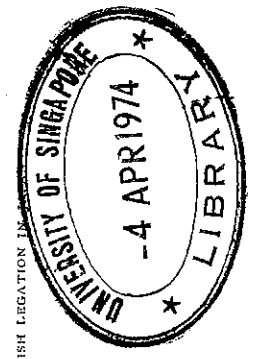


47/16

# TALES OF OLD JAPAN

BY  
A. B. MITFORD



SECOND SECRETARY TO THE BRITISH LEGATION IN

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS  
DRAWN AND CUT ON WOOD BY JAPANESE ARTISTS

NEW EDITION

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THE RONINS INVITE KOTSURU NO SUKE TO PERFORM HARAKIRI.



*Handwritten:*  
D. P. ...  
M. ...

## PREFACE.

In the Introduction to the story of the Forty-seven Rôbins, I have said almost as much as is needful by way of preface to my stories.

Those of my readers who are most capable of pointing out the many shortcomings and faults of my work, will also be the most indulgent towards me; for any one who has been in Japan, and studied Japanese, knows the great difficulties by which the learner is beset.

For the illustrations, at least, I feel that I need make no apology. Drawn, in the first instance, by one Ôdaké, an artist in my employ, they were cut on wood by a famous wood-engraver at Yedo, and are therefore genuine specimens of Japanese art. Messrs. Dalziel, on examining the wood blocks, pointed out to me, as an interesting fact, that the lines are cut with the grain of the wood, after the manner of Albert Dürer and some of the old German masters,—a process which has been abandoned by modern European wood-engravers.

It will be noticed that very little allusion is made in these Tales to the Emperor and his Court. Although I

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## PREFACE.

searched diligently, I was able to find no story in which they played a conspicuous part.

Another class to which no allusion is made is that of the Gôshi. The Gôshi are a kind of yeomen, or bonnet-lords, as they would be called over the border, living on their own land, and owing no allegiance to any feudal lord. Their rank is inferior to that of the Samurai, or men of the military class, between whom and the peasantry they hold a middle place. Like the Samurai, they wear two swords, and are in many cases prosperous and wealthy men, claiming a descent more ancient than that of many of the feudal Princes. A large number of them are enrolled among the Emperor's body-guard; and these have played a conspicuous part in the recent political changes in Japan, as the most conservative and anti-foreign element in the nation.

With these exceptions, I think that all classes are fairly represented in my stories.

The feudal system has passed away like a dissolving view before the eyes of those who have lived in Japan during the last few years. But when they arrived there it was in full force, and there is not an incident narrated in the following pages, however strange it may appear to Europeans, for the possibility and probability of which those most competent to judge will not vouch. Nor, as many a recent event can prove, have heroism, chivalry, and devotion gone out of the land altogether. We may deplore and inveigh against the Yamato Damashi, or Spirit of Old Japan, which still breathes in the soul of

## PREFACE.

the Samurai, but we cannot withhold our admiration from the self-sacrifices which men will still make for the love of their country.

The two first of the Tales have already appeared in the *Fortnightly Review*, and two of the Sermons, with a portion of the Appendix on the subject of the Hara-Kiri, in the pages of the *Cornhill Magazine*. I have to thank the editors of those periodicals for permission to reprint them here.

LONDON, *January 7, 1871.*

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## TALES OF OLD JAPAN.

### THE FORTY-SEVEN RÔNINS.

THE books which have been written of late years about Japan, have either been compiled from official records, or have contained the sketchy impressions of passing travellers. Of the inner life of the Japanese, the world at large knows but little: their religion, their superstitions, their ways of thought, the hidden springs by which they move—all these are as yet mysteries. Nor is this to be wondered at. The first Western men who came in contact with Japan—I am speaking not of the old Dutch and Portuguese traders and priests, but of the diplomatists and merchants of eleven years ago—met with a cold reception. Above all things, the native Government threw obstacles in the way of any inquiry into their language, literature, and history. The fact was that the Tycoon's Government—with whom alone, so long as the Mikado remained in seclusion in his sacred capital at Kiôto, any relations were maintained—knew that the Imperial purple with which they sought to invest their chief must quickly fade before the strong sunlight which would be brought upon it so soon as there should be European linguists capable of examining their books and records. No opportunity was lost of throwing dust in the

B

eyes of the new-comers, whom, even in the most trifling details, it was the official policy to lead astray. Now, however, there is no cause for concealment; the *Ron Fournéoni* has shaken off his sloth, and his *Maire du Palais*, together, and an intelligible Government, which need not fear scrutiny from abroad, is the result: the records of the country being but so many proofs of the Mikado's title to power, there is no reason for keeping up any show of mystery. The path of inquiry is open to all; and although there is yet much to be learnt, some knowledge has been attained, in which it may interest those who stay at home to share.

The recent revolution in Japan has wrought changes social as well as political; and it may be that when, in addition to the advance which has already been made, railways and telegraphs shall have connected the principal points of the Land of Sunrise, the old Japanese, such as he was and had been for centuries when we found him eleven short years ago, will have become extinct. It has appeared to me that no better means could be chosen of preserving a record of a curious and fast disappearing civilization, than the translation of some of the most interesting national legends and histories, together with other specimens of literature bearing upon the same subject. Thus the Japanese may tell their own tale, their translator only adding here and there a few words of heading or tag to a chapter, where an explanation or amplification may seem necessary. I fear that the long and hard names will often make my tales tedious reading, but I believe that those who will bear with the difficulty will learn more of the character of the Japanese people than by skimming over descriptions of travel and adventure, however brilliant. The lord and his retainer, the warrior and the priest, the humble artisan and the despised Eta or pariah, each in his turn will become a leading character in my budget of stories; and it is out of the mouths of these personages that I hope to show forth a tolerably complete picture of Japanese society.

Having said so much by way of preface, I beg my readers

to fancy themselves wafted away to the shores of the Bay of Yedo—a fair, smiling landscape: gentle slopes, crested by a dark fringe of pines and firs, lead down to the sea; the quaint eaves of many a temple and holy shrine peep out here and there from the groves; the bay itself is studded with picturesque fisher-craft, the torches of which shine by night like glow-worms among the outlying forts; far away to the west loom the goblin-haunted heights of Oyama, and beyond the twin hills of the Hakoné Pass—Fuji-Yama, the Peerless Mountain, solitary and grand, stands in the centre of the plain, from which it sprang vomiting flames twenty-one centuries ago.<sup>1</sup> For a hundred and sixty years the huge mountain has been at peace, but the frequent earthquakes still tell of hidden fires, and none can say when the red-hot stones and ashes may once more fall like rain over five provinces.

In the midst of a nest of venerable trees in Takanaawa, a suburb of Yedo, is hidden Sengakuji, or the Spring-hill Temple, renowned throughout the length and breadth of the land for its cemetery, which contains the graves of the Forty-seven Rônins,<sup>2</sup> famous in Japanese history, heroes

<sup>1</sup> According to Japanese tradition, in the fifth year of the Emperor Kôrei (286 B. C.), the earth opened in the province of Omi, near Kiôto, and Lake Biwa, sixty miles long by about eighteen broad, was formed in the shape of a *Etowé*, or four-stringed lute, from which it takes its name. At the same time, to compensate for the depression of the earth, but at a distance of over three hundred miles from the lake, rose Fuji-Yama, the last eruption of which was in the year 1707. The last great earthquake at Yedo took place about fifteen years ago. Twenty thousand souls are said to have perished in it, and the dead were carried away and buried by cartloads; many persons, trying to escape from their falling and burning houses, were caught in great clefts, which yawned suddenly in the earth, and as suddenly closed upon the victims, crushing them to death. For several days heavy shocks continued to be felt, and the people camped out, not daring to return to such houses as had been spared, nor to build up those which lay in ruins.

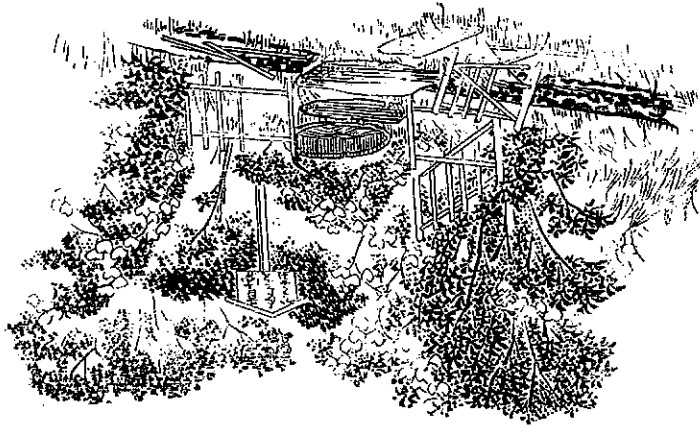
<sup>2</sup> The word *Rônins* means, literally, a "wave-man;" one who is tossed about hither and thither, as a wave of the sea. It is used to designate persons of gentle blood, entitled to bear arms, who, having become separated from their feudal lords by their own act, or by dismissal, or by fate, wander about the country in the capacity of somewhat disreputable knights-errant, without ostensible means of living, in some cases offering themselves for hire to new masters, in others supporting themselves by pillage; or who, falling a grade in the social scale, go into trade, and become simple wardsmen. Sometimes

of Japanese drama, the tale of whose deeds I am about to transcribe.

On the left-hand side of the main court of the temple is a chapel, in which, surmounted by a gilt figure of Kwanyin, the goddess of mercy, are enshrined the images of the forty-seven men, and of the master whom they loved so well. The statues are carved in wood, the faces coloured, and the dresses richly lacquered; as works of art they have great merit—the action of the heroes, each armed with his favourite weapon, being wonderfully life-like and spirited. Some are venerable men, with thin, grey hair (one is seventy-seven years old); others are mere boys of sixteen. Close by the chapel, at the side of a path leading up the hill, is a little well of pure water, fenced in and adorned with a tiny fernery, over which is an inscription, setting forth that “This is the well in which the head was washed; you must not wash your hands or your feet here.” A little further on is a stall, at which a poor old man earns a pittance by selling books, pictures, and medals, commemorating the loyalty of the Forty-seven; and higher up yet, shaded by a grove of stately trees, is a neat inclosure, kept up, as a signboard announces, by voluntary contributions, round which are ranged forty-eight little tombstones, each decked with evergreens, each with its tribute of water and incense for the comfort of the departed spirit. There were forty-seven Rônins; there are forty-eight tombstones, and the story of the forty-eighth is truly characteristic of Japanese ideas of honour. Almost touching the rail of the graveyard is a more imposing

it happens that for political reasons a man will become Rônin, in order that his lord may not be implicated in some deed of blood in which he is about to engage. Sometimes, also, men become Rônins, and leave their native place for a while, until some scrape in which they have become entangled shall have blown over; after which they return to their former allegiance. Now-a-days it is not unusual for men to become Rônins for a time, and engage themselves in the service of foreigners at the open ports, even in menial capacities, in the hope that they may pick up something of the language and lore of Western folks. I know instances of men of considerable position who have adopted this course in their zeal for education.

THE WELL IN WHICH THE HEAD WAS WASHED.



monument under which lies buried the lord, whose death his followers piously avenged.

And now for the story.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century there lived a daimio, called Asano Takumi no Kami, the Lord of the castle of Akō, in the province of Harima. Now it happened that an Imperial ambassador from the Court of the Mikado, having been sent to the Shogun<sup>1</sup> at Yedo, Takumi no Kami and another noble called Kamei Sama were appointed to receive and feast the envoy; and a high official, named Kira Kōtsuké no Suké, was named to teach them the proper ceremonies to be observed upon the occasion. The two nobles were accordingly forced to go daily to the castle to listen to the instructions of Kōtsuké no Suké. But this Kōtsuké no Suké was a man greedy of money; and as he deemed that the presents which the two daimios, according to time-honoured custom, had brought him in return for his instruction, were mean and unworthy, he conceived a great hatred against them, and took no pains in teaching them, but on the contrary rather sought to make laughing-stocks of them. Takumi no Kami, restrained by a stern sense of duty, bore his insults with patience; but Kamei Sama, who had less control over his temper, was violently incensed, and determined to kill Kōtsuké no Suké.

One night when his duties at the castle were ended, Kamei Sama returned to his own palace, and having summoned his councillors<sup>2</sup> to a secret conference, said to them: "Kōtsuké

<sup>1</sup> The full title of the Tycoon was Sei-i-tai-Shogun, "Barbarian-repressing Commander-in-chief." The style Tai Kun, Great Prince, was borrowed, in order to convey the idea of sovereignty to foreigners, at the time of the conclusion of the Treaties. The envoys sent by the Mikado from Kioto to communicate to the Shogun the will of his sovereign, were received with Imperial honours, and the duty of entertaining them was confided to nobles of rank. The title Sei-i-tai-Shogun was first borne by Minamoto no Yoritomo, in the seventh month of the year 1192 A. D.

<sup>2</sup> Councillor, lit. "elder." The councillors of daimios were of two classes; the *Kerō*, or "elder," an hereditary office, held by cadets of the Prince's family, and the *Yōza*, or "man of business," who was selected on account of his merits. These "councillors" play no mean part in Japanese history.

no Sുകé has insulted Takumi no Kami and myself during our service in attendance on the Imperial envoy. This is against all decency, and I was minded to kill him on the spot; but I bethought me that if I did such a deed within the precincts of the castle, not only would my own life be forfeit, but my family and vassals would be ruined; so I stayed my hand. Still the life of such a wretch is a sorrow to the people, and to-morrow when I go to Court I will slay him: my mind is made up, and I will listen to no remonstrance." And as he spoke his face became livid with rage.

Now one of Kamei Sama's councillors was a man of great judgment, and when he saw from his lord's manner that remonstrance would be useless, he said: "Your lordship's words are law; your servant will make all preparations accordingly; and to-morrow, when your lordship goes to Court, if this Kôtsuké no Sുകé should again be insolent, let him die the death." And his lord was pleased at this speech, and waited with impatience for the day to break, that he might return to Court and kill his enemy.

But the councillor went home, and was sorely troubled, and thought anxiously about what his prince had said. And as he reflected, it occurred to him that since Kôtsuké no Sുകé had the reputation of being a miser he would certainly be open to a bribe, and that it was better to pay any sum, no matter how great, than that his lord and his house should be ruined. So he collected all the money he could, and, giving it to his servants to carry, rode off in the night to Kôtsuké no Sുകé's palace, and said to his retainers: "My master, who is now in attendance upon the Imperial envoy, owes much thanks to my Lord Kôtsuké no Sുകé, who has been at so great pains to teach him the proper ceremonies to be observed during the reception of the Imperial envoy. This is but a shabby present which he has sent by me, but he hopes that his lordship will condescend to accept it, and commends himself to his lordship's favour." And, with these words, he produced a thousand ounces of silver for Kôtsuké no Sുകé, and a hundred ounces to be distributed among his retainers.

When the latter saw the money, their eyes sparkled with pleasure, and they were profuse in their thanks; and begging the councillor to wait a little, they went and told their master of the lordly present which had arrived with a polite message from Kamei Sama. Kôtsuké no Sുകé in eager delight sent for the councillor into an inner chamber, and, after thanking him, promised on the morrow to instruct his master carefully in all the different points of etiquette. So the councillor, seeing the miser's glee, rejoiced at the success of his plan; and having taken his leave returned home in high spirits. But Kamei Sama, little thinking how his vassal had propitiated his enemy, lay brooding over his vengeance, and on the following morning at daybreak went to Court in solemn procession.

When Kôtsuké no Sുകé met him, his manner had completely changed, and nothing could exceed his courtesy. "You have come early to Court this morning, my Lord Kamei," said he. "I cannot sufficiently admire your zeal. I shall have the honour to call your attention to several points of etiquette to-day. I must beg your lordship to excuse my previous conduct, which must have seemed very rude; but I am naturally of a cross-grained disposition, so I pray you to forgive me." And as he kept on humbling himself and making fair speeches, the heart of Kamei Sama was gradually softened, and he renounced his intention of killing him. Thus by the cleverness of his councillor, was Kamei Sama, with all his house, saved from ruin.

Shortly after this, Takumi no Kami, who had sent no present, arrived at the castle, and Kôtsuké no Sുകé turned him into ridicule even more than before, provoking him with sneers and covert insults; but Takumi no Kami affected to ignore all this, and submitted himself patiently to Kôtsuké no Sുകé's orders.

This conduct, so far from producing a good effect, only made Kôtsuké no Sുകé despise him the more, until at last he said haughtily: "Here, my Lord of Takumi, the ribbon of my sock has come untied; be so good as to tie it up for me."



Takumi no Kami, although burning with rage at the affront, still thought that as he was on duty he was bound to obey, and tied up the ribbon of the sock. Then Kôtsuké no Suké, turning from him, petulantly exclaimed: "Why, how clumsy you are! You cannot so much as tie up the ribbon of a sock properly! Any one can see that you are a boor from the country, and know nothing of the manners of Yedo." And with a scornful laugh he moved towards an inner room.

But the patience of Takumi no Kami was exhausted; this last insult was more than he could bear.

"Stop a moment, my lord," cried he.

"Well, what is it?" replied the other. And, as he turned round, Takumi no Kami drew his dink, and aimed a blow at his head; but Kôtsuké no Suké, being protected by the Court cap which he wore, the wound was but a scratch, so he ran away; and Takumi no Kami, pursuing him, tried a second time to cut him down, but, missing his aim, struck his dink into a pillar. At this moment an officer, named Kajikawa Yosobei, seeing the affray, rushed up, and holding back the infuriated noble, gave Kôtsuké no Suké time to make good his escape.

Then there arose a great uproar and confusion, and Takumi no Kami was arrested and disarmed, and confined in one of the apartments of the palace under the care of the censors. A council was held, and the prisoner was given over to the safeguard of a daimio, called Tamura Ukiyô no Daibu, who kept him in close custody in his own house, to the great grief of his wife and of his retainers; and when the deliberations of the council were completed, it was decided that, as he had committed an outrage and attacked another man within the precincts of the palace, he must perform *hara kirî*,—that is, commit suicide by disembowelling; his goods must be confiscated, and his family ruined. Such was the law. So Takumi no Kami performed *hara kirî*, his castle of Akô was confiscated, and his retainers having become Rônins, some of them took service with other daimios, and others became merchants.

Now amongst these retainers was his principal councillor a man called Oishi Kuranosuké, who, with forty-six other faithful dependants, formed a league to avenge their master's death by killing Kôtsuké no Suké. This Oishi Kuranosuké was absent at the castle of Akô at the time of the affray, which, had he been with his prince, would never have occurred; for, being a wise man, he would not have failed to propitiate Kôtsuké no Suké by sending him suitable presents; while the councillor who was in attendance on the prince at Yedo was a dullard, who neglected this precaution, and so caused the death of his master and the ruin of his house.

So Oishi Kuranosuké and his forty-six companions began to lay their plans of vengeance against Kôtsuké no Suké; but the latter was so well guarded by a body of men lent to him by a daimio called Uyésugi Sana, whose daughter he had married, that they saw that the only way of attaining their end would be to throw their enemy off his guard. With this object they separated and disguised themselves, some as carpenters or craftsmen, others as merchants; and their chief, Kuranosuké, went to Kiôto, and built a house in the quarter called Yamashina, where he took to frequenting houses of the worst repute, and gave himself up to drunkenness and debauchery, as if nothing were further from his mind than revenge. Kôtsuké no Suké, in the meanwhile, suspecting that Takumi no Kami's former retainers would be scheming against his life, secretly sent spies to Kiôto, and caused a faithful account to be kept of all that Kuranosuké did. The latter, however, determined thoroughly to delude the enemy into a false security, went on leading a dissolute life with harlots and winebibbers. One day, as he was returning home drunk from some low haunt, he fell down in the street and went to sleep, and all the passers-by laughed him to scorn. It happened that a Satsuma man saw this, and said: "Is not this Oishi Kuranosuké, who was a councillor of Asano Takumi no Kami, and who, not having the heart to avenge his lord, gives himself up to women and wine? See how he lies drunk in the public street! Faith-

less beast! Fool and craven! Unworthy the name of a Samurai!"<sup>1</sup>

And he trod on Kuranosuké's face as he slept, and spat upon him; but when Kôtsuké no Suké's spies reported all this at Yedo, he was greatly relieved at the news, and felt secure from danger. X X

One day Kuranosuké's wife, who was bitterly grieved to see her husband lead this abandoned life, went to him and said: "My lord, you told me at first that your debauchery was but a trick to make your enemy relax in watchfulness. But indeed, indeed, this has gone too far. I pray and beseech you to put some restraint upon yourself."

"Trouble me not," replied Kuranosuké, "for I will not listen to your whining. Since my way of life is displeasing to you, I will divorce you, and you may go about your business; and I will buy some pretty young girl from one of the public-houses, and marry her for my pleasure. I am sick of the sight of an old woman like you about the house, so get you gone—the sooner the better."

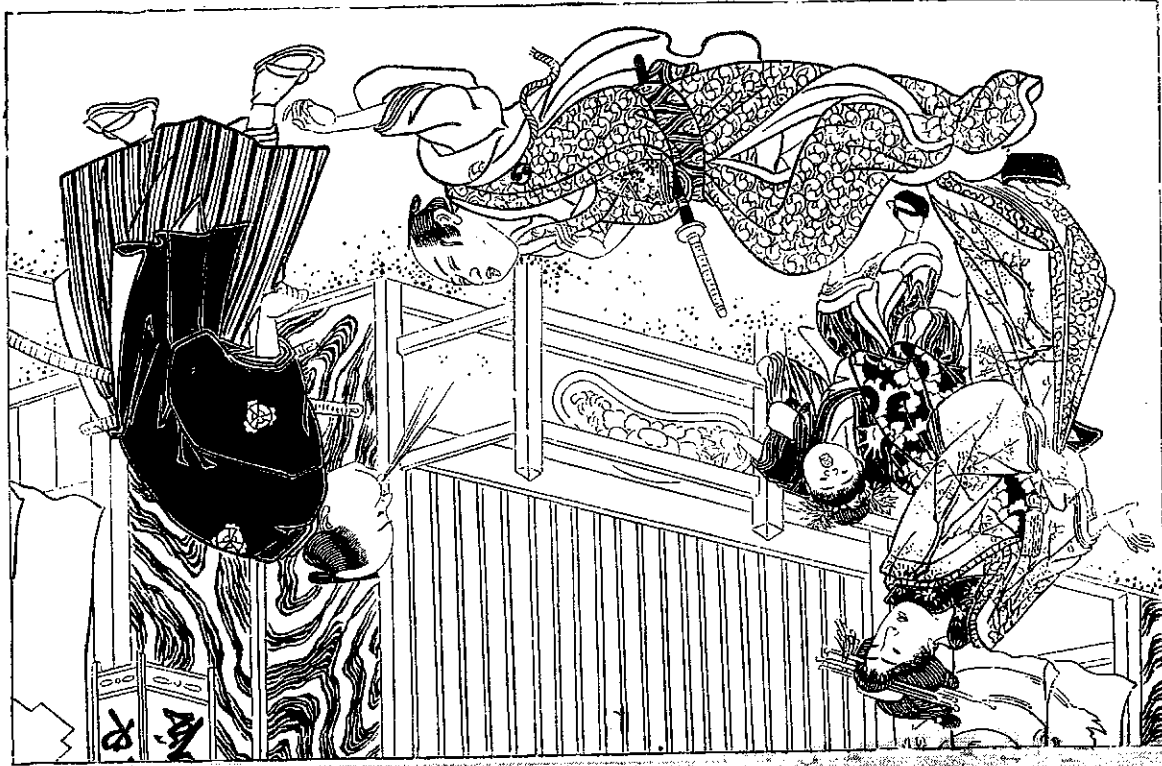
So saying, he flew into a violent rage, and his wife, terror-stricken, pleaded piteously for mercy.

"Oh, my lord! unsay those terrible words! I have been your faithful wife for twenty years, and have borne you three children; in sickness and in sorrow I have been with you; you cannot be so cruel as to turn me out of doors now. Have pity! have pity!"

"Cease this useless wailing. My mind is made up, and you must go; and as the children are in my way also, you are welcome to take them with you."

When she heard her husband speak thus, in her grief she sought her eldest son, Oishi Chikara, and begged him to plead for her, and pray that she might be pardoned. But nothing would turn Kuranosuké from his purpose, so his wife was sent away, with the two younger children, and

<sup>1</sup> Samurai, a man belonging to the *Euké* or military class, entitled to bear arms.



THE SATSUMA MAN INSULTS OISHI KURANOSUKÉ.

went back to her native place. But Oishi Chikara remained with his father.

The spies communicated all this without fail to Kôtsuké no Suké, and he, when he heard how Kuranosuké, having turned his wife and children out of doors and bought a concubine, was grovelling in a life of drunkenness and lust, began to think that he had no longer anything to fear from the retainers of Takumi no Kami, who must be cowards, without the courage to avenge their lord. So by degrees he began to keep a less strict watch, and sent back half of the guard which had been lent to him by his father-in-law, Uyétsugi Sama. Little did he think how he was falling into the trap laid for him by Kuranosuké, who, in his zeal to slay his lord's enemy, thought nothing of divorcing his wife and sending away his children! Admirable and faithful man!

In this way Kuranosuké continued to throw dust in the eyes of his foe, by persisting in his apparently shameless conduct; but his associates all went to Yedo, and, having in their several capacities as workmen and pedlars contrived to gain access to Kôtsuké no Suké's house, made themselves familiar with the plan of the building and the arrangement of the different rooms, and ascertained the character of the inmates, who were brave and loyal men, and who were cowards, upon all of which matters they sent regular reports to Kuranosuké. And when at last it became evident from the letters which arrived from Yedo that Kôtsuké no Suké was thoroughly off his guard, Kuranosuké rejoiced that the day of vengeance was at hand; and, having appointed a trysting-place at Yedo, he fled secretly from Kiôto, eluding the vigilance of his enemy's spies. Then the forty-seven men, having laid all their plans, bided their time patiently.

It was now mid-winter, the twelfth month of the year, and the cold was bitter. One night, during a heavy fall of snow, when the whole world was hushed, and peaceful men were stretched in sleep upon the mats, the Rônins

Little!  
in the garden

determined that no more favourable opportunity could occur for carrying out their purpose. So they took counsel together, and, having divided their band into two parties, assigned to each man his post. One band, led by Oishi Kuranosuké, was to attack the front gate, and the other, under his son Oishi Chikara, was to attack the postern of Kôtsuké no Suké's house; but as Chikara was only sixteen years of age, Yoshida Chuzayémon was appointed to act as his guardian. Further it was arranged that a drum, beaten at the order of Kuranosuké, should be the signal for the simultaneous attack; and that if any one blew Kôtsuké no Suké and cut off his head he should blow a shrill whistle, as a signal to his comrades, who would hurry to the spot, and, having identified the head, carry it off to the temple called Sengakuji, and lay it as an offering before the tomb of their dead lord. Then they must report their deed to the Government, and await the sentence of death which would surely be passed upon them. Mid-night was fixed upon as the hour, and the forty-seven comrades, having made all ready for the attack, partook of a last farewell feast together, for on the morrow they must die. Then Oishi Kuranosuké addressed the band, and said:--

"To-night we shall attack our enemy in his palace; his retainers will certainly resist us, and we shall be obliged to kill them. But to slay old men and women and children is a pitiful thing; therefore, pray you each one to take great heed lest you kill a single helpless person." His comrades all applauded this speech, and so they remained, waiting for the hour of midnight to arrive.

When the appointed hour came, the Rônins set forth. The wind howled furiously, and the driving snow beat in their faces; but little cared they for wind or snow as they hurried on their road, eager for revenge. At last they reached Kôtsuké no Suké's house, and divided themselves into two bands; and Chikara, with twenty-three men, went

round to the back gate. Then four men, by means of a ladder of ropes which they hung on to the roof of the porch, effected an entry into the courtyard; and, as they saw signs that all the inmates of the house were asleep, they went into the porter's lodge where the guard slept, and, before the latter had time to recover from their astonishment, bound them. The terrified guard prayed hard for mercy, that their lives might be spared; and to this the Rônins agreed on condition that the keys of the gate should be given up; but the others tremblingly said that the keys were kept in the house of one of their officers, and that they had no means of obtaining them. Then the Rônins lost patience, and with a hammer dashed in pieces the big wooden bolt which secured the gate, and the doors flew open to the right and to the left. At the same time Chikara and his party broke in by the back gate.

Then Oishi Kuranosuké sent a messenger to the neighbouring houses, bearing the following message:--"We, the Rônins who were formerly in the service of Asano Takumi no Kami, are this night about to break into the palace of Kôtsuké no Suké, to avenge our lord. As we are neither night robbers nor ruffians, no hurt will be done to the neighbouring houses. We pray you to set your minds at rest." And as Kôtsuké no Suké was hated by his neighbours for his covetousness, they did not unite their forces to assist him. Another precaution was yet taken. Lest any of the people inside should run out to call the relations of the family to the rescue, and these coming in force should interfere with the plans of the Rônins, Kuranosuké stationed ten of his men armed with bows on the roof of the four sides of the courtyard, with orders to shoot any retainers who might attempt to leave the place. Having thus laid all his plans and posted his men, Kuranosuké with his own hand beat the drum and gave the signal for attack.

"Ten of Kôtsuké no Suké's retainers, hearing the noise, woke up; and, drawing their swords, rushed into the front room to defend their master. At this moment the Rônins,

who had burst open the door of the front hall, entered the same room. Then arose a furious fight between the two parties, in the midst of which Chikara, leading his men through the garden, broke into the back of the house; and Kôtsuké no Suké, in terror of his life, took refuge, with his wife and female servants, in a closet in the verandah; while the rest of his retainers, who slept in the barrack outside the house, made ready to go to the rescue. But the Rônins who had come in by the front door, and were fighting with the ten retainers, ended by overpowering and slaying the latter without losing one of their own number; after which, forcing their way bravely towards the back rooms, they were joined by Chikara and his men, and the two bands were united in one.

By this time the remainder of Kôtsuké no Suké's men had come in, and the fight became general; and Kuranosuké, sitting on a camp-stool, gave his orders and directed the Rônins. Soon the inmates of the house perceived that they were no match for their enemy, so they tried to send out intelligence of their plight to Uyétsugi Sama, their lord's father-in-law, begging him to come to the rescue with all the force at his command. But the messengers were shot down by the archers whom Kuranosuké had posted on the roof. So no help coming, they fought on in despair. Then Kuranosuké cried out with a loud voice: "Kôtsuké no Suké alone is our enemy; let some one go inside and bring him forth dead or alive!"

Now in front of Kôtsuké no Suké's private room stood three brave retainers with drawn swords. The first was Kobayashi Héhachi, the second was Waku Handaiyu, and the third was Shimidzu Ikkaku, all good men and true, and expert swordsmen. So stoutly did these men lay about them that for a while they kept the whole of the Rônins at bay, and at one moment even forced them back. When Oishi Kuranosuké saw this, he ground his teeth with rage, and shouted to his men: "What! did not every man of you swear to lay down his life in avenging his lord, and now are you driven back by three men? Cowards, not fit to be

spoken to! to die fighting in a master's cause should be the noblest ambition of a retainer!" Then turning to his own son Chikara, he said, "Here, boy! engage those men, and if they are too strong for you, die!"

Spurred by these words, Chikara seized a spear and gave battle to Waku Handaiyu, but could not hold his ground, and backing by degrees, was driven out into the garden, where he missed his footing and slipped into a pond; but as Handaiyu, thinking to kill him, looked down into the pond, Chikara cut his enemy in the leg and caused him to fall, and then crawling out of the water despatched him. In the meanwhile Kobayashi Héhachi and Shimidzu Ikkaku had been killed by the other Rônins, and of all Kôtsuké no Suké's retainers not one fighting man remained. Chikara, seeing this, went with his bloody sword in his hand into a back room to search for Kôtsuké no Suké, but he only found the son of the latter, a young lord named Kira Sairoyé, who, carrying a halberd, attacked him, but was soon wounded and fled. Thus the whole of Kôtsuké no Suké's men having been killed, there was an end of the fighting; but as yet there was no trace of Kôtsuké no Suké to be found.

Then Kuranosuké divided his men into several parties and searched the whole house, but all in vain; women and children weeping were alone to be seen. At this the forty-seven men began to lose heart in regret, that after all their toil they had allowed their enemy to escape them, and there was a moment when in their despair they agreed to commit suicide together upon the spot; but they determined to make one more effort. So Kuranosuké went into Kôtsuké no Suké's sleeping-room, and touching the quilt with his hands, exclaimed, "I have just felt the bed-clothes and they are yet warm, and so methinks that our enemy is not far off. He must certainly be hidden somewhere in the house." Greatly excited by this, the Rônins renewed their search. Now in the raised part of the room, near the place of honour, there was a picture hanging; taking down this picture, they saw that there was a large hole in the plastered wall, and on

thrusting a spear in they could feel nothing beyond it. So one of the Rômins, called Yazama Jiutarô, got into the hole, and found that on the other side there was a little courtyard, in which there stood an outhouse for holding charcoal and fire-wood. Looking into the outhouse, he spied something white at the further end, at which he struck with his spear, when two armed men sprang out upon him and tried to cut him down, but he kept them back until one of his comrades came up and killed one of the two men and engaged the other, while Jiutarô entered the outhouse and felt about with his spear. Again seeing something white, he struck it with his lance, when a cry of pain betrayed that it was a man; so he rushed up, and the man in white clothes, who had been wounded in the thigh, drew a dirk and aimed a blow at him. But Jiutarô wrested the dirk from him, and clutching him by the collar, dragged him out of the outhouse. Then the other Rômin came up, and they examined the prisoner attentively, and saw that he was a noble-looking man, some sixty years of age, dressed in a white satin sleeping-robe, which was stained by the blood from the thigh-wound which Jiutarô had inflicted. The two men felt convinced that this was no other than Kôtsuké no Suké, and they asked him his name, but he gave no answer, so they gave the signal whistle, and all their comrades collected together at the call; then Oishi Kuranosuké, bringing a lantern, scanned the old man's features, and it was indeed Kôtsuké no Suké; and if further proof were wanting, he still bore a scar on his forehead where their master, Asano Takumi no Kami, had wounded him during the affray in the castle. There being no possibility of mistake, therefore, Oishi Kuranosuké went down on his knees, and addressing the old man very respectfully, said:

"My lord, we are the retainers of Asano Takumi no Kami. Last year your lordship and our master quarrelled in the palace, and our master was sentenced to *hara kiri*, and his family was ruined. We have come to-night to avenge him, as is the duty of faithful and loyal men. I pray your lordship to acknowledge the justice of our purpose. And now,

my lord, we beseech you to perform *hara kiri*. I myself shall have the honour to act as your second, and when, with all humility, I shall have received your lordship's head, it is my intention to lay it as an offering upon the grave of Asano Takumi no Kami."

Thus, in consideration of the high rank of Kôtsuké no Suké, the Rômins treated him with the greatest courtesy, and over and over again entreated him to perform *hara kiri*. But he crouched speechless and trembling. At last Kuranosuké, seeing that it was vain to urge him to die the death of a nobleman, forced him down, and cut off his head with the same dirk with which Asano Takumi no Kami had killed himself. Then the forty-seven comrades, elated at having accomplished their design, placed the head in a bucket, and prepared to depart; but before leaving the house they carefully extinguished all the lights and fires in the place, lest by any accident a fire should break out and the neighbours suffer.

As they were on their way to Takanawa, the suburb in which the temple called Sengakuji stands, the day broke; and the people flocked out to see the forty-seven men, who, with their clothes and arms all blood-stained, presented a terrible appearance; and every one praised them, wondering at their valour and faithfulness. But they expected every moment that Kôtsuké no Suké's father-in-law would attack them and carry off the head, and made ready to die bravely sword in hand. However, they reached Takanawa in safety, for Matsudaira Aki no Kami, one of the eighteen chief daimios of Japan, of whose house Asano Takumi no Kami had been a cadet, had been highly pleased when he heard of the last night's work, and he had made ready to assist the Rômins in case they were attacked. So Kôtsuké no Suké's father-in-law dared not pursue them.

At about seven in the morning they came opposite to the palace of Matsudaira Mutsu no Kami, the Prince of Sendai, and the Prince, hearing of it, sent for one of his councillors and said: "The retainers of Takumi no Kami have slain their

lord's enemy, and are passing this way; I cannot sufficiently admire their devotion, so, as they must be tired and hungry after their night's work, do you go and invite them to come in here, and set some gruel and a cup of wine before them."

So the councillor went out and said to Oishi Kuranosuké: "Sir, I am a councillor of the Prince of Sendai, and my master bids me beg you, as you must be worn out after all you have undergone, to come in and partake of such poor refreshment as we can offer you. This is my message to you from my lord."

"I thank you, sir," replied Kuranosuké. "It is very good of his lordship to trouble himself to think of us. We shall accept his kindness gratefully."

So the forty-seven Rôbins went into the palace, and were feasted with gruel and wine, and all the retainers of the Prince of Sendai came and praised them.

Then Kuranosuké turned to the councillor and said, "Sir, we are truly indebted to you for this kind hospitality; but as we have still to hurry to Sengakuji, we must needs humbly take our leave." And, after returning many thanks to their hosts, they left the palace of the Prince of Sendai and hastened to Sengakuji, where they were met by the abbot of the monastery, who went to the front gate to receive them, and led them to the tomb of Takumi no Kami.

And when they came to their lord's grave, they took the head of Kôtsuké no Suké, and having washed it clean in a well hard by, laid it as an offering before the tomb. When they had done this, they engaged the priests of the temple to come and read prayers while they burnt incense: first Oishi Kuranosuké burnt incense, and then his son Oishi Chikara, and after them the other forty-five men performed the same ceremony. Then Kuranosuké, having given all the money that he had by him to the abbot, said:—

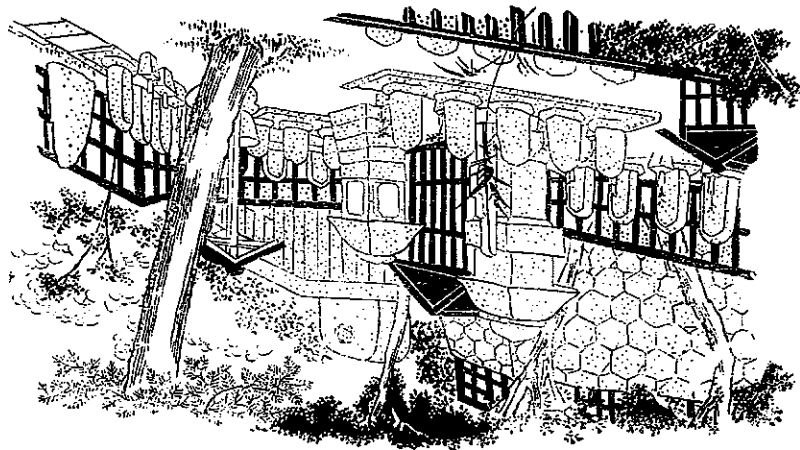
"When we forty-seven men shall have performed *hara kiru*, I beg you to bury us decently. I rely upon your kindness. This is but a trifle that I have to offer; such as it is, let it be spent in masses for our souls!"

And the abbot, marvelling at the faithful courage of the men, with tears in his eyes pledged himself to fulfil their wishes. So the forty-seven Rônins, with their minds at rest, waited patiently until they should receive the orders of the Government.

At last they were summoned to the Supreme Court, where the governors of Yedo and the public censors had assembled; and the sentence passed upon them was as follows: "Whereas, neither respecting the dignity of the city nor fearing the Government, having leagued yourselves together to slay your enemy, you violently broke into the house of Kira Kôtsuké no Suké by night and murdered him, the sentence of the Court is, that, for this audacious conduct, you perform *hara kiri*." When the sentence had been read, the forty-seven Rônins were divided into four parties, and handed over to the safe keeping of four different daimios; and sheriffs were sent to the palaces of those daimios in whose presence the Rônins were made to perform *hara kiri*. But, as from the very beginning they had all made up their minds that to this end they must come, they met their death nobly; and their corpses were carried to Sengakuji, and buried in front of the tomb of their master, Asano Takumi no Kami. And when the fame of this became noised abroad, the people flocked to pray at the graves of these faithful men.

Among those who came to pray was a Satsuma man, who, prostrating himself before the grave of Oishi Kuranosuké, said: "When I saw you lying drunk by the roadside at Yamashina, in Kiôto, I knew not that you were plotting to avenge your lord; and, thinking you to be a faithless man, I trampled on you and spat in your face as I passed. And now I have come to ask pardon and offer atonement for the insult of last year." With those words he prostrated himself again before the grave, and, drawing a dirk from his girdle, stabbed himself in the belly and died. And the chief priest of the temple, taking pity upon him, buried him by the side of the Rônins; and his tomb

THE TOMBS OF THE RÔNINS.





still remains to be seen with those of the forty-seven comrades.  
This is the end of the story of the forty-seven Rônins.

A terrible picture of fierce heroism which it is impossible not to admire. In the Japanese mind this feeling of admiration is unmixed, and hence it is that the forty-seven Rônins receive almost divine honours. Pious hands still deck their graves with green boughs and burn incense upon them; the clothes and arms which they wore are preserved carefully in a fire-proof store-house attached to the temple, and exhibited yearly to admiring crowds, who behold them probably with little less veneration than is accorded to the relics of Aix-la-Chapelle or Trêves; and once in sixty years the monks of Sengakuji reap quite a harvest for the good of their temple by holding a commemorative fair or festival, to which the people flock during nearly two months.

A silver key once admitted me to a private inspection of the relics. We were ushered, my friend and myself, into a back apartment of the spacious temple, overlooking one of those marvellous miniature gardens, cunningly adorned with rockeries and dwarf trees, in which the Japanese delight. One by one, carefully labelled and indexed boxes containing the precious articles were brought out and opened by the chief priest. Such a curious medley of old rags and scraps of metal and wood! Home-made chain armour, composed of wads of leather secured together by pieces of iron, bear witness to the secrecy with which the Rônins made ready for the fight. To have bought armour would have attracted attention, so they made it with their own hands. Old moth-eaten surcoats, bits of helmets, three flutes, a writing-box that must have been any age at the time of the tragedy, and is now tumbling to pieces; tattered trousers of what once was rich silk brocade, now all unravelled and befringed; scraps of leather, part of an old gauntlet, crests and badges, bits of sword handles, spear-heads and dirks, the latter all red with rust, but with certain patches more deeply stained

as if the fatal clots of blood were never to be blotted out: all these were reverently shown to us. Among the confusion and litter were a number of documents, yellow with age and much worn at the folds. One was a plan of Kôtsuké no Suké's house, which one of the Rônins obtained by marrying the daughter of the builder who designed it. Three of the manuscripts appeared to me so curious that I obtained leave to have copies taken of them.

The first is the receipt given by the retainers of Kôtsuké no Suké's son in return for the head of their lord's father, which the priests restored to the family, and runs as follows:—

“MEMORANDUM:—

“ITEM. ONE HEAD.

“ITEM. ONE PAPER PARCEL.

“The above articles are acknowledged to have been received.

(*Loc. sigill.*)  
(*Loc. sigill.*)

“Signed, { SAYADA MAGOBEL.

{ SAITÔ KUNAL.

“To the priests deputed from the Temple Sengakuji,

“His Reverence SEKISHI,

“His Reverence ICHINOK.”

The second paper is a document explanatory of their conduct, a copy of which was found on the person of each of the forty-seven men:—

“Last year, in the third month, Asano Takumi no Kami, upon the occasion of the entertainment of the Imperial ambassador, was driven, by the force of circumstances, to attack and wound my Lord Kôtsuké no Suké in the castle, in order to avenge an insult offered to him. Having done this without considering the dignity of the place, and having thus disregarded all rules of propriety, he was condemned to *haru kiru*, and his property and castle of Akô were forfeited to the State, and were delivered up by his retainers to the officers deputed by the Shogun to receive them. After this his followers were all dispersed. At the time of the quarrel the high officials present prevented Asano Takumi no Kami from carrying out his intention of killing his enemy, my Lord Kôtsuké no Suké. So Asano Takumi no Kami died without having avenged himself, and this was more than his retainers could endure. It is impossible to remain under the same heaven with the enemy of lord or father; for this reason we have dared to declare enmity against a personage of so exalted rank. This day we shall attack Kira Kôtsuké no Suké, in order to finish the deed of vengeance which was begun by our dead lord. If any

honourable person should find our bodies after death, he is respectfully requested to open and read this document.

"15th year of Genroku. 12th month.

"Signed, OISHI KURANOSUKÉ, Retainer of Asano Takumi no Kami, and forty-six others."<sup>1</sup>

The third manuscript is a paper which the Forty-seven Rôbins laid upon the tomb of their master, together with the head of Kira Kôtsuké no Suké:—

"The 15th year of Genroku, the 12th month, and 15th day. We have come this day to do homage here, forty-seven men in all, from Oishi Kuranosuké down to the foot-soldier, Terasaka Kichiyemon, all cheerfully about to lay down our lives on your behalf. We reverently announce this to the honoured spirit of our dead master. On the 14th day of the third month of last year our honoured master was pleased to attack Kira Kôtsuké no Suké, for what reason we know not. Our honoured master put an end to his own life, but Kira Kôtsuké no Suké lived. Although we fear that after the decree issued by the Government this plot of ours will be displeasing to our honoured master, still we, who have eaten of your food, could not without blushing repeat the verse, 'Thou shalt not live under the same heaven nor tread the same earth with the enemy of thy father or lord,' nor could we have dared to leave hell and present ourselves before you in paradise, unless we had carried out the vengeance which you began. Every day that we waited seemed as three autumns to us. Verily, we have trodden the snow for one day, nay, for two days, and have tasted food but once. The old and decrepit, the sick and ailing, have come forth gladly to lay down their lives. Men might laugh at us, as at grasshoppers trusting in the strength of their arms, and thus shame our honoured lord; but we could not halt in our deed of vengeance. Having taken counsel together last night, we have escorted my Lord Kôtsuké no Suké hither to your tomb. This dirk,<sup>2</sup> by which our honoured lord set great store last year, and entrusted to our care, we now bring back. If your noble spirit be now present before this tomb, we pray you, as a sign, to take the dirk, and, striking the head of your enemy with it a second time, to dispel your hatred for ever. This is the respectful statement of forty-seven men.

The text, "Thou shalt not live under the same heaven with the enemy of thy father," is based upon the Confucian books. Dr. Legge, in his "Life and Teachings of Confucius,"

<sup>1</sup> It is usual for a Japanese, when bent upon some deed of violence, the end of which, in his belief, justifies the means, to carry about with him a document, such as that translated above, in which he sets forth his motives, that his character may be cleared after death.

<sup>2</sup> The dirk with which Asano Takumi no Kumi disembowelled himself, and with which Oishi Kuranosuké cut off Kôtsuké no Suké's head.

p. 113, has an interesting paragraph summing up the doctrine of the sage upon the subject of revenge.

"In the second book of the 'Le Ke' there is the following passage:—'With the slayer of his father a man may not live under the same heaven; against the slayer of his brother a man may never have to go home to fetch a weapon; with the slayer of his friend a man may not live in the same State. The *Le Ke* *zôtônis* is here laid down in its fullest extent. The 'Chow Le' tells us of a provision made against the evil consequences of the principle by the appointment of a minister called 'The Reconciler.' The provision is very inferior to the cities of refuge which were set apart by Moses for the manslayer to flee to from the fury of the avenger. Such as it was, however, it existed, and it is remarkable that Confucius, when consulted on the subject, took no notice of it, but affirmed the duty of blood-revenge in the strongest and most unrestricted terms. His disciple, Tszé Hea, asked him, 'What course is to be pursued in the murder of a father or mother?' He replied, 'The son must sleep upon a matting of grass with his shield for his pillow; he must decline to take office; he must not live under the same heaven with the slayer. When he meets him in the market-place or the court, he must have his weapon ready to strike him.' 'And what is the course in the murder of a brother?' 'The surviving brother must not take office in the same State with the slayer; yet, if he go on his prince's service to the State where the slayer is, though he meet him, he must not fight with him.' 'And what is the course in the murder of an uncle or cousin?' 'In this case the nephew or cousin is not the principal. If the principal, on whom the revenge devolves, can take it, he has only to stand behind with his weapon in his hand, and support him.'"

I will add one anecdote to show the sanctity which is attached to the graves of the Forty-seven. In the month of September 1868, a certain man came to pray before the grave of Oishi Chikara. Having finished his prayers, he deliberately performed *karu kiru*<sup>1</sup> and, the belly wound not being mortal, despatched himself by cutting his throat. Upon his person were found papers setting forth that, being a Rônin and without means of earning a living, he had petitioned to be allowed to enter the clan of the Prince of Chôshû, which he looked upon as the noblest clan in the realm; his petition having been refused, nothing remained for him but to die, for to be a Rônin was hateful to him, and he would serve no

<sup>1</sup> A purist in Japanese matters may object to the use of the words *karu kiru* instead of the more elegant expression *Seppuku*. I retain the more vulgar form as being better known, and therefore more convenient.

other master than the Prince of Chōshū: what more fitting place could he find in which to put an end to his life than the graveyard of these Braves? This happened at about two hundred yards' distance from my house, and when I saw the spot an hour or two later, the ground was all bespattered with blood, and disturbed by the death-struggles of the man.

### THE LOVES OF GOMPACHI AND KOMURASAKI.

WITHIN two miles or so from Yedo, and yet well away from the toil and din of the great city, stands the village of Meguro. Once past the outskirts of the town, the road leading thither is bounded on either side by woodlands rich in an endless variety of foliage, broken at intervals by the long, low line of villages and hamlets. As we draw near to Meguro, the scenery, becoming more and more rustic, increases in beauty. Deep shady lanes, bordered by hedgerows as luxurious as any in England, lead down to a valley of rice fields bright with the emerald green of the young crops. To the right and to the left rise knolls of fantastic shape, crowned with a profusion of Cryptomerias, Scotch firs and other cone-bearing trees, and fringed with thickets of feathery bamboos, bending their stems gracefully to the light summer breeze. Wherever there is a spot shadier and pleasanter to look upon than the rest, there may be seen the red, portal of a shrine which the simple piety of the country folk has raised to Inari Sama, the patron god of farming, or to some other tutelary deity of the place. At the eastern outlet of the valley a strip of blue sea bounds the horizon; westward are the distant mountains. In the foreground, in front of a farmhouse, snug-looking, with its roof of velvety-brown thatch, a troop of sturdy urchins, sun-tanned and stark naked, are frisking in the wildest gambols, all heedless of the scolding voice of the withered old grandam who sits spinning and minding the house, while her son and his wife are away toiling at some outdoor labour. Close at our feet runs a stream of pure water, in which a group of countrymen are

runners; for they soon found that they had attacked a hornets' nest. In an incredibly short space of time, the guards of the different Legations and the sailors and marines from the ships of war were in hot chase after the enemy, who were scampering away over the hills as fast as their legs could carry them, leaving their baggage ingloriously scattered over the road, as many a cheap lacquered hat and flimsy paper cartridge-box, preserved by our Blue Jackets as trophies, will testify. So good was the stampede, that the enemy's loss amounted only to one aged coolie, who, being too decrepit to run, was taken prisoner, after having had seventeen revolver shots fired at him without effect; and the only injury that our men inflicted was upon a solitary old woman, who was accidentally shot through the leg.

If it had not been for the serious nature of the offence given, which was an attack upon the flags of all the treaty Powers, and for the terrible retribution which was of necessity exacted, the whole affair would have been recollected chiefly for the ludicrous events which it gave rise to. The mounted escort of the British Legation executed a brilliant charge of cavalry down an empty road; a very pretty line of skirmishers along the fields fired away a great deal of ammunition with no result; earthworks were raised, and Kôbé was held in military occupation for three days, during which there were alarms, cutting-out expeditions with armed boats, steamers seized, and all kinds of martial effervescence. In fact, it was like fox-hunting: it had "all the excitement of war, with only ten per cent. of the danger."

The first thought of the kind-hearted doctor of the British Legation was for the poor old woman who had been wounded, and was bemoaning herself piteously. When she was carried in, a great difficulty arose, which, I need hardly say, was overcome; for the poor old creature belonged to the Etas, the Pariah race, whose presence pollutes the house even of the poorest and humblest Japanese; and the native servants strongly objected to her being treated as a human being, saying that the Legation would be for ever defiled if she

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### THE ETA MAIDEN AND THE HATAMOTO.

It will be long before those who were present at the newly opened port of Kôbé on the 4th of February, 1868, will forget that day. The civil war was raging, and the foreign Legations, warned by the flames of burning villages, no less than by the flight of the Shogun and his ministers, had left Osaka, to take shelter at Kôbé, where they were not, as at the former place, separated from their ships by more than twenty miles of road, occupied by armed troops in a high state of excitement, with the alternative of crossing in tempestuous weather a dangerous bar, which had already taken much valuable life. It was a fine winter's day, and the place was full of bustle, and of the going and coming of men busy with the care of housing themselves and their goods and chattels. All of a sudden, a procession of armed men, belonging to the Bizen clan, was seen to leave the town, and to advance along the high road leading to Osaka; and without apparent reason—it was said afterwards that two Frenchmen had crossed the line of march—there was a halt, a stir, and a word of command given. Then the little clouds of white smoke puffed up, and the sharp "ping" of the rifle bullets came whizzing over the open space, destined for a foreign settlement, as fast as the repeating breech-loaders could be discharged. Happily, the practice was very bad; for had the men of Bizen been good shots, almost all the principal foreign officials in the country, besides many merchants and private gentlemen, must have been killed: as it was, only two or three men were wounded. If they were bad marksmen, however, they were mighty

were admitted within its sacred precincts. No account of Japanese society would be complete without a notice of the Etas; and the following story shows well, I think, the position which they hold.

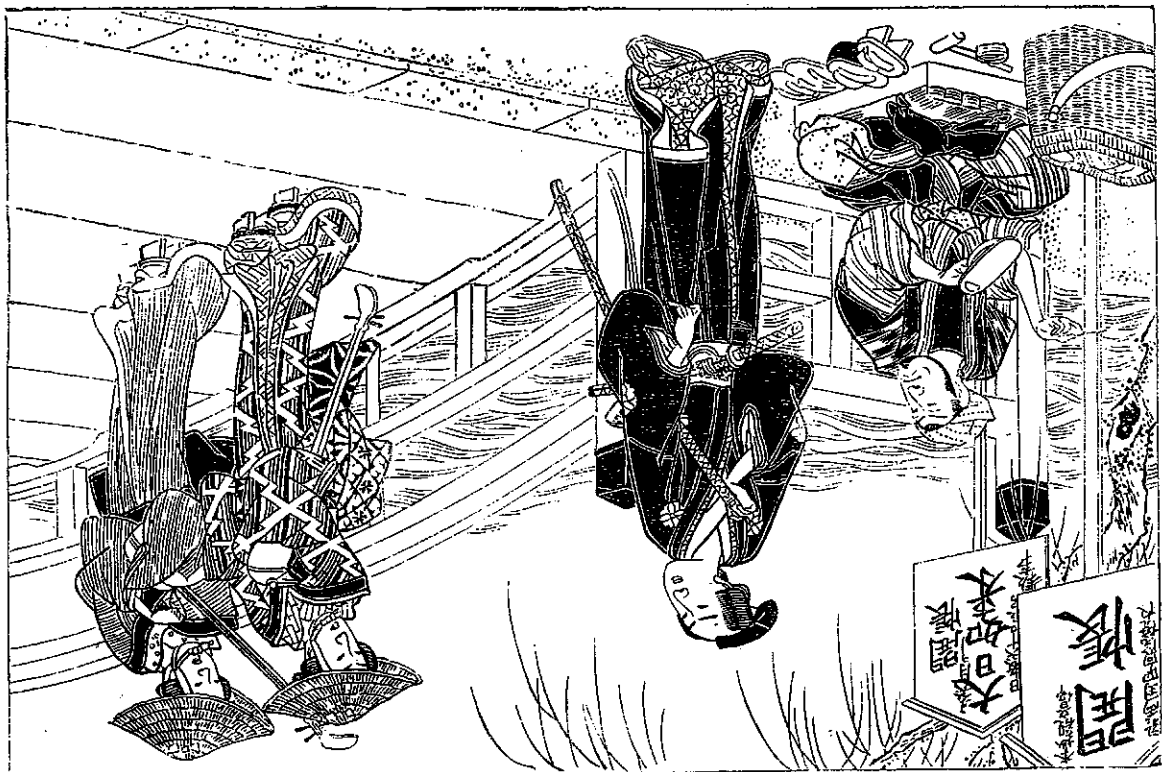
Their occupation is to slay beasts, work leather, attend upon criminals, and do other degrading work. Several accounts are given of their origin; the most probable of which is, that when Buddhism, the tenets of which forbid the taking of life, was introduced, those who lived by the infliction of death became accursed in the land, their trade being made hereditary, as was the office of executioner in some European countries. Another story is, that they are the descendants of the Tartar invaders left behind by Kublai Khan. Some further facts connected with the Etas are given in a note at the end of the tale.

Once upon a time, some two hundred years ago, there lived at a place called Honjô, in Yédo, a Hatamoto named Takoji Genzaburô; his age was about twenty-four or twenty-five, and he was of extraordinary personal beauty. His official duties made it incumbent on him to go to the Castle by way of the Adzuma Bridge, and here it was that a strange adventure befel him. There was a certain Eta, who used to earn his living by going out every day to the Adzuma Bridge, and mending the sandals of the passers-by. Whenever Genzaburô crossed the bridge, the Eta used always to bow to him. This struck him as rather strange; but one day when Genzaburô was out alone, without any retainers following him, and was passing the Adzuma Bridge, the thong of his sandal suddenly broke: this annoyed him very much; however, he recollected the Eta cobbler who always used to bow to him so regularly, so he went to the place where he usually sat, and ordered him to mend his sandal, saying to him, "Tell me why it is that

every time that I pass by this bridge, you salute me so respectfully."

When the Eta heard this, he was put out of countenance, and for a while he remained silent; but at last taking courage, he said to Genzaburô, "Sir, having been honoured with your commands, I am quite put to shame. I was originally a gardener, and used to go to your honour's house and lend a hand in trimming up the garden. In those days your honour was very young, and I myself little better than a child; and so I used to play with your honour, and received many kindnesses at your hands. My name, sir, is Chokichi. Since those days I have fallen by degrees into dissolute habits, and little by little have sunk to be the vile thing that you now see me."

When Genzaburô heard this he was very much surprised, and, recollecting his old friendship for his playmate, was filled with pity, and said, "Surely, surely, you have fallen very low. Now all you have to do is to persevere and use your utmost endeavours to find a means of escape from the class into which you have fallen, and become a wardsman again. Take this sum: small as it is, let it be a foundation for more to you." And with these words he took ten riyos out of his pouch and handed them to Chokichi, who at first refused to accept the present, but, when it was pressed upon him, received it with thanks. Genzaburô was leaving him to go home, when two wandering singing-girls came up and spoke to Chokichi; so Genzaburô looked to see what the two women were like. One was a woman of some twenty years of age, and the other was a peerlessly beautiful girl of sixteen; she was neither too fat nor too thin, neither too tall nor too short; her face was oval, like a melon-seed, and her complexion fair and white; her eyes were narrow and bright, her teeth small and even; her nose was aquiline, and her mouth delicately formed, with lovely red lips; her eyebrows were long and fine; she had a profusion of long black hair; she spoke modestly, with a soft sweet voice; and when she smiled, two lovely dimples appeared



GENZABURÔ'S MEETING WITH THE ETA MAIDEN.

in her cheeks; in all her movements she was gentle and refined. Genzaburô fell in love with her at first sight; and she, seeing what a handsome man he was, equally fell in love with him; so that the woman that was with her, perceiving that they were struck with one another, led her away as fast as possible.

Genzaburô remained as one stupefied, and, turning to Chokichi, said, "Are you acquainted with those two women who came up just now?"

"Sir," replied Chokichi, "those are two women of our people. The elder woman is called O Kuma, and the girl, who is only sixteen years old, is named O Koyo. She is the daughter of one Kihachi, a chief of the Etas. She is a very gentle girl, besides being so exceedingly pretty; and all our people are loud in her praise."

When he heard this, Genzaburô remained lost in thought for a while, and then said to Chokichi, "I want you to do something for me. Are you prepared to serve me in whatever respect I may require you?"

Chokichi answered that he was prepared to do anything in his power to oblige his honour. Upon this, Genzaburô smiled and said, "Well, then, I am willing to employ you in a certain matter; but as there are a great number of passers-by here, I will go and wait for you in a tea-house at Hanakawado; and when you have finished your business here, you can join me, and I will speak to you." With these words Genzaburô left him, and went off to the tea-house.

When Chokichi had finished his work, he changed his clothes, and, hurrying to the tea-house, inquired for Genzaburô, who was waiting for him upstairs. Chokichi went up to him, and began to thank him for the money which he had bestowed upon him. Genzaburô smiled, and handed him a wine-cup, inviting him to drink, and said—

"I will tell you the service upon which I wish to employ you. I have set my heart upon that girl O Koyo, whom I met to-day upon the Adzuma Bridge, and you must arrange a meeting between us."

When Chokichi heard these words, he was amazed and frightened, and for awhile he made no answer. At last he said—

"Sir, there is nothing that I would not do for you after the favours that I have received from you. If this girl were the daughter of any ordinary man, I would move heaven and earth to comply with your wishes; but for your honour, a handsome and noble Hatamoto, to take for his concubine the daughter of an Eta is a great mistake. By giving a little money you can get the handsomest woman in the town. Pray, sir, abandon the idea."

Upon this Genzaburô was offended, and said—

"This is no matter for you to give advice in. I have told you to get me the girl, and you must obey."

Chokichi, seeing that all that he could say would be of no avail, thought over in his mind how to bring about a meeting between Genzaburô and O Koyo, and replied—

"Sir, I am afraid when I think of the liberty that I have taken. I will go to Kihachi's house, and will use my best endeavours with him that I may bring the girl to you. But for to-day, it is getting late, and night is coming on; so I will go and speak to her father to-morrow."

Genzaburô was delighted to find Chokichi willing to serve him.

"Well," said he, "the day after to-morrow I will await you at the tea-house at Oji, and you can bring O Koyo there. Take this present, small as it is, and do your best for me."

With this he pulled out three riyos from his pocket and handed them to Chokichi, who declined the money with thanks, saying that he had already received too much, and could accept no more; but Genzaburô pressed him, adding, that if the wish of his heart were accomplished he would do still more for him. So Chokichi, in great glee at the good luck which had befallen him, began to revolve all sorts of schemes in his mind; and the two parted.

But O Koyo, who had fallen in love at first sight with Genzaburô on the Adzuma Bridge, went home and could

think of nothing but him. Sad and melancholy she sat, and her friend O Kuma tried to comfort her in various ways; but O Koyo yearned, with all her heart, for Genzaburô; and the more she thought over the matter, the better she perceived that she, as the daughter of an Eta, was no match for a noble Hatamoto. And yet, in spite of this, she pined for him, and bewailed her own vile condition.

Now it happened that her friend O Kuma was in love with Chokichi, and only cared for thinking and speaking of him; one day, when Chokichi went to pay a visit at the house of Kihachi the Eta chief, O Kuma, seeing him come, was highly delighted, and received him very politely; and Chokichi, interrupting her, said—

“O Kuma, I want you to answer me a question: where has O Koyo gone to amuse herself to-day?”

“Oh, you know the gentleman who was talking with you the other day, at the Adzuma Bridge? Well, O Koyo has fallen desperately in love with him, and she says that she is too low-spirited and out of sorts to get up yet.”

Chokichi was greatly pleased to hear this, and said to O Kuma—

“How delightful! Why, O Koyo has fallen in love with the very gentleman who is burning with passion for her, and who has employed me to help him in the matter. However, as he is a noble Hatamoto, and his whole family would be ruined if the affair became known to the world, we must endeavour to keep it as secret as possible.”

“Dear me!” replied O Kuma; “when O Koyo hears this, how happy she will be, to be sure! I must go and tell her at once.”

“Stop!” said Chokichi, detaining her; “if her father, Master Kihachi, is willing, we will tell O Koyo directly. You had better wait here a little until I have consulted him,” and with this he went into an inner chamber to see Kihachi; and, after talking over the news of the day, told him how Genzaburô had fallen passionately in love with O Koyo, and had employed him as a go-between. Then he described

how he had received kindness at the hands of Genzaburô when he was in better circumstances, dwelt on the wonderful personal beauty of his lordship, and upon the lucky chance by which he and O Koyo had come to meet each other.

When Kihachi heard this story, he was greatly flattered, and said—

“I am sure I am very much obliged to you. For one of our daughters, whom even the common people despise and shun as a pollution, to be chosen as the concubine of a noble Hatamoto—what could be a greater matter for congratulation!”

So he prepared a feast for Chokichi, and went off at once to tell O Koyo the news. As for the maiden, who had fallen over head and ears in love, there was no difficulty in obtaining her consent to all that was asked of her.

Accordingly Chokichi, having arranged to bring the lovers together on the following day at Oji, was preparing to go and report the glad tidings to Genzaburô; but O Koyo, who knew that her friend O Kuma was in love with Chokichi, and thought that if she could throw them into one another's arms, they, on their side, would tell no tales about herself and Genzaburô, worked to such good purpose that she gained her point. At last Chokichi, tearing himself from the embraces of O Kuma, returned to Genzaburô, and told him how he had laid his plans so as, without fail, to bring O Koyo to him, the following day, at Oji; and Genzaburô, beside himself with impatience, waited for the morrow.

The next day Genzaburô, having made his preparations, and taking Chokichi with him, went to the tea-house at Oji, and sat drinking wine, waiting for his sweetheart to come.

As for O Koyo, who was half in ecstasies, and half shy at the idea of meeting on this day the man of her heart's desire, she put on her holiday clothes, and went with O Kuma to Oji; and as they went out together, her natural beauty being enhanced by her smart dress, all the people turned round to look at her, and praise her pretty face. And so,



after a while, they arrived at Oji, and went into the tea-house that had been agreed upon; and Chokichi, going out to meet them, exclaimed—

"Dear me, Miss O Koyo, his lordship has been all impatience waiting for you: pray make haste and come in."

But, in spite of what he said, O Koyo, on account of her virgin modesty, would not go in. O Kuma, however, who was not quite so particular, cried out—

"Why, what is the meaning of this? As you've come here, O Koyo, it's a little late for you to be making a fuss about being shy. Don't be a little fool, but come in with me at once." And with these words she caught fast hold of O Koyo's hand, and, pulling her by force into the room, made her sit down by Genzaburô.

When Genzaburô saw how modest she was, he reassured her, saying—

"Come, what is there to be so shy about? Come a little nearer to me, pray."

"Thank you, sir. How could I, who am such a vile thing, pollute your nobility by sitting by your side?" And, as she spoke, the blushes mantled over her face; and the more Genzaburô looked at her, the more beautiful she appeared in his eyes, and the more deeply he became enamoured of her charms. In the meanwhile he called for wine and fish, and all four together made a feast of it. When Chokichi and O Kuma saw how the land lay, they retired discreetly into another chamber, and Genzaburô and O Koyo were left alone together, looking at one another.

"Come," said Genzaburô, smiling, "hadn't you better sit a little closer to me?"

"Thank you, sir; really I'm afraid."

But Genzaburô, laughing at her for her idle fears, said—

"Don't behave as if you hated me."

"Oh, dear! I'm sure I don't hate you, sir. That would be very rude; and, indeed, it's not the case. I loved you when I first saw you at the Adzuma Bridge, and longed for you with all my heart; but I knew what a despised race I be-

longed to, and that I was no fitting match for you, and so I tried to be resigned. But I am very young and inexperienced, and so I could not help thinking of you, and you alone; and then Chokichi came, and when I heard what you had said about me, I thought, in the joy of my heart, that it must be a dream of happiness."

And as she spoke these words, blushing timidly, Genzaburô was dazzled with her beauty, and said—

"Well, you're a clever child. I'm sure, now, you must have some handsome young lover of your own, and that is why you don't care to come and drink wine and sit by me. Am I not right, eh?"

"Ah, sir, a nobleman like you is sure to have a beautiful wife at home; and then you are so handsome that, of course, all the pretty young ladies are in love with you."

"Nonsense! Why, how clever you are at flattering and paying compliments! A pretty little creature like you was just made to turn all the men's heads—a little witch."

"Ah! those are hard things to say of a poor girl! Who could think of falling in love with such a wretch as I am? Now, pray tell me all about your own sweetheart: I do so long to hear about her."

"Silly child! I'm not the sort of man to put thoughts into the heads of fair ladies. However, it is quite true that there is some one whom I want to marry."

At this O Koyo began to feel jealous.

"Ah!" said she, "how happy that some one must be! Do, pray, tell me the whole story." And a feeling of jealous spite came over her, and made her quite unhappy.

Genzaburô laughed as he answered—

"Well, that some one is yourself, and nobody else. There!" and as he spoke, he gently tapped the dimple on her cheek with his finger; and O Koyo's heart beat so, for very joy, that, for a little while, she remained speechless. At last she turned her face towards Genzaburô, and said—

"Alas! your lordship is only trifling with me, when you know that what you have just been pleased to propose is the

darling wish of my heart. Would that I could only go into your house as a maid-servant, in any capacity, however mean, that I might daily feast my eyes on your handsome face!"

"Ah! I see that you think yourself very clever at hoaxing men, and so you must needs tease me a little;" and, as he spoke, he took her hand, and drew her close up to him, and she, blushing again, cried—

"Oh! pray wait a moment, while I shut the sliding-doors."  
 "Listen to me, O Koyo! I am not going to forget the promise which I made you just now; nor need you be afraid of my harming you; but take care that you do not deceive me."

"Indeed, sir, the fear is rather that you should set your heart on others; but, although I am no fashionable lady, take pity on me, and love me well and long."

"Of course! I shall never care for another woman but you."

"Pray, pray, never forget those words that you have just spoken."

"And now," replied Genzaburô, "the night is advancing, and, for to-day, we must part; but we will arrange matters, so as to meet again in this tea-house. But, as people would make remarks if we left the tea-house together, I will go out first."

And so, much against their will, they tore themselves from one another, Genzaburô returning to his house, and O Koyo going home, her heart filled with joy at having found the man for whom she had pined; and from that day forth they used constantly to meet in secret at the tea-house; and Genzaburô, in his infatuation, never thought that the matter must surely become notorious after a while, and that he himself would be banished, and his family ruined: he only took care for the pleasure of the moment.

Now Chokichi, who had brought about the meeting between Genzaburô and his love, used to go every day to the tea-house at Oji, taking with him O Koyo; and Genzaburô neglected all his duties for the pleasure of these secret meet-

ings. Chokichi saw this with great regret, and thought to himself that if Genzaburô gave himself up entirely to pleasure, and laid aside his duties, the secret would certainly be made public, and Genzaburô would bring ruin on himself and his family; so he began to devise some plan by which he might separate them, and plotted as eagerly to estrange them as he had formerly done to introduce them to one another.

At last he hit upon a device which satisfied him. Accordingly one day he went to O Koyo's house, and, meeting her father Kihachi, said to him—

"I've got a sad piece of news to tell you. The family of my lord Genzaburô have been complaining bitterly of his conduct in carrying on his relationship with your daughter, and of the ruin which exposure would bring upon the whole house; so they have been using their influence to persuade him to hear reason, and give up the connection. Now his lordship feels deeply for the damsel, and yet he cannot sacrifice his family for her sake. For the first time, he has become alive to the folly of which he has been guilty, and, full of remorse, he has commissioned me to devise some stratagem to break off the affair. Of course, this has taken me by surprise; but as there is no gainsaying the right of the case, I have had no option but to promise obedience: this promise I have come to redeem; and now, pray, advise your daughter to think no more of his lordship."

When Kihachi heard this he was surprised and distressed, and told O Koyo immediately; and she, grieving over the sad news, took no thought either of eating or drinking, but remained gloomy and desolate.

In the meanwhile, Chokichi went off to Genzaburô's house, and told him that O Koyo had been taken suddenly ill, and could not go to meet him, and begged him to wait patiently until she should send to tell him of her recovery. Genzaburô, never suspecting the story to be false, waited for thirty days, and still Chokichi brought him no tidings of O Koyo. At last he met Chokichi, and besought him to arrange a meeting for him with O Koyo.

"Sir," replied Chokichi, "she is not yet recovered; so it would be difficult to bring her to see your honour. But I have been thinking much about this affair, sir. If it becomes public, your honour's family will be plunged in ruin. I pray you, sir, to forget all about O Koyo."

"It's all very well for you to give me advice," answered Genzaburô, surprised; "but, having once bound myself to O Koyo, it would be a pitiful thing to desert her; I therefore implore you once more to arrange that I may meet her."

However, he would not consent upon any account; so Genzaburô returned home, and, from that time forth, daily entreated Chokichi to bring O Koyo to him, and, receiving nothing but advice from him in return, was very sad and lonely.

One day Genzaburô, intent on ridding himself of the grief he felt at his separation from O Koyo, went to the Yoshiwara, and, going into a house of entertainment, ordered a feast to be prepared; but, in the midst of gaiety, his heart yearned all the while for his lost love, and his merriment was but mourning in disguise. At last the night wore on; and as he was retiring along the corridor, he saw a man of about forty years of age, with long hair, coming towards him, who, when he saw Genzaburô, cried out, "Dear me! why this must be my young lord Genzaburô who has come out to enjoy himself."

Genzaburô thought this rather strange; but, looking at the man attentively, recognised him as a retainer whom he had had in his employ the year before, and said—

"This is a curious meeting: pray what have you been about since you left my service? At any rate, I may congratulate you on being well and strong. Where are you living now?"

"Well, sir, since I parted from you I have been earning a living as a fortune-teller at Kanda, and have changed my name to Kajji Sazen. I am living in a poor and humble house; but if your lordship, at your leisure, would honour me with a visit—"

"Well, it's a lucky chance that has brought us together, and I certainly will go and see you; besides, I want you to do something for me. Shall you be at home the day after to-morrow?"

"Certainly, sir, I shall make a point of being at home."

"Very well, then, the day after to-morrow I will go to your house."

"I shall be at your service, sir. And now, as it is getting late, I will take my leave for to-night."

"Good night, then. We shall meet the day after to-morrow."

And so the two parted, and went their several ways to rest. On the appointed day Genzaburô made his preparations, and went in disguise, without any retainers, to call upon Sazen, who met him at the porch of his house, and said, "This is a great honour! My lord Genzaburô is indeed welcome. My house is very mean, but let me invite your lordship to come into an inner chamber."

"Pray," replied Genzaburô, "don't make any ceremony for me. Don't put yourself to any trouble on my account."

And so he passed in, and Sazen called to his wife to prepare wine and condiments; and they began to feast. At last Genzaburô, looking Sazen in the face, said, "There is a service which I want you to render me—a very secret service; but as, if you were to refuse me, I should be put to shame, before I tell you what that service is, I must know whether you are willing to assist me in anything that I may require of you."

"Yes; if it is anything that is within my power, I am at your disposal."

"Well, then," said Genzaburô, greatly pleased, and drawing ten riyos from his bosom, "this is but a small present to make to you on my first visit, but pray accept it."

"No, indeed! I don't know what your lordship wishes of me; but, at any rate, I cannot receive this money. I really must beg your lordship to take it back again."

But Genzaburô pressed it upon him by force, and at last he was obliged to accept the money. Then Genzaburô told him the whole story of his loves with O Koyo—how he had first

met her and fallen in love with her at the Adzuma Bridge; how Chokichi had introduced her to him at the tea-house at Oji, and then when she fell ill, and he wanted to see her again, instead of bringing her to him, had only given him good advice; and so Genzaburô drew a lamentable picture of his state of despair.

Sazen listened patiently to his story, and, after reflecting for a while, replied, "Well, sir, it's not a difficult matter to set right; and yet it will require some little management. However, if your lordship will do me the honour of coming to see me again the day after to-morrow, I will cast about me in the meanwhile, and will let you know then the result of my deliberations."

When Genzaburô heard this he felt greatly relieved, and, recommending Sazen to do his best in the matter, took his leave and returned home. That very night Sazen, after thinking over all that Genzaburô had told him, laid his plans accordingly, and went off to the house of Kihachi, the Eta chief, and told him the commission with which he had been entrusted.

Kihachi was of course greatly astonished, and said, "Some time ago, sir, Chokichi came here and said that my lord Genzaburô, having been rebuked by his family for his profigate behaviour, had determined to break off his connection with my daughter. Of course I knew that the daughter of an Eta was no fitting match for a nobleman; so when Chokichi came and told me the errand upon which he had been sent, I had no alternative but to announce to my daughter that she must give up all thought of his lordship. Since that time she has been fretting and pining and starving for love. But when I tell her what you have just said, how glad and happy she will be! Let me go and talk to her at once." And with these words, he went to O Koyo's room; and when he looked upon her thin wasted face, and saw how sad she was, he felt more and more pity for her, and said, "Well, O Koyo, are you in better spirits to-day? Would you like some thing to eat?"

"Thank you, I have no appetite."  
"Well, at any rate, I have some news for you that will make you happy. A messenger has come from my lord Genzaburô, for whom your heart yearns."

At this O Koyo, who had been crouching down like a drooping flower, gave a great start, and cried out, "Is that really true? Pray tell me all about it as quickly as possible."

"The story which Chokichi came and told us, that his lordship wished to break off the connection, was all an invention. He has all along been wishing to meet you, and constantly urged Chokichi to bring you a message from him. It is Chokichi who has been throwing obstacles in the way. At last his lordship has secretly sent a man, called Kajj Sazen, a fortune-teller, to arrange an interview between you. So now, my child, you may cheer up, and go to meet your lover as soon as you please."

When O Koyo heard this, she was so happy that she thought it must all be a dream, and doubted her own senses.

Kihachi in the meanwhile rejoined Sazen in the other room, and, after telling him of the joy with which his daughter had heard the news, put before him wine and other delicacies. "I think," said Sazen, "that the best way would be for O Koyo to live secretly in my lord Genzaburô's house; but as it will never do for all the world to know of it, it must be managed very quietly; and further, when I get home, I must think out some plan to lull the suspicions of that fellow Chokichi, and let you know my idea by letter. Meanwhile O Koyo had better come home with me to-night: although she is so terribly out of spirits now, she shall meet Genzaburô the day after to-morrow."

Kihachi reported this to O Koyo; and as her pining for Genzaburô was the only cause of her sickness, she recovered her spirits at once, and, saying that she would go with Sazen, immediately, joyfully made her preparations. Then Sazen, having once more warned Kihachi to keep the matter secret from Chokichi, and to act upon the letter which he should send him, returned home, taking with him O Koyo; and after

O Koyo had bathed and dressed her hair, and painted herself and put on beautiful clothes, she came out looking so lovely that no princess in the land could vie with her; and Sazen, when he saw her, said to himself that it was no wonder that Genzaburô had fallen in love with her; then, as it was getting late, he advised her to go to rest, and, after showing her to her apartments, went to his own room and wrote his letter to Kihachi, containing the scheme which he had devised. When Kihachi received his instructions, he was filled with admiration at Sazen's ingenuity, and, putting on an appearance of great alarm and agitation, went off immediately to call on Chokichi, and said to him—

"Oh, Master Chokichi, such a terrible thing has happened! Pray, let me tell you all about it."

"Indeed! what can it be?"

"Oh! sir," answered Kihachi, pretending to wipe away his tears, "my daughter O Koyo, mourning over her separation from my lord Genzaburô, at first refused all sustenance, and heart failing to bear up against her great grief, she drowned herself in the river, leaving behind her a paper on which she had written her intention."

When Chokichi heard this, he was thunderstruck, and exclaimed, "Can this really be true! And when I think that it was I who first introduced her to my lord, I am ashamed to look you in the face."

"Oh, say not so: misfortunes are the punishment due for our misdeeds in a former state of existence. I bear you no ill-will. This money which I hold in my hand was my daughter's; and in her last instructions she wrote to beg that it might be given, after her death, to you, through whose intervention she became allied with a nobleman: so please accept it as my daughter's legacy to you," and as he spoke, he offered him three riyos.

"You amaze me!" replied the other. "How could I, above all men, who have so much to reproach myself with in my conduct towards you, accept this money?"

"Nay; it was my dead daughter's wish. But since you reproach yourself in the matter when you think of her, I will beg you to put up a prayer and to cause masses to be said for her."

At last, Chokichi, after much persuasion, and greatly to his own distress, was obliged to accept the money; and when Kihachi had carried out all Sazen's instructions, he returned home, laughing in his sleeve.

Chokichi was sorely grieved to hear of O Koyo's death, and remained thinking over the sad news; when all of a sudden looking about him, he saw something like a letter lying on the spot where Kihachi had been sitting, so he picked it up and read it; and, as luck would have it, it was the very letter which contained Sazen's instructions to Kihachi, and in which the whole story which had just affected him so much was made up. When he perceived the trick that had been played upon him, he was very angry, and exclaimed, "To think that I should have been so hoaxed by that hateful old dotard, and such a fellow as Sazen! And Genzaburô, too!—out of gratitude for the favours which I had received from him in old days, I faithfully gave him good advice, and all in vain. Well, they've gulled me once; but I'll be even with them yet, and hinder their game before it is played out!" And so he worked himself up into a fury, and went off secretly to prow about Sazen's house to watch for O Koyo, determined to pay off Genzaburô and Sazen for their conduct to him.

In the meanwhile Sazen, who did not for a moment suspect what had happened, when the day which had been fixed upon by him and Genzaburô arrived, made O Koyo put on her best clothes, smartened up his house, and got ready a feast against Genzaburô's arrival. The latter came punctually to his time, and, going in at once, said to the fortune-teller, "Well, have you succeeded in the commission with which I entrusted you?"

At first Sazen pretended to be vexed at the question, and said, "Well, sir, I've done my best; but it's not a matter which can be settled in a hurry. However, there's a young

lady of high birth and wonderful beauty upstairs, who has come here secretly to have her fortune told; and if your lordship would like to come with me and see her, you can do so."

But Genzaburô, when he heard that he was not to meet O Koyo, lost heart entirely, and made up his mind to go home again. Sazen, however, pressed him so eagerly, that at last he went upstairs to see this vaunted beauty; and Sazen, drawing aside a screen, showed him O Koyo, who was sitting there. Genzaburô gave a great start, and, turning to Sazen, said, "Well, you certainly are a first-rate hand at keeping up a hoax. However, I cannot sufficiently praise the way in which you have carried out my instructions."

"Pray, don't mention it, sir. But as it is a long time since you have met the young lady, you must have a great deal to say to one another; so I will go downstairs, and, if you want anything, pray call me." And so he went downstairs and left them.

Then Genzaburô, addressing O Koyo, said, "Ah! it is indeed a long time since we met. How happy it makes me to see you again! Why, your face has grown quite thin. Poor thing! have you been unhappy?" And O Koyo, with the tears starting from her eyes for joy, hid her face; and her heart was so full that she could not speak. But Genzaburô, passing his hand gently over her head and back, and comforting her, said, "Come, sweetheart, there is no need to sob so. Talk to me a little, and let me hear your voice."

At last O Koyo raised her head and said, "Ah! when I was separated from you by the tricks of Chokichi, and thought that I should never meet you again, how tenderly I thought of you! I thought I should have died, and waited for my hour to come, pining all the while for you. And when at last, as I lay between life and death, Sazen came with a message from you, I thought it was all a dream." And as she spoke, she bent her head and sobbed again; and in Genzaburô's eyes she seemed more beautiful than ever,

with her pale, delicate face; and he loved her better than before. Then she said, "If I were to tell you all I have suffered until to-day, I should never stop."

"Yes," replied Genzaburô, "I too have suffered much; and so they told one another their mutual griefs, and from that day forth they constantly met at Sazen's house."

One day, as they were feasting and enjoying themselves in an upper-story in Sazen's house, Chokichi came to the house and said, "I beg pardon; but does one Master Sazen live here?"

"Certainly, sir: I am Sazen, at your service. Pray where are you from?"

"Well, sir, I have a little business to transact with you. May I make so bold as to go in?" And with these words, he entered the house.

"But who and what are you?" said Sazen.

"Sir, I am an Eta; and my name is Chokichi. I beg to bespeak your goodwill for myself: I hope we may be friends." Sazen was not a little taken aback at this; however, he put on an innocent face, as though he had never heard of Chokichi before, and said, "I never heard of such a thing! Why, I thought you were some respectable person; and you have the impudence to tell me that your name is Chokichi, and that you're one of those accursed Etas. To think of such a shameless villain coming and asking to be friends with me, forsooth! Get you gone!—the quicker, the better: your presence pollutes the house."

Chokichi smiled contemptuously, as he answered, "So you deem the presence of an Eta in your house a pollution—eh? Why, I thought you must be one of us."

"Insolent knave! Begone as fast as possible."

"Well, since you say that I defile your house, you had better get rid of O Koyo as well. I suppose she must equally be a pollution to it."

This put Sazen rather in a dilemma; however, he made up his mind not to show any hesitation, and said, "What are you talking about? There is no O Koyo here; and I never saw such a person in my life."

Chokichi quietly drew out of the bosom of his dress the letter from Sazen to Kihachi, which he had picked up a few days before, and, showing it to Sazen, replied, "If you wish to dispute the genuineness of this paper, I will report the whole matter to the Governor of Yedo; and Genzaburô's family will be ruined, and the rest of you who are parties in this affair will come in for your share of trouble. Just wait a little."

And as he pretended to leave the house, Sazen, at his wits' end, cried out, "Stop! stop! I want to speak to you. Pray, stop and listen quietly. It is quite true, as you said, that O Koyo is in my house; and really your indignation is perfectly just. Come! let us talk over matters a little. Now you yourself were originally a respectable man; and although you have fallen in life, there is no reason why your disgrace should last for ever. All that you want in order to enable you to escape out of this fraternity of Etas is a little money. Why should you not get this from Genzaburô, who is very anxious to keep his intrigue with O Koyo secret?"

Chokichi laughed disdainfully. "I am ready to talk with you; but I don't want any money. All I want is to report the affair to the authorities, in order that I may be revenged for the fraud that was put upon me."

"Wont you accept twenty-five riyos?"  
 "Twenty-five riyos! No, indeed! I will not take a fraction less than a hundred; and if I cannot get them, I will report the whole matter at once."

Sazen, after a moment's consideration, hit upon a scheme, and answered, smiling, "Well, Master Chokichi, you're a fine fellow, and I admire your spirit. You shall have the hundred riyos you ask for; but, as I have not so much money by me at present, I will go to Genzaburô's house and fetch it. It's getting dark now, but it's not very late; so I'll trouble you to come with me, and then I can give you the money to-night."

Chokichi consenting to this, the pair left the house together. Now Sazen, who as a Rônin wore a long dirk in his girdle, kept looking out for a moment when Chokichi should be off

his guard, in order to kill him; but Chokichi kept his eyes open, and did not give Sazen a chance. At last Chokichi, as ill-luck would have it, stumbled against a stone and fell; and Sazen, profiting by the chance, drew his dirk and stabbed him in the side; and as Chokichi, taken by surprise, tried to get up, he cut him severely over the head, until at last he fell dead. Sazen then looking around him, and seeing, to his great delight, that there was no one near, returned home. The following day, Chokichi's body was found by the police; and when they examined it, they found nothing upon it save a paper, which they read, and which proved to be the very letter which Sazen had sent to Kihachi, and which Chokichi had picked up. The matter was immediately reported to the governor, and, Sazen having been summoned, an investigation was held. Sazen, cunning and bold murderer as he was, lost his self-possession when he saw what a fool he had been not to get back from Chokichi the letter which he had written, and, when he was put to a rigid examination under torture, confessed that he had hidden O Koyo at Genzaburô's instigation, and then killed Chokichi, who had found out the secret. Upon this the governor, after consulting about Genzaburô's case, decided that, as he had disgraced his position as a Hatamoto by contracting an alliance with the daughter of an Eta, his property should be confiscated, his family blotted out, and himself banished. As for Kihachi, the Eta chief, and his daughter O Koyo, they were handed over for punishment to the chief of the Etas, and by him they too were banished; while Sazen, against whom the murder of Chokichi had been fully proved, was executed according to law.

## NOTE.

AT Asakusa, in Yedo, there lives a man called Danzayémon, the chief of the Etas. This man traces his pedigree back to Minamoto no Yoritomo, who founded the Shogunate in the year 1192 A.D. The whole of the Etas in Japan are under his jurisdiction: his

subordinates are called Koyagashira, or "chiefs of the huts;" and he and they constitute the government of the Etas. In the "Legacy of Iyeyasu," already quoted, the 36th Law provides as follows:—"All wandering mendicants, such as male sorcerers, female diviners, hermits, blind people, beggars, and tanners (Etas), have had from of old their respective rulers. Be not disinclined, however, to punish any such who give rise to disputes, or who overstep the boundaries of their own classes and are disobedient to existing laws."

The occupation of the Etas is to kill and flay horses, oxen, and other beasts, to stretch drums and make shoes; and if they are very poor, they wander from house to house, working as cobblers, mending old shoes and leather, and so earn a scanty livelihood. Besides this, their daughters and young married women gain a trifle as wandering minstrels, called Torioi, playing on the *shamisen*, a sort of banjo, and singing ballads. They never marry out of their own fraternity, but remain apart, a despised and shunned race.

At executions by crucifixion it is the duty of the Etas to transfix the victims with spears; and, besides this, they have to perform all sorts of degrading offices about criminals, such as carrying sick prisoners from their cells to the hall of justice, and burying the bodies of those that have been executed. Thus their race is polluted and accursed, and they are hated accordingly.

Now this is how the Etas come to be under the jurisdiction of Danzayemon:—

When Minamoto no Yoritomo was yet a child, his father, Minamoto no Yoshitomo, fought with Taira no Kiyomori, and was killed by treachery: so his family was ruined; and Yoshitomo's concubine, whose name was Tokiwa, took her children and fled from the house, to save her own and their lives. But Kiyomori, desiring to destroy the family of Yoshitomo root and branch, ordered his retainers to divide themselves into bands, and seek out the children. At last they were found; but Tokiwa was so exceedingly beautiful that Kiyomori was inflamed with love for her, and desired her to become his own concubine. Then Tokiwa told Kiyomori that if he would spare her little ones she would share his couch; but that if he killed her children she would destroy herself rather than yield to his desire. When he heard this,

Kiyomori, bewildered by the beauty of Tokiwa, spared the lives of her children, but banished them from the capital.

So Yoritomo was sent to Hirugakojima, in the province of Idzu; and when he grew up and became a man, he married the daughter of a peasant. After a while Yoritomo left the province, and went to the wars, leaving his wife pregnant; and in due time she was delivered of a male child, to the delight of her parents, who rejoiced that their daughter should bear seed to a nobleman; but she soon fell sick and died, and the old people took charge of the babe. And when they also died, the care of the child fell to his mother's kinsmen, and he grew up to be a peasant.

Now Kiyomori, the enemy of Yoritomo, had been gathered to his fathers; and Yoritomo had avenged the death of his father by slaying Munémori, the son of Kiyomori; and there was peace throughout the land. And Yoritomo became the chief of all the noble houses in Japan, and first established the government of the country. When Yoritomo had thus raised himself to power, if the son that his peasant wife had born to him had proclaimed himself the son of the mighty prince, he would have been made lord over a province; but he took no thought of this, and remained a tiller of the earth, forfeiting a glorious inheritance; and his descendants after him lived as peasants in the same village, increasing in prosperity and in good repute among their neighbours.

But the princely line of Yoritomo came to an end in three generations, and the house of Hôjô was all-powerful in the land.

Now it happened that the head of the house of Hôjô heard that a descendant of Yoritomo was living as a peasant in the land, so he summoned him and said—

"It is a hard thing to see the son of an illustrious house live and die a peasant. I will promote you to the rank of Samurai."

Then the peasant answered, "My lord, if I become a Samurai, and the retainer of some noble, I shall not be so happy as when I was my own master. If I may not remain a husbandman, let me be a chief over men, however humble they may be."

But my lord Hôjô was angry at this, and, thinking to punish the peasant for his insolence, said—

"Since you wish to become a chief over men, no matter how humble, there is no means of gratifying your strange wish but by



making you chief over the Etas of the whole country. So now see that you rule them well."

When he heard this, the peasant was afraid; but because he had said that he wished to become a chief over men, however humble, he could not choose but become chief of the Etas, he and his children after him for ever; and Danzayémon, who rules the Etas at the present time, and lives at Asakusa, is his lineal descendant.

## FAIRY TALES.