

OJIO SAN

A NOBLE'S DAUGHTER

By ONOTO WATANNA

I.



HE preparations for the marriage had begun, and Yuri had ceased to sing. The coolies who worked for her father missed the bright voice, and looked at each other with serious faces.

The little garden with the sacred stones and the wild wisteria took on a dull and lonely look. The very flowers seemed to miss the sunny little figure who was wont to linger among them. For everything about Yuri was beautiful, from the crown of her little head with its golden combs to the tips of her tiny feet. She was so small that you could have lifted her up with one hand with the greatest ease, but she was so pretty and dainty and good to look at, that you would wish to put both arms about her.

With a hot flush on her face, and her two little hands clutched fiercely under the soft omeshi, she remained indoors. The sun might be shining and the birds singing deliriously, but Yuri heard and saw them not. Her little heart was in a wild rebellion, and she was thinking of two things that clashed piteously together; one was the marriage they had prepared for her, the other was Ichiro Omi, her old playmate and sweetheart. Where was he? Why did he not come? She wrung her little hands feverishly and tried to think calmly. She was Ojio-san (a noble's daughter), and in her inmost soul she rebelled against it, for she belonged therefore not to herself, but to her male relatives, the seven brothers, who had hitherto, because she was their only sister and was without father and mother, petted and loved her and allowed her to have her own way in all things, until some older relatives whispered that Yuri was no longer a child. Whereat the seven brothers drew together and spoke seriously, though sadly, of parting with their little sister, and securing a husband for her. Then a professional Nakoda (or matchmaker) had arrived on the scene with an offer of marriage from one of the richest men of Kyushu, who had seen Yuri a few times and had taken a fancy to her. The brothers turned eager ears to the proposal, for although they were of Samurai and noble blood, yet they were not rich men, and well they knew of the advantage that would accrue to them in marrying Yuri to Shimoda Otama, the suitor; and the Nakoda pressed his client's suit and the brothers eagerly agreed to the contract, and little Yuri was betrothed.

It was in a firm way that the brothers broke the news to her and bade her prepare for marriage. She was too stunned at first to understand, and when finally it dawned on her that she was to be taken away from her beautiful home, from her birds and flowers, and, above all, from Omi, to a large city to live in a stately shiro (palace) and be the wife of one of the cold, learned and polished Samourais of Kyushu, a feeling of intense anger

and rebellion took possession of her. Truly she had always known she was Ojio-san, but why had she been brought up like the other children of the village? Why had she been allowed from childhood to have her own way in all things—to think for herself; to love whom she chose and hate whom she chose? Had the care bestowed on the "daughters of nobles," from earliest childhood, been given her, she would never have met Ichiro Omi; she would never have learned to love him, as she admitted to herself passionately she did. And Omi was away from the village at that time. He was at a big college in Kyushu where he was studying to become a sensei (teacher). Yuri felt utterly helpless. She loved the peasants; she liked to linger and gossip with the women of the village, and play on the blue hills and fields with the children, and she did not wish to be Ojio-san. She was at heart a peasant she told herself, and as she looked with wistful, misty eyes at the blue and golden fields about her, she made up her mind with all the stubbornness of a Samurai that she would never, never, never marry Shimoda, but would become the wife of Omi, the child of the peasants, and for his sake she, too, would become as one of them. It was a stupendous task she had set herself—stupendous for a Japanese girl of Samurai blood—that of crossing the will of her brothers—her guardians by law and nature.

One of the brothers entered the room, his arms full of blue flowers, and he set them down, looking very tenderly at her, but she turned her head away. The other brothers also came into the room, but she ignored them also, and they watched her with sad eyes, for they loved her very dearly and really had her welfare at heart. Suddenly Yuri turned toward them, and said very sweetly, "Ah, I see the brothers! Have they come to sell the sister?" Her voice grew more scornful and a hot blush flew over her face.

The brothers frowned. "Ha!" said the eldest one, "what means this? Forgot thyself hast thou, foolish child-sister?"

Yuri laughed softly, but there was no mirth in her laughter.

"Ah, no—man—brothers," she said mockingly with a graceful half prostration, "surely your child-sister knows she is Ojio-san. Surely she knows—"

The eldest brother interrupted her sternly.

"Hsh," he said, taking a step toward her. "Thy behavior unbecoming is. It is our place and pleasure to provide for thy future, ungrateful one, and thou art not acting as becomes thy sex, but as a mere baby. Have thou no duty sense?"

Yuri became very still during this speech. Then she said very quietly, "Surely, I am willing to obey the will of my protectors in all things. I am Ojio-san—not a peasant."

She turned her back on them, and they thinking she had become resigned left her to herself. She had not shed a single tear, but this was not because she did not feel keenly. It was because she had the hardy, stubborn blood of the Samurai in her veins, which made her hide her true

feelings, so that although she spoke in scorn of her marriage, yet she did not let the brothers see how keenly she was suffering.

As her maid brushed her hair that evening till it shone bright and glossy as the shining jade that she placed before the stone Buddha when she visited the Kwannon temple on the hill, Yuri said very quietly, "Oyoshi-san, how much dost thou love me?" The maid did not answer, but she passed her hand lovingly across the little black head. Yuri was satisfied. She shook the hair from the maid's hands and bade her kneel before her. Then she told her all her trouble—of the harshness of the brothers in wishing to wed her to a man who was old and whom she did not and never could love. The sympathetic face of the maid invited further confidence, and she unfolded to her a plan so daring and dangerous for a Japanese girl to think of attempting that the maid started back in horror. Although but a common woman by birth, she had worked for Samurai families for so long that she had acquired some of that absolute devotion to duty so conspicuous in their daughters. "Oa! mistress-san," she said imploringly, "lamentable would that be."

Yuri laughed gaily, and shook the kneeling maid by the shoulder, forcing her to her feet, and bade her bind up her hair, for truly if they wished to accomplish that which she intended surely to do, they must make haste while yet it was night, so that her brothers would not miss her. She was deaf to the maid's pleading, silencing her with a petulant little imperiousness in her voice that the maid did not dare gainsay. Without further parley she gathered the rich tresses together, and pushing aside the sliding fusuma screens, brought from another apartment robes for herself and mistress to slip over their omeshi. Then very silently the two stepped out of the house, and crossing the rice fields, passed swiftly down to the new railway, which barbarians from the west had recently built.

II.

With a fierce shrill whistle and a loud puffing and blowing the great fiery engine moved out of the village. The maid trembled all over with fear, but Yuri sat up very straight and stiff, though her eyes shone with excitement. She slipped the robe from her shoulders, folded it neatly on the seat, and putting her head back was soon fast asleep. The train sped on and on, every jerk or sway making the frightened maid shudder more violently. She looked at the placid face of her little mistress and marveled, not realizing that the sleep was due more to exhaustion than calm. Through the long hours of the night the maid could not sleep. Visions of her seven angry brothers rose before her. She thought of how she had proved herself an unworthy servant and of how she might even be dragged to prison by the irate brothers and jealous lover. Well she knew of the unrelenting spirit of the Samurai, and her heart shrank in dread from the exposure that would surely follow. Through all her thoughts, however, never once did she think of failing her little mistress, or doing otherwise than obey her imperious will.

The next morning Yuri seemed still more gay. She laughed and teased the worried maid, and grew enthusiastic over the changing landscape as they whirled by plains yellow with natane blossoms, interminable rice fields and blue hills and skies and water, in one enormous golden glow. This was what the Kyushu landscape presented. But they were nearing their destination, and the air had lost the freshness of the country and the fields became fewer and fewer, until gradually the train began to slacken its speed and passed slowly through a dull straggling town, with no pretty streets like in the village where Yuri had

lived, and no gardens or fields. Then the train stood still and Yuri rose to her feet and tried to steady herself, for, after the unusual travel and the miserable unsightly town in which she found herself, she felt dazed and tired.

The town they had arrived at was Kumomota, the chief city of Kyushu, where the government school was located. Before Meiji such a public school did not exist, and the children of the Samourai had select schools of their own, while the children of the common citizens attended primary schools.

Yuri had no trouble in finding the government school, for her brothers had once brought her to Kumomota and they had taken her to see her old playmate Omi, and she had found him a tall, quiet man-youth, whose manners were even, she thought, more polished and gentle than her Samourai brothers. For although Omi's parents were not wealthy people yet they were ambitious for the welfare of their sons, of whom they had two. They were desirous of giving them a scholarly education, so that one of them should become a merchant in Yokahama, and the other a sensei of Kyushu. And Omi had told Yuri on that visit of all his plans; of how, when he became a little older and when he had completely mastered the foreign languages, he would attend the Imperial University, and he would add with a smile, "Perhaps I shall become as learned and solemn as the old Chinese sensei who teaches us literature." All this Yuri remembered very distinctly, and because she was scarcely more than a child, she wondered in a vague sort of way whether Omi had actually become as he had predicted, for it had

have presented a strange appearance to a westerner, but the students of the colleges of Japan are, as a rule, very serious in deportment. Save what should rather be called a scientific art (juijutsu) the Japanese students do not enter into games or sports. Each student enters college with a strong personal sense of obligation. That school is a place for study and hard work, and not for pleasure, is, perhaps, the first thing a Japanese child is told by the master. And the students

lack of strength to be unable to wait until the parents shall provide them with a wife. And Omi had lived for four years among men and youths who were brought up to feel and think in this way, but although he had acquired all the outward grace, and had the cool, unsmiling, unreadable exterior peculiar to Kyushu students, the boy was strangely different from his schoolmates. His mind carried him back to when he was a child, running through the blue fields down to the road-

side to meet his father, worn and tired with laboring on the farm of Yuri's father and brothers. His mother had been of gentler birth and it was largely through her influence that his father had amassed some little fortune, which enabled him to send his sons to the government school, and give them all the advantages of the sons of the Samourai. But all the love of his heart, pent up because kept in confines by his school life among companions, who were for the most part his superior in rank and birth, companions who were strangely fascinating but still uncongenial for him, he poured out on the lowlier parent—the poor old laboring father. But he carried himself with a dignity and grace that would have done credit to a young noble, and being the cleverest student of his class he had become a great favorite among them, and none knew of the hungry heart beneath the calm, placid exterior.

A bugle sounded for military exercises and the students began to fall in line.

They were used to curious or casual passersby pausing at the parade gate to watch them, so that they paid little attention to the two women standing timidly in the shadow. Yuri was peering eagerly among them, search-



DRAWN BY CAPEL ROWLEY

"LEANING AGAINST HIS ARM
LIKE A TIRED CHILD"

themselves, having the hearts of Japan, seldom crave distractions. The pupils of the Kyushu schools especially, who are for the most part of wealthy parentage, and are sent to school to acquire a certain style peculiar to the old Kyushu Samourais, are essentially earnest and taciturn. They cultivate a certain hardness which makes them consider frivolous amusements weak. Thus, for one of them to feel any sentiment or love toward one of the opposite sex, unless already betrothed to her, would be considered extremely weak and, perhaps, vulgar. For it is said to show

ing for a familiar form, but her heart sank lower and lower as she caught glimpses of the faces of the passing students and failed to find the one she sought. But although she had been unobserved by most of the students, yet there was one who had seen her almost from the moment when stepping bravely to the gate, with the trembling maid behind her, she had half started into the grounds, and had then started back again in fear, as the commanding officer in a big voice, and frowning heavily, ordered the students to fall in line.

It was Omi who had seen and recognized her. He wondered how she came to be in Kumomota alone. It was his heart's desire to go up to her and greet her, but would that be practical? Would he not lose caste among the students were he to approach her thus, for she had not come to see him as the female relatives of the others always came—with male relatives. She was looking tired and he noticed that there was something troubled about her. At the bugle call a sudden dazzling came before her eyes and two glistening tears rolled slowly down her face. Omi could stand no more. So quietly and swiftly he crossed to her side that none of the students noticed him. As he came suddenly upon her, whispering her name with piercing tenderness, "Yuri-san," the flood gates of the girl's heart opened and she burst into a passion of tears, pausing but a moment to throw her arms passionately about her lover's neck. Then the maid knew that the girl's calm assurance had been but put on to hide the stronger emotions that lay beneath and that she had been under a terrible strain.

Out from the shadow of the parade grounds—away from the sounds of the patriotic national song that had suddenly burst forth, Omi drew her. Was he weak—cowardly? His very duty was dear and sweet to him in spite of all, and the soft beating and tapping of the drums, mingled sweetly with the call of the bugle and the voices of the students, seemed to be calling him back, and in leaving it all surely the sacrifice would atone for the desertion.

When Yuri was calm enough, and they had entered a more secluded part of the city, she began to tell him why she had come, leaning against his arm like a tired child, and speaking with little catches in her voice. Her innocent confidence in him filled him with pride and delight.

"Yuri-san," he said, trying to speak calmly, though his voice quivered, "how large thy love! Shall we then for the time of all lives be husband and wife?" The maid began to weep, bitterly, for she knew that the symbol of such a marriage was death, and she loved her little mistress full well.

Omi turned to her kindly. "It is, indeed, unkind to leave you behind Oyoshi-san, but no vulgar death shall we meet."

Yuri left his side to comfort the inconsolable woman.

"Omi-san," she said very sweetly, "at the big school where you have lived so long has no learning come to you? Surely a man-youth can plan and think for a little child-woman?"

Now that the tempest of her heart had been relieved in the outburst of tears, the woman and the coquette in her asserted itself. Unlike most Samourais, Yuri could not calmly contemplate death. There was too much vitality in her. She stepped close up to Omi and whispered something in his ear. Although he shook his head and appeared to be horrified at her proposal, yet Yuri had her way, for she stamped her little foot imperiously and frowned and pouted until he relented, and taking her by the hand said very tenderly, though sadly:

"The heart of selfishness is surely stronger than the soul of sacrifice—and for thy love shall it be so."

III.

Now Shimoda Otama, although of a Samourai family, who acted up to most of the traditions of their people, living sumptuously in a refined and beautiful town called Hakata in the conservative province of Kyushu, was yet a very broad and liberal man. He had traveled in foreign lands and had seen much of the world. Therefore he had acquired a certain indifference to some of the prejudices and customs of his class. It was

largely through his influence that the government school had grown to the extent it had within the last few years, and that citizens' children had been admitted, although in the latter case it was only when the parents could well afford it that they availed themselves of this advantage. Shimoda was a man of about sixty and had already been married, but his wife had long since been dead, and having no children he became lonely and hired a Nakoda to secure a wife, at the same time making mention of Yuri, whose father had been his friend.

So he made great preparations for the marriage, and had his house thoroughly cleaned and refurnished. It was with great satisfaction that he thought of Yuri, brightening the almost royal home he had made for her. He even began to dream of the time when a son should be born to them. He was glad his wife would not be like most Ojio-san. It was her very unconventionality that had attracted him to her. Altogether, he felt he had made a thoroughly good bargain.

The day set for the marriage had arrived, and with quiet pleasure he awaited the arrival of the relatives, guests and bride. A servant entered, and after an humble prostration, announced the arrival of the brothers, but made no mention of the bride. Shimoda, taking it for granted that she was with her brothers and friends, went out to meet them with smiles and words of courtesy and welcome. Half way down the path from his door he stopped. The brothers were all before him, standing in attitudes of utter sorrow and shame. Thinking something had happened to the bride he hastened to inquire concerning her, whereat the eldest brother, stepping forward and with many humble apologies, told him of her disappearance. At first Shimoda was so mortified and angered that he could do nothing save glare at the brothers in silent rage. Then, remembering his dignity, he spoke with cutting sarcasm of the truly wonderful "largeness" seven brothers had shown in being able so well to take care of one, younger sister. But although things were said that no Japanese should say to another, yet the brothers were too despondent to resent them. Shimoda, at length, began to take pity on them, and finally invited them to enter his "honorably unworthy and poor house," but before the brothers had time to reply he stopped short, and a look of astonishment and bewilderment replaced the cold suavity on his face. Two figures were coming up the path, dressed in the bridal robes of Japan.

Hand in hand they came along. Suddenly the girl began to speak, and as her voice fell on the startled brothers' ears they turned about, and seeing the pair rushed toward them with one accord. Two shining swords were suddenly raised and gleamed in the light, and Omi and Yuri were pointing at their own necks. Then the brothers drew back, for they feared that Yuri might harm herself. Although the words were addressed to all, yet they were meant alone for Shimoda, and Yuri turned her eyes supplicatingly on him. She told of her early childhood life; of how she had grown up among the peasant children till she had felt as one of them; of how she and Omi had been friends and lovers for many, many years, and that if they were compelled to give each other up they would surely both commit joshi and so become wedded in death. With all the passion and pathos of a Japanese girl she spoke, her voice growing pleading, defiant, piteous and passionate by turn, till the brothers wondered much if this could be the same willful, innocent little sister who had lived with them all these years and whom they had never really known. Shimoda looked at the brothers, and they in turn looked helplessly at

him; then he crossed to the girl's side, and taking the swords from the hands of the pair laid them on the floor at the feet of the brothers, and turning to them announced his intention of formally adopting Omi, with his parents' consent, for his son, for he was well pleased with his bearing and demeanor. And he also desired to propose his new son as husband for Yuri, the sister of the seven brothers.

The brothers, who really loved Omi very dearly, and besides had ever since the marriage contract been wretched because of their little sister, were fairly delighted, and giving their consent declared their gratitude and indebtedness to Shimoda Otama. I believe Otama became a very big man in Kyushu because the people were overjoyed at his kindness and benevolence, and I think he and the seven brothers said, "Bless you my children," just as you would do in America.

CHILDREN'S PARTIES.

BY CARRIE MAY ASHTON.

NOTHING can be more enjoyable than the simple, informal gatherings for little folks.

When they lose their simplicity and become elaborate functions attended by veritable little men and women they lose their chief beauty.

If parents could only be brought to realize that these little folks can only be children for such a short time, while they will be grown up for years they would not be so anxious to hurry them out of their babyhood.

Informal invitations, early hours, simple but bountiful refreshments and dainty, inexpensive costumes, means far more to the majority of children than the far more elaborate occasions where large sums of money are spent needlessly. The new invitations for children's entertainments read as follows:

"We are going to have a little party. We should like to have you come."

"My mamma wishes to know if your mamma will let you come to my party?"

"We are giving a little dance, can you come?"

Many juvenile parties are given in the afternoon from 3 to 6 or 4 to 7. Others are from 4 to 8.

At a pretty little birthday gathering a large fernery was used as a center piece. The table was effectively decorated with smilax, pink roses and pink ribbons. Ropes of smilax and pink ribbons reached from the chandelier to the four corners of the table.

At each plate toy balloons floated, anchored by cunning baskets with pink trimmings and filled with bonbons. The refreshments, so far as it was possible, were served in pink and white to carry out the color scheme.

There were cunning little sandwiches tied with pink baby ribbons, platters of cold turkey, tiny molds of quivering jelly of a delicate pink shade, small cakes iced in pink, ice cream in pink and white in various forms and a delicious drink served in small glasses made of red raspberry juice.

Costume parties are always favorite entertainments with the little folks, for nothing affords more genuine pleasure than "dressing up" to represent some one else.

Mother Goose and Brownie parties are specially pleasant.

A May Pole dance is a pretty feature for a dancing party.

The minuet, horn pipe and Irish jig are effective and pretty dances for children's parties.

The shadow pantomime affords no end of amusement for these small gatherings. A sheet should be stretched tightly across the room and a lamp placed on the floor. A series of pantomimes, usually funny, should be gone through by two or three actors.