

THE KINGDOM OF SLENDER SWORDS

An International Romance by **Hallie Erminie Rives**
Author of *Satan Sanderson, Hearts Courageous, The Castaway, Etc.*

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CHAPTER I.

Where the the Boat?
Barbara leaned against the upstart rail, the light air fanning her bronzed cheeks, her arteries beating like tiny drums, atone with the throbbing throbs of the steel deck as the black ocean leviathan swept on toward its harbor, resting place.

All that Japanese, Akihi no, who had been in a state of tremendous excitement, she had crept from her berth at dawn to see the busy sun come up in a Rostriusian flush as weirdly soft as a mirage, to strain her eyes for the first filmy feather of land. Long before the gray-green wisp showed on the horizon, the sight of a lumbering junk with its square sail leered across with white stripes, and its bronze seamen, with white loin cloth and great band about the forehead, naked and thew-like sculptures, as they swayed from the clumsy tiller, had sent a thrill through her. And as the first far peaks crested themselves on the robin-egg blue, as impalpable and ethereal as a perfume, she felt warm drops coming with a rush to her eyes.

For Japan, every sight and sound of it, had been woven with the softest imaginings of Barbara's orphaned life. Her father she had never seen. Her mother she remembered only as a vague, widowed figure. In Japan the two had met and had married, and after a single year her mother had returned to her own place and people, broken hearted and alone. In the month of her return Barbara had been born. A year ago her aunt, to whom she owed the care of her young girlhood, had died, and Barbara had found herself, at 21, mistress of a liberal fortune and of her own future. Japan had always exercised a potent spell over her imagination. She pictured it as a land of strange glowing tresses of queer costume and weird, fantastic buildings. More than all, it was the land of her mother's life romance, where her father had loved and died. There was one other tangible tie—her uncle, her mother's brother, was Episcopal bishop of Tokio. He was returning now from a half year's visit to America, and this fact, coupled with an invitation from Patricia Danbridge, the daughter of the American ambassador, with whom Barbara had chummed one California winter, had constituted an opportunity wholly alluring.

A shadow fell beside her and she turned. It was her uncle. His clean shaven face beamed at her over his clerical collar.

"Isn't it glorious?" she breathed. "It's better than champagne. It's like pins and needles in the tips of your fingers. There's positively an odor in the air like camellias. And did any one ever see such colors?" She pointed to the shore dead ahead, now a serrated background of deep tones, swimming in the infinite gold of the tropic afternoon.

Bishop Randolph was a bachelor, past middle age, ruddy and with eyes softened by habitual good humor.

"Japan gets into the blood," he said musingly. "I often think of the old lady who committed suicide at Nikko. She left a letter which said: 'In favor of the gods, I am too dishonorably old to hope to revert this jewel-glorious spot, so I prefer anguishly to remain here for ever!' I have had something of the same feeling, sometimes. I remember yet the first time I saw the coast. That was twenty-five years ago. We watched it together—your father and I—just as we two are doing now."

She looked at him with sudden eagerness, for of his own accord he had never before spoken to her of her dead father. The latter had always seemed a very real personage, but how little she knew about him! The aunt who had brought her up—her mother's sister—had never talked of him, and her uncle she had seen but twice since she had been old enough to wonder. But, little by little, gleaming a fact here and there, she had constructed a slender history of him. It told of mingled blood, a birthplace on a Mediterranean island and a gipsy childhood. There was a thin sheaf of yellowed manuscript in her possession that had been left among her mother's sooty papers, a fragment of an diary of his. Many leaves had been ruthlessly cut away, but in the pages that were left she had found bits of flotsam; broken memory-pictures of his own mother which had strangely touched her, of a bitter youth in England and America, overshadowed by the haunting fear of blindness, of quests to West Indian cities, told in phrases that dripped blood and sunshine. The voyage to Japan had been made on the same vessel that carried her uncle, and they two had thus become comrades. The latter had been an enthusiastic young missionary, one of a few chosen spirits sent to defend a far field-casement thrown forward by the batteries of Christendom. Her sister had come out to visit him and a few months later had married his friend.

Such was the story, as Barbara knew it, of her father and mother—a love chapter which had been closed with a far-away grave by the island sea. Her fancy had made of her father a pathetic figure. As a child, she had dreamed of some day placing a monument of his memory in the Japanese capital. She possessed only one picture of him, a tiny profile photograph which she wore always in a locket engraved with her name. It showed a dark face, clean-shaven, finely chiselled and passionate, with the large, full eye of the dreamer. She had liked to think it looked like the paintings of St. John. Perhaps this thought had caused the projected monument to take the form of a Christian chapel. From a nebulous idea, the plan had become a bundle of blue prints, which she had sent to her uncle, with the request that he purchase for her a suitable site and begin the building. He had done this before his visit to America and now the chapel was completed, save in one particular—the memorial window of rich stained glass stowed at that moment in the ship's hold. The bishop had not seen it. From some feeling which she had not tried to analyze, Barbara had said nothing to him of the chapel's existence. Now, however, of his unexpected deference, the feeling frayed, and she told him all of her plan.

He gazed at her a moment in a startled fashion, then looked away, his hand shading his eyes. When she finished there was a long pause which made her wonder. She touched his arm.

"You were very fond of father, weren't you?"

"Yes," he said, in a tone oddly restrained.

"And was my mother with you when he died in love with her?"

"Yes," and after a pause, "I married him."



"EAST IS EAST, AND WEST IS WEST, AND NEVER THE TWAIN SHALL MEET."

"Then they went to Nagasaki," she said softly, "and there he died. You weren't there then?"

"No," he answered in a low voice. His face was still turned away, and she caught an unaccustomed note of feeling in his voice.

He left her abruptly and began to pace up and down the deck, while she stood watching the shore line sharpen, the tangled blur of harbor resolve and shift into manifold detail.

At length the bishop spoke again at her elbow, now in his usual voice: "What are you going to do with that man, Barbara?"

"A faint flush rose in her cheeks. "With what man?"

"Austin Ware."

"She shrugged her shoulders and laughed a little uneasily. "What can one do with a man when he is 10,000 miles away?"

"He's not the sort to give up a chase."

"Even a wild goose chase?" she countered.

"When I was a boy in Virginia," he said with a humorous eye, "I used to chase wild geese, and her 'em, too."

The bishop chuckled away, leaving a frown on Barbara's brow. She had had a swift mental vision of a cool, dark-bearded face and assured hearing that the last year had made familiar. It was a handsome face, if somewhat cold. Its owner was rich, his standing unquestioned. The fact that he was ten years her senior had not made his attentions the more flattering.

He had had no inherited fortune and had been no heir; for this she admitted him, if so far as liking went, she liked him. The week she left New York he had intended a yachting trip to the Mediterranean. When he told her, coolly enough, that he should sail for Japan, she had treated it as a jest, though knowing him quite capable of meaning it.

A passenger leaning near her was whispering "Sally in Our Alley" under his breath and a Japanese steward was emptying over the side a vase of wilted flowers. A breath of cool breeze came, mixed with a faint smell of tobacco, and these and the whistled air awoke a sudden reminiscence. Her gaze went back to the clustered shipping, beyond the gray line of buildings and the masses of foliage, and swam into a tremulous June evening seven years past.

She saw a wide campus of green lawn studded with stately elms festooned with electric lights that glowed in the falling twilight. Scattered about were groups of benches, each with its freight of dainty frocks, and on one of them she saw herself sitting, a shy girl of 16, on her first visit to a great university. Men went by in sober

black gowns and flat mortar-boards, young clean-shaven and boyish, with arms about another's shoulders. From one of the balconies of the ivied dormitories that faced the green came the mellow tinkles of a mandolin and the sound of a clear tenor.

"Of all the girls that are so smart, there's none like pretty Sally."

She is the darling of my heart—only one voice had said: "That's Duke's Daunt!" Then the melody suddenly broke queerly and stopped, and the man who had spoken got up quickly and said: "I'm going in. It's time to dress anyway."

And somehow his voice had seemed to break queerly, too.

"Duke Daunt! The scene shifted into the next day, when she had met him for a handful of delirious moments. For how long afterward had he remained her childish idol! Time had overlaid the memory, but it started bright now at the sound of that whistled tune.

Her uncle's voice recalled her. He was handing her his binoculars. She took them, chose a spot well forward and gazed her eyes to the glass.

A sigh of ecstasy came from her lips, for it brought the land almost at arm's length—the stone hatbox crowded with brown Japanese faces, peered out here and there by the white Panama hat or pith-helmet of the foreigner; at one side a bouquet of gay mullin dresses and be-ribboned parasols flanked by a phalanx of waiting rickshas, the little flotilla of crimson sails at the yacht anchorage—the stately, columned front of the club on the Bund with its cool terrace of round tables—the kimono'd figures squatting under the gossamerly best pine along the waterfront, where a motor car flashed like a brilliant mailed beetle-farther away tiny shop fronts hung with waving figured blue and beyond them a gray billowing of tiled roofs, and long, bright, yellow-chimneyed streets anattering toward a mass of glowing green from which cherry blossoms soared like pink balloons.

Nearer, nearer yet, the ship drew on, till there came to meet it two curved arms of breakwater, a miniature lighthouse at each side.

Barbara lowered the glass from her eyes. The slow swinging of the vessel to the anchor had brought a dazzling bulk between her gaze and the shore, perilously near. She saw it now in its proper perspective—a trim steam yacht, painted white, with a rakish air of speed and tautness, the sun glinting from its polished brass fittings.

Barbara was feeling a strange con- fusion of familiarity. Puzzled, she withdrew her gaze, then looked once more. Suddenly she dropped the glass with a startled exclamation. "What are you going to do with that man?"—her uncle's query seemed to echo satirically at her. For the white yacht was Austin Ware's, and there, on the gleaming bows, in polished golden letters, was the name BARBARA.

CHAPTER II.

"The Boat."

The day had been sluggish with the promise of summer, but the falling afternoon had brought a soft suspiration from the broad bosom of the Pacific laden with a refreshing coolness. The office of the Grand hotel was quiet; only a handful of loungers smoked at the bar, and the last young lady tourist had finished her flirtation on the terrace and retired to the comfort of a stately kimono. In the deep foliage of the "Bluff" the slanting sunlight caught and quivered till the green mole seemed a mighty beryl, and in its hedge-shaded lanes, dreamy as those of an English village, the clear air was pungent with tropic blossoms.

On one of these fragrant byways, its front looking out across the bay, stood a small bungalow which bore over its gateway the dubious appellation "The Boat."

Under the awning three men were grouped about a miniature roulette table; a fourth, middle-aged and of huge bulk with a cynical, Semitic face, from a wide arm chair was lazily peering through the fleecy curling of a Turkish cigarette. A fifth stood leaning against the balustrade, watching.

The last was tall, clean-cut and smooth-shaven, with comely head well set on broad shoulders, and gray eyes, keen and alert. Possibly no one of the foreign colony (where a secretary of the embassy was by no means a rare avial) was better liked than Duke Daunt, even by those who never attempted to be sufficiently familiar with him to call him by the nickname, which a characteristic manner had earned him in his salad days.

Suddenly a distant gun boomed the hour of sunset. At the same instant the marble ceased its erratic career, the wheel stilled and the youngest of the gaming trio and

the master of the place—Philip Ware, a graceful, shapely fellow of 25—flushed face and nervous manner—pushed the scattered counters across the table with shaking fingers.

"My limit today," he said with sullen petulance, and flipping the marble angrily into the garden below, crossed to a table and poured out a brandy-and-soda.

Daunt's gray eyes had been looking at him steadily, a little curiously. He had known him several years before at college, though the other had been in a lower class than himself. But those intervening years had left their hateful marks. To Yokohama he was rapidly coming to be, in the eyes of the censorious, an example for well-meaning youth to avoid, an incorrigible flaneur, a purposeless idler on the primrose paths.

"Better luck next time," said one of the others lightly. "Come along, Larry; we'll be off to the club."

The older man rose to depart more deliberately, his great size becoming ap- pallingly abnormal. He was framed like a wrestler, abnormal width of shoulder and massive head giving an effect of weight which con- trasted oddly with aquiline features in which was a touch of the acceptrine, something ironic and sinister, like a vulture. His eyes were dappled yellow and deep-set and had a peculiar expression of cold, untroubled regard. He crossed to the farther side and looked down.

"What a height!" he said. "The whole harbor is laid out like a checker-board." He spoke in a tone curiously dead and lacking in timbre. His English was per- fect, with a trace of accent.

"Pretty fair," assented Phil morosely. "It ought to be a good place to view the bay, quadrants when it comes in tomorrow morning. It must have cost the Japanese navy department a pretty penny to build those temporary wharves along the Bund. They must be using 1,000 incandescents! The hours are long, but I don't think the draughts were Japan's long lost brothers, instead of battleships of a country that's likely to have a row on with her almost any minute. I wonder where they will anchor."

The yellowish eyes had been gazing with an odd, intense glitter, and into the heavy, pallid face, turned away, had sprung sharp, evil lines, that seemed the shadows of some monstrous reflection on which the mind had fed its sudden, wicked vitality was in strange contrast to the toneless voice, which now said: "They will be just opposite this point."

"So far?" The younger man leaning on the balustrade spoke interestedly.

"It seems as though from here one could almost shoot a pea aboard any one of them."

"You might send me up some sticks of dynamite," said Phil with satiric brevity. "I'll practice. I'll begin by shying a few at this forsaken town; it needs it!"

The big man smiled faintly as he withdrew his eyes, and held out his hand to the remaining visitor. The degrading lines had faded from his face.

"I'm distinctly glad to have seen you, Mr. Daunt," he said. "I've watched your trials with your aeroplane more than once lately at the parade ground. I saw the elder Wright at Paris last year and I believe your flight will prove as well sus- tained as his. It's a pity you can't compete for some of the European prizes."

"I'm afraid that would take me out of the amateur class," was the answer. "It's purely an amusement with me—a fad, if you like."

"A very useful one," said the other. "Un- less you break your neck, I'll wonder we haven't met before in Tokio. I have an appointment tonight, by the way, with your ambassador. (Come in to see me soon)," he said, turning to Phil. "I'm at home most of the time. Come and dine with me again."

"Dr. Heronson's the real thing!" said Phil, when the other had disappeared. "He's a scientist—the biggest in his line—but he's no prig. You ought to see his villa at Kisariz on the Chiba road. He's worth a million, they say, and he must make no end of money as a government expert." He paused, then, and added: "I've seen mighty quiet tonight! How does he strike you?"

Daunt was silent. He was wondering what attraction could exist between this middle-aged scientist with his cold eyes and emotionless voice and Phil, sparkling and irresponsible black sheep and net-de- well, who thought of nothing but his own coarse pleasures.

"You don't like him! I can see that, well enough," went on Phil aggressively. "Why not? He's a lot above any man I know, and I'm proud to have him for a friend of mine."

"There's no accounting for taste," returned Daunt drily. "At any rate, I don't imagine it matters particularly whether I like Dr. Heronson or not. There's another thing that's more apropos." He pointed to the decenter in the other's hands. "You've had enough of that tonight, I should think."

Phil reddened. "I've had no more than I can carry, if it comes to that," he re- torted. "And I guess I'm able to take care of myself."

Daunt hesitated a moment. Today's call had been a part of his consistent effort, steadily growing more irksome, to keep alive, for the sake of the old college name, the quasi friendship between them, and to invoke whatever influence he might once have possessed.

"I'm thinking of your brother," he said quietly. "You say his yacht came into harbor from Kobe today. He'll scarcely be more than a week in the temple cities, and any train may bring him after that. You'll want all the time you've got to straighten out. You'll need to put your best foot forward."

A look that was not pleasant shot across Phil's face. "I suppose I shall," he said savagely. "A pretty brother he is! He wrote me from home that if he found I'd been playing, he'd let his allowance to me for a week. I'd like to knock the smile of his down his throat—the cold-blooded fish! He spends enough!"

"He's earned it, I understand," said Daunt.

"So will I, perhaps, after I've had my thing. I'm in no hurry, and I won't take orders about it from him. I've had to knuckle down to him all my life, and I'm precious tired of it. I can tell you. What business is it of his if I choose to stay out here in the east?"

A flush had risen to Daunt's forehead, but he turned away without reply. At the stair, however, he spoke again.

"Look here, Phil," he said, coming slowly back. "Why not come up to Tokyo for a while? It's quieter, and it will be a change. I have a little Japanese house in Aoyama that I leased as a place to work on my glider models, but I don't use it much. It's fairly well furnished. The caretaker is an excellent cook, too." He took a key from his ring and laid it on the table. "Let me leave this anyway—the address is on the label—and do as you like about it."

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Phil looked at him an instant with nar- rowing eyes, then laughed. "Tokyo as a gentle sedative, eh? And pastoral visita- tions every other day."

"You needn't be afraid of that," replied Daunt. "I'll not come to lecture you. I haven't set foot in the place for a month, and probably I shan't for a month or two. Come. Go up and try it, anyway. Drop the Bund and the races for a little while and get a grip on things."

Phil looked away. A sudden memory came to him of a face he had seen in a row on the opposite side. Each had a cap like a cadet's, and all watched Barbara movably. Between them a little boy sat on the edge of the seat, his elogs hanging from the throng between his bare toes, the sleeves of his kimono bulging with bun- dles. He stared as if hypnotized at a curl of Barbara's bronze hair which lay against the cushion. Once he stretched out a hand furtively to touch it, but drew it back hastily.

"If I could only talk to him!" Barbara exclaimed. "I want to know the language. Tell me, Patsy—how long did it take you to learn?"

"I?" cried Patricia, in comical amaze- ment. "Heavens and earth, I haven't learned it! I only know enough to badger the servants. You have to turn yourself inside out to think Japanese, and then stand on your head to talk it."

"Never mind, Barbara," said the bishop, looking up from his newspaper. "You can't learn it if you insist on it. Haru would be a capital teacher—bless my soul, I be- lieve I forgot to tell you about her."

"Who is Haru?" asked Barbara.

"She's a young Japanese girl, the daugh- ter of the old samurai who sold us the land for the chapel. The family is a fine old one, but of frayed fortune. I was greatly interested in her, chiefly, perhaps, because she is a Christian. She became so with her father's consent, though he is a Buddhist. The next of the servant class, of course. But I thought—if you liked—she would make an ideal companion for you while you are learning Tokio."

"I know Haru," said Patricia. "She's a dear! She's as pretty as a picture, and her English is too quaint!"

"It would be lovely to have her," Bar- bara answered. "You're a very thought- ful man, Uncle Arthur. Are you sure she'd want to?"

"I'll send her a note and ask her to come to you at the embassy this evening. Then—all aboard for the Japanese lessons!"

"No such wisdom for me, thank you," said Patricia. "I prefer to take mine up through the servant class, just as much as the diplomatic corps. It's a shame there's Count Foyrich, the Serbian charge." She nodded toward the farther end of the carriage where a bored-looking European minutely regarded the landscape through a monocle. "He's nice," she added, re- spectfully, "but he's a despicable, I caught him one night at a dinner dropping a cap- sule into his soup."

A man passed hastily through the car- riage leaving a trail of small pamphlets bound in green paper with gold lettering—an advertisement of a health resort, printed in English for the tourist. Barbara opened one curiously. She looked up with a merry eye.

"Here's a paragraph for you, Uncle Ar- thur," said said. "Listen to this: 'This place has other modern monu- ments, first and second class hotels and many amusements. In one quarter are a number of missionaries, but they can easily be avoided.'"

"Do let us credit that to difficulties of the language," he protested. "I'm sure that must have been meant complimen- tarily."

"But what a contradiction!" put in Patricia wickedly.

"Well," he retorted. "My baker has a sign on his wagon. The biggest loaf in Tokyo." He meant that well, too.

A shrill whistle, slamming of doors, and the gray roofs fell away. Barbara glimpsed the very spirit of beauty, between the whirling shadows of pine and camphor trees, between tiled walls and gaudily statched temples, flights of gray pigeons and sprays of pink cherry blossom.

And across the gorgeous landscape, re- joining from every rift and crevice of its moist soil, in its colors of rich red earth and green foliage, in the grace and vigor of its springing, resilient bamboo groves and the cardinal pride of its flowing camellias, Barbara's heart answered the call.

(To Be Continued.)

CHAPTER III.

The Land of the Gods.

In the first touch of the shore, where the ambassador's pretty daughter waited, Patricia had rushed to meet her, embraced her, with a moist, ecstatic kiss on her cheek, rescued the bishop from his ordeal of hand-shaking and carried him off to find their trunks, leaving Barbara borne down by a babel sound and scent whose newness made her breathless, and to whose manifold sensations she was as keenly alive as a photographic plate to color.

The ricksha ride to the station (for so the Japanese had adapted the English word "station") was a moving panorama of strange high lights and shades, of savory odors from bake ovens, of open shop-fronts lunging with gaudy figured carpets, or piled with saffron bins, warty purple melons, abony sea-plants, shrivelled yellow peppers and red Hokkaido sweet corn cobs, and drawn by chanting half-naked coolies, and swiftly gliding victorias of Europe.

When the ricksha set them down at the station Barbara felt bewildered, yet full of exhilaration. As they drew up at its stone front, a porter with red cap and brass buttons emerged and began to ring a heavy bell, swinging it back and forth in both hands. The bishop bought their tickets at a little barred window bearing over it the sign: "Your baggage will be sent freely in every direction."

They entered the car just behind an ample lady who had been among the ship's passengers—a good-natured, elderly, well-touristed, who, the second day out, had confided to Barbara her certainty of an invitation to the Imperial Cherry Blossom party, as her husband "and a friend in the litigation." She wore a painted moun- tain and the husband of influential acquain- tance showed now a gleaming expanse of white waistcoat crossed by a gold watch chain that might have restrained a tiger. The lady nodded and smiled.

Three students in the uniform of some lower school, with foreign jackets of blue-black cloth set off with brass buttons, sat in a row on the opposite side. Each had a cap like a cadet's, and all watched Barbara movably. Between them a little boy sat on the edge of the seat, his elogs hanging from the throng between his bare toes, the sleeves of his kimono bulging with bun- dles. He stared as if hypnotized at a curl of Barbara's bronze hair which lay against the cushion. Once he stretched out a hand furtively to touch it, but drew it back hastily.

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"Here's a paragraph for you, Uncle Ar- thur," said said. "Listen to this: 'This place has other modern monu- ments, first and second class hotels and many amusements. In one quarter are a number of missionaries, but they can easily be avoided.'"

"Do let us credit that to difficulties of the language," he protested. "I'm sure that must have been meant complimen- tarily."

"But what a contradiction!" put in Patricia wickedly.

"Well," he retorted. "My baker has a sign on his wagon. The biggest loaf in Tokyo." He meant that well, too.

A shrill whistle, slamming of doors, and the gray roofs fell away. Barbara glimpsed the very spirit of beauty, between the whirling shadows of pine and camphor trees, between tiled walls and gaudily statched temples, flights of gray pigeons and sprays of pink cherry blossom.

And across the gorgeous landscape, re- joining from every rift and crevice of its moist soil, in its colors of rich red earth and green foliage, in the grace and vigor of its springing, resilient bamboo groves and the cardinal pride of its flowing camellias, Barbara's heart answered the call.

(To Be Continued.)

"If I could only talk to him!" Barbara exclaimed. "I want to know the language. Tell me, Patsy—how long did it take you to learn?"

"I?" cried Patricia, in comical amaze- ment. "Heavens and earth, I haven't learned it! I only know enough to badger the servants. You have to turn yourself inside out to think Japanese, and then stand on your head to talk it."

"Never mind, Barbara," said the bishop, looking up from his newspaper. "You can't learn it if you insist on it. Haru would be a capital teacher—bless my soul, I be- lieve I forgot to tell you about her."

"Who is Haru?" asked Barbara.

"She's a young Japanese girl, the daugh- ter of the old samurai who sold us the land for the chapel. The family is a fine old one, but of frayed fortune. I was greatly interested in her, chiefly, perhaps, because she is a Christian. She became so with her father's consent, though he is a Buddhist. The next of the servant class, of course. But I thought—if you liked—she would make an ideal companion for you while you are learning Tokio."

"I know Haru," said Patricia. "She's a dear! She's as pretty as a picture, and her English is too quaint!"

"It would be lovely to have her," Bar- bara answered. "You're a very thought- ful man, Uncle Arthur. Are you sure she'd want to?"

"I'll send her a note and ask her to come to you at the embassy this evening. Then—all aboard for the Japanese lessons!"

"No such wisdom for me, thank you," said Patricia. "I prefer to take mine up through the servant class, just as much as the diplomatic corps. It's a shame there's Count Foyrich, the Serbian charge." She nodded toward the farther end of the carriage where a bored-looking European minutely regarded the landscape through a monocle. "He's nice," she added, re- spectfully, "but he's a despicable, I caught him one night at a dinner dropping a cap- sule into his soup."

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(To Be Continued.)

He swung down the steep, twisting, ravine-like road to the Bund with less or ill-humor. He had no thought of the dark line sky arching over, soft with vapors like a smoke of gold, or of the glimpses of the sea that came in sharp bursts of light between the curving walls that towered on either side.

At the foot of the hill stood a sign board on which was pasted a large bill in yellow ink.

AT THE GAYETY THEATRE
LIMITED ENGAGEMENT OF
THE POPULAR
HARDMANN COMIC OPERA COMPANY

MISS CIBBY CLIFFORD.

He paused in front of this moment, then passed to the Bund. At its upper end, near the hotel front, great floating wharves had been built out into the water. They were gaily trimmed with bunting and electric lights in geometrical designs, and were flanked by arches covered with twigs of ground pine. A small army of workmen

was still busied on them, for the European squadron in whose honor they had been erected would arrive at dawn the next morning. Just beyond the arches, under a row of twisted pine, were a number of park benches, and from one of these a girl with a beaming parasol greeted him.

"You're a half hour late, Phil," she com- plained. "I've been waiting here till I'm tired to death." She made place for him with a rustic flourish. She was showily dressed, her cheeks bore the marks of habitual arena-paint and the fingers of one over-ringed hand were slightly yellowed from cigarette smoke.

"Who is Haru?" he said, curiously, and sat down beside her. In his mind was still the picture of that oval Japanese face suffused with pink, those pretty bare feet splashing through the foam, and he looked aside at his companion with an instant's un- conscious distaste.

"I had another row with the manager today," she continued. "I told him he must think his company was a kinder- garten."

"Trust you to set him right in that," he answered satirically.

"My word!" she exclaimed. "How gum you are today! Same old poverty, I suppose." She rose and shook out her skirts.

"Come," she said. "There's no play tonight. I'm in for a lark. Let's go to the Jewell- Fountain