

THE ATTACHE

By P. Y. BLACK

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Cannon and Powers rose and howled with joy when their striker brought in the card, a most official card—"Mr. Kido Mabuchi, the Japanese Legation, Washington, D. C." In the big school in Massachusetts where Mabuchi as a boy had studied the mysteries of American civilization, with Cannon and Powers as his chief instructors, he had struggled through a course of football. He now required all the power of muscular resistance thus gained to withstand the onslaught of these friends of his school days.

"You monsters! You dragons of America!" he cried, falling backward into the only armchair the youngsters' bare quarters possessed. "Has West Point, then, not reformed you?"

"Shut up, you lovely little brute, and come to my bosom again! Ain't he sweet, Powers? Observe his little tan tootsies. The dude has been built in London and Paris. Kido, oh, Kido, is this a grateful return for all the republican simplicity you imbued at Halton?"

They sat down, one on either side of Mabuchi. Their tall, bony, wire woven frames far overtopped that of the graceful oriental.

"Well, tell me, then," said Mabuchi, smiling.

"Tell you? It's you who've got to do the telling, Kido," they cried together. "We've nothing to tell," Cannon added. "When you left for the war, we got through West Point somehow and are existing among cowboys and Indians on these broad, unlovely plains. It was good of you to come to see us, as we could not come to Washington, but you always were a decent little specimen of foreign bric-a-brac. Now tell us about yourself."

"It is not much to tell. When my country went to war with China, I was ordered home, you know. Then I served with the army, and the honorable general spoke well of me in dispatches and I was promoted. The war ended, and my government sent me to travel. I was everywhere—London, St. Petersburg, Berlin, Vienna and Paris."

"How I should have liked to do Paris with you! There's a French count, an ex-officer, here stopping with the colonel. I suppose you met heaps of them in Paris? He's studying America too, Count—Count—what's his name—Count—"

"Count Diceandbass?" cried the striker, opening the door of the young officers' sitting room to usher in an elderly, wax mustached Frenchman. Powers and Cannon advanced to greet the new visitor. Kido Mabuchi rose slowly, his yellow brown face turning gray.

"Count d'Eisenbas," Powers said, "we are honored. Let me introduce to you Mr. Kido Mabuchi of the Japanese legation and an old school friend of ours. We were just telling him it was curious that you and he, both studying us savages for the benefit of your governments, should meet at such an out of the way hole as Fort Drake."

The count made a rush of effusive greeting at the Japanese, who coolly took his hand.

"Mon Dieu, gentlemen! You afford to me surprises the most welcome."

"You know each other, then?" said Powers.

"Know!" cried d'Eisenbas. "We are comrades since long time!"

"Yes," said Kido, and the laugh was gone from the eyes which had sparkled on his old friends, "we met in Paris."

"And are ravished to meet in America!" cried the count with a hand on either of Mabuchi's shoulders.

Cannon and Powers looked at each other in amazement. It was impossible not to note the dearth of delight in Kido's face.

"On this hot afternoon, when I had nothing to do, I remembered our last game at pokal, gentlemen, and I said: 'Ha! I shall go and have my r-revanche from the youthful giants, Messrs. Cannon and Powair.' May I? For Mabuchi at baccarat, ecarte and the games of Paris. I know, but pokal!"

"I pray—excuse me," said Mabuchi gravely. "I no longer play cards."

"Ah! Since Paris?" cried d'Eisenbas, with a shooting glance.

"Since Paris," Kido assented calmly.

"Pshaw, Kido," cried Cannon, "you'll simply have to play poker in Washington. Count, let me offer you something cooling. Kido—why your glass is full yet!"

"I don't touch anything," said Mabuchi gravely.

"Since Paris?" again the Frenchman asked and mocked.

"Since Paris," said Mabuchi.

"Ah, I see, you want not to play pokal. You have much to talk. Au revoir, my American giants. We shall meet at the colonel's. Mabuchi, shall we meet?"

"We shall meet," said Kido, rising and bowing with grave oriental ceremony.

The school chums stared on Kido.

"What the devil happened to you in Paris?" Cannon cried again. "Why did that Frenchman grin in that measly way, as if—as if he owned you? Speak, you little lump of bronze. What mischief did you have the nerve to get into without Powers and me to haul you out again?"

In the corner of the colonel's broad veranda that night Count d'Eisenbas spoke in French briefly and coldly to the little Japanese.

"I cornered you here on purpose," he said. "I have given you a year, and you are not ready. Well, tomorrow you must make good your promise or I shall hand these notes in my breast pocket to your chief."

Kido Mabuchi went home to his bunk, hastily fitted up in Cannon's room, but slept not at all.

In the morning when his chums came in from stables and early company drills they found the attache sealing letters on which he had been very busy and which he now put in his pocket.

He was very amiable, very cheerful and very calm. It is something to have had ancestors of oriental blood and oriental faith; it is something to be able to say when the hour has come: "Is it, then, time? Good. Just a minute, and I shall be ready," to finish the cigarette calmly, to nod to friends a smiling adieu and then to perform the harakiri decently and with regard to other people's sensibilities.

The hour before sundown is admirable for target shooting. The four went down to the range late in the afternoon. The count had been bragging a little of his skill with a rifle, and Cannon and Powers had coaxed the Japanese into making a match with him. D'Eisenbas mocked at that. He seemed to have a great contempt for the attache.

"Mais—Mabuchi?" he laughed. "I shall beat him at the range, as I beat him at ecarte in Paris. What are the—en Anglais—stakes?"

Kido's eyes involuntarily flashed on the Frenchman's breast pockets, and the count grinned in a way which Cannon and Powers resented, but could not understand.

Powers and D'Eisenbas were to mark for Kido, and Cannon and Mabuchi for D'Eisenbas.

"It is very simple," said Cannon for the count's benefit. "While you mark, Count d'Eisenbas, bullseye, four, three whatever the shot is, the targets revolve, and Powers will paste the hole on the lower one. Remember, be careful to wiggle waggle the danger flag distinctly if you want to examine closely."

Then Kido saw the gates open before him and was content. This matter of suicide might be very simply arranged. Powers would be in the pit with him, stooping down with his pasters at the lowered target. The count was a fair shot at least. At 300 yards he could hardly miss. What so simple as to leap up in the nick of time and receive the bullet? It was not the harakiri, to be sure, but in matters of suicide one should accommodate oneself to place and other circumstances.

D'Eisenbas won the toss and elected to have Kido shoot first. He and Powers went to the butt to mark. Kido began to shoot at 300 yards mechanically, and, behold, the gates closed! Fate laughs at schemes. The plan of Kido was shattered. D'Eisenbas, wrathful at the Jap's good shots, forgetting where he was, forgetting the danger signal, leaped up with an oath to challenge a bullseye and fell back again in the pit, shot through his plotting brain.

Kido rushed into Cannon's arms with strange, mad eyes.

"It is the gods!" he screamed. "It was no murder. I meant it the other way because I could not perform harakiri on myself in your honorable room. Look, then, look!"

Cannon clutched the letter Kido had written in the morning. In it the attache told his tale—the untold tale of many another in the clutches of the "secret service" of unscrupulous European governments. D'Eisenbas had failed to corrupt the secretary by bribe or promise, but in Paris he had introduced him to cards and women, and the women had got from the lad a few of Japan's plans for fortification and army organization. Threatened with disclosure by the spy, who also held over his head notes of hand for "debts of honor," Kido saw but one way to escape disclosure and disgrace. But the gods had forbidden it. The count instead was dead.

"I shot him," he said over and over again, "but it was not murder. I meant him to shoot me."

"We understand," said his chums. "It's all right, and the gods have more horse sense today than usual. We'll take these papers from his pockets and destroy them and report the circumstances—sad accident—prominent men—you know."

"And he's really dead?"

"Sure dead," said Powers. "But try to look decently regretful, Kido."

The Abbot of Fools.

The abbot of fools, who was also known in different parts as the archbishop or bishop of fools, the abbot of misrule, the lord of misrule, the master of unreason and L'Abbe de Liesse, was the person who used to superintend the saturnalia, which were common in different parts of Europe from the fifth to the sixteenth century. The feast of fools was an imitation of the heathen saturnalia and, like this, was celebrated in December; hence the confusion of ideas which has arisen in mixing this feast with the ordinary Christmas revels. The chief celebration of the feast of fools fell upon Innocent's day, but the whole revels lasted from Christmas to the last day of Epiphany. The young people generally elected a leader, who went by one of the names quoted, and he was consecrated with many grotesque and ridiculous ceremonies.

England, Scotland, France and Germany all practiced these wild saturnalia, and it was with great difficulty that they were finally abolished. The abbot was not responsible for any trick or practical joke played on the rest of the community by his orders, and the victims had simply to "grin and bear it." In the temple (dow headquarters, London) the office of the lord of misrule seems to have been a coveted one, for we read that it was only given to young men of good family.

PRESERVED BY WAX

FOUR HISTORIC PAINTINGS IN THE NATIONAL CAPITOL.

They Were Treated Long After Completion and When They Already Showed Signs of Dissolution—An Artist's Curious Blunder.

It is a curious fact that the same combination of chemicals which preserved in a perfect state for over 500 years the remains and shrouds of King Edward I. of England have also been used to preserve four of the great historical paintings perpetuating scenes in the foundation and establishment of this government.

These four paintings occupy perhaps the most conspicuous place for observation in the nation. They are the work of Colonel John Trumbull and hang on the eastern wall of the rotunda of the capitol.

The paintings were put in place in 1824 under the supervision of the artist himself, but not without much hesitation and objections on his part because of the dampness of the walls and air in the rotunda at that time. The fears of the artist were proved to be well founded, for four years later the changes on the surface of the paintings became so apparent that congress passed a resolution authorizing their removal from the walls of the rotunda by Colonel Trumbull for inspection and remedy if possible. It was at this point that Colonel Trumbull's knowledge of the preservative chemical compound was drawn on.

In a letter to congress, dated Dec. 9, 1828, Colonel Trumbull explains in detail his treatment of the paintings at that time, and an inspection now of these four pictures shows that they are in a perfect state of preservation both as to brightness of color and condition of canvas.

In the letter referred to Colonel Trumbull says: "All of the paintings were taken down, removed from their frames, taken off from the panels over which they were strained, removed to a dry, warm room and there separately and carefully examined. The material which forms the basis of the paintings is a linen cloth whose strength and texture are very similar to those in the topgallant sails of a ship of war. The substances employed in forming a proper surface for the artist, together with the colors, oils, etc., form a sufficient protection for the face of the canvas, but the back remains bare and exposed to the deleterious effects of damp air. The effect of this is first seen in the form of mildew. It was this which I dreaded, and the examination showed that mildew was already commenced and to an extent which rendered it manifest that the continuance of the same exposure for a few years longer would have accomplished the complete decomposition or rotting of the canvas and the consequent destruction of the paintings."

Colonel Trumbull then explained how he first thoroughly dried the canvases and prepared them for the preservative. On this point he continues: "I had learned that a few years ago some of the eminent chemists of France had examined with great care some of the ancient mummies of Egypt with a view to ascertaining the nature of the substance employed by the embalmers which the lapse of so many ages had proved to possess the power of protecting from decay a substance otherwise so perishable as the human body. This examination had proved that, after the application of liquid asphaltum to the cavities of the head and body, the whole had been wrapped carefully in many envelopes or bandages of linen prepared with wax. The committee of chemists decided further, after a careful examination and analysis of the hieroglyphic paintings with which the casines, etc., are covered, that the colors employed and still retaining their vivid brightness had also been prepared and applied with the same substance."

"I also know that toward the close of the last century the Antiquarian Society of England had been permitted to open and examine the stone coffin deposited in one of the vaults of Westminster abbey and said to contain the body of King Edward I., who died in July, 1307. On removing the stone lid of the coffin its contents were found to be closely enveloped in a strong linen cloth, waxed. Within this envelope were found splendid robes of silk enriched with various ornaments covering the body, which was found to be entire and to have been wrapped carefully in all its parts, even to each separate finger, in bandages of fine linen which had been dipped in melted wax, and not only was the body not decomposed, but the various parts of the dress, such as a scarlet safa mantle and a scarlet piece of sarsenet which was placed over the face, were in perfect preservation, even in their colors."

Colonel Trumbull then states that, with this knowledge, he melted common beeswax and mixed with an equal quantity of oil of turpentine, which mixture was applied hot with brushes to the backs of the paintings and afterward rubbed in with hot irons until the cloth was perfectly saturated. The niches in the walls were backed with cement and the paintings so placed in them that air could circulate behind the canvases. Spring doors were also ordered placed in the entrances to the rotunda by Colonel Trumbull. Since that treatment these paintings have had nothing done to them, and from present appearances they need nothing.

Another peculiarity in one of these pictures is pointed out to persons being shown the capitol under the care of a guide, and that is in the scene of Washington resigning his commission. The two daughters of Charles Carroll, who stand embracing each other, are given five hands.—Washington Star.

The Crispy Season.
There's something in this crispy air that's like the fiddler's sound,
When y'er fiddlin' for the quadrille an' y'er swingin' yer sweetheart round!
When you hear a glad voice call,
"Come up, you feller, all,
An' balance to yer partners till the dancin' shakes the hall!"

While there's lots of joy in summer, when the birds sing wild an' free,
There's nothin' like the winter, when the fiddle sings to me!
The fire blazin' bright,
The dancin' sweethearts smilin' as he swings her left an' right!

So the crisp air sets me thinkin' of the times a-comin' long
When life'll meet the music of the halleluia song!
The happy time of fall,
When you hear the fiddler call
An' you balance to yer partners till the dancin' shakes the hall!
—Atlanta Constitution.

Both Were Shocked.
Little Elsie was a faithful attendant at Sunday school and had listened earnestly when plans for a coming Christian Endeavor convention were discussed, her interest increasing to enthusiasm over the mysterious affair when she learned that her auntie was to attend as a delegate.

Coming into the library one day, auntie saw the little maid busily engaged in writing a letter to a cousin with whom she kept up a juvenile correspondence. She scrawled industriously for a moment; then stopped. There was a puzzled expression on her face, ink stained face as she dangled her short legs and wriggled uncomfortably on her high perch.

"Auntie," she said, "how do you spell 'devil'?"
"Oh, Elsie," said her auntie, "I am shocked! Why are you using such a word as that in your letter? Nice little girls never say such things."
It was Elsie's turn to be shocked.
"Why, auntie," she cried, "I'm only telling her about the Christian and devil convention!"—Harper's Magazine.

Editor's Troubles in Russia.

A correspondent tells the following story of methods of censorship in Russia: I was at an evening party of the local press censor in a south Russian town. About midnight I had strolled from the music room into a cardroom and was watching a game of cards, one of the players being our host, the censor, when the hostess approached her husband and said: "I wish, my dear, you would step behind. There are three poor wretches there who have been waiting for you a couple of hours. I did not wish to disturb you sooner." "They must wait a little longer," replied the censor. "I must finish my rubber." Twenty minutes later our host absented himself for a quarter of an hour. Meeting his wife next day, I asked her who were the "three poor wretches" referred to. "Editors of the three local journals," she replied. They had waited two and a half hours in the censor's back kitchen with their manuscript and proof sheets for that morning's issue, without which they could not go to press.—Pearson's.

Hadn't Used Any Hysteria.

A certain lady of title recovered from a rather severe illness. An adept with the brush and a regular exhibitor of water colors in connection with the local art gallery, it was supposed she had overworked herself.

When the doctor was called in, an old nurse who had been in the family many years bored the medical man with her opinions as to the cause of the attack.

"It's them long hours an' hard work of the paintin' what's done it," she remarked directly she saw him. The doctor was preoccupied and scarcely heard the remark.

"Has her ladyship exhibited any traces of hysteria?" he suddenly demanded, turning to the talkative nurse.
"Oh, no, sir," was the unexpected reply. "They was water colors, all on 'em—real beauties too."—Milwaukee Wisconsin.

Censoring Shakespeare.

A masterpiece of censorship was once performed by the Turkish censor, Nicchan Effendi, on the occasion of the production of Shakespeare's "Othello" at Constantinople. He "corrected" the drama so thoroughly as to leave hardly a trace of the original. Among other words, he expunged "Cyprus," giving ingenious reasons for this correction. "Cyprus," he said, "is a Turkish island. It would be politically unwise to send Othello to Cyprus, because the territorial integrity of Turkey is guaranteed by treaties. Why not put, instead of Cyprus, some Greek island, such as Corfu?" And thus it came to pass that from respect to the treaty of Paris Othello had to go to Corfu.

No Breath to Waste.

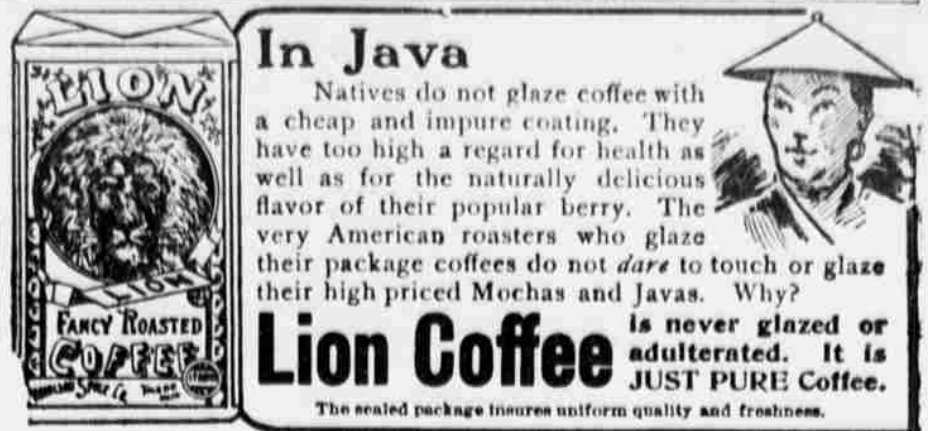
"There is something about the atmosphere in the far north that makes men very quiet," said a man from up in the frozen region the other day. "The habit is acquired, I suppose, in tramping, when the altitude makes it necessary to use all your breath for breathing and leaves you none for talking. The result is that the men talk very little. They become almost speechless and will sit about at night, each thinking his own thoughts and allowing his fellows to do the same."

An Appetizer.


Gentleman (at restaurant)—I say, waiter, your customers are a fearfully noisy lot!
"Yes, sir, and yet they are so particular, you would scarcely believe. Why, that same turbot you are eating just now no fewer than six of them refused before you came in."

Both Were There.

Miss Millyun—One can be very happy in this world with health and money.
Deadbroke—Then let's be made one. I have the health and you have the money!—Illustrated Bits.



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