

# Prince Sagaritsu's Patriotism

A STORY OF THE JAPO-CHINESE WAR

By ONOTO WATANNA



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I.

**G**REAT confusion reigned in the house of the Chinese consul at Yokohama. Servants hurried hither and thither, moving and packing furniture and personal effects, while men and women, both Chinese and Japanese, crowded about the

place. The Japs watched curiously, with a touch of satisfaction, the bustle and stir going on in the house, and gossiped and commented as to how its inmates felt over their forced departure. But the Chinese watched wistfully, painfully, the preparations, and as each load moved away a heavier load seemed to sink on their hearts—a burden of fear and dread of what was to come.

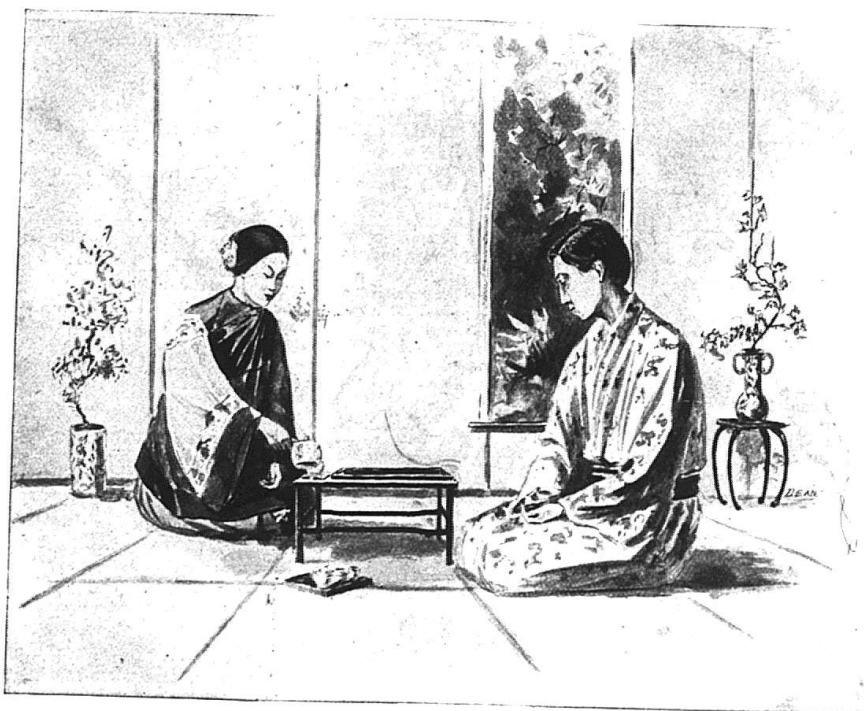
The imperial declaration of war against China had been published on blood-red paper, and the Chinese consul at Yokohama was about to leave for China.

A young man with dark, piercing eyes, and proud erect form, clad in a brilliant uniform, came rapidly down the street. He appeared excited and nervous, his eyes roved restlessly over the crowd, which made way respectfully for him; the Japanese in their white uniforms apparently recognizing his high rank from his dress, saluted with uncovered head and prostrations.

He asked questions of some of the officers in a low voice, then approached the house as if to enter. Suddenly he appeared to have changed his mind, turned, and walked rapidly away, as swiftly and proudly as he came.

A little farther down the street a Chinaman accosted him. He listened coldly at first, but after a while grew impatient, and from his attitude and gestures showed his dislike and contempt for his companion. Still the Chinaman pleaded on, and, as his eloquence grew with the knowledge of the urgency of his mission, Prince Sagaritsu wavered and faltered.

There were but two courses open to him, and they were opposed to each other. Both had their bitternesses, their sorrow and pain. If he joined



DRAWN BY J. E. DEAN

"NOW IN HER WOMANHOOD HE LOVED HER"

work—his duty—for the sake of sentiment. He, too, would join in the conflict. Nay, he must lead. Was he not born a leader of his fellowmen? Why did he linger? Why hesitate?

"Thy master, give him regretful fare-wells from me, who will ever love and cherish his memory." The Chinaman attempted to stay him with further pleading, but in vain, and the two parted—Prince Sagaritsu with firm, proud tread and eyes that glowed with zeal and enthusiasm, the Chinese secretary with weary, lagging steps.

When a student in China, Prince Sagaritsu had dearly loved Ching Li, the old Chinese mandarin, under whom he had studied and with whose family he had made his home for six years, it being customary in Japan, some years ago, for the higher classes to send their sons to China to be educated. Then it was through Prince Sagaritsu's

influence, on his return to Japan, that Ching received the consulship at Yokohama. He came, bringing with him his family, which consisted of a son and daughter. The latter, having remarkable beauty and being of a sweet and modest disposition, was loved by every one. Prince Sagaritsu had played with her when she was a tiny little girl, and now in her womanhood he loved her.

II.

**O**VER the plains of C—, gliding stealthily through the woods in the darkness of the night, came a squad of Japanese soldiers. Many days and nights they had traveled thus; much ravage and slaughter had been done; helpless bands of Chinamen had been attacked by them, defenseless farmers in their homes assaulted, and small villages ruined. The leaders were cruel and relentless, one of them was reckless. They were not a large body of men—some five hundred, perhaps—and could not, so far from their base, have fought the enemy in open battle. But their work was more deadly than any open combat could have been. From village to village they went, attacking the defenseless; for, in most of the smaller towns and villages in this region,

knowledge, even of the war, had scarce reached, and they were unprotected and at the mercy of Japanese soldiers.

The moon rose high and red over the soldiery, and cast wild, flickering shadows around them. The night was strangely still and peaceful, scarce a leaf stirred in the trees and bushes that screened the mass of men crouching, gliding, whispering under its shadow, awaiting a band of some two hundred Chinese mandarins, with their wives and servants. Their object? Massacre. The reason? National hatred, grown almost to insanity, duty to the emperor, thirst for blood.

"Sure are you this is the night?" queried one shadow, bringing his horse close to that of another official's.

"Information by me yesterday received was 'the next moon,' and lo, it is here."

The words were hardly out of his mouth when another put his hand out and, leaning forward, peered through the darkness.

"Hark! Listen!"

A faint muffled sound is heard—a dull beat, beat, beat. It is the unmistakable sound of sandaled runners. It becomes clearer; it is nearer! In the distance the watchers descry the gleam of a yellow light. It moves slowly; they stand in the deep hush, their swords drawn in readiness. Louder and louder becomes the beat of the runners; brighter and brighter gleams the yellow light, flickering from yellow to red and green, as the expected band approaches nearer and nearer, all unconscious of the lurking danger.

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AN INTERVIEW WITH MAYER.

THE religious world will hear with profoundest regret that Joseph Mayer, the grandest peasant of them all, the idolized Christus of three decades, will probably never appear in that capacity again. He has aged fearfully since 1890, the result of an almost fatal accident of two winters ago. Referring to that accident, a few days ago he said to my son:

"In the winter we haul a great deal of wood. It was on one of these wood-hauling expeditions that I met with the accident to my leg you were asking about. I happened to get upon the wrong side of the sled, a huge log rolled off and my leg was under it. Our horses are trained to stand when on the hills, and I lay a half hour with my leg beneath the log, until assistance came. If the horses had started, well—as it was, my leg was broken in two places. I heard of the telegram you mention as sent to America, stating my leg had been amputated, for I received a great many letters from friends who had been here, and a great many more from those I had never even seen or heard of. They were kind and thoughtful—your countrymen. A firm in Chicago sent me a catalogue of artificial limbs, and a lady in the west wanted to send me two large trees for my garden—Gott Sei Dank, my foot and leg are whole again. It was His infinite goodness which spared me—but it would have been His infinite goodness had it crushed me."

A HOLY SERVICE.

THESE words of Mayer, breathing such childlike faith and trust, are the keynote to which all life in that little village is attuned. That really the people exist for the Passion Play—ten years of life preparatory for a few presentations of the sufferings and triumph of Jesus—not only reconciles the religious world at large to the assumption of these mountain peasants of the divine characters of the New Testament story, but it leaves that world to feel that Oberammergau is the only place in which, and its inhabitants the only people by whom, the Passion Play should be given.

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PRINCE SAGARITSU'S PATRIOTISM.

(Continued from page 107.)

Hah! they are at hand! The silent mass of men among the trees become quick, alert, flying figures. They spring out from the shadow into the gray moonlight and fall upon their prey like hungry panthers. Taken by surprise, the Chinese party hardly attempt to defend themselves. Without parley, without remonstrance, only one universal startled cry of terror rings out; then they fall like grass beneath the scythe, and the groans of the dying mingle horribly with the clash of swords, gleaming like tongues of intermittent flame in the glancing flare of the moon.

Only one group left. They have slipped into the shadow of the friendly trees, the trees which only lately shadowed the enemy. But can they hide from the sharp eye and alert ear of the Japanese? The father grasps the hand of the son. He is wounded and faint. He stumbles, falls, and the crash of his fall among the bushes betrays them. One horseman springs to the ground, and, plunging his sword into the darkness at the fatal spot, knows he has done well, for a groan of agony and the fall of a heavy body answers his stroke. Then he hears a woman weep.

III.

THE bloody work is over. The Japanese stand silent, showing scarce a sign of fatigue after their awful work. They await the command of their leader—the one who fancied he heard a woman weep. He is peering into the darkness among the trees. In and out, here and there, among the bushes he is striking with his sword. Suddenly a form dashes into the road, hesitates in front of the mass of men, trembles wildly, then turns to flee. The remorseless sword of a soldier strikes the slight form down, and they fling it back into the bush from whence it had issued. The leader is silent.

"On our way proceed snail we?" they question him; but he bids them wait, as there is no necessity for further secrecy, and after such work truly they deserve rest.

So they lie and sleep close by the bodies of their victims, calmly and placidly, as only Japanese might.

But their leader is wakeful. He treads restlessly about the dead and sleeping forms. For weeks and months memory has slept. He has forced himself to forget all save the glory of fighting for his country; forced himself to forget that he once knew one who loved him as a son, one who loved him as a brother, and one who—ah! memory awoke that night. The cry of a woman in the distance brings him memory and remorse. He whispers a woman's name—"Ching Jara!"—and with deep tenderness asks his heart if she is safe? Will he never see her more?

His eye falls on the dead, and once more they gleam with exaltation, but only for a moment; for in fancy he hears a woman weep, and again memory returns to Jara, little Jara—tender, gentle, loving Jara—the Chinese maiden loved so dearly, daughter of a nation he so despises.

Prince Sagaritsu slept none through the night, though he flung himself restlessly on the grass. At the first pale glimmer of dawn he arose to his feet, his mind none the less full of thoughts of Jara because of the departure of the night. He lingered restlessly around the sleeping soldiers, frowning contemptuously on the dead Chinamen. When he turned toward the wood it was with a feeling of intense reluctance and fear. Behind a clump of bushes lay two forms. They were Chinamen, and by their dress and queues he recognized their rank—that of mandarin; one, an old man on his face, his arms stretched stiffly

out on both sides, his long queue, braided with countless silk threads, hanging grotesquely over the front of his head; by his side a youth, his face thickly clotted with blood, and farther away—Prince Sagaritsu took a step forward and one back. The glimmering dawn grew brighter. He put his hand above his eyes and stared at a prone, disheveled object before him.

Had he been a devout Buddhist he might have called on his gods; had he been a Christian he would have whispered Christ's name in his awful agony; but he was neither—a Japanese without a religion save the religion of patriotism and of love, and he stood mute and stared with eyes that saw naught save the rigid, bloody form of Ching Jara.

Then his eyes moved painfully and slowly from her and rested on the forms of the sleeping soldiers. With a cry of intense hatred and loathing he thrust his sword into the nearest sleeper, and the next, and the next, so swiftly that the men but awoke to die. Five he killed; then, almost with one accord, the rest awoke. They found him standing over his victims with bloody sword and bloodless, fierce face, and when he saw the awakened men he stepped back, back to the side of Jara, close by the bodies of her father and brother, and, stretching his hands out, cried aloud with such piercing anguish in his voice that even the cool, merciless Japanese were stirred and stood silent, not one putting out a hand to touch him, he who was a prince of the immortal house of S—, and yet was more wretched than the lowliest serf or coolie.

And the great red sun rose higher in the east, and the trees stretched their quivering arms toward Prince Sagaritsu, and seemed to whisper—"Fool!"

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