

than might have been expected. He stepped over and held out his hand. She was glad to see him. It was in her eyes, the music of her voice, the rose-hue of her cheek. They got off soon, having nothing in view, and went to a restaurant. The old gentleman—Klitson thought of him as old, but the fact is he looked like an athlete—said that he was going back to California, having been offered a good thing. "Agnes doesn't want to go," said he.

"No," she replied. "We are so nicely situated now—in a place all mine. You must come out to see—us."

Klitson said that he would, and he went that afternoon. She met him at the door. Beneath the lightness of her welcome there was a reserved warmth. Klitson could feel it in his heart. She showed him into a parlor, neat and cheerful. They talked about the summer hotel, how sweet the woods, how bad the table. "Oh, you must see my pet room," she said. "It is where I read and write."

Klitson followed her. At the door he gasped. On the wall was his skeleton. It was his room.

"Why, what is the matter?" she cried. Klitson sat down and told her. Tears flew to her eyes.

"I hope you don't think I stole it!" she cried.

"Oh, not for the world," said Klitson. "I couldn't think that. But would you mind telling me how you did get it?"

"Why, of course. When we came from California I

bought this piece of ground with money left me by my mother. And this summer, just before going to the country, I made arrangements with a contractor to build me a brick house. I heard shortly afterward that the fellow was a fraud, but as his reports to me were satisfactory I did not try to investigate his moral standing. Well, a few days after you left the country he wrote that the house was ready, and so I came home. But you say your house was wood. This is brick."

"Let's see about that," said Klitson.

They went out and examined the walls—wood, skillfully sanded and marked off. They went back into the skeleton-room. They sent for a detective. He said that the contractor had been arrested on a charge of forgery, and was awaiting trial.

"Well, we've got him, anyway," said Klitson, when the detective had gone. "We'll throw the law down on him."

"And—and you are going to take the house away from me?" she said.

"No," replied Klitson.

"Then what are you going to do?"

"I'm going to tell you that I love you, and ask you to marry me."

The old gentleman in the next room heard them laugh, and then there fell a deep silence. "And when we get tired of living over here," said Klitson, "why, we can have the house moved back over yonder."

round himself. A boy in his twenties is usually vainer than a girl in her teens. Tom grinned at this compliment.

The girl continued, "Bud you change some ways else, too."

"Yes?"

"Yes, indeed. 'Fore you go 'way from Japan you always lig' poor liddle me jus' a liddle bit; now you naever"—here she paused, throwing a glance half of invitation, half of reproach, at him—"now you naever even kees me any more."

That settled it. By this time she had risen to her feet again and was standing before him in the most inviting manner in the world. There is no need to tell how Tom answered her. Besides, that was one of the American tricks he had taught her long ago.

It was about a month later. Tom had prolonged his visit in Japan. His original intention had been only to stay there a few weeks, certainly not more than a few days or a week in any one city. One morning, as Natsusan sat very comfortably at his feet trying to make him laugh and chase away the gloom that had suddenly possessed him, he said to her as firmly as he could:

"Now, Natsu-san, I want you to listen to me!"

"Yaes?" the girl interrogated. "I listenin', Mr. Solemn Angry-patch." She meant "Crosspatch."

Tom himself was not quite sure what it was he wanted to tell her. His engagement had been preying on him of late, and this day his American mail had brought him quite a batch of letters that—well, that made him feel very glum and remorseful and blue, on somebody else's account. As he looked down at the confident little figure at his feet he felt weak, very weak. He had been trying to summon enough courage all week to tell her he was to be married soon; that he did not think she ought to visit him so much; that he, of course, did not love her. Yet he could not contemplate a day passing without his seeing something of her. He was silent now at the crucial moment, when, aided by the letters, he should have been spurred on to the heroism of telling her.

"Wha' you skeered," she asked, "tha' you not tell me?"

Tom got up suddenly and began pacing the floor, with his hands thrust deep in his trousers-pockets, a look of perplexity on his face. He couldn't help liking Natsu immensely, that was certain; but as for being in love with her—"Pshaw!" he said, bravely, to himself, "Evalyn has my heart, of course, in the right place." He began to imagine that he might have some trouble in getting rid of Natsu on her own account. She might make it unpleasant for him, and Tom detested scenes. He wished he had not been so weak—had not encouraged her—for he had done so, not deliberately, but unconsciously. He braced all his strength together.

"Come here, Natsu-san," he said; "I want you to look at a picture."

It was a photograph of a young American girl. She was dressed in fashionable clothes, with a large hat on her head trimmed with birds, flowers and imitation cherries.

"What a ugly girl!" said Natsu-san, spitefully, making a face. "She all so fonny! See all the ugly things on her haed! Wha' you call that—a hat? Ugh! I not lig' a hat lig' that—all fool of ve-veget-ables an' birds an—an'—"

"But look at the face, Natsu-san."

The young man was getting red. Natsu regarded the face very critically.

"How tha' is fonny! See, she roll her eyes, so!" and she turned her own little eyes in irresistible mimicry of the American girl's, which were turned heavenward.

"Do you know who this is?" Tom asked, sternly.

Perhaps Natsu guessed the truth. She caught her breath with a sudden pain at the sharpness of Tom's voice, but she did not betray to him in the slightest way that she was concerned. In fact, there was an indifference in her face and voice that the most finished Western coquette would have been glad to emulate.

"No, an' I don' keer vaery much."

"Well," Tom said, stung by what she had said, "she is—a—she is—er—I expect to marry her some day."

He did not look at Natsu-san as he spoke, and it gave the girl time to recover herself.

The pallor of her face was scarcely noticeable, and her voice did not tremble in the slightest; in fact, there was extreme mockery in it.

"How nize that is!" she said. "How you mus' lofe her!"

She did not come to see him all the next day, and with a restlessness he could not conquer he went over to seek her in the tea-garden.

"Why did you not come over to-day?" he asked her, nervously.

"Well," she said, shrugging her little shoulders, "I thing it bes' not. What kin I do? You goin' to marry! I goin' to marry! Tha's bes' we not see each other for-aevermore."

"You going to marry?" repeated Tom, stupidly.

"Yaes," she said, calmly.

He was conscious of a feeling of unreasonable jealousy. Why had she told him nothing of this before?

"When?" he began, and could get no further. "When—when?" he repeated, stupidly.

"Oa," the girl answered, coolly, "I bin 'engaged,' you call it, long time now. I egspieg to marry nex' mont."

"Then you were just fooling with me?"

"Tha's grade fun!" she admitted.

He turned abruptly and left the gardens. "Just like these Japanese women!" he said, between his teeth, with an unaccountable lump in his throat. "No heart to break. And to think all this time I was suffering on her account, fearing I would hurt her so, and—well—" He lit a cigar and turned into his house miserably. His *amour propre* was suffering terribly.

As for her? She was singing very gaily in the tea-garden, and her fingers seemed to pull the samisen-strings with an added vigor. But her eyes looked tired, and there was a wistful look about her little white face.

THE WAYS OF MARCH

By Hattie Whitney

THE keen white moon of March has cut across
The cloud a sudden swath of frigid light;
A few clear stars with sharpened points emboss
The shaggy vastness of the scowling night,
As if some gnome had hurled, in passing by,
A sheaf of flaming brands against the sky.

In blackness, lighted by no camp-fire's spark,
March meets his henchmen—all the lusty gales,
Who revel through a carnival of dark
Till drifts the night wreck with its tattered sails,
Its decks by morning sea-waves washed away,
Its masts half blotted out with misty gray.

And in the bleak, wild waste of early dawn
Their flying arrows frozen music strike
From rock and earth—the frantic chase is on;
Their hunting-horn rings down the gleaming pike,
And shrills away where sweep the lonely glades,
And shivers down the gorge in weird cascades.

And I could find it in my heart to love
The haughty knight who bears no olive spray,
But casts before the world an iron glove,
And dares old Winter back unto the fray—
Who brings no sprig of floral offering,
And yet, withal, prepares the way for Spring.

For some day all the bitter winds shall hush
Their boisterous din, and slip to gentleness;
The stern gray heavens catch a mellowing flush,
And warm, still tears the rimy earth caress,
And March's lute shall whisper at the eaves
Of waking blossoms and uncurling leaves.



By Onoto Watanna

HE was in a reminiscent mood. She was sitting in one of the American's big chairs, and because she was so very small her feet reached only half way to the floor, and the chair seemed to envelop her altogether. She looked at the American out of a pair of very sharp little eyes, and there was just the least touch of pique in her voice. "You tell me long time ago, hah! six, ten, twenty monts, that you come bag soon at Japan to see me. But you naever come in long time. What do you do all that long time?"

The young man laughed.

"Been pretty near round the world, Natsu-san, since then."

"Hum! an' you say you naever forgit me—I naever forgit you—but wen I come see you—you say jus' lig' this"—she frowned heavily—"Hem! Wha's want? Wha's that liddle girl? How? You want me? Ah, yaes, I 'member now—tha' you, Natsu-san? My, but you change—you grown vaery big!" But me, I reckonize you at once, but you—you forgit me lig' I only a pritty liddle play-toy."

"Nonsense!" He was still laughing. "I knew you at once, Natsu-san. What are you doing now? Still at the geisha business?"

"Oh, no," she said, pretending to be provoked. "Now, what you thing—that I be geisha-girl foraeve and aeve?" This was not true, however, for she was still a geisha-girl.

"Come, stand up," he said, "and let me see what you look like now."

She rose obediently from the chair, and stood in a charming attitude, with her little hands stretched daintily out, and her head tilted the least bit to one side.

"Now, I know what you goin' to say. 'My, how ugly you grown, Natsu-san! Grashes! How old you be! Look lig' a—a ole wooman!'"

The young man laughed outright. She was irresistible. He had been trying ever since they had met again not to let himself be carried away by her charms, for of course it was impossible for him now to—well, care for her as he used to do two years ago. And yet how pretty she had grown! At that time she had been too young—only fifteen. Now she was dazzling.

Then, too, his vanity was immensely flattered that she had not forgotten him, and that she had been the first to meet him at the boat. She evidently considered he had stood up in position plenty long enough for him to see her,

and suddenly subsided to the floor, her little feet under her, looking, if possible, even more bewitching than before.

"Now tell me all about yourself," she said, coaxingly.

"Nothing to tell, Natsu-san, that you would understand. Besides, I'd rather hear you talk."

"Now you are selfeesh again," she said, reproachfully,

but proceeded to recite to him a few of the little incidents that had occurred in Tokyo since he had left.

Now, Tom Eyster had left Japan with the fixed intention of getting over his infatuation for Natsu-san. She was the youngest and prettiest geisha-girl in a tea-house that Tom had always found particularly attractive because, perhaps, of the picturesqueness of its situation, being on the highway between Yedo and Kyoto, and within sight of Fuji-Yama. He had known hundreds of geisha-girls, but none of them had ever seemed to him as charming as Natsu-san, to whom he had attached himself almost from the first day when she had knelt at his feet holding the tray while he drank his *saké* hot. After that day he had been almost constantly at the tea-house, and a friendship had sprung up between them. A friendship? Well, perhaps something more than that, for the last time Tom had seen her he had taken her bodily into his arms, in true American fashion, and had kissed her very ardently.

"I am coming back soon, Natsu-san," he had said to the doleful little figure; but as the ship began to move down the bay he shut his lips together very grimly, as he said, "Don't expect ever to see her again. Hope not, for obvious reasons."

That was two years ago. Tom had succeeded very nicely in forgetting Natsu-san, and, in fact, had taken a dose of the best medicine for love; that is, he had fallen in love with another. Now he was taking another trip through Japan before returning to America, there to settle down with the new love, who, by the way, was a fair American girl. Tom felt quite capable of meeting Natsu-san now, what with the added two years to his former twenty years and the assurance of his American girl that she trusted him utterly. It really was not Tom's fault that he was frightfully susceptible. In fact, he would have told you it was Natsu's fault. She had no business to grow so pretty and charming. Tom was more helplessly smitten than ever this time.

"You change vaery much," the girl told him, looking at him very critically.

"In what way, Natsu-san?"

"Oa, I dunno. I thing you grown more nize-loogin'."

This was artful, shrewd, diplomatic. It broke down a certain stiff dignity with which Tom was trying to sur-