

The Watch Scene in Madame Butterfly



L ABRAMS



AT THE end of the second act of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*, comes the Watch Scene, the most impressive part of the opera.

Madame Butterfly, her child, and her servant are standing at the lattice waiting—watching for the man who is never to return,—at least not until all need for his coming has passed,—not until his heart-broken wife has killed herself.

It is the story of the American man, who, traveling in Japan, falls in love with a Japanese girl, marries her and leaves her, with a promise to return,—the promise never kept.

In this case, a young officer has married Butterfly, leaving in a brief month or two, with promise to return when the cherries bloomed again. But the soft, pink blossoms were now dotting the trees of the picturesque little country for a second time since the officer had left, and still he did not come.

The little Japanese woman still strews her tiny *shoji* each day with the cherry blooms, wishing to gladden his return. And it is here that we find her keeping the Night Watch. A ship has come to Nagasaki, and she believes that it will surely bring him to her, for are not the cherries blooming again?

And so standing at the lattice, she looks off toward the twinkling lights of

