The Call

By ANNA ALWARD EAMES

Koto had been on the wharf since dawn. When the tug, plethoric and important for the honor of bringing off his prince, had scuttled hoarsely across the channel and under the bows of the Manchuria, mysterious, enchanting, her red mouthed funnels slanting to the glistening blue, he had followed her with straining eyes. When she bustled back with all her might, a flounce of foam at her prow and her decks gleaming war bulletins, an emotion grew big within him and there was a mist in his glance that swept the port of Honolulu, stretching along the line of curling swells and up the sides of the gay green mountain.

It had all happened in what seemed a second of time. He had been tossing banzais from his perch on a tier of sacked sugar as the tug came alongside, and his prince was transferred to the governor's shining carriage, the music, the flag bearing school children, the ship and his prince tingling through his blood in happy, chilly ripples. Then a fireworks bomb had exploded under the governor's horses.

The emperor's call for troops on the waving war bulletins, the heartrending vision of Japan which the occasion evoked—Japan, rainbow hued, flower scented, wan in the gloom of desperate conflict, the careworn figure of his prince, fresh from the thick of the fight for this embassy, upright and undaunted in the lurching victoria—fused in his consciousness with the smoke of the exploding bomb.

Through his exaltation there pierced a lightning flash of impelling purpose, and he shot over the gay kimonos, the lean Americans, the dusky natives, to the center of the widening circle and dropped at the horses' heads.

The national hymn of Japan choked in a jangle of discords as the runaway horses shook the dark, sinewy body in the affrighted faces of the crowd, then stood, spent with the pain of the sawing weight on their bits.

Five minutes before he had been only one of hundreds on the wharf waving his hat and shouting "Banzai!" Now these beating huzzas which shook the wharf and echoed among the masts were for him. Women were weeping over him; men were grasping his hand. He was bowing before the governor's carriage and his prince was saying:

"My brave retainer, you are needed at the front. You shall go with the rank of captain."

Koto could only bow lower than ever, but he hung gray before them as he pictured his helpless, aged parents, uncared for and alone.

For an ordinary draft he could have arranged a substitute, but for this, no. Here was at once promotion, honor, reward. No one must know—no one could know—how unwelcome it was, and his harassed soul stood wet on his forehead as he bowed, smiling and serene. Amid his torture he felt dimly that these high honors were not for him, but for that other that came to him so impellingly up there in his joy and held him, yet was not him.

"He is not on the list of the drafted, your highness," he heard a voice.

"Let him take command at once," ordered the prince. "You will go as captain," he assured Koto once more.

The noble prince of Japan had been saved from a tragic fate, his rescuer publicly rewarded. The wharf rang again with cheers, the national hymn of Japan pealed in weird, wild strains from the throats of the stumpy, stolid lines of Japanese school children, the governor's carriage proceeded on its way, bells rang, ocean liners trumpeted, and Koto, awed by the majestic impulse that had seized him and set him on his way, struggling with the ideals which the training of his whole life had emphasized, his duty to his parents and his duty to his country, marched at the head of the Japanese troops.

"KOTO, THEY SAY YOU WILL GO TO THE WAR."

He swung on to a car late that afternoon, excited and eager. Not since leaving Japan had he come so close to the heart of his country. Was it the American harbor, gay with his country's flag, that shook his soul? Was it his prince's ship from Tokyo, gallant and graceful in the blue water outside the reef, or was it the "Flag of the Rising Sun," which, all day, over the city had hung like a great bird with beating wings, eloquent of Japan in trouble? This he knew: His country was bleeding and in desperate struggle. He must go.

But how?

He was a waiter at the big hotel.

"Koto," said a soft voice as he thoughtfully marshaled his glasses late that evening—"Koto, they say you will go to the war."

Koto turned and beheld the Japanese parlor maid who had worked in the same hotel with him for four years, and he saw deliverance. It was no time to think of love, he knew, as he noted the droop of the demure little figure, the tremulous smile. She would smile though her heart were breaking. It was the way of the women of his country, and she would die for him if need be, he determined, as he lingered on the prettily arranged grace of her next remark, which fell in a voice as soft as her apple cheek.

"Koto, do you go to fight for Japan?"

"Yes," he answered, with difficulty, "I go to fight for Nippon. The aged parents"—His face grew sharp.

"Yes, Koto," she comforted. He bent over his task, unable to meet her eyes.

"If I, so unworthy, could be a daughter to the honorable parents," she bowed formally, a fierce pain in her breast.

Beneath his well ordered Japanese exterior Koto's heart gave a great leap of relief and thanksgiving, but he only said gravely, bowing low before the woman's soft pallor: "I will marry you, most honorable of women. Then you will feel free to watch over the aged parents, and if I die support them."

The woman laid a pretty brown hand over her heart, as if to quiet its tumult, then said, smiling: "You shall go to fight for Nippon. The aged parents shall be the first objects of my unworthy care."

He bent over her hands in sincere delight. Love was not for him, he knew, and he knew that she knew. Henceforth he belonged not to himself nor her nor to his parents, but to Japan. It was not for the fine man to show painful emotion, so he said simply:

"Come let us go to them."

"The prince has drafted me, O my father and my mother!" He bowed low.

"The emperor calls for troops," he faltered miserably, aghast at their pallor. Then, snatching at his one ray of comfort, he gently drew the woman forward. "Here is your daughter. She will love you and care for you."

The aged pair raised their faces, white, unearthly, celestial. Bowing low, the mother quavered: "My son, it is the greatest of all glories to die for Japan, but the soldier, the samurai, must have no divided heart. Rejoice with us and with our daughter that we may arm the soldier with the gift of our unworthy lives, lest, thinking of us, he forgot his duty to Nippon. My son, here is your sword; it was your grandfather's."

Koto sickened as he beheld his destiny. He besought the uplifted face of the woman where she knelt, graceful and white cheeked, near the aged pair. The faces of the three were resolute, rapt, radiant.

A gentle rush of wind filled the room with a flood of fragrance. Beyond the swaying curtain he noted, with the sensitive eye of anguish, a moonlit canoe leap to the crest of the booming swell, hang above the green abyss for a breath and in the next dash with the momentum of the universe through spray and sea drift high on the tawny sands.

"Receive it," the delicate voice flickered as the red blood leaped to her dexterous stroke. Then, her fading glance embracing the sacrifice, she whispered, "Consecrated."

By the sword there knelt until dawn a captain of the emperor's troops, drinking deep of the vision that had found him a light hearted youth and in a few short hours had furrowed his soul with the throes of the patriot and crystallized his life to its task.

Balzac and Music.

The De Goncourts tell us, on the authority of Theophile Gautier, that "Balzac abhorred music." Theo did, we know. To him is generally attributed the saying that music was the most expensive noise of which he had cognizance. Balzac did not himself thoroughly understand it, but he was deeply interested in it. He treated it almost sympathetically. He got, so it is said, a learned German to help him to deal with it elaborately, and not a little pleased, it may be remembered, was he with the result.

Had any writer of fiction before Balzac ever analyzed any musical composition with half the thoroughness with which in one of his shorter stories Balzac analyzed "Robert le Diable" and all the method of Meyerbeer? And Meyerbeer, it is worth noting, was in the Paris of Balzac's day, almost the Wagner of that place and time. He was an innovator scarcely less discussed.—London Academy.

Inventors of Old.

Mere invention was regarded as somewhat vulgar in ancient times. Archimedes made little of his mechanical inventions. They were only the amusements of geometry, he said, and only at the behest of his sovereign did he consent to give practical expression to the many wonderful schemes with which his brain teemed. And when Eudoxus and Archytas took seriously to mechanics they were denounced by Plato as corrupting and debasing the excellence of geometry, by making her descend from intellectual to corporeal things. The inventor was long thereafter despised by the philosophers, and mechanics regarded simply as a branch of military art.

Right In It.

"Say, Richard, de fashions sez dis year's coats is to be worn long, but ain't you kind er crowdin' on de style?"—New York World.

Enough For Him.

"What! Wed my daughter, sir?" he cried.
"Why, she's my only child!"
The youngster would not be denied,
However—he just smiled!
"Oh, that's all right," he said, undaunted
"You see, sir, one was all I wanted!"
—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

Marketing Poultry.

Dressed poultry should not be packed for transportation until entirely cold. It should then be laid in clean straw, breast down, keeping wings and legs close to the body. See that there is no discoloration of the skin.