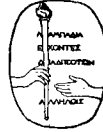
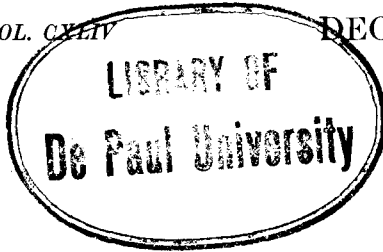


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WHAT PATRICIA HEARD FROM TOKIO

NEW LETTERS FROM JAPAN BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE LADY OF THE DECORATION"

PART I

BY FRANCES LITTLE

DEAREST PAT,—Since I left you I have been like a bumble-bee on a fly-wheel. Only the wheel flies faster than I can bumble. So there is not a minute to call you Patricia. I have a call of a different kind. Before I answer, there are a few happenings I must pass along to you, else they'll grow stale, so swift is the change in the life pictures of the Far East of to-day.

The big mail-steamer that brought me over is out in the harbor. It is flying flags and frivolling with every wavelet and making much show while waiting to take my letter to you. Of course it may be waiting for other things. But it is queer what kindly intimacy you acquire with these giant ships which have carried you safely across leagues of water, rough and smooth. Why, I feel as if this one must know of my promise to write you often and everything possible to write, and your promise to seek entertainment only from the written pages. If cold facts creep in here and there, just remember they are facts, and each one has a godmother to stand sponsor for it.

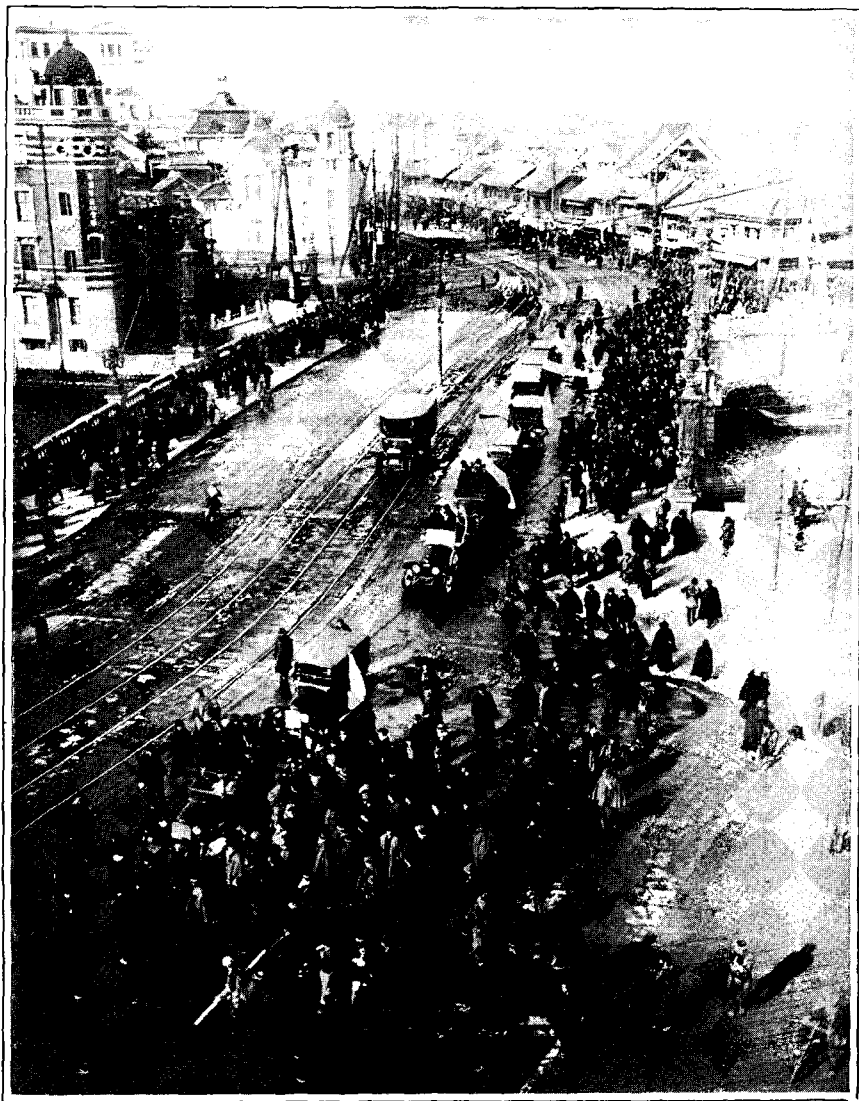
Do you remember those long winter

evenings, with the wind howling outside, my telling you of the many times I've sailed across the old Pacific with a heavenly blue sky above and a sea to match beneath? This time the above and below were of another color. The water took on the heavy gray of the clouds and the one merry thing on its broad expanse was our little steamer. From Seattle to Yokohama it looped the loop, skimmed the crest of every wave, climbed up the other side with an abandon which brought no joy to the storm-tossed souls aboard. It ceased its capers only when anchored in the shallow pools of Tokio Bay. After that I can't say whether it put on company manners or not. I was too busy with other things new and old.

Where do you get your wisdom, Pat, held as you are to one room and a bed? Your warning that changes great and small would greet me was more than justified. I was prepared for some such greeting. Changes are inevitable. I did not expect so complete a knock-down.

They began to arise with the first glimpse of Hondo's misty shores and even the ghosts of old familiar things were

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THE APPROACH TO NIPPON BRIDGE—THE CENTER OF THE EMPIRE

charged with a new spirit which is transforming a beautiful land, not omitting the space above. So far as I could see, the world upheaval has not budged Fuji one inch. The mountain "where dwells the Spirit Lady who made the flowers to bloom" was as serene and beautiful as ever. But think of it! Over her glistening heights an airplane dipped and somersaulted, scorning alike danger and the traditions of the sacred mount below.

No longer did sampans and white-

sailed junks flock around us in the open sea, bidding us welcome, the owners inviting us to dispose of all small change for articles temptingly cheap and curious. Even the sea-gulls had flown to other climes, and only a government launch, impertinent as to newness, important as to duty, came and swiftly departed. After all, I've told you of the joyful arrival of a steamer in a Japanese port—and now to see it robbed of so much of its color and quaintness! It is enough

to jar the feelings of the calmest Buddha. You can imagine what it did to a high-tension Westerner.

Not a question about it. The country has been racing along to progress at such a giddy speed it has almost forgotten that the picturesque and the artistic were its two biggest offerings. Past masters as the Japanese are in adapting themselves to changes of time and circumstance—theirs or anybody's—isn't it a thousand pities they cannot make progress tally with beauty? That sounds as if I had a grievance. I have. But I am in a commercial port. And it's winter. The picture-book country is hid. Spring is coming! Something tells me a gracious spirit will open wide the drab covers and show me once again the Rainbow Land that is truly a gift of the gods.

With a bang we noisily crunched into a mud-colored wharf. Maybe it was the shivering crowd, possibly the bitter wind which made a picture dreary and colorless. Whatever the cause, my anticipations and enthusiasm were fast accumulating icicles, when a part of a Japanese conversation drifted my way.

"So! You make convenient to arrive last day of Goat Year! I congratulate. Him make many troubles for long time."

Instantly I was cheered. As always, I found comfort in having something to hold responsible for all misfortunes. The goat could easily bear it and after five hours' struggle with passport officials, customs, and jinrikisha men, polite but high prices, you can't blame me for rejoicing that William's hours were numbered. Nor for hoping his spirit would pass out and hasten to the place, hot or cold, to join the spirit of the ancient son of Nippon who in the long ago labeled every

year with the name of a serpent or animal.

The little streets through which I rode are just as alley-like as ever. I reached my hotel only to find its one-time wide-open hospitality inclosed in a solid glass front. However, once inside, the warmth of the familiar lobby, the kindly, smiling service of its attendants, went a long way toward banishing the evil spirit of the goat and quickly dispelled all physical discomfort. True, the dispelling act commanded triple the price of former years—one yen barely covering the doorman's tip, whereas I've often boasted to you a little ten-sen silver piece produced as many smiles and bows as would an unexpected legacy.

Mark it as a certainty, my friend, something has changed everything. But I did not stop to argue whether the blame should be placed on the back of the goat or the burden of the war. Each



TRAFFIC POLICEMEN AT A TROLLEY STATION

minute I was giving thanks for the blessings that were, a few left-over ones and a new one or so.

Perched over the big entrance door, a Russian orchestra played. The melody flooded all space and smoothed out the crinkles in one's soul as only such music can, and there are some few million crinkles in this part of the world that need smoothing. Many of the musicians were refugees from a ruined land. Absence from home did not mar the beauty of their music, but it did seem to deepen their smile of half-content. Nothing surprising in that. Over here the Reds can't get them if they don't look out.

A group of uniformed French aviators gave a dash of color to the scene. And the stir they created as they talked as vigorously with their hands as with their tongues, gave intense amusement to four English Tommies each of whom had a leg or an arm missing.

I wish you could have seen one woman guest. She was said to belong to the brave Battalion of Death. It was not hard to believe. She was booted and bloused as a soldier of the late mighty Czar. There was no hint of color in her handsome face, though she danced constantly, stopping only to change partners—and they were many—then swinging out again to the rhythm of the music as if marching to war.

Only by determination and good luck had she escaped the horrors of a German victory. Hiding by day, walking at night, living off any morsel of food she could pilfer, she finally struck a village by the sea. A Japanese freighter did the rest, and Yokohama was the port of safety, with a small official job in the

bargain. Every time there is a revolution in Siberia, which is oftener than one can keep tab, there comes a knocking at the gates of a northern and southern port ships filled with frightened humanity, fleeing from the bloody Reds. And as this little country is already so crowded, people are about to fall in the sea for lack of standing-room, it is a grave question how to dispose of the despairing hordes, homeless, moneyless, and often foodless.

But all honor to Nippon and the people therein! The refugees go neither hungry nor shelterless, though the task is one

Hercules might take a day off to think over.

But on with the dance. I marveled at a soldier of foreign extract. A string of decorations ornamented his uniform from shoulder to breast-bone. As many scars criss-crossed his face, but nothing deterred his two good feet from keeping perfect time as he skillfully guided his companion with his one good arm. Handicapped? Not a bit of it. I asked



AN ENERGETIC STREET SINGER



BOARDING A TROLLEY IN JAPAN FOLLOWS AMERICAN PRECEDENT

about him. With a brush in that one whole hand and a pot of paint, the yens and sens were filling his pockets, while he filled the hearts of all the children with joy by the lifelike touch he gave to the faces of dolls and menageries of wooden animals.

What amazes me most about this war wreckage is the unconquerable spirit that is to be found at every turn. It flames like a torch in the darkness. All those outside the horror zone take notice!

I had seen much of it in former years, but now a new spirit, atmosphere—call it what you will—enveloped place and people. It was almost thick enough to see. It was mercilessly shuffling quiet pleasures and quaint customs of the past into a dump-heap of things old and forgotten and working changes in the cherry-blossom land which were indeed a revelation. Not to me only. An old retainer stood near me. By his unfailing kindness I had been piloted through

many bygone feasts of curious customs and outlandish foods. Long service gave him privileges, conversational and otherwise, just as it has your ebony Jimmy-Lou. With unquiet eyes he watched a newly arrived youth pilot a girl through a very new dance. The girl, half West half East, was good to look upon. The dance was neither.

"Ah!" he muttered. "The war! It is accursed. Have it change your people to hopping monkeys and make many damn fooleys like mine?"

Never mind the "damn." It meant nothing to him. To me, not being in tune with the infinite, it proved an outlet. Still, with the kindly presence of the old man and his talk of olden days, when Oriental pictures had no Occidental frames, I was beginning to feel human once again. I sank deeper into the comfortable chair with something like a sense of things familiar. It wrapped me about

like a snug-fitting sweater. No desire to move stirred me. A telegram proved more effective. It was handed me by a messenger who measured all of a yard in height. His English vocabulary spread over a few inches only. It was his willing spirit which counted. He made a free offering of all his knowledge and gleefully assisted in reading the message. His bright eyes—what there was of them—twinkled.

"I know," he burst out. "Giro San! Him live by Tokio. Boss Lady Mish! Quick you go."

Good guess. Kate Jilson, born missionary and universal friend, bade me hasten to Tokio and spend New-Year's with her and as much longer as I choose. If I have told you much about her, the small boy's summing up tells you more. But not all. In other days she would have come herself, or sent a retainer to bring me hither like a package marked "handle with care." Evidently Kitty was going with the changing tide.

Now you see where my call comes in, and as I go to answer it off goes this letter. With it goes a promise to take you

right along with me into all that happens. Be sure things are bound to happen if the "Boss Lady Mish" is in the neighborhood. We can't tamper with Kate, nor can we halt the changes. But ours the fun of looking on as the show goes passing by.

The signals are flying. The small boy is waiting to take this letter to the steamer. Here is my love—and a hope that has just been wished on me:

"May all pain be distant from important parts."

TOKIO

PATSY!—Can't you see your old, dun-colored Rosebud growing positively peevish as to heels if she had to submit to a morning bath and a curry-comb massage, then be haltered to a stall? That's the daily program of a Japanese dairyman for his herd. It is also the best of reasons why the toy steam-engine boasts neither cow-catcher nor bell, and hauls its abbreviated train, with not a wandering "Sukey" to block the traffic.

In years past this little train was the only means of transporting oneself from Yokohama to Tokio. It ambled its way



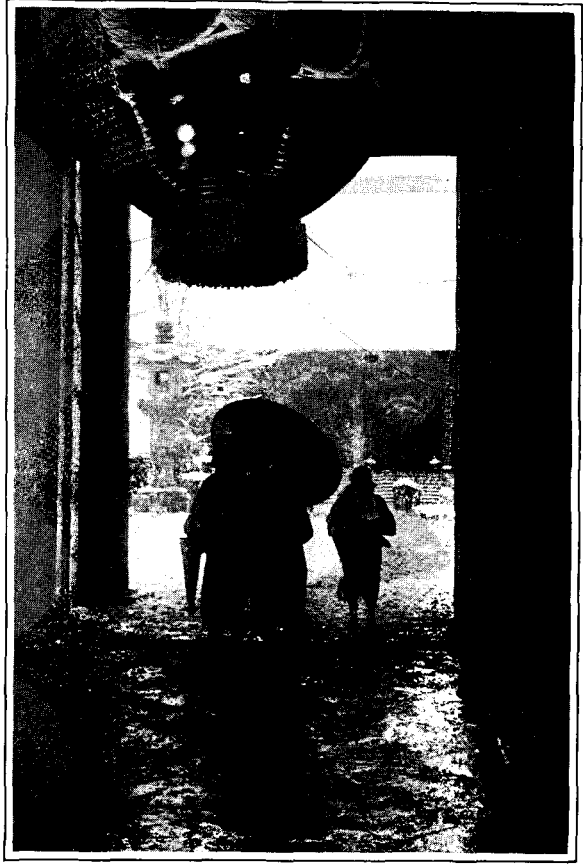
PREPARATIONS FOR NEW-YEAR'S DAY IN A JAPANESE HOUSEHOLD

along the ancient Tokaido high-road into the great Eastern capital, arriving as it pleased, when it pleased, heedless alike of schedules and business engagements of its passengers.

This brilliant winter day I had been rushed through the tiled and concreted Cherry Tree Station, by an up-to-the-minute red cap, into a highly polished car which lacked neither bulb, button, nor plush seat to make it the last thing in trolley fashion. And, take notice, the fashion does not stop at trolleys. Tokio's night sky blazes with signs, blue and red and orange, the character-writing freakish enough to make the lightning jealous. Electric hibachis for heating relegated charcoal to the Dark Ages. The humblest rice-shop sports an electric machine for polishing grain, and there are electric stoves to cook it on. Verily the old Samurai stronghold is being electrified, and we, who so well remember the quiet charm of the by-gone lantern-jinrikisha days, receive the shock full abreast and feel a bit stunned.

But on the trolley time for emotion or memories was brief. The motorman was gleefully translating his New-Year spirit into speed and I was trying to hold on to my senses, a small suit-case, and a half-seat by the window.

There was just time for my eye to catch a glimpse of the curved sweep of temple roof, or the tiny, wayside shrines half hidden in pine-scented groves. Fallow rice-fields and winter wheat seemed only patches of brown and green. I made a rough guess that the bright, shapeless spots on the dark dresses of the work-women were babies tied to Mamma San's back, and the streaks of color flashing down the roadside were children at play. Just one swift glance at peerless



THE QUIET PRECINCTS OF AN ANCIENT TEMPLE

Fuji purpling in the winter dusk, then through crowded suburbs of straw and plaster we landed at a brilliantly lighted station with a bump.

Hope the reading of it has not left you as breathless as the doing of it did me. I hustled to the platform. A voice hailed me. A hand grasped mine. "What made you so late? I thought you were never coming." This from Kitty Jilson! Would you think it? And she as familiar with all the ways of the East, straight or crooked, new or old, as I am with the path from my house to that shut-in but happy abode of yours.

Kate's clear eyes twinkled with her greeting, and she wore her twice-turned serge coat as jauntily as though it were silver fox. The unmissionary flare of her hat caught my eye. I could almost

hear it saying, "Good, but never frowzy!"

She was as undaunted and as cheerful as though she had not toiled thirty-five years with Orientals—rich and poor, the godly, the would-be's, and the everlasting sinner. She radiated hospitality, as you do hope. Between giving and taking of news she announced:

"I tried for a taxi. No good. A year's salary wouldn't hire one to-night."

Shades of emperors and daimyos! taxis in Tokio—where thousands of the streets are too squeezed in to get a good breath! Heavens! Pat. Do you realize what a blessing it is most Japanese shops wear open fronts?

"What about jinrikishas?" I ventured.

"Jinrikishas!" Kate laughed. By this time the flare of her hat was positively rakish. "Think we are standing still in this part of the world? There are only a few of them left. They've been engaged for weeks. But we must hurry. We dare not keep the *unagi meshi* (eels

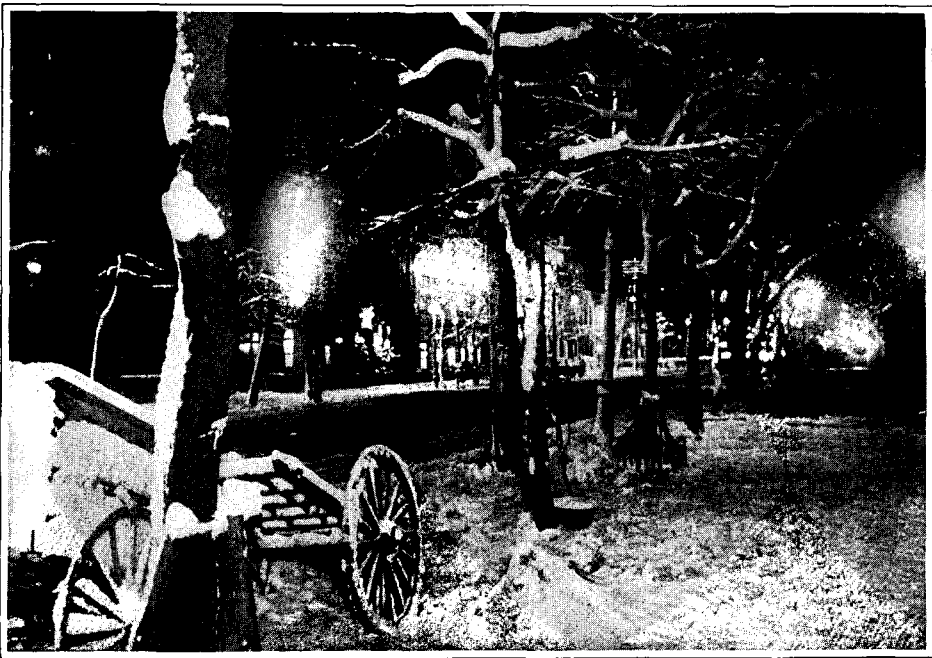
and rice) waiting! The Bamboo Inn said it would be ready at eight."

Oh, swift-footed, blue-garbed messenger of old! Some changes since you sped through miles of streets narrow and dim for the price of your fish and rice, and now! These days messages come high. Only lately a telephone number sold for three times five hundred yen! That's what I thought. I only said:

"Shall we walk?"

"Walk? Three miles, and supper waiting! Not on your sweet life. We'll take a street-car."

Patricia mine! It would give you a week's vacation from some aches if only a Japanese street-car could come riding by. On the average it is more like a bandbox on roller-skates than a public conveyance for public service. Built for the accommodation of some fifty quietly disposed, unhurried people, twice that number of hustling would-be passengers make a plunge for a particular car. The result is a near riot, all showing perfect good nature and smiles, but making of the



GINZA STREET—THE FIFTH AVENUE OF JAPAN ON A NEW-YEAR'S EVE

car an agitated human beehive with not enough space left on which a dragon-fly could comfortably light.

Into one of these heaving masses we pushed our way. Kate's polite request to make room went unheeded. The spirit of all was willing, but it was a case of sit in your neighbor's lap, stand on his toes, or hang in mid-air by a strap. Even the printed appeal not "to stick your knees or elbows out of the window" was useless. No other place left to put them. Happily everything ends somewhere.

How welcome was our halting-place at a street corner! With the aid of a conductor, a polite motorman, and a spry youth we untangled ourselves, two disheveled feast-makers. But I should like to see a prize-fighter emerge from a Tokio street-car unmussed, and neither Katherine nor I ever took a prize for anything. Soon the cold air and a firm foundation beneath us began the cheering act. A near-by sign temptingly paved the way to hilarity. It read: "Amiable dressmakers! Ladies having fits up-stairs. Arise."

The desire to take advantage of the invitation was almost irresistible. In steps my friend, bidding me repress my mirth. She reminded me we were in a section of the city which still clings to the feudal days. Thank Heaven, there are a few of them left. It frowned upon ladies young or old laughing in the streets, as it fought any effort to foreignize. The sign was a remnant of the last vain attempt. I was so rejoiced to find this spot I gladly tucked away all but the faintest smiles. A page of the picture-book was peeping out.

Soon we were walking through Big Fist Street. A few good-sized hands could easily have spanned its width. The narrow places, romantic with shadows from lanterns soft and swaying, it needed only the incense-laden breeze, the chanting of a temple priest, and the twang of a samisen! Lo! once again mine the joy to feel the magic spell!

By the time we passed the kitchen of the Bamboo Leaf—Pat, wouldn't you

love to have your kitchen where your big front door should be?—the feeling had me by the throat. When two little poster maids smilingly greeted us, removing our shoes at the same time, then showed us to a room all silky mats and dim, pink lights, the haunting charm of the Orient had me fast. I'd love to coin a fresher phrase for you, but the old enchantment needs nothing new.

I think my "Thank Heaven!" must have been emphatic. Miss Jilson at once stopped preening her ruffled hat feathers and challenged, "For what?" I dearly love to catch a whiff of Kate's unconquerable good sense, leavened at times with a dash of frivolity. I baited her with a bit of sentiment.

"For you, my dear, and your thoughtfulness in giving me a glimpse of a picture, beautiful and old, but fast fading!"

"Nonsense. If you call it a picture, there are hundreds of the same kind, if you know where to find them. This room is as good for another century as the last. Nothing faded about it except that kakemono. Think I'd fade myself if I'd been painted for over three hundred years. We may be sitting on cushions made from four-times-removed grandmother's sash. What of it? They are as soft as new ones and the colors quite as good. You surely don't expect things to last forever, do you? Be bored to death if they did."

She didn't say it all at once, but by the time the maids had served dinner with not a ceremonial hand-flourish nor a chop-stick missing, Kate invited me to draw up the red-lacquer table and to wail out my troubles "like Job of old, if it's any help."

I began my lament of how new things and changed things had arisen to excite my memories of the Japan of other days . . . what had happened to so much of the beauty of the country and the customs of the people?

"Well," demanded my hostess, "you didn't imagine that hideous war would turn this little silk-worm empire into a

pet butterfly, while it was changing every other country into dragons and devils and a million heroes?"

You can see for yourself when the Lady Mish goes a-feasting she cares no more for figures of speech than any other kind of figure, her own included. The point is you always know what she means.

"And," she went on, "have you any conception what the people of and in Japan have done these last years? Red-Crossers have worked themselves into a shadow. Stay-at-homes have made thousands of garments, packed and shipped them to Siberia. And the busiest housemothers baked bread and cake and sold them to swell the charity fund. Relief funds with fancy names, but a mighty firm purpose, have kept at it day and night, relieving starvation and incidentally pocketbooks to do it with. Doesn't your imagination tell you, if your good sense doesn't, that hundreds of homeless Russian refugees and companies of Czech soldiers with every coming ship unloading strays, prisoners, and stragglers, are enough to twist customs and traditions of any country fatally? Why, child"—that was nice of Kitty—"this is a brand-new part of the world. Even our daily earthquakes have moved out to sea."

We talked it out all the way home. I was grateful to the earthquakes and acknowledged the inevitable, still I was unreconciled. However, that's not going to change one splinter in the scheme of things.

I know how determined you have been to permit neither illness nor sorrow to spoil your life and, happy you, never to bring shadows into the lives of others. It's splendid. But if I am to show you Japan as I see it, with the sunshine must creep in a shadow or so. The one I saw last night still haunts me. Making a tour of the guest-room so hospitably prepared for me, I looked from one of my windows across the garden. A square of light caught my eye. Though late, the outer wooden shutters of the house

were not in place. A pale-yellow glow of shaded candles silhouetted the figure of a woman against the rice-paper doors. She bent with clasped hands over the form of a child, and the sound which drifted toward me through the darkness was not the cry of a far-off night bird. Being well up on shadows, I am here to prophesy, this one is tagged with a story. When it is told I'll tell you.

I've counted up, or, rather, back. It is just about time for your household to be gathered around, for what you call your "best hour." How vividly the picture comes before me, shadows and night lights—Jimmy-Lou standing guard; Johnny with his faithful old hands clasped across his clean overalls, and, just inside the door, frail Dorothy and the other pitiful two, castaways of factory life. You their only chance. Some skipper you are, my friend, to take on all that cargo!

TOKIO.

When this reaches you, New-Year's will have long since passed into that invisible haven of all other New-Years. Bestir your fancy and watch something of the day's pictures I will try to pen for you. Make them fast in your memory before their quaint beauty becomes dulled by onrushing time.

Did I ever give you a recipe for a Japanese house? A tubful of plaster, a cartful of straw, some few beams and a fishing-pole or so; a little time and skilful hands. Behold! a dwelling-place where convenience does sacrifice at beauty's altar.

Kate's house is like this, and it faces a wonderful river, with a glint of the sea just beyond. It hangs as lightly over the bank as a kingfisher swings on a limb before he dives. There is nothing to prevent us from taking an unexpected dive if the earth begins to shiver, but it hasn't happened yet.

I began my day by watching the splendor of a sunrise. To see the full play of nature's pomp I had only to take out one whole side of my room. Easy enough. The indoors is mostly out. Just

slide back seven paper doors, and there I was with a new land, a new sea, a fresh world as wonderful and beautiful as the first dawn of the first day. There was nothing between my eyes and the glorious sweep of gold and blue. Neither was there anything between me and zero if Hokkaido's winter king got frisky and sent down a bitter wind to sweep all before it.

But the breeze of this morning lingered in the tiny garden below and rose to my window laden with the faintest hints of a joyful something to come. How you would have enjoyed it! The dwarf plum-tree felt it, and opened wide its blossoms to the sun. Kitty's old pet crane intercepted the message, strutted along the gravel path, and hopped on the half-circle bridge. He scared the goldfish in the little pond out of a half-day's swim. Then, too, Kate's hand-maidens, steadies and extras, were singing in the kitchen over their many household preparations. The little song, gay and festive, said plainly that youth and laughter were having their hour. With the sound came a heart flutter or so, and right away I blessed the thieving years that they had been good enough to leave me a few thrills all my own. I should need every one of them as the hours went on, for of all the holidays in the Land of the Rising Sun the first day of the new year is the biggest and gladdest.

Remembering this, I hurried down to find the dining-room lined with an animated flower-garden. It was a collection of Kitty's pupils, dependents, and neighbors, dressed in their brightest and best, come, all with congratulations, and some with small gifts. The day is full of luck, too. Good or bad. Depends upon how one greets it. And you can count your last penny, my dear, no rich man, poor man, merchant or chief, wise or otherwise, is bold enough to disdain entirely the day's traditions which started the minute the first Japanese Adam and Eve appeared on Izumo's rocky shores. Traditions may stay put for all the year, but with the dawn of a fresh one they

sally forth to frolic in the highways and the alleys, indoors and out. They demand respectful attention from every being, and woe to him or her who tips the nose in scorn.

You may think a policeman immune. He isn't. I can prove it. A few nights ago as we were coming home, Katherine picked up from the dusty street a small coin. It was a find because it was silver. Possibly when I tell you that all the silver small change is completely and mysteriously melting from sight in this part of the world, you will understand why we were so fluttered over the discovery. Our excitement led us to the nearest police-box. We handed the precious bit to the one lone guardian of the law on watch. With it we were obliged to hand in our life histories and present address.

On New-Year's morning our first honorable visitor was the Keeper of the Coin! He brought all his dignity and his calling-card. I envied the calm leisure with which he removed his belt and his fierce little sword. Without a flicker he put his gloves into his hat, then treated us to half a volume of congratulations. He did it all as solemnly as if he were reading a list of our sins with penalties attached. When he thrust his hand in his pocket we began to wonder if an arrest warrant would follow. Instead he only produced the silver piece, saying it had not been called for. Would Kate use it as a good-luck piece? In a twinkle the whole amount of five cents went clinking into the charity-box. The visitor saw for himself it had started on its mission. The policeman smiled for the first time and I am sure for the millionth time the God of Luck grinned.

The latter gentleman must have been particularly pleased with us, too. He smiled on us all day. Presents began pouring in from every direction—baskets of oranges, boxes of persimmons, cake, rice, and blessed fowls of old Nippon! Dozens of eggs! No sooner had these gifts landed at the front door than out they went through the back entrance to

neighbors old and penniless, whose only hope for the next meal lay in Kate's caring for them as she would for a flock of helpless children. All the givers well knew what was done with their gifts. Knowing this, they heaped up the measure, not alone as tribute to the deity of the day, but from a kind and generous spirit all their own.

Kate was called to the kitchen. I trotted along close behind, determined not to miss a trick so that I might turn them all over to you.

This time the visitor was a young girl. Her face was as sad as her clothes were shabby. She came to talk about her sister. In the mean time she did not forget to offer congratulations for the day. The sister's husband was at sea. There was no money and little food in their house, but a brand-new baby.

They had been so happy when little Lotus Blossom came, but babies cost so much these days. It took five yen right away, and every time the doctor came it meant another yen. Now there were no more and the baby seemed to be withering up. Maybe it was cold. There weren't many padded garments to put around it and there was no fire. The sister was very ill, too. Before the baby came she had worked on a ship, loading freight. The girl thought it all wrong, but her sister wanted to earn a little extra money, though she had never done such work before.

The girl herself could not nurse the household and earn money at the same time. What should she do?

This is one of the times when Kate does all the doing. Twenty things at once, and each one worth while. Before that girl could finish with her bows her arms were filled with bundles of clothes and food and a small bag where all the household change went to join the policeman's silver coin.

Late that evening I saw Kate reading something from a very soiled piece of paper. I asked her what it was. She read it to me. It was from our visitor of the early morning.

"I soon return warm clothes and food and moneys. Many kind thanks. Though my feet fly as like by wing, I too lately. Spirit of sister and baby flew away. They dead!"

Alas! some things never change.

It's your story all over again, Pat, straining to give and to do till bones and pocketbook threaten dislocation. Only the setting is different. Your dainty room, your own presence on the snowy bed, breathes tranquillity and peace. Out here, with the swarm of flags and kites flipping above, the thousands of paper balls bouncing below one feels as if he were whirling around in a rain-bow, and a very gay one at that. Everybody is cheerful, everybody smiles, and if their happiness is play then all hail to the willing spirit and the grit to show it!

In our house every soul was commandeered to lend a helping hand in receiving visitors and portioning out the gifts. By late afternoon, so constantly had I gone the rounds, I was beginning to sympathize with the wheels of a Christmas delivery-wagon, when boom went a temple bell. All was changed. Work was done. Play began.

The sun tumbled behind the golden mountains, and as the world lay enthralled in the afterglow of pink and purple, I caught a glimpse, through my window, of the woman who made the picture on the screen my first night in this room. Now she made a picture of a different kind. She was in the garden, seated under a great pine. The lovely tints in her kimono lighted up the somberness of the old tree as much as did the sunset. But the sadness on her face belonged neither to the dress nor to the shining hour. I softly closed my screen, slid down our ladder-like stairs, and demanded Kitty to produce all the information she had on the picture lady next door.

"Yes, I know her," said my friend. "She's the unceremonial wife of a 'juggling-with-money' broker. The man was so pleased with his sudden riches—I don't know how he got them—he just

had to make himself a present. He picked her—without her leave, of course. Simply handed papa a bank roll and the thing was done.”

You should see the Lady Mish’s eyes blaze when she mentions this subject.

“Think of a country which has grown upward by leaps and bounds retaining this abominable law that permits a man to keep extra households. Of course anybody who knows the Orient knows that Japan is far from being alone in her guilt, but—” Kate preached a ten-minute sermon with appropriate texts. I voted yes to everything she said, but I couldn’t change the law and said as much, but I could hear the story and begged her to go on. Between times I got a little of it.

Sometimes the woman, Otani San by name, brought her little girl to kindergarten. She was very shy. But that didn’t matter. There is a look in Friend Katherine’s eyes that would coax a wild flower to confidences. Otani San began to talk. Before coming to “Yochin” with her small daughter she never dreamed of any life save her own kind. She had watched the plays of the children. Their Christmas songs sang into her heart something of which she had never dreamed. The stories told by the teachers opened the windows to another world, always closed to her by isolation. Her family was built on the old feudal plan. Of course they were poor. When her father commanded her to go to another house she went without question. She had never disobeyed. Now the surprise of father’s life was racing toward him. It would catch the broker man, too. She was going to leave. Her little girl should have a chance which had never come to her. You know there are times when astonishment stills my tongue. To a decision so rare and so costly to the decider, I could only say, “Think of it.”

I was sorry I did. It switched the story. Kate said there was little use in thinking of it. Times were changing too fast; so were the Japanese girls. Only

last month the daughter of an old and noble house threw all the laws of rigid custom to the winds and eloped with the family chauffeur.

Now it was time for us to go and, would you believe it? I was left with that story hanging in mid-air, and me about consumed with thrills and interest. What of it? Wasn’t the whole of Tokio bursting in a blaze of welcome to the first night of the year? And weren’t the countless colored lights turning even the sordid spots of a great city into dream-land?

Before every door, rich or poor, swayed a flourishing bamboo-tree, its feathery branches all aflame with myriad strips of colored paper. Every tree on one side of the street bent gracefully to meet its neighbor on the other side. Beneath the enchanted bower walked countless holiday-makers who happily could forget for the moment they were but mortal.

You should see the big lobster as he hangs over many carved entrance gates. He is all tangled up in a wonderful bow-knot of straw rope. He is there to wish long life to every passer-by, and his paper sides are pink with blushes as he looks down on a printed slip swinging from the lower limbs of two fresh young pine-trees shaved to order and placed on each side of the gate. Harken to what that printed slip says, Pat! “Another milestone on the road to hades.” What a cheerful soul it must have been to have thought of it first. After all, it isn’t as doleful as it sounds. It is only a reminder that if you are on the wrong path there’s still time to turn and go the other way.

We were headed the right way and soon swung into the silver-light street called Ginza. On unfestival days the Ginza is the Fifth Avenue of Tokio, with ample space, semaphores, skyscrapers, and all the trimmings that go with them. How glad I was that night, that most things new and aggressive had the good sense to hide in the soft glow of numberless lanterns. Big ones and little ones,

rose ones and butterflies, rivaling in hue the gay clothes of the glad throng. And over all the magic touch of promise and hope which comes with the dawn of every New-Year.

Yes, I know you. It is the children you want to know about. They were there, thousands of them, rich and poor, but all sweet and fresh as the blossoms of plum-tree and cherry on the flower-man's stand. Many little brothers and sisters with littler brothers and sisters strapped to their backs, and so joyously light-hearted I found myself wishing they had never to grow up to find their Land of Enchantment filled with shadows of reality.

Happily, the shadows were afar off and the children danced from place to place like light-winged moths in a full-bloomed garden. Balls of silver bobbed in their black hair, pink and yellow balloons fluttered in their hands as they fled from one joy to another. Truly the gladness of the crowds of many colors, the keen delight in simple things, the cheerful pushing and jostling, always with smiles and more smiles, made a sight hard to be duplicated in the world.

It mattered neither to young or old that poverty and riches stared at each other with only the width of the pavement between. On one side gleamed the plate-glass windows filled with Oriental treasures. They were rare and costly as the boldest profiteer can make them. Crêpes of wonderful rainbow tints, cobwebby enough to catch the wisest fly, sashes so heavily woven with gold I am thinking the strongest back would have need of a crutch to support its weight. Doesn't it make you tired even to think of five yards of brocade heavy with tinsel, and all of a yard wide, wrapped around the middle, tied over a pillow in the back to give them the proper shape? No wonder that ladies of the smartest set receive their guests while sitting on the floor.

But it was the outer side of the pavement that gripped the emotion or imagination—anything which happened for

the moment to be on the lookout. It was fringed with the poor and the very poor, their meager wares spread out on squares of matting laid flat on the flagging, their owners eager and wistful, but thankful for the smallest sale. Kitty said these people came for this special night from all the out-of-the-way, nearly forgotten spots of Tokio. They brought all their own possessions and any they could borrow, with the hope that Good Luck would bring them a few extra pennies.

Don't you think it the act of a kindly government to make it possible for these poverty-stricken ones to have the same chance as the prosperous ones at the biggest time of the year? I do and did, but, shades of Shoguns! What stories those little pavement shops revealed! Tragedy and mirth as intermixed as bamboo fountain-pens and yellowed carvings of ivory.

I wondered what trick of fate sent those lacquer boxes with the crest of a proud and ancient dynasty embedded in gold to a sidewalk sale? Where was the deserted temple, once owner of the rich tapestries and priestly garments now tagged with a marked-down price? Was it a lover who penned the poem on the face of the dainty fan? But, goodness me! why shade the picture with melancholy musings? Let us laugh instead with a trader who turned his sense of humor into profit. Hear what I read from a board which topped a pile of bunnies tanned and ready to wear.

"Ladies' furs. Made from your skins or mine."

The sparkle in the owner's eyes made me suspicious. I asked, "You know?"

"Oh yes. I have lived in Chicago fifteen years."

Good English and the wit to use it. I might have learned much from this merry merchant, but a cry diverted me.

It was young and determined. I turned to see youthful Japan, at least a vigorous part of it, protesting against the innovation of a baby-buggy. Mamma San's back was good enough for him. I followed to see the end of the argu-

ment. Of course it ended in victory for son and a heartache and backache for mother. She evidently had spent her little all for the cheap go-cart which might help to ease the burden of carrying the boy. There was nothing for the baubles he so insistently demanded.

The fund you gave me did glorious deeds that night. It helped to fill the despised cart with joy for the child and comfort for the mother, as it helped, later on, to fill many other little hearts with rapture.

It came near to furnishing a meal for a man and woman, ragged and very poor. Kate dug them out of a doorway and hustled them into a luxuriant restaurant. Soon there was a smile in every wrinkle of their poor old faces. They said they knew the God of Luck would not pass them by on that night—if they waited long enough. Kate and you were it. So was the proprietor. He declined to take a penny for the feast. So we bought warm neck-wrappings and hand-coverings instead. Between the dashes and dots this letter is freighted with some of the joy you gave.

Out in the street men, women, and children played battledore and shuttlecock. They seldom missed a stroke while they skilfully eluded street traffic. Motor-buses raced up and down. Long processions of luxurious automobiles with more luxurious womankind within went this way and that. Side by side sped jinrikishas conveying gorgeous geisha maids to the next engagement.

But not for a moment are you to think the tea-house ladies ever choose the lowly jinrikisha. Indeed, no! Rarely do they budge from their silken cushions these days unless assured a motor waits at the garden gate.

A band of street singers, picturesquely ragged, chanted a forty-fourth verse for me for half a penny. For ten cents a baby acrobat stood on his head and gaily tossed a ball from two small feet. My two good-sized ones were giving out. I said, "Home, Kate." Weary, but happy, we faced about, stopping only to cheer a beggar and help out an overwrought lady who was singing for her supper.

There were some joyous souls in the house across our garden. Hilarious encores for the singing girls and their tinkling samisens told the story. Otani San's room was dark. I can hardly hold my curiosity to know if she has fled, and what will happen when she does! On the street the moon played hide-and-seek with the shadows. Two lovery young things walked arm-in-arm and chanted an ancient love-song. Certainly it was against the rule. But, as I told you, times are swiftly changing. Love's young dream is heading the procession.

In the great world shuffle even the "passionless calm of the East" is being stamped with a different brand. Who can say how long the beauty of Nippon's gladsome New Year will remain untouched? Never mind! My pictures and yours will last as long as we do.

(To be continued)

THE MARRIAGE IN KAIRWAN

BY WILBUR DANIEL STEELE

KAIRWAN the Holy lay asleep, pent in its thick walls. The moon had sunk at midnight, but the chill light seemed scarcely to have diminished; only the limewashed city had become a marble city, and all the towers turned fabulous in the fierce, dry needle rain of the stars that burn over the desert of mid-Tunisia.

In the street Bab Djedid the nailed boots of the watch passed from west to east. When their thin racket had turned out and died in the dust of the market, Habib ben Habib emerged from the shadow of a door arch and, putting a foot on the tiled ledge of Bou-Kedj's fry shop, swung up by cranny and gutter till he stood on the plain of the house-tops.

Now he looked about him, for on this dim tableland he walked with his life in his hands. He looked to the west, toward the gate, to the south, to the northeast through the ghostly wood of minarets. Then, perceiving nothing that stirred, he went on, moving without sound in the camel-skin slippers he had taken from his father's court.

In the uncertain light, but for those slippers and the long-tasseled *chechia* on his head, one would not have taken him for anything but a European and a stranger. And one would have been right, almost. In the city of his birth and rearing, and of the birth and rearing of his Arab fathers generations dead, Habib ben Habib bel-Kalfate looked upon himself in the rebellious, romantic light of a prisoner in exile—exile from the streets of Paris where, in his four years, he had tasted the strange delights of the Christian—exile from the university where he had dabbled with his

keen, light-ballasted mind in the learning of the conqueror.

Sometimes, in the month since he had come home, he had shaken himself and wondered aloud, "Where am I?" with the least little hint, perhaps, of melodrama. Sometimes, in the French café outside the walls, among the officers of the garrison, a bantering perversity drove him on to chant the old glories of Islam, the poets of Andalusia, and the bombastic histories of the saints; and in the midst of it, his face pink with the Frenchmen's wine and his own bitter, half-frightened mockery, he would break off suddenly, "*Voilà, messieurs!* you will see that I am the best of Mussulmans!" He would laugh then in a key so high and restless that the commandant, shaking his head, would murmur to the lieutenant beside him, "One day, Genet, we must be on the alert for a dagger in that quarter there, eh?"

And Genet, who knew almost as much of the character of the university Arab as the commandant himself, would nod his head.

When Habib had laughed for a moment he would grow silent. Presently he would go out into the ugly dark of the foreign quarter, followed very often by Raoul Genet. He had known Raoul most casually in Paris. Here in the Tunisian *bled*, when Raoul held out his hand to say good-night under the gate lamp at the Bab Djelladin, the troubled fellow clung to it. The smell of the African city, coming under the great brick arch, reached out and closed around him like a hand—a hand bigger than Raoul's.

"You are my brother: not they. I am not of these people, Raoul!"