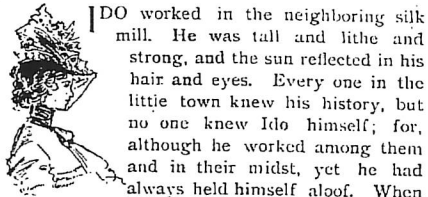


THE STORY OF IDO

HOW A JAPANESE HALF-CASTE CAME TO HIS OWN

By Onoto Watanna

Drawing by Louis Betts



IDO worked in the neighboring silk mill. He was tall and lithe and strong, and the sun reflected in his hair and eyes. Every one in the little town knew his history, but no one knew Ido himself; for, although he worked among them and in their midst, yet he had always held himself aloof. When Ido had been a little boy at school, he had been very unhappy, because his school-mates had laughed and jeered at his strangely-tinted hair and blue eyes. With an American or English boy they would have understood, and perhaps never even noticed it particularly; but with a Japanese—? And when Ido was only fifteen years old his mother had died, and he was left utterly alone in the world. In the daytime he worked at the mill; at night he studied the English language. Far away across the waters lived his father's people.

Ido had never seen any of them, and they had never even heard of him; but he had never ceased to tell himself that he would know them and go to them some day. Had he been a happy child; had those about him not made him always feel that he was different from them, and—yes, that they despised and disliked him—perhaps Ido would never have dreamed of leaving Japan; but for many years, ever since his mother had died, in fact, he had lived a lonely, isolated life, with but one thought, one purpose; and that to cross the ocean and go out among those he imagined would be like himself and would understand him.

Ido remembered his father well, and oh, how he had loved him! He had been tall like a young giant. He was an English officer on one of the big men-of-war that had come to Japan. Somewhere in the little house where Ido lived all alone was a beautiful British uniform, with gold braid on the shoulders and down the front. Ido's father had told him that may be, some day he, too, might wear just such a uniform; but that was so many years ago—long before even the missionary on the hill had brought them the terrible tidings of his death at sea. Ido had some old English papers with an account of his father's death. He had learned it by heart almost,

and, indeed, it was with these same papers, over which he had pored constantly, that he had kept up his knowledge of the English language.

In the account of his father's death, it spoke of him as being the only child of Charles Arthur Montrose, and said, also, that he was unmarried.

Ido was only twelve years old then. "Ah," he had said very gently to the mother, and trying to speak like a man, "they don't know about you and me, mother, but when I get to be older and can earn enough money, we will cross the west ocean and console his parents."

But the little mother was inconsolable, and three years afterward, she, too, died, and Ido not only found himself alone in the world, but practically unprovided for. He had never known that, since his father's death, his mother had supported them both by doing dainty embroidery work for a

large store in Tokyo, which was only a short distance from the little town where they lived. So Ido squared his young shoulders, left the school, crossed the fields and went to the great silk mill, the pulsations of which could be heard all over the little town.

"What is your name?" the stern-faced proprietor of the silk mill had asked him.

"Ido Charles Arthur Montrose," the boy answered, quietly.

"Ido Chars' Artur' Montose!" repeated the man. "That's queer name!" and added sharply, "What sort of name is that?"

"English," said the boy proudly.

"Hem! Is it not English?"

Ido nodded his head quietly, "I am a half-caste," he said.

The man grinned a trifle, looking at the boy in his Japanese clothes, which were of the richest and finest silk.

"And you want work, like—like a laborer—a workman—you in those clothes?"

"Yes," the boy answered. "That is all I have; just these clothes." The man was still grinning, as though amused at the idea. Ido took a step toward him, imploringly. He pushed back his sleeves and showed the man his arms.

"See how strong I am! How brave!" He waited for the man to notice the big muscles on his arms, and then continued, "I can do much work in the factory, anything you wish me to do. I must work—must make the money."

"What you want to make so much money for?"

"Just—just to live," he said. "I have no money—just the little house to live in."

"Well," said the man, slowly, "you can go to work but you better change those clothes you have on."

Afterward he said to the foreman, "That new hand has the red in his hair of the barbarian. He is big, and a beast, perhaps; but he is also strong and willing. Give him plenty of work."

And so Ido entered the employ of the silk mill. His life was no less desolate or isolated, for none of the men were companionable for him and he felt sure that they would understand him no more than the little children had done in his schooldays.

Several years slipped quickly by, and Ido was a youth of eighteen years. He was simple and gentle, and modest as a maiden. Many of the hands in the factory genuinely liked the boy, but none of them were intimate with him. In Japan the half-castes usually live to themselves; the Japanese look down on them. In the little town where Ido lived he alone was partly of English parentage. Perhaps, had he not been so sensitive, and had sought to mix with the people, he could have made many friends; but he was naturally shy and sensitive, and they did not approach him.

Once one of the men in the mill had said to him, "Ido, why don't you marry some one, instead of living all alone like a hermit?"

"Who would have me?" said Ido, with a sensitive



"THE CHILD PERMITTED IDO TO LIFT HER IN HIS ARMS"

consciousness of the red in his hair and the fluctuating color in his cheeks.

"Lots of girls! If you wish, I will even let you have a look-at meeting with my sister."

"Oh, no!" said Ido, hastily. "I—am—too young yet."

The other one shrugged his shoulders, but he said to a few of the other hands, later on, "Ido is a fool. He could get into some family if he wanted to; but I believe he likes his desolate life. Well, if he does, who cares?" And Ido went back to the house alone and read the old English papers and books his father had left behind.

One delicious, dreamy day in the month of April, when hill and field were decked with the exquisite delight of the cherry blossom, and the air was full of fragrance, Ido went out into the woods. It was a holiday; and Ido always spent his holidays in the woods. He was rather sad this day. Business had been very bad lately, and they were talking of cutting the wages down. The wages were already so small, and Ido's little fund seemed to grow only so very slightly, his trip across the ocean seemed very far off, and the boy was feeling despondent and discouraged.

"It will cost me—yes, surely, about two hundred yen," he said. "Let me see; I only make eight yen a month, and I have to live out of that. Now, I have seventy-five yen in hand. It has taken me three years to save that much. The master said he would pay me more when I grew older, but he has not done so. Alas! it will take me many years yet." He sighed, looking drearily out before him. After a time he rose to his feet, restlessly, pushing the hair back from his forehead.

"I am getting morose and gloomy," he said, shaking himself. "This living alone is bad, they say. Maybe I'll soon grow as solemn and cross as the old Chinese sensei who used to teach us literature. I wish—yes, I wish—I had somebody to talk to to-day—not any of the men from the factory—no; they wouldn't understand me. I am, indeed, different from them all!"

His reveries were interrupted by a cry that he fancied he heard in the distance.

"It sounds like a little child," said Ido, pricking up his ears. The cry was repeated. It came almost from the heart of the wood, though Ido fancied it was not far off. He ran lithely into the wood, in the direction of the cry, answering it as he ran, with his hand to his mouth, "Hi! Yi! Hi! Yi!"

Finally he came upon her—a distracted, frightened little figure—wandering tearfully about, with tangled golden curls about her face and in her eyes. The wide Leghorn hat had fallen back, and was hanging by the ribbons tied under her chin; the little white frock was soiled and stained.

Ido stood off a little way, and watched her a moment before approaching her. Never in his life had he seen anything like her before.

"I got lost!" she kept repeating. "I got lost!"

"She is a little English girl," Ido said to himself. "She is—like me. She—she—we belong to same people."

The little girl continued crying pitifully to herself, rubbing her little fists into her eyes.

"Oh!" she said, impatient with herself, "that don't do no good to cwy. I won't cwy! No! Margery won't cwy any more—just squeam, and squeam, and squeam, an' en some one's going to hear and take me to my mamma." And so she screamed, "Mamma! Papa!" over and over, and frightened herself with her own cries, so that she fell to sobbing again.

Some one came out from behind one of the trees and knelt at her feet. The little girl was frightened at first. He had come so suddenly and silently. He began wiping the tears from her eyes, very softly. Then the little girl heard the gentlest voice in the world:

"You gittin' los' all 'lone, poor liddle girl?" It

was such a soothing voice that Margery instantly dried her eyes and looked at him.

He was a Japanese, that was certain; and yet Margery had never seen a Japanese with blue eyes in all her life! His were as blue as the skies. That alone was enough to take her from her own sorrows for a moment.

"What a very funny looking Japanese you is!" she remarked, gravely. "Please put me down." He had lifted her up. "I'm too big to be carried," she said, with great dignity. "Is you Japanese, sure thing?" she continued.

He smiled gently at her—"Jus' liddle bit."

"Oh!" Margery could not understand this.

"Well, I got losted," she said. "Please take me to my mamma and papa. I'm Margery Parrish, and I'm five years old."

"Where do you live?" he asked.

"Oh-h, I don't know that!" Her lip quivered, and she was going to cry again, but she pulled herself together. "Let me sink," she said; "I sink we lives in—in Japan?" She put it to him as a question, for she wasn't sure herself. "We twaveled so much, you know," she continued, apologetically. "Nurse, she tooked me for a wide in a funny little rickysheer, an' nen she got out to go into a garden and see the dirties dancing, an' nen I clumbed out and got losted."

"Will you stay with me, an' be good liddle girl?" he asked her.

"No," she said, very emphatically. "You must take me to my mamma right away!" and she stamped her little foot, imperiously.

"Bad, I donno where tek you. You come home with me, an' mebbe I kin fin' those parents; then I tekin' you to them. See—it gitting vaery dark."

The child was finally coaxed into accompanying him, and permitted Ido to lift her in his arms, and carry her across the fields to his home.

She did not cry after they reached his house, but sat, very solemnly, on the little mat Ido placed for her, and ate the meal of rice and fish that he prepared for her, for she was very hungry.

"What a funny little house!" she said. "Do you live all alone?"

"Yes."

"Oh, poor man! wivout any liddle gells and boys whichever?"

He nodded.

"Oh, that's too bad! If I didn't love my mamma and papa so much I'd like to stay and be your little girl." She looked very thoughtful a moment. "P'raps my papa and mamma don't mind me to stay wif you a little, little while—just a little while." She smiled engagingly at him, and crept into his lap. "You like me to stay little while with you?"

Ido nodded, mutely.

"Well, I'm going to," she announced. She went to sleep in his arms, and all the night long Ido held her there, even after he had lain down himself.

Next morning she helped him tidy the little house all up before he started out, and she would chatter and prattle and laugh as she followed him about the house. Ido got down some old playthings and trinkets he had had when a child, and then he carried her across the street, and for the first time in his life paid a visit to a neighbor. He told them about his finding the child, and asked them if they wouldn't have the little one with them through the day to play with their several children, offering to pay them for her care. So, all morning, Margery played with the little Japanese children, and at noon Ido came home and ate his lunch with her, and went back to the factory, to return at night. And after he got home Margery made him tell her tales—something he had never done before in his life, but which he did very well, making them all up out of his head.

And Margery would raise her pretty little red lips, and say, "Kiss me, Ido," and he, blushing like a timid little boy, would lean over to be kissed; for, you see, the Japanese do not kiss, and Ido did not understand how to, either.

This lasted for a week. Margery was very

good, and seemingly content. But every night she would say to Ido, "To-morrow I must go back to my mamma and papa," and when to-morrow came she would forget.

One day Ido picked up a copy of the English "Hansei Zasshi," a weekly paper which is published at Tokyo in the English language, as well as Japanese. It was nearly a week old. Ido loved newspapers—especially English ones—and he always devoured every bit of reading matter he could find. He read the little paper over eagerly, and even ran his eye down the advertisement columns. Then he came to this column, in heavily-leaded type:

"LOST—Strayed from her nurse, somewhere in the woods, about fifteen miles from Tokyo, Margery Dorothea Parrish, only daughter of Edward Parrish."

And then the advertisement went on to voice the anguished cry and prayer of the parents to any one finding her to return her at once. There was mention, too, of a reward, but Ido did not notice that. He had grown very pale, and was trembling. For a long time he stood looking out of the window, his mind and thoughts in confusion. Margery had been the first gleam of sunshine that had come into his life since his mother's death, and he had learned to love her with all the intensity of his nature. Ido had always wished for a dear little sister. When he was a little boy, his chief prayer to the gods was always, "Please, a little sister," but she had never come—till then.

The foreman called to him sharply to go on with his work—the noon hour was over. Ido started and stared, stupidly, at him.

"I—must—go to Tokyo," he said, vaguely.

"What?"

"I must ask for a day to go to Tokyo."

They were very busy this day, and the foreman was ill-tempered.

"You can't go," he said, shortly.

"Ah, I must, surely."

"Very well; you can stay away then."

Ido grew paler and hesitated.

But only for one day. He could not afford to lose his position.

"You stay or go," the man said, doggedly. Ido went.

"Come, liddle Marg'ry," he said to the child, and told her where he was going to take her. She left the playthings and hugged him ecstatically.

"Oh, you dear, dood Ido!" she said.

Ido smiled. He had had her little white dress washed, and now put it, very gravely, on her, tied the sash and arranged the hair, trying to fix her as much like when he had found her as possible. All the time she chatted, and danced with delight at the prospect.

Then he lifted her up in his arms, and she put hers tightly about his neck, and whispered that she loved "her dear, dood Ido."

Ido stopped to ask her, solemnly, "Forever?" and Margery agreed, with an emphatic hug.

As he passed the neighbor's house, whose children had played with her, he told the mother where he was going.

"And you are going to walk?" she said, in amazement.

"Yes," he said, simply, and started down the long dusty road which led to Tokyo.

It was very dark when he reached Tokyo, and Margery was sound asleep in his arms. Ido had never been in the city before. He stopped a jinrikiman to ask the way to the English Windsor Hotel. The man told him, and he continued on his way.

On the piazza of the hotel a number of the guests were sitting. Ido went up the steps. They could not very well see who he was, in the semi-darkness, or what it was he was carrying; but he addressed a man who stood at the head of the steps.

