage to fortune. And she was beginning to chafe at the restraint, to question, to wonder why. He buried his dry little face in the fresh young blossoms, and let the perfume steal like nectar through his brain.

In accordance with his instructions, she kept strictly within doors, or ventured no farther than the garden, the days dragging tediously to a close. Often she wondered what had become of Kenneth Everard, and if she should ever see him again. Frequently she told herself that she hoped not, and knew that she was lying. Of course it was better that they should never meet. She must not forget her pride, her dignity: she could not pardon the slight that one of his house had heaped on her. Yet the remembrance of his kisses, the passionate, burning glances, the fierce intoxication of his em-
brace—would the knowledge of this ever pass away from her? Did she really hope that it would pass? She knew she did not; she knew that she was one who yearned for love, who could not live without love: who would journey far to find love, who knew that by and through love only could she rise to the ultimate glory of life.

One day Takemoto called, but from her bedroom window she saw him coming and resolutely kept her room until he had again taken his departure. Takemoto! How she shuddered at the thought of him, contrasting him with the straight-limbed, clear-eyed young Englishman who had taken her in his arms and kissed her with all the adorable fire of youth. Could oji-san really mean what he said—that he would doom her to perpetual companionship with one whose mere presence was so distasteful, so revolting? Naturally he could not see with her eyes. To him Yoji Takemoto was an eligible parti: rich, as this world went—rich in everything but what she yearned for most. That this man was old, and fat, and ugly amounted to nothing. What were these trivial blemishes in the eyes of oji-san: what could a woman want more than to make a wealthy and honourable marriage?

Slowly a week passed, and then one day Yoji Takemoto came again.

The cottage was one of two storeys. On either
side of the main entrance was a bow window, that on the right belonging to the drawing-room. Round this window clustered a thick creeper, while a low laurel bush reached almost up to the window itself. To the right of this bush again she had been sitting in the shade, reading and dreaming, until the opening of the little rustic-shaped gate aroused her. Peering through the leaves she saw Takemoto come, and sat very still lest he should perceive her. But without a glance to right or left he walked swiftly but heavily up the path and knocked on the door.

Very still she sat for some time, wondering how she might reach her room unobserved. Once there she could lock the door and resolutely refuse to meet the man should he ask to see her. But how reach the room? If she entered the front door she must be seen: she might possibly creep in the back way, though that also was not without some risk. A wild desire to flee from her impending fate took hold of her. Far across the valley the country stretched into the wide, dim distance. Somewhere there, somewhere away from it all, she might find peace. Then suddenly she sat very still, scarcely daring to breathe, for she had caught her own name uttered by the shrill voice of Takemoto.

In the meantime Dr. Mohri, with many bowings, was ushering his illustrious visitor into the drawing-
room. Takemoto's head was in the air, his eyes full of suspicion as he watched his host. Sinking into a chair by the window, to which the doctor bowed him, he took out a large coloured handkerchief and rather excitedly began to mop his face.

"You have walked far?" the doctor inquired sympathetically.

Takemoto grunted with that freedom unknown to the poor. The little doctor eyed him with a curious, almost pathetic, impassivity.

"I have come, Mohri-san," said his guest, "because I weary of your honourable dalliance, and would know exactly what I am to expect from this protracted negotiation."

"Ah," muttered Mohri, "what one is to expect: what one receives! In what way may I conduce to your eternal happiness?—which is the one thought nearest to my heart."

Again Takemoto grunted, his face flushing darkly.

"Your niece, Iris-san."

"As usual, enjoys the best of health."

"You understand, Mohri-san, that I leave shortly for Nippon?"

"You have been good enough to honour me with your confidence to that extent."

"As you know, it is my wish that she should accompany me as my wife."
"Your honourable condescension has favoured me with this further confidence."

"Then why this delay?" asked the other abruptly.

"I always think that fate, who upon occasion grants so much, invariably reserves this privilege of delaying her blessing. Why we do not, at telegraphic speed, get just exactly what we want is one of those problems which I am not competent to solve. I deal in human affairs, Takemoto-san, not in the prerogatives of the gods."

"This seems to me a very human affair," growled Takemoto, who, like all men with a full purse, was impatient of opposition. "I am to understand that you are my friend, Mohri-san?"

"Always."

"Then, as a friend, why have you not brought matters to a head? I am not greatly enamoured of this trifling with my interests."

"If there be trifling," said Mohri, "it is the trifling of the gods, against whom we hurl ourselves in vain."

"Pooh!" ejaculated Takemoto, snapping his stubby fingers as if in disdain of all deities. He thought not overmuch of them, this rich man, nor would he tolerate for a moment their interference in his affairs. "Am I to understand that you would trifle with me, Mohri-san?"
"By no means. My wish has ever been the same—to serve you honourably. Yet here it is not I alone who can command. Had we to deal with men there would be no doubt of our ultimate triumph; but this is a woman, one who is half of the West, and who has imbibed the strange woman's doctrines that are such a disgrace to European civilisation. However much we may deplore the fact we cannot deny it. She claims the right, for good or ill, to choose her own partner, and the law of this benighted land does not permit me to use force."

Takemoto's face grew serious with suppressed wrath: the pock-marks looked like livid pits in the flushed skin.

"What am I to understand exactly by that?"

"Of a truth I do not know—exactly. When a woman takes the bit between her teeth there is no holding her in."

"It seems to me," said Takemoto, with a sneer, "that the niece is not alone in imbibing the notions of the West."

"How can a student of humanity fail to observe the more blatant characteristics of a strange people? On coming to a new country we notice, first, the costume of the people, next, their faces, and then their customs. If we live with them long enough we gradually penetrate their intellectual outlook."
He would be a dull student of humanity who ignored the latter."

"Quite so." Takemoto's expression was gradually growing more aggressive. "What I wish principally to know is whether you are for or against me?"

"Is there any necessity to ask such a question?"

"I should not ask it if I did not think so."

"Then rid your mind of any such thought, my friend. My dearest wish, now, as always, is to see my niece married to your honourable supremacy. But of a truth, Takemoto-san, she seems somewhat indifferent to the great honour you would confer on her. Personally the thought is incredible—I cannot grasp it. Yet it is the way of a woman, and if the gods can read this strange riddle of the sex, which I cannot, then are they worthy of our deepest veneration."

"Perhaps," answered Takemoto in his greasiest tone, a tone full of infinite suggestion, "it might be worth your while to try."

"I fear my subtleties would fall on dull ears. One cannot teach the blind to see or the deaf to hear. I admit that your august condescension has reached its limit. I have discovered that when a Western woman cares for a man there are no bounds to her daring, nothing she will not do or suffer for his sake; but, if she does not care, all the gods of Europe and Asia threaten her in vain."
"By that you imply——"
"That she does not care for you, Takemoto-san. It is deplorable, incredible: I am overwhelmed at the thought of such ingratitude. Yet I fear it is the truth."

Takemoto rose heavily to his feet, his little eyes burning with curious malignity.
"You must teach her to care, Mohri-san."
The words came slowly, distinctly, with an emphasised meaning which Dr. Mohri could not possibly ignore.
"I! Many things have I attempted, Takemoto-san, many obstacles have I overcome; but this that you ask me, this is the labour of a god."
"Nevertheless, I think you will accomplish it."
"You have much confidence in my powers."
"Only the greatest."
"But what makes you think that I am equal to this task?"
"Because I ask you."
"I could wish that you had more reason for such confidence."
"Then because I command you, Mohri-san."
Behind the big spectacles the blinking eyes steadied for a moment, but beyond that the wizened little face betrayed neither anger nor alarm.
"It is good to be able to command," he said. "Better still to be obeyed."
"You will obey."
"Is that for Takemoto-san to say?"
"I think so: otherwise I shall know how to act."
"Perhaps I might be permitted to ask in what manner the honourable Takemoto-san intends to act?"
"By letting those in authority know the secret of Dr. Mohri."
"Do you think that would help you?"
"Then you do not deny that you are the author of these outrages that have been convulsing the whole country?"
"Why should I deny that which my honourable guest asserts with such conviction? I do not see that it bears on the matter at issue."
"Only so much as it affects your freedom—your life," answered the other drily.
"If I give my freedom and my life for the greater glory of Nippon, I give all that a patriot has to give."
"These people call it murder, and murderers they hang by the neck. They do not understand, or appreciate, that patriotism which riots in murder."
"Am I to be responsible for the dullness of a particularly dull people?"
"Look you, Mohri-san," said the other sharply, irritably, "I am not here to argue with you. These
people would like to know that the person who poisoned Sir Basil Everard is the monster who has been terrorising London."

"And you think I am that person?"

"I know it."

"And, unless I coerce my niece into becoming your wife, you will go to these English people and tell them what you suspect?"

"What I know."

"That would be unpatriotic, Takemoto-san: the Emperor would not approve."

Takemoto sniffed disdainfully. The rich man thwarted is no great respecter of emperors, for he, too, is an emperor in his own small way, and we are never unduly submissive to those of our own rank.

"Nor do I approve," said Mohri, "for by destroying me you would destroy your country. That makes you a traitor, Takemoto-san."

Takemoto’s eyes narrowed as he gazed on that impassive face, and for the first time there was a suspicion of uncertainty in the look.

"Perhaps I did not mean to go so far," he said.

"Give me Iris-san and I care not what you do, or what happens to these people."

"You are going farther, Yoji Takemoto: you are going to the very end of things."

Takemoto fell back a pace or two, a sickly, yellow pallor suddenly overspreading his face.
"What do you mean by that, Mohri-san?" he asked in a low whisper.

"That Dai Nippon has no use for traitors."

"I a traitor!" he gasped.

"Have you not proved it out of your own mouth? What I have done has been for the greatness and glory of my country. As a result of my experiments I shall in time place Nippon in the forefront of the nations. Yet you would rob her of that greatness. Nippon has no use for you: in this world there is no room for the traitor."

"Mohri-san!"

The voice came pitifully, choking with terror. But Mohri-san had no pity. Takemoto saw him take aim at his face, and before he could put up his hands to protect himself the thing crashed in his eyes.

Dr. Mohri covered his mouth and nose with a pad of linen as he leant over the recumbent figure.
CHAPTER XIX.

In this attitude he remained for some time until the huddled heap on the floor began slowly to relax. Then, looking round, he suddenly encountered the wide, staring eyes of Iris, and with a quick movement he transferred the pad of linen from his mouth to his breast-pocket. There she stood with a deathly white face, her breast rising and falling tumultuously, the very epitome of terror. For the first time in his life he seemed nonplussed, though even then his cold, calculating brain was wondering how he had come to overlook the possible presence of the girl.

"Run away!" he said sharply. "Why are you here?"

"I was outside; I saw him come; I heard. What have you done to him?"

The words came in short gasps, with difficulty: with equal difficulty she seemed to breathe. He turned as if to screen with his meagre form the thing that lay on the floor.
"You heard?"

"Every word. But it's not true, oji-san—say it's not true!"

"And if it were?"

Leaning against the doorpost, she buried her face in her hands, shivering. He came forward, and taking her by the arm led her swiftly but gently from the room, closing the door behind him. Together they crossed the hall into the room opposite. There he sat her in a chair by the table and stood looking down at her.

"If it were true?" he repeated in his unemotional sing-song.

"It cannot be," she sobbed.

"You would hate me very much, Iris-san: you would look on me with loathing, seeing in me nothing but the monster who revelled in murder? If I were that, and that only, your judgment would be just: but if I experimented for the honour and glory of my country, as the vivisectionist experiments on animals for the good of humanity, what then?"

Her eyes sought his, and in them he saw a shuddering terror, a horror of him and the thought which his presence awoke, that made him shrink sickeningly within himself.

"Then you do not deny it?" she whispered. In the face of what she had heard, what she had seen, how could he?
"To gain the knowledge necessary for us to struggle successfully with our environment we must experimentalise," he explained in that cool, imperturbable manner of his. "The vivisectionist is not necessarily a monster because he destroys life, since by such destruction he may discover truths of incalculable benefit to humanity. If by life we do not acquire wisdom, knowledge, of what value is it?"

"But don't you realise that the taking of human life is not permitted; that it is a wicked, a shameful, an outrageous act, punishable by death?"

"All that, my child, I knew before you came into the world to enlighten it with your wisdom. But when the glory of one's country is at stake, Iris-san, one ought not to consider so small a thing as human life."

"He said that you murdered Sir Basil Everard."

"A mere experiment which ended fatally."

"That is why you forbade me to mention his name, to admit that we had ever known him—out there?"

"Obviously that must have been the reason. I think it no crime to experiment on an enemy: I know of no one on whom I would rather test my skill. You weep for him?"

"For you—myself."

"Sir Basil Everard insulted you—me—my august
sister of sacred memory. He was a dog craving to be poisoned, and I satisfied the craving. So it must be with all who would hurt me and mine. In a world of force, in a world where righteousness does not exist, force is king and emperor. If I do not trample on the million, the million will trample on me. It has been so from the beginning of things; it will be so to the end of time.”

“And these murders,” she gasped, “these horrible atrocities that have made the unknown scourge a loathsome terror to the community!”

“Who are they that you should weep for them? In all probability I am the best friend they ever had. As a flock of sheep may be destroyed without compunction, humanity deriving benefit from the act, so may these nobodies help to further the ultimate omnipotence of Nippon. To test my invention, it was necessary that I should experiment in this wise. I am happy to say that I have proved beyond doubt the value of my theories. When the armies of Dai Nippon march Westward, they will carry with them a power that shall sweep their enemies from their path. And to me the glorious conquests will be due. Armed with my invention, our people will march from East to West the lords of the universe. That which has been but a dream will be a tangible reality. Nippon shall become a god among the nations, and I, Hiro Mohri, a prophet.
If, then, I can do these things, bring these proud, white races to their knees, place on their stiff necks the heavy, steel-shod foot of Nippon, shall I not be justified of my acts? What were a hundred or a hundred thousand of these people lost if Nippon is saved?"

"But this is murder," she said in a low, scared voice. "Since when have you learned to think so seriously of what these people call murder? What, after all, is it but a passing, hurried a little, perhaps, but merely forestalling ultimate destiny?"

"Since when was Hiro Mohri given the right to forestall destiny?"

"All great men forestall destiny: destiny was ever willing to follow in the footsteps of great men. Great men are the masters of destiny, the arbiters of fate, and as such are not to be judged by the trivial conventions which are good only for those who are born to follow."

"And Takemoto-san?"

"You do not weep for him?"

"No—but——"

"Takemoto-san would have betrayed his country to the enemy. There was no room in this world for Takemoto-san, and so I sent him to join the spirits of his illustrious ancestors. It was written so: it is written on the foreheads of all who would oppose the progress of Nippon."
"And do you suppose Nippon will thank you for these crimes? She will be branded as a pirate nation, and all the just peoples of the earth will rise against her."

"There are no just peoples on earth, neither is there justice on earth. Their Prophet and God came to teach them, and they made a mock of Him, and murdered Him, and they have been mocking Him and murdering Him ever since."

She bowed her head submissively: how could she cope with one supreme both in dialectics and murder? But though he might beat down her reasoning by the force of his intellect, he could not sweep aside the sense of revulsion which the thought of him, the presence of him, awoke.

"Assuming," she said, "that in your eyes murder is the light thing you would make of it, you do not fail to realise that others may regard it as a particularly heinous offence?"

"Not at all: that's why I've had to act in secret. Murder only becomes an acknowledged part of the social system in times of stress and upheaval. Truly the ways of men are as inscrutable as those of the gods."

"Yet these men are gods who will destroy you."

A slow smile broke over his yellow face.

"My work is done," he said. "When they learn who is, or was, the author of these experiments,
THE GIRL FROM NIPPON.

I shall be at the head of the conquering armies of Dai Nippon."

"And suppose they know already: suppose they are already preparing to envelop you?"

He looked round with a quick, comprehensive glance, as though detection might be lurking in some near corner. Then once more that slow, meaning smile broke over his face.

"You saw what became of Yoji Takemoto and his power. It is as easy to slay a thousand as one."

"Oji-san, for the love of God!" she cried.

"God! The god of these people, or the gods of Nippon? I, too, am a god," he said; "the giver of life and death. A world-conqueror I—the little yellow man from the East—whence came all wisdom. But my work is finished, Iris-san. Nothing now remains for us but to steal away and leave these people wondering till the great day of awakening. Are you not glad that Takemoto goes not with us? He served his purpose. Let him rest."

A great fear of him had descended upon her: like a cloud it fell, covering her with darkness, wrapping her in an impenetrable mist of horror and doubt. Live with him, return with him to the East, knowing his fearful secret! She felt that never again could she touch his hand, or listen to his voice, or feel other interest in him than that
of desperate horror. And this was the man whose wisdom she had applauded, whom she had regarded as far above all other men in learning and prescience. And all his wisdom, all his knowledge, all his acquirements, had been directed to murder!

"The dogs?" she said suddenly.

"Ah, yes; one begins in that way."

"It was cruel of you."

"I admit compunction as to the dogs."

"You gave one to Kenneth Everard?"

"An amiable young man, but inquisitive. I do not like inquisitive people."

She took a step forward, her eyes dilating.

"What have you done to him?"

"He is quite safe."

"You have killed him?"

"He was not of sufficient importance." Yet he saw the sudden gust of passion sweep to her eyes, and he knew that it required a supreme effort on her part to hold herself in check.

"Tell me, oji-san—you have killed him?"

"No, no! But I have taught him a lesson. I think he has probably gained some wisdom. The day after to-morrow our ship sails from Liverpool—the Satsuma-Maru. We shall be among our own people. You will be ready, Iris-san—and very wise. In Nippon I shall be great, honoured—the Prophet, the Deliverer. And you shall partake of my glory,
and, who knows, perhaps return here with me in
the vanguard of our conquering armies."

"The day after to-morrow!" Dreadfully, ins-
sistently, the words coursed and thundered through
her brain. The day after to-morrow—and what
then? For ever to be associated with him of the
dreadful power, with him who treated with similar
contempt the life of a man or a dog! Why, there
would be no more peace for her, no rest by day or
night. Waking she would behold that cold, calm,
inscrutable visage, sleeping he would be ever the
nightmare of her thoughts. All of a sudden there
opened between them the vast gulf which divided
East from West, the vast, illimitable swell of ocean
which neither thought nor ingenuity could ever
bridge. And like a revelation it came to her that
she was of the West, that she had always been of
the West, that her thoughts, aspirations, all the
soul of her, was with the white peoples, the glorious
white peoples!

He stood in the hall and watched her—a curious
and quaint little figure—as she slowly mounted
the stairs to her room—her prison. For such she
knew this house was now to her; a temporary
prison in which she was to be lodged until he took
her aboard the Japanese ship. Though he had
spoken with his usual suave discretion, she knew
quite well that he harboured doubt of her, and all of
whom he harboured doubt he had his own peculiar methods of guarding. Without a word she had left him, no sound escaped his closely-pressed lips: it was the first time they had parted so coldly.

There was doubt on her face, pain in her eyes as, seated by the window of her room, she looked across the blue, peaceful landscape. How still everything was, how quiet, and how secure! This was the civilisation of a great and peaceful people, of a people who did no wrong nor tolerated wrong in others; a people who opened their hospitable arms to the stranger, giving him the freedom and the security of her own sons. And how had that stranger repaid her hospitality? She shuddered, but it was not with the cold.

In a vision, as it were, she saw that ship, the Satsuma-Maru, nosing her way Eastward through the everlasting seas. Onward it would go, drawing nearer and ever nearer until Fuji towered up out of the blue expanse, and the land of Nippon, once so loved, now so hated and feared, met her view. There was her prison, there an end to the new life, the new hope that of late had welled so strongly within her. Could she face it: dared she? Was she for ever to say good-by to the new and thrilling interests of life? Out there she would return once more to the Eastern woman, and know nothing of this sudden joy, the exultation of living that
THE GIRL FROM NIPPON.

had made existence so supremely sweet. This she knew was her home, to the joys, the sorrows, the tenderness of which every drop of her blood responded. All those other thoughts had been alien thoughts: even while she believed herself to hate these people and their land she knew that they were her people, and that it was her land, and she loved them both. It was the call of the blood, strong as life, insistent as death. Love that long has lain dormant bubbles, bursts afresh to life as one watches beside the sick bed. So was it with her. In the hour of parting the scales fell from her eyes, the mists from her soul. She loved these people, these great white people—her people!—who had won such a glorious place in the sun.

And oji-san, what was she to think of him? He had not killed as the common man kills—in passion, for gain. She almost wished he had. Then one might find some palliation for poverty, or the gust of fury. But to him murder was a mere experiment, a thing that circumstance rendered necessary. Life had one value only: it fed, satisfied the craving of ambition. As the world-conqueror strode to glory over the bodies of both friend and enemy, regretful, perhaps, but consoled his blood-lust with the knowledge that such things must be, so strode he, unheeding the pale, pitiful hands that were raised in supplication. That his work was in the street
instead of on the field of battle mattered nothing. He, too, worked for that glorious iniquity which men in their madness applaud.

Some three hours later she softly descended the stairs, but there were others as soft of foot in that house, and she had not taken two steps across the hall before she encountered Yoban, who seemed, shadow-like, to emerge from the shadows.

"My uncle?" she questioned.

He shook his head. "I cannot say, honourable."

"He is abroad?" The man bowed. "And I?" Yoban remained mute, regarding her with unwinking eyes. "You have had your orders?"

"The doctor, your illustrious uncle, thought it better that you should honourably prepare for your journey."

"Yoban, I am a prisoner in my uncle's house?"

"Not so, illustrious. The doctor, your august uncle, would never pardon me if harm befell you."

It was the same thing, but this care of her was singularly inopportune just then. Vague plans flitted like ghosts through her brain. She knew that this quiet, unobtrusive, lynx-eyed little person would die before swerving an inch from his master's orders. And there were others in the background—mysterious dark shades that seemed to live in shadows, but who would emerge as resolute men at the word
of command. And away beyond it all was the waiting ship, and Nippon—and oblivion.

The door of the drawing-room was wide open, and as her glance turned to it she involuntarily drew back a pace. Then her eyes sought those of the sphinx-like Yoban, who bowed low, as if inviting her to enter. Piercingly she gazed at him, and then suddenly remembered that he was not supposed to know she knew. With a sudden effort she entered the room, looking fearfully about; but there was nothing to startle the eye, nothing to offend but memory. The furniture was carefully arranged as usual, the windows wide open, and through the room blew the delicious smell of the garden. On a table by the window was a bowl of sweet-peas which the doctor had gathered and lovingly arranged with true artistic appreciation.

"You do not know when my honourable uncle will return?"

"He did not so far confide in one so utterly unworthy—but he ordered the car."

Yet he had not taken Yoban to drive it! What this meant exactly she could not imagine. She knew that the doctor, among his other accomplishments, was an expert driver; but why had Yoban been left at home if not to guard her?

"I had hoped you would be able to take me out," she said.
He bowed, there being no need to explain the impossibility of doing so.

Shadow-like he disappeared among the shadows as she once more mounted the stairs; but though she went direct to her room, and somewhat noisily bolted the door, it was not to rest. Eagerly, impatiently, she paced the narrow limits of her room. Sometimes she sat by the window, her arms on the sill, and stared out dreamily across the darkening landscape. Then when it was quite dark she rose softly and stole towards the door. Kneeling she put her ear to the keyhole and listened with great intentness. Then, assured that there was no one in the passage without, she carefully drew back the bolt, and a moment later she was peering into the darkness.

Not a sound came from below: with the exception of her own suppressed vitality it might have been a house of the dead. Nevertheless she moved lightly as a ghost across the passage to the door opposite, which was that of her uncle's room, and turned the handle. It gave beneath her touch, and the next moment she was in the room. She had little fear now that those below would stir, for unless expressly bidden, none of them ever dared to approach the upper floors. Indeed, she herself had never dared to enter his private apartments uninvited: it was one of those things he would never dream her
capable of doing. But once inside she carefully drew the heavy curtains across the window; and lit the candle with which she had come prepared.

The room betrayed none of the idiosyncrasies of its owner. It was as plain a room as you would find in any middle-class house: the sort of room that was used for one purpose only—to sleep in. Here were no traces of the dreadful trade plied by oji-san. It was the plain, unpretentious bedroom of the man who caught the 8.30 for the City every morning. But as she held the light up, she saw, hanging behind the door, the coat which Mohri had worn during his last interview with Takemoto. Quick as thought she began to search it, and presently from the breast-pocket she drew forth that for which she had come in quest—a pad of linen—the identical pad with which Dr. Mohri had covered his mouth and nose as he stood over the huddled form of Takemoto.

As she took it in her hand, she suddenly became aware of a strong, pungent smell, not unlike that of ammonia. None the less she slipped it into her bodice, blew out the light, and carefully groped her way back to her own room.
CHAPTER XX.

It was just on midnight when Kenneth Everard returned weary and disappointed from one of his fruitless searches for Dr. Mohri. Not that he had the slightest wish ever again to set eyes on that redoubtable assassin, but he knew that where the doctor was there would the niece be also, and to find her he felt capable of infinite energy.

As he crossed the open space of King's Bench Walk a shadow came swiftly towards him from among the trees, and almost before he knew what was happening Iris stood beside him. Of all the surprises of his life, that was perhaps the greatest, and involuntarily his hands went out to her and caught hers in a warm clasp.

"You!" he gasped. "I have been looking for you everywhere."

She threw a quick glance to right and left, gently releasing her hands.

"I had to know," she answered enigmatically.
"You had to know. I want to talk. Is it safe here?"

He also glanced round, hesitant. "It would be safer in my chambers. Do you mind?"

"You forget: I am an Oriental." She gave a little laugh that jarred.

He made no further protest, and she was thankful. Without a word they crossed the roadway. He opened the door with his latchkey.

"You look tired," he said as he turned to her in the light of the room.

"I walked and I ran," she answered briefly, "and I have waited out there for an hour."

He was full of apologies.

"Why did you run?" he asked. "From whom did you run?"

"My uncle."

"Why?"

"You cannot guess—you do not guess?"

Her eyes sought his, wildly, appealingly, eyes which glowed curiously of terror and pathos.

"Yes, I know. When did you?"

"To-day. Takemoto came. He threatened him with exposure." She hesitated.

"Well?"

"Takemoto will never expose him now."

"Dead?"

She nodded. For a brief moment the suspicion
flashed through him again, but in the face of her evident distress he knew that he was wronging her grievously.

"And you?" he asked.

"My uncle has decided that we leave for Liverpool to-morrow, and from there sail in a Japanese ship for the Far East."

"Yes?" He put the word breathlessly.

"I cannot go with him: I dare not. It is too horrible! Like so many of his race he has preached hatred of the white people; but I never thought, I could not dream. . . . I, too, have tried to hate you because he wished it; because I was envious, sick with longing for that which was denied me—my birthright. I think he dominated me to my undoing, except—except when that other came along."

"I do not understand."

"No, but you must. He killed Sir Basil Everard."

"He!" Incredulity and amazement struggled for mastery on his face. "But he did not know my cousin?"

"A fiction—like most things connected with us. In Kobe your cousin was ill, and he saved his life. Then Sir Basil Everard was pleased to take note of me. It was what I had dreamed: it was the white man, noble, full of kind words, one of my own people. When he left for England he promised
to return—for me! But he did not keep his promise. When we met here he regretted that promise: he could not marry an Asiatic, a half-breed! I was not sorry, because I had long since ceased to trust him. But it stung, that taunt: it made me bitter, it intensified my hatred. I had no regret for the loss of him, but I was savage for revenge. I think just then I hated the world and everybody in it. To oji-san he told the same tale, but he was not so merciful. You know what happened."

He looked at her, and there was both horror and loathing in the look.

"Then you knew all along that he had murdered my cousin?"

"No, no!" she gasped, shrinking from him. "I had not the slightest suspicion. Could you think that I—"

"But tell me"—he appeared bewildered—"what was your reason for pretending that you had never met my cousin out there?"

"Such were his orders, which I have always obeyed implicitly, and... I had a reason of my own."

"What was it?"

"Revenge on you for the wrong done me by your cousin."

"In plain words, you wished to ensnare me? Well, you had an easy task," he laughed bitterly.
"Which has become more than I can bear. That is why I am here to open my soul. I said: 'If I can I will humiliate this man because of that other, I will cause him intolerable bitterness. If woman have any attraction for man, he shall desire me. I will bring him to my feet, and then spurn him as a dog of a mongrel breed.'"

"And like a dog I came to your feet, and you spurned me; but I could not see into your heart, I could not dream that you were animated wholly by revenge. Somehow I thought you nobler than that. That you defied me seemed natural enough: even when you hurled at me marriage with Take-moto I had no real fear that you could descend so low. Having no knowledge of the enigma of your life, how could I imagine that you were animated by so gross a spirit?"

"That spirit died at its birth," she said in a low voice. "And shame came to me, and horror and loathing beyond words. But could I believe? Should I break my heart at the bidding of a man? What was left me but pride? Such a weak, foolish little pride it seems now. Yet in the moment of my wrath this revenge did not seem so small a thing. You see, you had ennobled me beyond my merits. I am not, I never was, the woman of your imagination. I thought it would be a fine thing to bring you down and then laugh at you."
But when the hour came, there was no laughter left. I am humiliated beyond words, beaten all along the line; and so I come, not for pity, not to supplicate, but because I owed you this, and I am full of shame and terror. I had hoped to make a mock of you, and I have covered myself with humiliation. Truly the blood of Dr. Mohri must be strong in me, otherwise I could not have perpetrated this great shame."

She leant forward in the chair and hid her face in her hands. Before her he stood irresolute, wondering, scarcely believing that he had heard her aright. It seemed an incredible thing that she could be guilty of this great meanness, pitiful beyond words. Yet, if she had never been sincere before, he did not question her sincerity now. It was plain to the eye of the most exacting.

"And after?" he said. She turned up to him a pair of inquiring eyes.

"After?"

"When you found that I was not responsible for the shame of my cousin, when you found I was sincere, as far as God permitted me?"

"No one could guess my remorse." Then for a moment something of the old defiance shone in her eyes, poised curiously in the turn of her tilted chin.

"But that as it may be. Now you know me for what I am. This I think I owed you. It has cost
me much, but I had to come: I should never have known a moment's peace had I not told you all. I think I shall never know peace again."

"And this love for my cousin—there was love?"

"I may have thought so then. I was young, you see, young in many ways, and he was the first white man I had ever known. You would not understand what that meant to one in my position. . . . When he came to repudiate me my heart beat joyously. Long had I suspected what was then made certain."

"And Takemoto?"

She shuddered. "You could not dream—"

"No," he answered quickly. "Even when you turned on me I told you so."

"Takemoto is dead," she wailed. "Oji-san killed him, as he has killed so many. Oji-san who to me was a wonder, almost an adoration."

"You are sure there is no mistake here?"

"With my own eyes I saw him. The thing seemed to burst in Takemoto's face; there was a little smoke, and—Takemoto was dead."

So it was the same method: the little bomb, almost noiseless, the suffocating odour, and death. Dog and man, women, children, all paid tribute to this rapacious monster.

"What does it mean?" he asked. "Is he mad, do you think?"
"Mad drunk with patriotism, the glory of Nippon."

"The glory of Nippon?" he echoed, startled beyond himself, for of a sudden the awful truth seemed to dawn on him.

"By such means he hopes to lead the armies of Dai Nippon, Great Japan, victorious over the white races. He is mad for the greatness and glory of Nippon: the thought obsesses him. I sometimes think he is not quite human, and that he has but the most vague perception of the horror of his crimes. Indeed, I doubt that he really regards them as crimes. He is not as other men. In the white races he sees nothing but the potential enemies of his country, and it consequently becomes a religious duty to sacrifice them. The East is rising, he says, preparing for the great day, and he knows that when that day comes the white people, to save themselves, must sink their petty jealousies of each other and combine, or utter annihilation awaits them."

"But this devilish invention of his, whatever it is—is it not also dangerous for those who wield it? The fumes which overpower the enemy may also destroy the friend."

She started, then slipping her hand into the pocket of her coat drew forth the pad of linen and held it out to him.

"This is the antidote. As he stooped over
Takemoto-san he held this to his mouth and nose."

Everard took it, handling it as carefully as he would a venomous serpent. The pungent, but not unpleasant, chemical odour greeted his nostrils. Inquiringly he turned to her. In a few brief words she told him what she had seen, and how she had discovered the pad. The significance of it all seemed to strike him with singular force. Masked, protected in this manner, an army might sweep the world before it. Dr. Mohri was a more dangerous and terrifying person than ever he had imagined.

"And now," he said, a new, strange light stealing into his eyes, "what of yourself?"

"I do not know—except that I have fled from him, that I must hide myself away, that I cannot go back to him."

"You think he will follow?"

"I am sure of it. He may hate others, but me he loves."

"Loves!"

"You do not know him: none of your people could understand him. To him this is not murder, but a great and sacred duty for the glory of Nippon. Nothing else in the world counts with him. Scorn, opprobrium, hatred—the world might seethe with these, but they would not sway him a hair's-breadth from his purpose."
"Yet he realises that the moment he is apprehended, as apprehended he will be, the law will claim his life as forfeit?"

"He will never be apprehended."

"He must be. This sort of thing cannot go on unchecked. Heaven knows, Iris, I would do anything to spare you this humiliation, but you must realise that my duty—"

"You may try, but it will be useless—and dangerous. His enemies vanish one by one as though some unseen power swept them from the earth. I implore you not to attempt what so many have failed to achieve. I sometimes think he is a little more than human. Out there, in Kobe, people whispered strange tales of him: children ran and hid themselves as he passed through the street."

"And you believe—"

"Ah, no! Nevertheless he is not as other men, and to cross him is dangerous. Therefore I beg of you to rest content with this knowledge, and instead of seeking him, do your utmost to avoid him."

"And should he seek me?"

"Take this: it may save you." She held out the linen pad. "Keep it on you always, and should you suddenly encounter him, be prepared. He strikes quickly, like lightning."

"I know. Already has he struck me down." He told her of that incident in the laboratory.
"And you live?" It seemed to her as though a miracle had happened.

"As you see. He may not have meant to kill. I cannot say. He was forced to protect himself. But I might easily have died out there on the common."

She shuddered, drawing close to him with frightened eyes.

"You would have been sorry, Iris?"

"Yes," she answered simply, "I would have been very sorry."

"Nothing more?"

"What more?"

"Wouldn't it have seemed that something you would rather not part with had gone out of your life: that—that—perhaps—"

He had taken her hands and was involuntarily drawing her closer to him. Pathetically, appealing, she looked up at him. His arms went round her, and she hid her face in his breast.

"My dearest," he said, "look at me."

She did so through moist and quivering lashes. He kissed those dear, strange eyes, which looked up at him yearningly, mutely, with the patient love and adoration of a dog. Then, as though startled at a sudden thought, she drew back. Reproachfully he looked at her.

"I was forgetting who and what I am."
"You are my dearest love," he said, "and one day, soon, you are going to be my wife."

Slowly she shook her head.

"The niece of Hiro Mohri. Do you forget?"

"If the niece of Hiro Mohri loves me she will forget—all that I ask her to forget."

"Yes, I love you," she said quite simply. "I loved you even when I tried my hardest to bring about your humiliation: I think I loved you most when I taunted you with Takemoto. That was hard to bear?" she questioned.

"Very hard."

"Yet you did not upbraid me. If you knew how mean I felt. When I reached home I quarrelled with oji-san; but he knew I would never marry Takemoto. He will never let me marry you."

"Then we must do without his consent."

Realising all that this meant, a look of dire uncertainty sprang to her eyes. One might easily talk of defying Dr. Mohri, but therein lay a danger which she knew and feared.

"He will never consent," she said with finality. "Even now he may be coming in pursuit of me."

Apprehensively both turned to the door, and then instinctively each sought the eyes of the other.

"We must prepare even for that contingency. You are mine now," he said, "and I am going to hold you for ever."
THE GIRL FROM NIPPON. 267

She nestled in against his shoulder, and he felt the pressure of her dear arms tighten on his neck.

"Hold me close, my very dearest," she whispered; "don't let anyone tear me from your arms. I want to be yours, all yours, yours through life and the ages after life. In your Holy Book they say that those who love on earth shall meet again in Heaven. Do all Christians believe that?"

"All good Christians."

"I want to be a good Christian, for I want to believe it too."

"You are a good Christian already."

"Ah, no; but I shall be. You will teach me how."

"I am a poor teacher, dearest."

"You are a good teacher," she protested, "because you have taught me how to love you when my heart was filled with nothing but hatred and envy. Oji-san scoffed at all faiths: religion was to him but another name for superstition. He said that no intelligent man could believe in such a thing: that even those who professed such faith—the teachers, the priests—did so with a sneer in their hearts, laughing at the simplicity of the devout: that it meant nothing more than the grasping of worldly possessions, worldly power, and that its only use was to keep the ignorant in subservience and awe: vain promises held out to
propitiate the unhappy, those whom the world holds down."

"There may be many who think with him, but we do not envy them. All is not perfect, dearest, even in Christendom, though among much that is ill there is also much that is noble. But all this you shall know later. In the meantime we must hide you from Dr. Mohri. You were to sail to-morrow?"

"He will not go without me. Even now, returning suddenly, he may have learnt of my flight. At this moment he may even be waiting for me at your door."

She pressed closer to him, and there was a great fear in her eyes.
CHAPTER XXI.

In spite of himself he could not help gazing round with a look of alarm. This knowledge angered him; yet he was ready to admit that the thought of Mohri affected him like a nightmare. That implacable spirit of hate, who smote without mercy, what was one to do with him? Again the thought swept through him of the imperative duty he owed to the community; that he should go forthwith to the proper quarter and denounce this monomaniac who seemed to make a jest of murder. And yet how was that going to help him? To tell all did not mean to cure all. It was not to be assumed that apprehension would necessarily follow the disclosure of his identity. Then there was the girl, the girl whom he loved, whom he hoped one day to make his wife. How could he let her relationship with this monster be bandied about from lip to lip? He was distraught with a multiplicity of emotions. Dr. Mohri had to be fought and conquered, but he
270 THE GIRL FROM NIPPON.

could not see that publicity was the proper means to his end.

"You have no doubt," he questioned, "that once he learns of your flight he will come in search of you?"

"None whatever," she answered with conviction.

"And you do not wish to see him?" He put the question tentatively, like one who entertains the shadow of a vague suspicion.

"Never again," she replied, a little regretfully. His past kindness, consideration, love, all flashed through her mind, awaking a sense of deep depression. If the answer suggested ingratitude, as she feared it might, she hoped this lover of hers would understand. To him, to the world, Dr. Mohri was a homicidal maniac of the most appalling character; but to her he must always be oji-san, the man who had been father, mother, all that endears, the very embodiment of affection and careful consideration. Never could she look upon him with the eyes of the world; his crimes, so black to others, would always be pierced by the tender rays of solicitude. The knowledge of what he had been, how he had shielded her, made smooth her way through life, must always soften harsh judgment or bitter feeling. Memory flew back to other days when they had been very dear to each other, when she had looked up to him as one who was above all men in knowledge, when she had sat at his feet and drunk in his wisdom. And now
the land rang with detestation of him; every man's hand was against him. If apprehended an ignominious death awaited him; if encountered in the street he would be shot down like a mad dog.

Was he really conscious of the enormity of his offences? In her heart she doubted it; she was sure that his estimate of himself was at complete variance with the rest of the world, though she well knew that the world was likely to take little heed of that. To his perverted mind there might even seem something noble in his deadly work. It was not for personal gain, nor from any motive of revenge; all was for the advancement of Nippon and the glory of his race. This was to him faith, religion, God. So that he accomplished the end he had in view, the result sanctified the means.

Reading her inner thoughts Kenneth's manner was one of delicate consideration. He knew what this man had been to her, and that notwithstanding his many faults none but the better side of him had she seen. Therefore, and with much circumspection, he suggested that a cousin of his, who lived at Harrow, would gladly welcome her until such time as he could, by due process of law, make her his wife. Also he was not without the hope that during the interim Dr. Mohri might be apprehended, destroyed, or forced to fly the country, though of this he naturally did not breathe a word.
Expressing her willingness entirely to be guided by him, he at once began to think of the means by which he could put his plan into execution, and with that end in view immediately rang up his cousin. It was some time before he could get through, the people at Harrow having retired, but at last the connection was secured, and briefly as possible he explained his needs. Iris, of course, could not hear what was said at the other end of the line; but when Kenneth wound up with, "It’s awfully good of you, Jack. If I can get a taxi to bring us along I’ll come at once. Tell Molly she’s a dear," she knew that he had succeeded.

"It’s all right," he said as he hung up the receiver. "They’re two of the best people in the world, and I know you will be quite safe with them. Are you ready?"

"Quite," she answered. Without demur she would have gone with him to the end of the world.

Together they descended the stairs and made their way into Fleet Street. Opposite the "Griffin" they hailed three cabs in succession, but the drivers, pleading a lack of petrol, refused to take them so far. However, a fourth, who had not been long on the streets, learning that one of the fares would return with him, undertook the job, Kenneth assuring him that at Harrow he would be able to replenish his supply of petrol should such be necessary.
THE GIRL FROM NIPPON.

It was a long, strange, sweet drive, but it came to an end at last, and they were duly welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Worsley (otherwise Jack and Molly), with a warmth which gladdened both their hearts. It must be confessed that a humorous look twinkled in Jack Worsley's eyes as he glanced at Kenneth, and that Mrs. Worsley could not altogether suppress some sign of amazement as she welcomed the strangely beautiful girl. She, however, asked no questions, but slipping her arm through that of Iris led her away.

"I will come again first thing in the morning," Kenneth said. The girl smiled. Mrs. Worsley thought she had never seen such a plaintively beautiful smile.

"It's like this," Everard explained to Jack Worsley, who had taken his friend into the dining-room to give him a whisky and soda before his setting out again, "Miss Mayford—Iris—is going to be my wife. I give you my word, old chap, that everything is all right, but there are circumstances which render this secrecy necessary. When the time comes I will explain everything to your satisfaction. Tell Molly this." Jack nodded. "It is in connection with that affair of my cousin. There is a possibility of trouble, but I think we'll soon clear things up now."

Jack gripped his hand, his honest face beaming gratefully at the good news.
"You know what delight that will give us."
"I know. You’ve both been very good; I shall never forget."

Jack tossed his head disdainfully.
"My dear fellow, the thing was too absurd."
"You will be amazed when you hear the sequel. I know neither of you would dream of questioning Iris. Trust me just a little while longer."

Jack Worsley obtained for the driver a fresh supply of petrol, and Kenneth turned reluctantly from the house. It was a long and rather miserable run back, but he reached the Temple in safety, and though it cannot be said that he slept over-well that night, it was some consolation to know that he had placed Iris beyond the reach of harm.

When he arrived at Harrow on the following morning Jack had already gone to the City, but Molly Worsley met him in the hall, and greeted him with that charming frankness which was one of her most delightful characteristics.

"You’re a lucky man," she said. "Miss Mayford is charming."
"So glad you like her, Molly. I thought you would. How is she?"
"Quite well, and as self-possessed as though you had been married twenty years."

He saw the question she did not like to put, and
a rather amused smile shone in his eyes and played round the corners of his mouth.

"But there's something about her you don't quite understand, eh?"

"She has the most strangely beautiful eyes I have ever seen," said Mrs. Jack diplomatically.

"'Strangely beautiful,'" he echoed with a smile.

"Is that all?"

"Don't be absurd. Is she English?"

"Half; the other half is Japanese."

"Japanese!"

"Her father married a Japanese woman. She is over here with her uncle, Dr. Mohri."

"And where is he?"

"Thereby hangs a tale, Madame Curious—which shall be unfolded to you in due course," he added in a mysterious whisper. "Patience, my dear friend; I have promised Jack that you both shall know all presently."

"Well, she's in the garden," said Mrs. Jack with a sly smile. "I'm going into the town to do some shopping. You'll stay to lunch?"

"I was afraid you weren't going to ask me."

He found her on the lawn at the back of the house. She was sitting in a large wicker chair, a book on her lap, her head tilted back against the flaming red cushion, her eyes, like her thoughts, away in the clouds. He tried to draw near without disturbing
the, but as if acting on some instinct she suddenly sat up and looked round. Then with a little cry of joy she rose and came to him. He caught her in his arms and kissed her, and as she pressed her face against his breast he buried his lips in her thick black hair, the smell of which exhilarated him like a deep draught of wine.

"My own dearest," he said, his hands stroking her arms and shoulders with infinite tenderness.

Closely she clung to him, and the pressure of her slim, warm body against his set his pulses beating with happiness.

"It is you. You have come?"

"Did you think I would not?"

"No—but—" He saw the trouble in her eyes and kissed them.

"Nothing but death could keep me away from you," he said.

She shuddered. Death! It was ever in her thoughts; it hung like an exhalation about them. Quite plainly he read the thought that was passing through her mind.

"You are afraid?"

"Yes."

"But we are safe here. Nothing can harm you now."

"I hope so. Still, I am afraid. You do not know him. If he intends to discover me, he will.
If he should be angry with you ... You carry the antidote?

"Always."

"Be careful; never forget it. If anything should happen, I too should die." He kissed her quivering mouth. "I wonder if I had told him—if I had asked his permission. He may hate the world, but he loves me."

"Could he love anything—anyone?"

"He loves Nippon," she said, almost by way of an apology. "Therefore love is not dead in him."

"But he would have married you to Takemoto."

"You do not quite understand. He is an Oriental and looks at things with Eastern eyes."

"True," he answered; "I do not profess to understand the East."

"Yet this, too, came out of the East."

She held up the book she had been reading. He saw with a feeling of mingled pride and amazement that it was a copy of the New Testament.

"You understand, Iris?"

"I think so. Listen." She read slowly, with an intensity of expression which seemed to discover new depths in her:

"'And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain.'"
"It has comforted many," he said in a low voice, no less earnest than her own.

"To me it is singularly beautiful."

Reverently he laid his hand on her shoulder, for suddenly, added to the woman he adored, he saw the soul of her, and she grew sacred to his touch.

At the best he meant this house at Harrow to be but a temporary shelter, it being too near town and Dr. Mohri for him to feel perfectly secure. He knew of a quiet place in Devonshire, on the confines of Dartmoor, where, Mohri once eluded, they might hope for security; but, previous to that, he must make her his wife. Once married, and with the greater right to protect her, he felt that, even in the worst extremity, he would be able to meet Dr. Mohri on firmer ground.

He told her all this as they paced up and down the garden after lunch. The house inhabited by the Worsleys was a pretty, gabled, detached, red-brick building, unpretentious, yet showing much evidence of care and comfort. Though the front garden was small, there was a fair stretch of ground at the back, a part of which, at the bottom, was used as a kitchen garden, the whole being surrounded by a red-brick wall surmounted by broken glass. In the right-hand bottom corner was a clump of apple and pear trees blotting out that portion of the wall.

Arm in arm the lovers sauntered up and down the
well-shaven lawn which stretched to the beginning of the kitchen garden, earnestly discussing their plans for the future, when of a sudden Kenneth came to a standstill, his eyes glued upon the afore-mentioned clump of trees. Then with a low exclamation he dashed from her side and made a precipitate rush for the spot. He had caught, or thought he had, the glimmer of a pair of eyes staring at them through the leaves.

Yet, even though he mounted the wall, he saw nothing, nor could he discover the slightest trace of anyone having been there. She came towards him with a white, scared face and eyes that were full of terror.

"What is it?" she gasped.

"My mistake, of course. Foolish of me. I'm sorry."

"You saw something?"

"Thought I did. Of course it was only my fancy. I'm always seeing things—will always see them—until this is over."

But she was not to be satisfied with this lame explanation. Tremblingly she laid her hands on his shoulders and looked up at him with a pitiful expression.

"What was it?—tell me."

"A pair of eyes peering at us through the leaves."

She shuddered. He caught her hands, pressing
them warmly, and laughed, but not as wholeheartedly as he imagined.

"All fancy," he said, "the result of a heated imagination. Look, there are a thousand holes between those leaves which one might easily confuse with eyes. That's how perfectly sane and honest people see ghosts."

"Let us go in," she said.

"You are afraid, Iris?"

"Of him—always."

"But he would not harm you?"

"He might take me away from you." Helplessly, pitifully, she looked around. To her the air was full of mystery and terror; she seemed obsessed by the fear of unseen but ever-present fatality; as though out of the unknown destiny in some horrid shape would strike. "You won't let them take me away from you?" she pleaded.

"Not while I live."

But truth to tell he too had that sense of dread which he found so difficult to combat.

They agreed to say nothing to Molly Worsley of their fears, which, when analysed, resolved themselves into nothing more than terrors of the imagination. What else could they be? Supposing even that a man had been watching them over the wall, it was nothing but their fear that connected him with Dr. Mohri. Assuming even that some one had
been there, it might have been only a tramp, or a boy intent on plundering the fruit trees.

He told her all this, again and again he repeated the assurance to himself. He had discovered no one, there was not even a trace of anyone to be found: yet he counselled prudence as they drew near the house, and begged of her not to stir out of doors while he was away. On the morrow he would return and take her far into the country, where they would be free of all fear of pursuit.

It was dusk when he reached the Temple. The square was deserted, business being once more over for the day. Mounting the stairs, two steps at a time, he reached his own landing and quickly opened the door. The room was in darkness, but feeling for the switch he turned on the light. As he looked round he saw Dr. Mohri sitting in his own particular arm-chair placidly blinking up at him.
CHAPTER XXII.

NEEDLESS to say the unexpected apparition of the little doctor gave him a terrific shock. Instinctively his hand went to his pocket, an action which caused Mohri's lip to curl rather superciliously.

"There is no necessity," he said, the smile deepening. Kenneth Everard had forgotten that Dr. Mohri could smile. He would rather the feat had been impossible.

"What do you want here?—how did you get in?"

"I wanted to see you; and I came in through the door."

"Broke in?"

"Obviously, as the door was shut, I had no other alternative."

Gazing at that calm, insignificant, imperturbable figure, Kenneth could not realise that this was the maniac, the monster for whose life the country was positively howling. Never, perhaps, had crime sat so lightly, or so insignificantly, on any human being.
It seemed impossible that this could be the man who had set London—England—in a ferment. Crime, even in its most hideous form, lost all the fierce brutality of its force in such a guise. He should have been horrible to look at, tigerish, wolfish, not withered benevolence blinking through steel-rimmed spectacles. Looking at him was to fill one more with wonder than loathing; amazement tempered fear, incredulity almost blotted out anger and horror.

Not in the least perturbed, though well he knew how his presence affected Everard, he continued to blink upon that young man with as much composure as he would have watched the antics of a moth round a flame.

"Mr. Everard," he said, babbling smoothly and easily as a child, "I had hoped it would not be necessary again to warn you of the unpleasantness that may accompany interference with my affairs. Also I had hoped, having already received one warning, that you would exercise a greater discretion thereafter. I regret to see that you are one of those people who fail to profit by experience. This, as you may imagine, is extremely painful to me, having no use for fools."

Kenneth nodded with the slow sang-froid of one who was absolute master of his emotions, though dreading every moment that those emotions would master him.
"I don't think there is any necessity for us to discuss the relative value of fools," he said, assuming an ease he was far from feeling. "I presume you have come to demand the whereabouts of your niece, but if you expect to terrorise either her or me, you will find that you are mightily mistaken."

"No, no; nothing was further from my thoughts. Why should I come to ask you the whereabouts of my niece, when I know?"

"You know?" echoed the other incredulously.

"You took her to the house of Mr. Worsley at Harrow. I approve of your conduct, Mr. Everard; indeed there is much in you that I admire, however wrong I may consider it. The unfortunate thing is that our interests seem to clash."

"I love your niece, Dr. Mohri, and she has promised to be my wife."

"Women will promise anything; it is characteristically charming of them. Occasionally we wise ones step between them and their promises—for their own good. While admitting that Mrs. Worsley may possess every admirable attribute of her sex, I have thought it better to remove my niece from her care."

"Do you think that will be easy?"

"I shall be extremely surprised if it has not been done already."

Kenneth looked bewildered. Then he advanced a
quick step nearer the little man. The right hand, which all this time had been in his pocket, took a
firmer hold of the revolver.

“What do you mean by that?”

Dr. Mohri looked up blinking, unperturbed.

“If my orders have been carried out, which I have no doubt is the case, my niece has already
forsaken the protection of Mrs. Worsley.”

“You boast.”

“Sometimes I do more.”

There was no doubt of that. Kenneth shuddered. And yet he had no personal fear of this man; rather
was the feeling in him one of irritation, annoyance. He flew across to the telephone and bawled the
Worsleys’ number into it, the while his eyes were glued to his unwelcome visitor, who sat as calmly
as though this matter did not in the least concern him.

Receiving no reply to his call Kenneth rattled the receiver furiously.

“Don’t get angry with them,” purred the soft voice from the chair. “It is really not their fault; they are quite unable to answer. The connection is severed.”

“By you?”

“Oh, yes.”

Furiously replacing the receiver, Kenneth strode back and confronted that impassive figure.
"Get out of this," he said harshly. "For her sake I give you one more chance. Quit the country, go back to Japan with your cursed invention, or whatever you call it, and if you want to murder, murder your own people."

"She has been indiscreet, this niece of mine? Alas! it is the way with women, even the best of them!"

"I know who you are and what you are. I know you murdered my cousin as you have murdered Takemoto, as you have murdered so many innocent people. A mad dog is more fit to live than you."

"Then why not denounce me?"

"Because of her, and the shame a knowledge of your relationship would bring on her. This sort of thing must end, Mohri; you must quit the country at once. It is the last chance you will ever get of saving your miserable neck."

"And should I fail to be intimidated by your threats?"

"I will at once denounce you to the police."

"You are rash, Mr. Everard, knowing my power. Even now, if I so wished, I could destroy you where you stand."

Kenneth whipped the revolver from his pocket and held it within a yard of the man's head.

"Keep your hands out of your pockets," he warned, "unless you want me to blow your brains out."
Perceptibly the doctor shrunk from those fierce eyes, that threatening pistol. But he did not attempt to rise, nor did he fumble at his pockets. On the contrary, calmly, almost ostentatiously, he stretched his slender little hands along the arms of the chair. Then he looked up with that smile which was deeper than the gaze of the Sphinx.

"Pray do not excite yourself unduly. Had I wished to kill you I could have done it a dozen times within the last ten minutes. I could do it now even though you seem to command the situation."

"I think not," answered the other grimly.

Mohri shrugged his shoulders, the while his slender fingers beat a delicate tattoo on the leather arms of the chair.

"Remember," he said, "the number of times I have had you at my mercy. If I were what you believe me to be, could I have been so generous?"

"What can I believe you to be, except what you are—a murderer and a discredit to humanity! The only consolation to be found is in the knowledge that you are not a white man."

"I am equally pleased with that knowledge. You and your white men!" he sneered, his thin mouth twitching angrily. "And all England, all Europe, is trembling at the exploits of one despised Oriental. What do you think it will be when we swarm across your country in our tens of thousands,
burning, destroying, your cities ravaged, your homesteads in flames!"

"So that is your dream! Others have dreamt it before—and they have gone the way of all such dreamers."

A slow smile spread over the narrow yellow face, and for a moment seemed to irradiate the high cheekbones.

"Perhaps it would not be profitable to discuss any such contingency. Dream your fool-greatness: let it lap you in a heavy slumber of vanity until the awakening."

"What you conceive to be a heavy slumber is merely the repose of the giant. His limbs are strong, his brain clear—he does not sleep, he rests. Go back with that message to your people: tell them to banish their vain dreams of conquest. A disastrous triumph over a demoralised foe, fighting thousands of miles from his base, has turned your silly heads. The white race will always keep you where you are, where you deserve to be. You are not great enough to be free: only foolish enough to be vain and unscrupulous."

"Yet you would marry one of our people, the people your high superiority despises."

"I despise no people, though I may loathe the individual."

"She has my blood in her veins—the blood of a
murderer. There were moments when I might have made of her what I would."

"That you refrained is to your credit, Dr. Mohri. For that I owe you something, and here, now, I wish to discharge the debt. It is the recollection of this, of what you have been to her, of what she thought you were, that has held me back so long. But an end has come to my forbearance. You must leave England at once."

"I have your permission to depart?" The low voice rang with the faintest suspicion of a taunt. "That is exceedingly good of you, but culpable. I believe your law recognises the offence of being accessory after the fact. But my work is finished. I have no further use for you or yours—at present. You may doubt me, Mr. Kenneth Everard, but in spite of your excessive foolishness there is something in you that I admire. According to your lights you are an honest man, and however much I may deplore an excess of honesty in a world where only the rogue and the hypocrite prosper, I have a perverted admiration for honesty. Iris-san, my honoured niece, is honest. I think, also, her father was an honest man: at least, my honourable sister always protested so with much feminine vehemence; although one must make every allowance for the adoration of that strange sex, which creates a god to-day and hurls him from his shrine to-morrow.
Almost I regret my determination not to let her marry a white man. She is of the East, she must remain of the East. It is imperative to my scheme of things."

"Your scheme of things? Murder?"

"Incidentally, perhaps, as the slaying in battle is murder. I foresee trouble with authority out there even as your dreamers here are stifled beneath a mountainous dust-heap of officialism. You think of us as a people in the van of progress, quite forgetting the fact that we are an Oriental people still swathed in the ignorant superstition of long-dead centuries, flaunting in our caps the peacock feather of vanity. But in that ignorance lies our strength, for from the ignorant only can we command allegiance to the death. Is it not so with all the fighting peoples? On that ignorance the men who rule rely. There would be no great king, no great statesman, no great soldier or sailor were it not for the brute ignorance of the common herd. That authority can always command: I shall command authority."

"Yet you seemed to doubt."

"Hence my niece must be taught my secret. I have no son to take my place, no one in whom I dare confide. That is why she must return with me. I take this trouble to explain, because I wish you to understand the apparently unwarrant-
able position I have taken up. Personally, I should be most happy to respect her wishes if they did not clash with my schemes, but the circumstances are such that it is imperative she return with me."

"And do you suggest that she will agree to continue these horrible murders?"

"What you call murder I call by quite another name. But since we do not seem to agree on this point I see no use in further discussing it. Perhaps you do not realise that my experiments are at an end? The machine is perfected. In the future it will help the conquering armies of Dai Nippon to sweep everything before them. That will not be murder, but war, which your priests bless and call noble! If I should die, my secret must not die with me, that is all. Do I make myself quite clear?"

All this he spoke naturally, conversationally, in a tone so matter-of-fact as to make his listener wonder if he could be hearing aright, to doubt that this inoffensive, persuasive little person could really be the cold-blooded monster of his imagination. And that moment of doubt was his undoing, one for which those little eyes with the lizard lids had been watching. With a lightning-like spring Mohri was out of the chair and had struck Kenneth a blow on the wrist which for the moment deprived him of all power. The revolver flew from his fingers,
and before he realised what had happened Mohri had pounced on it.

"My turn now," he said, levelling it at Everard's face. "You have not yet learned to seize your opportunities. A most lamentable error."

Kenneth fell back a pace or two, reading murder in the doctor's eyes. He had no doubt that Mohri meant to kill him, as he had killed so many others. In that calm, impassive face he read a meaning which boded little hope.

"For the moment I was mistaken, and I deserve to pay. I should have remembered the viper you are and crushed you without mercy." The little man admitted as much with a grave inclination and an unemotional stare, the very fixity of which was fate in its most implacable mood. "Well, why do you hesitate? Why don't you shoot?"

"That is not my way, Mr. Everard," he purred. "Firearms make a noise, and I happen to possess an intense dislike to all noise. When I kill, I kill softly, gently, with the supreme art of my race. Your violent Western methods never did appeal to me. One breathes, and then ceases to be. It is decidedly better both for the experimentalist and his subject."

He laid the revolver on the table beside him as if in mockery of his victim, at the same time slipping his other hand into his pocket. When it
came out again Kenneth saw that he held a small, whitish-looking globe in his fingers. This he poised daintily as if in the act of throwing. A low, long whine came from a door on the right. It was the great Airedale. A slow smile full of meaning crossed Mohri's face.

"I regret the necessity," he said, "but circumstances render it imperative. You know just a little too much, Mr. Everard. Takemoto-san knew too much, and now he knows nothing. It is better thus. Men die easily this way. Many will experience it later: you will have the advantage of them. Also I might experience some difficulty in persuading my niece to return with me if she thought you were alive. Please accept my most humble apologies."

With a sharp yelp the dog hurled himself at the door. Then he began to scratch and whine. A cruel smile pursed Mohri's thin lips. Kenneth saw and understood. Thoughts, hopes, fears flashed through his brain. If the dog could only break through! But Mohri stood between him and the door, that innocent-looking globe of death poised in his fingers.

"You fully understand," cooed the little man, "that I much regret the necessity? Your own intrusive actions have rendered it imperative."

"Why do you hesitate? What is one murder more or less to a monster like you?"

"Nothing. It was not of that I thought. Oh,
no! The duty of man, as of nations, is to sweep the enemy from his path. Unhappily, you have constituted yourself my enemy, and you must go, swept up, dissipated. Even if I wished, I could not afford to let you live. No one must know my secret and live. No,” as Kenneth looked wildly round, “I assure you there is no possible way of escape. If you look at that clock you will see that it is now two minutes to the hour. On the stroke of its first chime you will cease to exist.”

“Why wait so long?” Kenneth asked, despair driving him to the point of recklessness. “I ought to have shot you like the dog that you are when I had the chance. God forgive me for a fool!”

“I admit that was an extraordinary error, for which you are now about to atone. Believe me, even at this last moment, I would show favour if I dared; but I must kill you, Mr. Everard, otherwise I imperil my scheme of things. You should have taken warning, and so avoided me and mine.”

He saw the little man take a swift glance at the clock. Instinctively his eyes wandered in the same direction. It was but a question of seconds now. Then, suddenly remembering, his hand went to his breast pocket. At that moment the silver chime struck the first note. Mohri leaned over the table and hurled the bomb at his face. But, acting on impulse, he sprang in the air, clapping
the pad of linen to his mouth. The missile struck him just below the neck and exploded with a muffled sound. A bluish vapour rose above his head. For a second or so he swayed like one who has been partly stunned by a blow, and Mohri, a similar pad of linen across his own face, watched him with wonder and incredulity. But, as Kenneth staggered towards the table, his free hand outstretched, Mohri, realising in a flash what that action meant, tilted the table and sprang towards the door, reaching which he switched off the light.

He heard Kenneth stumble and knew he was searching for the revolver, which had fallen on Everard's side of the room. A moment—two—three—he waited. Then suddenly he opened the door, sprang out, and snapped it to behind him. A bullet splintered the panel as he passed through.

Kenneth staggered across after him, for notwithstanding the antidote a little of the fumes had penetrated his brain, one hand holding the pad to his mouth and nose, the other gripping the revolver. He did not wait to switch on the light, but pulling the door open dashed on to the landing.

Not a trace of Mohri was to be seen. For a moment, but for a moment only, he hesitated. Then he dashed down the stairs at a breakneck pace, and so out into the open. He did not doubt that Mohri had made his exit by way of the lane
into Fleet Street, and like one gone suddenly mad with the lust of murder he dashed that way. Out of the shadows of the lane he saw a form emerge and come towards him. Up went the revolver, and in his madness he might have fired had not the light from an adjacent lamp shown the newcomer to be Jeffrey Colburne.

"Where is he?"

"You, Ken! What on earth——"

"Have you seen him?"

"Him?"

"Dr. Mohri! He went this way."

"I have seen no one. What does it mean?"

Colburne, taking his friend by the arm, found that he was shaking horribly. A strong smell of chemicals seemed to infect the air.

"He has been here—that devil out of hell. We had a tussle. Ugh! Let's get back. Can't you hear the dog howling?"

Away across the still air came the long howl of a dog, which in turn was followed by a succession of sharp, fierce barks. The two men hurried along, both too bewildered to speak.
CHAPTER XXIII.

At the very moment that Kenneth Everard was facing death in his chambers in the Temple, Iris woke from a troubled dream to behold Yoban's slit eyes staring at her in the moonlight. The window was open, and as the cold air blew in it gently stirred the curtains. She sat up shivering, but made no sound. She was not one of those girls who scream in any and every emergency, though even had she attempted to do so the watchful servant was ready to stifle the cry in her throat. As it was he stood over her, his finger to his lips, thereby enjoining silence.

"What do you want?" she asked in a low voice.

"The honourable lady must dress herself and come with me."

"I cannot go with you."

"He commands."

"I will not. How dare you enter this room?"

"Pardon, honourable lady, it is not I. He commands."

"I will alarm the house."
"It cannot matter; and it may be dangerous," he added in a warning tone.
"For you."
"For your honourable friends. He commands: we obey."
"Where would you take me?"
"Back to him who waits."
"I refuse to go." Vexatiously she bit her lip.
"I hope the honourable lady will not make it necessary for me to use force."
"You dare!"
"I obey my master," he answered in the tone of one who acted without volition of his own.
"Yoban, I don't wish to go back: I can't. I am frightened. My uncle has made it impossible for me to live with him. I do not wish to see him again: I want him to forget me."
"Orders, lady, the master's orders. I beg of you to consider my position and help me. It is not I who do this thing, who dare to penetrate your honourable chamber. Lady, I implore you to go with me; and make no sound, otherwise we shall be forced to deal with your friends."
"We?"
"They wait in the garden."
If this was true there was no hope for her: there would be no hope for her friends should they attempt to interfere. She hadn't the slightest doubt that
Jack Worsley would show fight: he was the sort of person who would plunge into battle with no thought of self. And if anything should happen, as she was sure it would, how could she look Molly Worsley in the face, how Kenneth? They had been good to her, kind beyond all seeming. Molly she already loved as a sister. To lure her husband to destruction would be the devil's way of showing love—worthy the niece of Dr. Mohri.

"I will come," she said.

Yoban strode over to the window and looked out while she slipped into her clothes. This window gave on to a small balcony, which in its turn was only a few feet from the ground. When she announced herself as being ready he beckoned her out on to the balcony. On the grass plot below a man stood in the shadow cast by a wing of the building. She recognised him as one of the native servants. He steadied her drop as Yoban helped her over. Then with an agile movement Yoban leapt the rail and softly alighted beside her.

They escorted her in the shadow of shrub and tree until they reached the bottom of the garden. The gate was opened and they passed out. After making a detour of several of the houses they came, at the corner of a deserted street, upon the car. Without speaking Yoban opened the door and she stepped in. The next moment they were speeding towards Hampstead.
It had all taken place so quietly and so swiftly that she almost failed to realise what had happened until the car was well on its way. Then the thought occurred to her that she might at least have made some show of resistance, though this regret passed swiftly. She was not really afraid again to face her uncle, notwithstanding her knowledge of him, and she had the satisfaction of believing that in thus acting she had saved the Worsleys from probable disaster. That, at all events, she had by her acquiescence avoided, and from this fact she wrung all the consolation that was obtainable.

* * * * *

In the meantime Kenneth and Jeffrey Colburne, having re-entered their chambers, the former at once sprang across to the telephone and endeavoured to open up communication with the exchange; but as no answer was returned to him he realised that what Mohri had said was true, and after a few moments' search he discovered where the wire had been severed. Blankly he looked at his companion.

"I must get through to them at Harrow. She may be in the greatest danger."

"I wonder if Simpson's in?" was Colburne's suggestion.

"Let us go up and see."

Simpson, who had a suite of chambers above them, was intimate with the two friends, so that they had
little compunction in knocking him up at that hour of the night. Kenneth dashed out, followed by his friend, and bounded up the stairs two steps at a time. Fortunately, Simpson was in. Clad in a loose, shabby dressing-gown, a pipe in his mouth, a ponderous-looking law-book in his hand, he opened the door in answer to Kenneth's vigorous knocking. A look of astonishment crossed his rather sallow, ill-shapen face as Kenneth blundered in.

"Hullo!" he cried. "Burglars?"

"What do you mean?"

"Heard your pup kicking up an awful shindy. Thought I heard a shot."

"Then you woke up. I say, old chap, may I use your 'phone?"

"Of course; but I really don't think I was asleep."

Without waiting to explain Kenneth dashed across the room and snatched at the receiver. Simpson looked at Colburne with elevated brows: Colburne replied with an air of intense mystery. Simpson, who was an extremely placid man, laid down his book and calmly relit his pipe.

"Have they answered?" asked the man at the exchange.

"Not yet."

"You're through all right."

"They are probably in bed."

"I'll call them up again."
An interminable waiting. The only sound heard in the room was the noise made by Simpson as he pulled rather strenuously at his pipe.

"Hullo!"

"Hullo!" answered Kenneth. "Is that you, Jack?"

"Who is it?"

"Kenneth."

"Good lord! What's wrong?"

"That's what I want you to tell me. Is Iris safe?"

"Safe! What d'ye mean? Of course she is."

"Are you sure?"

"Sure? She went to bed three hours ago."

"Is she there now?"

A low chuckle came over the line.

"How the deuce should I know?"

"Go and see, there's a dear fellow."

"What—me?"

"For God's sake go. It's serious. I believe her to be in great danger. Go—quickly. I'm half mad with terror."

"Well I'm—- All right. Cling to the line."

Kenneth hung to it in an agony of expectation. Every sense was stretched to its utmost to catch the slightest sound. He did not seem to be aware of the presence of the others until Simpson struck another match, for which he received a diabolical scowl. His mind was following Jack Worsley as he mounted the stairs: he almost fancied he could hear the
knock on the door. Colburne watched him anxiously as though in anticipation of the worst: Simpson looked from Colburne to the man at the telephone with a placid air of disinterestedness which deeply belied the true state of his feelings. As a fact his mind was sharply inquiring who was "she," and what it all meant. After an almost intolerable interlude the one-sided conversation, as far as the listeners were concerned, was resumed.

"Are you there?" came over the line from Harrow in an excited voice.

"Yes, yes!"

"Miss Mayford is not in her room."

"Gone!"

"Evidently."

"Sure?"

"Absolutely."

"No clue?"

"None."

"You do not think she is in the house?"

"Sure she's not."

"You heard nothing?"

"Nothing. Her bed has been slept in, but her clothes are gone. The window of her room was wide open. I had to break in the door."

"Good God!"

"What do you suspect, old man? What does it mean?"
"Thanks, Jack. Sorry to trouble you. Does Molly know?"
"She's here with me now. Can we do anything?"
"Nothing, thanks. Good-night."
"Good-night. But, Ken——"

But Kenneth had clapped back the receiver and so severed connection. His face was white, his lips twitched nervously as he turned to the two men.
"Thanks ever so much, Simpson," he muttered.
"Awfully sorry to trouble you."
"No trouble, old boy. Sorry things haven't panned out satisfactorily. Can I be of any further service?"

Kenneth shook his head and made for the door, Colburne following. Closing the door after them, Simpson returned to his pipe and his book—and his thoughts.

"Well, he's got her," Kenneth explained as soon as they had returned to their own chambers. "While he was here holding me in check, his people broke in at Harrow and carried her off."

"He moves swiftly, and to some purpose, this Dr. Mohri."

"We, too, must move swiftly. You're in with me in this?"

"My dear fellow!"

In answer to a further and prolonged whining of the dog he went to the door and let the great fellow out.
“Here’s another auxiliary,” he said, stroking the animal, who whined and capered round him for joy. “We’ll take him with us.”

“Where?”

“Where we are going. She described the house at Golder’s Green—its situation. I shall find it; and even if I fail, the dog won’t. You’d know his scent, old fellow, wouldn’t you, even though a thousand crossed it?”

The dog, his head against his master’s knee, looked up with clear, unblinking eyes.

“You think they have taken her there?”

“We shall see. If they haven’t, we’re done for.”

Swiftly he examined his revolver, reloading the empty chamber. Then he slipped the weapon into his pocket along with a handful of loose cartridges, which he took from the drawer of his desk. Silently Colburne did the same. The dog looked on, his tail wagging as if in approval, his eyes shining like diamonds.

“We are going to find her, Inu,” he said. The dog rubbed his great shaggy body against his master’s legs and whined. “We have an account to settle, you and I. Remember, no mercy this time.”

The dog stiffened.

“I believe he knows,” said Colburne.
CHAPTER XXIV.

IN the drawing-room of the house at Golder’s Green Iris sat huddled in the arm-chair biting her lips with the vexation of defeat. Her hair, which had been hastily knotted preparatory to her departure from Harrow, had fallen loose, and a roll of it lay across her shoulder—thick, black, lustrous, sweet-smelling. Her hat, fallen awry, gave her an almost jaunty appearance in dejection. Dr. Mohri, his hands behind his back, stood by the fireplace blinking at her through his steel-rimmed spectacles. He was as placid, as imperturbable as ever, and for all outward emotion shown by him as sure of himself as he had ever been.

"Why did you do it?" she asked angrily. "I had no wish to see you again—I have no wish to see you. Knowing you as you are, I fear you. With fear there can be no love."

"Have I not tried to explain? You are necessary to my scheme of things. There is no one else whom I can trust. If I should go, you must carry on
my secret: should I survive and reach Nippon, much honour and glory await us both."

"I refuse to be a party to your detestable schemes: I will have nothing to do with them. Go, return to Nippon if you wish, but leave me in peace."

"I cannot leave you in peace, Iris-san; I cannot leave myself in peace. Having ventured so far, I must march on to the end. Moreover—"

"Moreover?"

"It is not my wish that you should ally yourself with a white man. I hate all white men: I live only for the day of their humiliation—the triumph of Nippon. Listen, Iris-san: much as I have loved you and found comfort in you, I would rather see you dead than know that the child of my honourable sister was in the arms of one of this detested race. Therefore I sent for you to come to me, and like a dutiful child you came."

"But not for love of you," she answered boldly, "but fear for the friends who had been kind to me."

"It is the same thing. Then you have no fear for yourself?"

"None. You may kill me as you have killed others. I should not be the first woman you had struck down."

Unruffled he answered: "These women are the mothers of these men. Not that I strike at women, but if they cross my path, they must be swept
aside. But you—it is of you I would speak. My secret is known to more than one. He knows: how many more by this time I cannot say. Obviously it would imperil our chances if we were to attempt to reach Liverpool. We must quit London by another route."

"Do you think that will help you? Do you suppose that you can avoid the penalty of your crimes? Though you hide on sea or on land the fate which you have courted will assuredly track you down. No man can do as you have done and escape punishment. It would be against all reason, all law, all sense of justice. God, fate, destiny, Providence—whatever you like to call it—is not the impotent fancy of a superstitious mind. In the life of man there is a controlling force which you have outraged, flaunted, jeered at, and it is now about to take its revenge on you. I would not be you for all the wealth and glory of Nippon past and to come."

"I have met that controlling force and have conquered it: I shall conquer it always. Man moulds his destiny: he does not leave it to the whim of chance. But time presses. You will go with me, Iris-san—reasonably, decorously?"

"I cannot!"

"Cannot?"

"Dare not! I fear you: I should be in constant
terror of you: I should be ashamed of you. If go you must, and if you are wise you will fly before you hear the knocking at the door, go, in God's name, but leave me behind!"

Involuntarily his eyes turned towards the door, and she knew that he was listening.

"I cannot go without you," he said quietly, softly, and yet as if with finality. "It is always dangerous to leave a traitor behind."

"Traitor!"

"You are not that? You have not warned the enemy of my secret?"

"I? No! What makes you think that I would betray you?"

"I had not thought so once, but I have had proof. What did you give to Kenneth Everard?"

She started forward with a gasp, her eyes wide with terror, her lips suddenly frozen.

"Have you killed him, too? Have you struck him down as you did the others?" She advanced on him, her eyes blazing with sudden fury, her lips trembling. In her heart was no thought of fear. The tigress robbed of her cub, the mother of her first-born, would know as little sense of terror. "If you have—if you have done this—I will kill you with my own hands, oji-san."

"Peace, peace!" he commanded. "I have not
killed him. Is it possible that he can be so much to you?"

"If he is dead," she continued fiercely, "I will hate you through all eternity. Living I will hound you to your doom: dead I will follow you into the unknown."

Slowly he nodded, as if comprehending all.

"In an hour's time," he said, "the car will be waiting for us. Go and prepare yourself for the journey."

"He is dead? You have killed him?"

"He is not dead."

"But you tried! Ah, thank God!"

"Why do you thank God? Whose God?"

He knew the thought running through her mind had reference to the stolen pad of linen. He had wondered if she had seen him place it to his mouth as he stood over the huddled body of Takemoto.

"You will be ready in an hour?" he said.

"I cannot go with you," she answered slowly.

"I do not wish to see you again. Is not that enough? You could not wish one to accompany you who finds your presence abhorrent?"

"Don't you understand? I dare not leave a traitor behind."

"A traitor—I!"

"Is it necessary to prolong this unedifying discussion? It is imperative that you come with
me, Iris-san. I could never sanction your marriage with my enemy, supposing it is marriage he intends.” She bit her underlip sharply, as though to keep back the bitter cry of pain. “Remember, you are only a half-breed, one of the despised, inferior race. These men do not marry such women as you.”

“You lie! I am a white girl—and he loves me.”

It was his last throw, and it failed. A bitter sneer curled his lip, and then his beady slits of eyes with their puffed, lizard lids forgot to blink.

“Time flies,” he said, “and I cannot wait indefinitely. You come with me?”

“No!”

“Listen, Iris-san, for I am serious. It is imperative that you obey me in this. I have definitely decided that you must come with me. I cannot leave you here to be the spoil of this man: I will not. Therefore do not attempt further to exhaust my patience. Do you not realise that I am determined, desperate—if you will have it so. Either you must share my secret, or—”

“Your secret will die with me?”

She spoke in a low, tense voice, her eyes desperate with horror and the thing she dare not name. Could he—would oji-san do this thing?

“The way is long,” he answered in that soft, cooing, sing-song of his, “and the night will soon give place to the day. We must be many miles
from London before it dawns. Abroad we shall take ship for Nippon. You will forget these happenings in our own land. Here, I regret to say, I can no longer trust you. You will go to this man, my enemy, and together—"

"Who has made him your enemy?"

"Would it profit me to explain? All you have to realise is that my secret must not remain in the possession of one whom I cannot trust."

"If I refuse, you will kill me as you killed Take-moto, as, for all I know to the contrary, you have already killed him? Well, I will not go with you: I cannot, I dare not. Now kill me, if you will. I shall have a tale to tell my mother, your honourable sister, which, when you come, oji-san, as come you must, you will find hard to answer."

"I think," he replied, "that tales are not carried thither; and in any case, I shall find my reward in the knowledge of duty accomplished. This man must be given up, Iris-san, and all the dreams and yearnings that have gone with the thought of him. In this my resolve is unalterable. Do not put me to the limit of my patience. To you I have abased myself beneath the dignity of man. I go no further: you must obey."

Defiantly she glared back at him. Did he mean it? Would he carry out his threat? Would he destroy her? For a moment a mist of pain blurred
her vision. Yet in that moment she saw all that she had lost, or might be losing. Would he strike her down, mercilessly, pitilessly, as he had struck down so many others? In her heart she believed he would. Beyond all conception the man was mad with his great ideal. Mother, father, sister—none of these would he spare in pursuance of his plan. He would shatter a world, create chaos, misery, and suffering unutterable, rather than forgo the madness that obsessed him. And now she, too, was to be added to his list of victims. For a stranger she had turned from him, as women will to the end of time, and she felt he hated the man more on that account than because of the colour of his skin, or of his knowledge of the secret.

"Then I am to die, oji-san?" she said.

"It is better so," he answered without emotion.

"How long do you give me to live?"

"All your life," he said, "if you listen to me."

"I have listened to you, and you tell me that I must give him up. This I cannot do, because there would be no joy in life without him. Therefore I could not live—I have no wish to live."

"To die is to lose all."

"Perhaps also to gain all."

But the gain was not commensurable with the loss. Truly to die was to lose all; and her blood ran
strongly, and her heart yearned for the fulfilment of human love."

"In our country there is an honourable method of dying."

"I am not of that country. If I thought so once, I know now that it was a trick of destiny. And to me that method would not be honourable: rather would it be a great dishonour. You shall kill me, oji-san, and then, perhaps, you may at last realise what death means: you may at last be brought to a bitter understanding of the wrongs you have committed."

"How shall I kill you?" he asked.

"Swiftly. I would not suffer pain: do not let me suffer pain, or know what I am leaving. As you killed Takemoto. It is quick. I shall not feel it?"

"You shall not feel it. This is your resolve?"

"Unless you let me go to him. Your secret shall not pass my lips, or his. For him I promise. Let me live, oji-san, let me live!"

"You would like to live?"

"Am I not young? The blood in my veins is warm: I am aglow with life."

"Coldness is better," he said. Then he crossed to the door; but as he reached it he stopped. "Prepare, Iris-san. Coldness and oblivion are much better than pain and the wounds of memory."
CHAPTER XXV.

LEFT alone, Iris gazed round the room confusedly. Was this indeed to be the end? Would he return and coldly carry out his desperate resolve? To strike at a stranger—that, perhaps, was conceivable—but ruthlessly to slay one who had been so dear, was this possible? Yet in truth she did not doubt. Obsessed as he was by his schemings, he would allow admittance to no generous impulse, no human sentiment.

If she could only know the fate of her lover! If he were dead, then death might not be so terrible; but if he still lived, then this going out into the void was full of fear and horror. How could she know? If she could only know! In her heart she believed that he still lived. Oji-san, with all his crimes, had never stooped to lying. Accused, he admitted the accusation. He would have admitted it as calmly, as imperturbably, to judge and jury as to the individual in private. He made no pretence of not knowing how the world regarded him:
it merely meant that he acted according to his light, accepting his own principles in his own way.

But to die! She had not that fear of death which affrights the Western mind. The Oriental in her still struggled with the embryo Christian. Fatalism, the thing that must be, strive we ever so hard—this, perhaps, was still a part of her creed. This fate she had been accustomed to regard calmly, impersonally: something that comes to us and takes us by the hand whether we will or not. Perhaps to-day, perhaps to-morrow: in any case, soon or late. What matters the hastening or the tarrying? But in those other days there was not the same incentive to live. She had not lived, had not known what life was. She had not known the sensation of a strong, tender pair of arms about her body, of the utter abandonment of self in the existence of another.

Sharply she turned and looked towards the window. Was she mistaken? Listening, she heard it come again, a low tap on the glass without. Puzzled, she hesitated, but only for a moment. Then she stepped noiselessly, swiftly, towards the window.

The blind, not having been pulled quite down, left a vacant space of about six inches, and as she drew near, peering, she saw a white face on the other side of the glass, and with a little whimper
of joy recognised it as her lover's. He was signalling excitedly for her to open the window, and without a moment's hesitation she obeyed. Instantly he sprang into the room and caught her in his arms. She did not notice the great Airedale leap in after him, or Colburne standing outside, a revolver gleaming in his hand.

Kenneth half-led, half-dragged her towards the window. Not that she had failed to read his purpose, or had hesitated to act on it; but at that moment her quick ears had caught the sound of a step outside, and a momentary paralysis seemed to seize her. The dog also heard that step and knew it, for with a pitiful little whine he shrank quivering in against the curtains.

"He is coming!" she gasped, and as the door opened Kenneth covered the intruder with his revolver.

"You are my prisoner, Dr. Mohri. Keep your hands out of your pockets—or I fire."

Mohri, without betraying the least emotion, stepped into the room and kicked the door to after him.

"This is extremely rash of you, Mr. Everard," he said smoothly. "Though, of a truth, I did not expect to see you again so soon, I cannot say that I am sorry you have come. It is well that we should have a final understanding."
Kenneth watched him closely, ready to shoot at the first suspicious movement. He knew Dr. Mohri now, what he had to expect should he for an instant relax his guard, and his mind was made up. He would shoot this murderer come what might of it.

"I think we have come to that," he said. "The game's up, Mohri. You are my prisoner."

Mohri smiled. "I your prisoner! Rather have you placed yourself in my hands. Yet for her sake I would spare you. Go your way. There is death in this house."

Nonchalantly he walked across the room, the muzzle of the revolver following him. Catching a glimpse of Colburne by the window a supercilious smile curled his thin lips.

"Are there many more of you? How many? So much the better. There will be fewer for the conquering armies of Nippon to annihilate. Tomorrow London will learn of a fresh outrage, one that may be more provocative of terror than all that has gone before. The adorable rashness of youth that would assault the stars, or weave a shroud for destiny! You may as well drop that plaything. The day is mine: all days are mine—and Nippon's. You are utterly at my mercy: do you know this? I think you know it: I fancy I see the knowledge in your eyes. It is something to know—something."
"Nevertheless, I fire at the first suspicious movement."

"Even that will not save you—or her. Fool, to think you could thwart my will, match yourself with me, with one who carries the fate of nations in his hands. As well might you build a screen of rushes to shelter you from the typhoon that comes hurtling across the Yellow Sea. I am death, I am judgment: I conquer all. It is I who command. I who deal fate at my will."

The contemptuous curl never left his lips: his eyes ceased to blink. Suddenly he seemed to grow tall, powerful, menacing, almost like death. That he believed himself to be all that he proclaimed the anxious watchers never doubted. There was an air about him as of one who controlled unseen powers. Nothing insignificant or mean: a spirit in whom burned the forces of destiny.

Kenneth, his finger on the trigger, wondered why he did not press it, why he did not put an end to the intolerable strain. Feeling that every moment that passed was a clear gain to the enemy, he yet hesitated to shoot in cold blood. The man who did not strike when his chance came was trifling with fate. Yet Mohri refrained from presenting him with the opportunity he craved, as if knowing that this man would act only in self-defence. He had waited once: he had but to wait again.
But suddenly, like a flash of lightning sweeping across a dark sky, the scene was changed. None of them had observed the great Airedale crouching in the corner. For one thing, they had eyes only for that wizened embodiment of fate, and the great animal had ceased his whining with the advent of his torturer. Consequently, not a thought had been turned his way. But when he sprang it was like a projectile hurling itself from the mouth of a gun. With a savage snarl, mane erect, tail stiff, eyes green with the fury of hate, he launched himself at his enemy, and his great white teeth met with a vicious snap on the lean brown throat. Mohri saw him coming, and his hands went up as if to ward off the dreadful impact. But it was too late. He staggered, uttered a snarl of rage and anguish, then fell backward, the dog on top of him. Mohri beat at him, kicked, screamed, but the dog ground his teeth into him, and tore at the narrow bosom with his claws.

Kenneth, acting on instinct, rushed forward and seized the creature by his neck: Colburne scrambled through the window. When they eventually tore the infuriated animal from his victim Dr. Mohri lay still.

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THE END.
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