

The Waning of Wistaria



CHAPTER XXX

Whatever speculation the sudden friendly interposition of a Japanese into the American officer's dilemma caused among the sub-officials in charge of the Treaty House, it did not run a lengthy course.

When the officers came within sight of the entrance and saw the columns hostilely arranged, there was a movement of alarm. But quickly the dual force of Catzu and Aidzu spread out to permit a passage through itself.

"What explanation can you offer of this?" demanded Perry. The Lord Catzu lifted his eyebrows. "Explanation! I do not explain it. They were fanatical priests, madmen, who thought that the head of the church should take over the direction of the State.

Into the life and soul of Mori things he had put aside as unfitness his consentation to the cause. Nevertheless, he received him gladly, and made no objection to the proposal of the samurai that he should be permitted to go with Toro and Jiro to the Mori fortress.

The continued presence in the Shogun's city of one known throughout the length and breadth of the land as the Imperialist leader could not in the nature of events remain unknown to the authorities.

Without a word the Satsuma samurai drew his second sword from his belt. The hit he rested upon the ground. In an instant he fell upon his point.

Many of those present had never seen these powerful princes. So, crowding past the common soldiers, they pressed upon their headquarters, until stopped by the chosen guard of samurai surrounding the princely pavilions.

CHAPTER XXXI WHEN the company of foreigners had passed into the Treaty House, the few moments intervening before the beginning of the ceremonies within were employed by the samurai still on guard outside in scrutinizing the cards of those citizens whose rank permitted them to fill the vacant rear of the hall.

"Possibly," was Perry's brief assent. "We have two heads, one a font of wisdom, the other of action. The one is the spiritual head, the divina Emperor; the other the true ruler and Emperor, with whom you are in communication.

"The Emperor is now done," said Catzu. "Permit me to inquire when your excellency will return for an answer."

One Hasuda headed a party that sought out the Prince Mori. "Let every foreigner be burned this night," urged Hasuda. "Let us drive into the sea those dogs who already have delayed our action too long.

CHAPTER XXXIII IT was night when the runners of the Prince Mori's norimon, having traveled the highway to its gated termination, entered Kioto.

From across the bay, rolling and reverberating, striking the rocky angles of the highlands and driven back repelled, came the long roar of the foreigners' saluting guns.

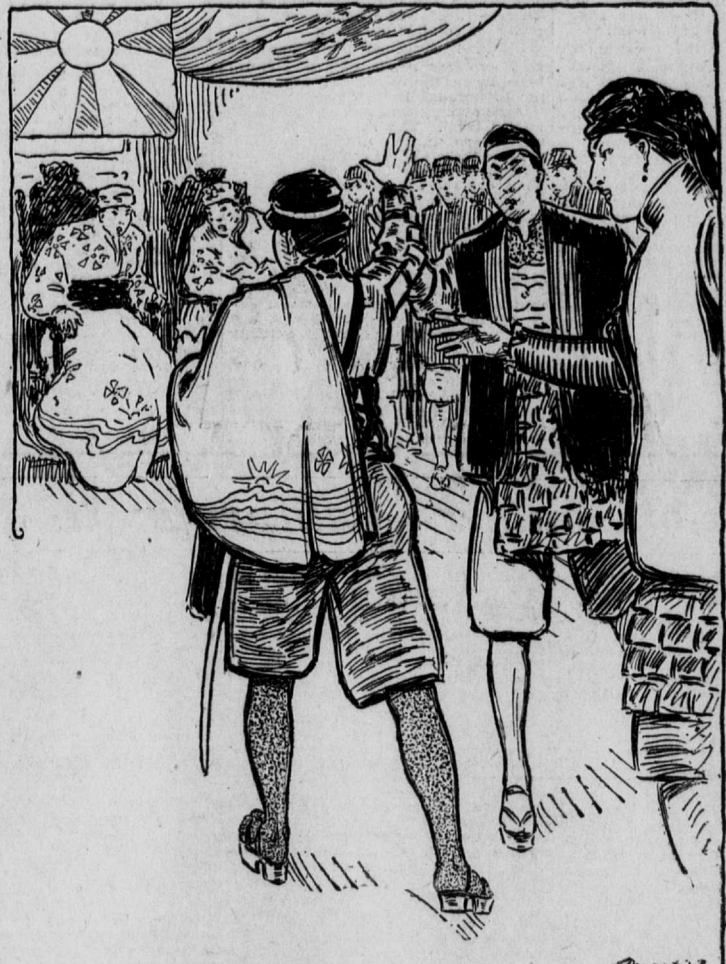
CHAPTER XXXII WITH the fecundity peculiar to the storm and stress period of a nation's history, the germ almost forcibly implanted into Japanese soil by Commodore Perry waxed strong, came to blossom, fell into seed, and ended by multiplying itself into international form.

"The policy advocated by Mori was the same outlined by him in his act of instruction to Jiro when he had bade the boy explain to the foreigners the true conditions of government.

Hasuda, in the shadow of the gate and the farther shadow of the cedars which bent their branches over the walls, raised his sword.

At what seemed this manifestation of cowardice the ronins, outlawed samurai as they were, laughed scornfully. They would have died unflinchingly. It was not of samurai blood.

"By the sword, of course." "By secret means. In time the Emperor Komei came to believe that the shogunate held his life in its hands, as it has. He came to distrust all men. He trusts neither Aidzu, his enemy, nor me, his friend."



THOU LIEST! HE SHOUTED.

To Be Continued Next Sunday