THE LOVE OF A GEISHA

By Hugo Erichsen.

CHERRY blossom time in Japan! To one who has never been there, these are empty words. To John Foster Morden, a free born American, visiting Nippon for the first time, on the other hand, they were pregnant with meaning. Translated into the vernacular of the well-intentioned but somewhat impulsive young man they would have stood for a bower of beauty, a creation of nature as nearly approaching a mundane paradise, as it is possible for earthly things to do. Filled to the full with a realisation of the floral splendor of the realm of the mikado, Morden resolved to take a trip from Tokio to Kyoto to view the celebrated Gion night cherry in the latter city and to join the admiring throng of natives that gathers around the famous tree nightly during its flowering period. The evening after his arrival found him early at the post of observation—a comfortable seat in a jinrickisha that was yet uncomfortable as he had to bend his head far backward in order to get a good view of the graceful blossoms. Vari-colored lanterns had been elevated on the poles among the branches and shed a feeble light on an animated scene. The rich and the poor—all were here assembled in worship of the beautiful. Though they talked in a tongue that was unintelligible to him, he felt that he was sharing their sensations and thinking their thoughts. And when the full moon broke through the straggling clouds and flooded the whole panorama with her silver light, even the chattering multitude was impressed. Voices and laughter were hushed and for the moment Flora, queen of spring, reigned supreme.

When Morden returned to the Gion cherry afoot the following afternoon, he was not yet free from the spell of the previous evening. He was in the mood some psychologists have termed receptive and not disposed to quarrel with the Creator for having made the land of chrysanthemums.

Traversing the grounds of a little park in the vicinity on his way to the beautiful tree, he was suddenly rooted to the spot by a sight upon which he gazed with unfeigned delight. In a jinrickisha, drawn by one of the untiring human horses of Japan, sat a geisha engaged in a conversation with another public dancer, as Morden readily discerned from the latter's butterfly garments. With her jet black hair, fair, regular features that were barely tinged with a touch of olive, and pearly teeth, she appeared to him the incarnation of all that is beautiful in Japanese womanhood. The girls, oblivious of his presence, were engaged in an animated conversation, punctuated with laughter. He watched every gesture of the pretty occupant of the little cart and mentally observed that it was the poetry of motion. So engrossed was he in the contemplation of the pretty scene before him, that he did not notice the signs of restlessness on the part of the maidens, that indicated plainly the interview was drawing to a close. When he did, he felt alarmed. It was a mere matter of curiosity, he said to himself, that he wanted to see where the pretty girl lived. A look at the robust jinrickisha man, who was stolidly awaiting the word of command that would start him on the run of a mile or two, convinced Morden that he would have to select a man of equal vigor did he not want to lose sight of his little beauty. Luckily, in Japan, wherever the foreigner is, there is the jinrikisha man also. No sooner had the jin-son beckoned to one of these fellows in the distance, when they came running from all directions, eagerly proffering their services. In fact their ardor in quest of a fare came near precipitating a fight, which was only averted when the "foreign gentleman" scattered small coin widely among them in search of the money. This maneuver excited the hilarity of the ladies, and the only one in the conveyance was still laughing when she gave her 'ricksha man the signal to start. It was as though a statue had come to life. The stolidity of the fellow vanished in a trice. He had observed the hiring of his rival and guessed at the gentleman's purpose. At a sign from Morden his jinrickisha man was ready to take up the pursuit of his fair countrywoman. Both of these sturdy fellows took a deep breath and then the race began. The speed these iron-sinewed men developed was marvelous. In and out of narrow lanes, up and down garden paths, now dodging the obstruction, now avoiding that, nearly coming into collision with other 'rickshas, wending their way in and out of the surging population, past playing children, as if guided by intuition—thus this race of the panting rivals of Kyoto was run. At first the geisha, not understanding the object of this celerity, was alarmed. When a backward glance brought comprehension, she was amused and finally interested. Her eyes glistened and she cheered on her human steed to greater exertion. But the pursuer was spurred on by a promise of extra reward, in case he should overtake his rival. Gradually he gained on the latter until it was clear that persistence had won again, as it has so many times the world over. Slowly the two jinrickishas, one following the other, approached the dwelling of the geisha, reaching which the graceful woman sprang lightly to the ground, paid the man quickly and vanished into the house. Morden, unconscious of the fact that he was being observed by dozens of mischievous eyes from behind drawn jalousies, had the disappointed look of a man who is suddenly transported from the delights of a dream to grim reality. But he knew enough of the inflexible etiquette of Japan to be aware that an intrusion into the dancer's and singer's abode was out of the question. He might resort to the nearest teahouse and send for her to entertain him, but to do that he would have to know her name. So he engaged the man who had served her so well and, returning to the hotel, secured from him, with the aid of an interpreter, her exact address. And all this time he was telling himself that it was merely a matter of curiosity.

But nevertheless, he could not escape the reflection that the episode of the afternoon was hardly commendable, considering the fact that he was engaged to an American girl, named Mary James, who was only awaiting his return from this oriental tour to marry him. "But," he concluded, "America is far away and she will never know the difference. So what's the odds?"

II.

When they met again, after that, it was Morden's turn to become embarrassed. The geisha's training as a professional entertainer, stood her in good stead. It was true she blushed deeply on entering the room and saw the stranger who had followed her the previous day, but soon regained her composure. Bowing smilingly she let herself down onto the matting and passed her slender fingers caressingly over the strings of the samisen that had been placed in readiness for her. The foreigner had sent for her, as had so many from over the seas before him. She would play and sing for him and then would go away and she would see him no more and he would forget her. It was the fate of the geishas.

Presently in a melodious voice she began to chant a strange song, half melody, half recitation. Morden had not the slightest idea what it was about. What interested him most was the way she sang it, swaying her graceful body in time with the music. He had heard samisen players before, but none who was such a complete master of the Japanese guitar as this beautiful girl. She fairly made the instrument speak. Lost in admiration of her, he forgot time and place until she reminded him by preparations for departure that her entertainment had come to an end. Then he reluctantly dismissed her.

He sent for her the next day and the next after that. Weeks passed and still he was a daily visitor to the teahouse. He did not need to send for her now. She was there at the appointed time and it was generally understood that she was to play and dance for him only and no one else. He paid the rapacious teahouse proprietors all they asked and blessed his stars that his father was rich and provided him with ample means. Passing a few hours every day in the company of his fair entertainer, they soon became well acquainted. Gradually she lost her shyness and when he discovered that she, like many of the geisha, was a bit of a linguist and talked English brokenly, their conversation was no longer restricted to pantomime and such Japanese phrases as he had managed to acquire. He was now no longer laboring under a delusion and frankly confessed to himself that love directed his steps to the teahouse and to Kohana—love that brooked no barriers, love that would break down the restraints of conventionality, love that was deep enough and unselfish enough to disregard race prejudices and unite the occident with the orient.

To him Kohana was the most beautiful woman that ever lived, every step she took the perfection of grace, her form and features the replica of a petite

"I WANT YOU TO BE MY WIFE AND BE WITH ME ALWAYS."

Venus, her smile divine. At his request she went out boating with him occasionally, which was no violation of the etiquette of her native country, as long as he returned her to the teahouse. She would never have consented to his taking her home.

And once, unbeknown to her, he followed her and some of her girl friends into the woods and, surreptitiously watched them as they romped. Deeply engrossed in some of the national games they failed to pay any attention to their surroundings but leaped and skipped and laughed to their hearts' content. He was not astonished to find that she was the leader of this pastime—it seemed the most natural thing in the world that she should be. The position belonged, by right, to the most graceful. How light of limb she was, now darting here now there, evading capture or directing the quick movements of the merry girls and emitting amusing little feminine shrieks of delight. Once the winding chain of human beauty closely approached Morden's hiding place, but he remained undiscovered and later made his way out of the woods unseen.

It was on one of the boating expeditions that he told Kohana of his intentions and asked her to become his wife. After dismissing the native oarsman, he had directed the light craft far out of sight of the crowd on shore, until the opposite bank was reached and the boat disappeared under the overhanging boughs of a large cut-leaved tree. Suddenly the American and his companion found themselves in a vernal bower that seemed to enclose them on all sides. Even the water appeared to be a network of branches and leaves. Laying the oars in the little craft and running ashore, he helped her to disembark.

Sitting down by her side on the grass, he took her little hand and held it lovingly. Playfully she tried to withdraw it from his grasp. "O," she said, with a comical grimace, "I frighten account you sit so close an' hol' my han'. You hurt poor Kohana an' mak' her sawry an' then she cry."

"I would not hurt you for the world, little one," he cried impetuously. And then, after a moment: "Do you like me, Kohana?"

"Lig you?" She nodded smilingly.

"Do you like me very much," he persisted, trying to pass an arm around her waist.

She nodded again.

"Yes," she said, "Kohana, she lig you ver' much. Firs' you come, she no lig you. But now you lig see me, an' I lig see you."

This was hardly what he expected. There was too much Japanese cryptism in it to suit him. So he renewed the attack on the citadel of her heart.

"Don't you know, sweetheart, that I love you better than all else in the world, even myself?" he said.

The girl laughed merrily, but instantly smothered her hilarity when she saw his frown.

"O, you mak' geisha talk," she observed, attempting to assume a sage expression. "Last year, Ijinson, from that United States America, he tell poor Koyoshi he loave her. She loave him, too, so she got marry. But now he lig her no more. Me give her beag moaneys an' go 'way on beeg ship. An' she so sawry, she cry all time and get seek an' die. Tha' 's mos' tarrible."

"But, my darling," he said earnestly, "you don't understand. I want you to be my wife and be with me always. I shall wed you at the American consulate and so you will be married according to the law of your country and mine. Besides I have decided to stay in Japan and make it my home. Now, what do you say?"

He held his arms toward her and she no longer resisted him when he drew her into his embrace and kissed her again and again.

Smoothing the rebellious black hair on her forehead, he said: "You haven't told me yet you love me, Kohana."

"Yeas, I loave you ver' moach," she murmured, blushing furiously and then hiding her face on his shoulder.

Finally she disengaged herself from his embrace.

"Kohana mos' bes' happy female woman in Japan," she declared. "mebbe in the whole worl'. Firs' poor Kohana thing you speaking nonsense with her. Then she know you not mak' mis-take. She onderstan'. You going be her hosban'. How that is nize. It soun gran'. An' then you stay marry with me and we happy forever, no madder whichever."

He comprehended her, with the intuition of a lover.

"Yes, my dear," he assented joyfully, "no matter what may happen."

He folded her into his arms again.

"Do you know you are the most beautiful woman in Japan, Kohana?" he asked, looking down on her upturned face.

"You thing so?" she said demurely, but looked pleased.

"An' you got bes' heart in the inside you," she added, after a brief interval, with an air of conviction that caused Morden to laugh, whereupon she pouted.

But her displeasure vanished as suddenly as it came and she was once more the happy, smiling Kohana he had learned to love.

Before returning to the landing place they decorated their boat with small branches of the tree under which they had pledged their troth, until it presented quite a festal appearance. He rowed slowly across the lake, facing her where she sat in the stern end of the boat. And as he plied the oars, he sang one of the songs he remembered from college, in a rich baritone, keeping time with his strokes.

"I so so'prise you sing," she said, when he had finished. And then, to his great delight, she clapped her little hands, as she had seen the foreigners do.

As they walked leisurely away from the lake shore more than one promenading couple turned to look after them. Being of medium height and well built, he was not too tall for her petite graceful figure. Moreover, his dark eyes and nut brown hair and moustache and regular features did not emphasize the contrast usually observed between the facial appearance of persons of different races. Morden was dressed in a light inconspicuous business suit, but the geisha had donned her holiday attire and was resplendent with color. The radiance of their countenances betrayed their secret and gave rise to whispered remarks. All the world loves a lover, and Japan is no exception to the rule.

That evening, for the first time, she allowed him to take her home and parted from him at the threshold of her dwelling with a melodious "good night." On attempting to give her a farewell kiss, however, he found that there was still one barrier between them—the inflexibility of Japanese decorum.

On returning to his hotel he felt vaguely that it was his duty to break the news to the girl waiting for him across the seas; to tell her of his changed life, his discovery that what he had felt for her was naught but friendship—that he had never known what love was until he met Kohana. But he shrank from this disagreeable duty, and decided to put off writing to her, until it became absolutely necessary. What did it matter, anyway, with her thousands of miles away, whether she received what would be sad tidings to her a month sooner or later. With all the conceit of the average son of Adam he imagined that his faithlessness would all but crush her and he deemed it a mercy to put off anything that would bring naught but sorrow to her.

III.

Had he but known it, she was informed of his defection even then. A letter postmarked Kyoto, from a missionary friend with whom she had attended Wellesley college, that had reached her but a day or two before, conscientiously executed the duty Morden had shirked.

"Mr. Morden," her friend wrote, "is infatuated with a Japanese singer and dancer of unusual beauty. A report has gained currency that he proposes to marry this geisha and settle in Japan. I hope it is unfounded. I am going to call on this girl and see what I can do with her. It appears to be a useless task, however, as I am told the geisha is as deeply in love with him, as he is with her. I hope he will come to his senses before it is too late."

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And true to her word, Miss Alice Brown called upon Kohana. She had no difficulty in being admitted. The geisha was just engaged in dressing herself for her daily visit to the teahouse. In fact, attended by her maid, she was just putting the final touches to a rather elaborate toilet, from the cross-sticks and butterfly ornaments in her coiffure to the delicate silk embroidery on her clogs. Though the missionary was inclined to be critical, she had to admit it was no wonder this woman had turned the head of her countryman. Kohana's kindliness of manner and beauty softened Miss Brown's heart and made her disinclined to disclose the real purpose of her visit. If it had not been for what she considered her duty, she would have turned back and fled precipitately. But duty was her strong point. Being a perfect Japanese linguist and fully conversant with the customary ceremonial of the land of the mikado, she began by exchanging compliments with Kohana, eulogizing her ancestors and finally coming down to the present day, herself and then—and then to her inotoko, the Japanese term of endearment for men, corresponding to our "lover."

At the commencement of the conversation the women had seated themselves on the floor matting, whence the geisha now regarded her adversary with flashing eyes. At length she understood why the Christian had come to see her. What puzzled her still, however, was to divine the motive that led the missionary to interfere.

But the latter did not leave her long in doubt concerning this point. Briefly she told her of the girl to whom Morden had been betrothed in far-off America, and frankly predicted that he would break his faith with the Japanese girl as he had broken it with her countrywoman, and more to the same effect. She reminded Kohana, too, of the unhappiness that had followed the last Japanese-American union at Kyoto.

The girl's faith in her lover was not to be so lightly shaken, however, much less destroyed. She told Miss Brown she was convinced of the integrity of her iro-otoko, and politely intimated that she would not be disconsolate at her visitor's departure.

The missionary became aware of the necessity of a change of tactics, if she would accomplish her purpose, and presently began to make comparisons between the respective stations in life of the geisha and her lover. Morden, she told the poor girl, now listening intently to every word, was rich and had every prospect of becoming a power in the mercantile world, ultimately taking the place of his father. If Kohana married him, his father might disown him and thus cut him off from a brilliant future and a life free of care. If she loved him it was plainly her duty not to step between father and son and ruin the latter forever. If she loved him! Of course, if she did not love him, it did not matter.

Consciously Miss Brown had touched the one cord to which the heart of every Japanese, male or female, readily responds—filial obedience. When the missionary took her leave, it was all arranged that Kohana was to depart on the following day for a prolonged visit to the interior. In attempting to bow her visitor out, the pallid girl reeled and would have fallen if it had not been for the timely support of the maid.

* * *

That afternoon Morden waited in vain for his geisha at the tea-house, nor did she put in an appearance the following day. Thinking she might be slightly ill, he waited until the third day before he dispatched a messenger to her. The man came back with the startling information that the geisha had disappeared and that nobody seemed to know what had become of her. The American's anguish was heartrending. Without thought of food or sleep he searched for her ceaselessly for over a week, offering rewards freely for any clue to her whereabouts, being buoyed up from time to time with false reports that ended invariably in the bitterness of disappointment. At last, haggard with sleepless nights, he resigned himself to his fate.

Returning to Tokio he put up at the same hotel he had frequented before, the Anglo-American. When he had registered, the clerk handed him a cable gram, explaining that it had arrived but a few hours before. The dispatch read: "Am relieved to learn you propose to marry a Japanese. Know now never loved you. Just married Horace P. Wilder. Congratulations in order. —Mary James."

"ELIZA," A SHORT STORY OF "THE TIME, THE PLACE AND THE GIRL"

By Margaret Johnston Merrill.

"YOU may take the rugs to the back porch, Eliza, and clean them. Then come and I will show you your work."

Mrs. Hunt turned to prepare herself for her day's outing, and the servant took up the rugs.

There was nothing remarkable in Eliza. She had the dusky complexion and kinky hair and her features were somewhat more regular, and her expression brighter than that of many.

Once upon the porch, her whole face lighted, for Eliza had the love of beauty, so natural to the African.

"I reckon dere's a right smarf of mountains heah, anyhow," she gasped, as the full view of Pisgah, in its soft glory, caught her eye. "Maybe No'th Cawlina is as good as Tennessee if it ain't go in Smoke."

Eliza had arrived in North Carolina the day before, and, leaving her children with a relative, had secured work in a family of northerners residing in that state.

"Ef I could only hev de child'en, it would be finr, but maybe I kin git to keep dem."

Eliza's love of beauty included personal adornment and none knew better than she how to make the most of her possessions. Her turban might be of the flimsiest, but it was always becomingly arranged. Just now she tossed her head coquettishly, jingling her eardrops as a colored man of unusual dignity of manner approached. The old man politely touched his cap.

"Please, cook, will you tell Mrs. Hunt dat Silas Gates is heah?"

With a condescending nod and a dainty manipulating of her skirt, Eliza went to deliver the message. Mrs. Hunt gave Silas his instructions, and then laid out the day's work for Eliza before going away. Eliza was especially anxious to make a good impression in her new situation, and worked unremittingly until a great part of her day's work was done.

"I reckon I bettah go see if dat man's adoin' all right," she mused.

"I jes' want some chips fur de kitchen stove, Mistah Gates," she said, advancing toward him, proud of having correctly remembered his name.

"If cou'se, cook. Let me help you get dem," was the kindly answer.

"Scuse me, Mistah Gates, I'se a widow. Mrs. Eliza Jackson's my name." This was said with figure drawn up to full height and a perceptible flutter of earrings, which were not lost upon the old man.

"I'se happy to make yo' 'quaintance, Mis' Jackson. I'se Deacon Silas Gates."

"Well, now! I done heard my cousin, Sarah Graves, say last night, says she, Deacon Gates belongs to our church, says she, and he's a pow'ful man. I'se right glad to meet you so soon."

Eliza was discreet enough to conceal any further reason for her joy at meeting him, but she resolved to play her cards skillfully.

"Sistah Graves is right," returned the old man, thoughtfully, "I'se a scholah, shuah enough."

"Well, I'se no scholah, but I 'sent in company of de fust families, allus. I do wish I was a scholah."

Eliza was amazed that he could mention such a trifle as scholarship and apparently forget the possession of the vine-covered cottage she had seen from her cousin's cabin the evening before. Her cousin had assured her that no other colored man in the town owned as fine a cottage, not to mention the trumpet vine. Morning glories were well enough, but they were not to be compared with trumpet vines. Any commonplace darky might own a few flowers, but to possess a cottage covered luxuriantly as was that of Deacon Gates was an unmistakable mark of rank.

"Yes, Mis' Jackson," continued the old man, patronizingly, "It's great to know as much as I do. Mis' Hunt, she say to me dis mawnin', 'I want you to cut about one fo'th of dis woods into pieces fur de little stove.' Now, I goes to work and I totes each stick and counts it. Dere's 29 sticks—I kin count to 29 and moah. It takes a scholah, but I kin do it."

"How you gwine to find out de fou'th" queried his listener.

"You see a fou'th means a quawtah, each time," said the deacon, argumentatively.

"But how you gwine git de quawtah?" she persisted.

A pause. The old man scratched his head thoughtfully.

"I'se sorry you can't see dat de mattah is too deep fur anyone what ain't used to sich meditation."

He quietly resumed his work to cover any sense of defeat, and Eliza wisely felt that in a game like hers silence was the better course, so she hurried with the chips to the kitchen.

Her mind was made up. She would make one supreme effort. A slight overcasting of the sky and a distant rumbling of thunder gave her ample excuse for again seeking Mr. Gates.

"I'se all flustrated, Deacon Gates. I'se powerful afeard of thundah so I jes' run to speak to you. I don't reckon a scholah is afeard of thundah. I'se tol'able weak. I low, but Lawd, what if de thundah would strike me!"

All the old man's chivalry was aroused. To be appealed to by a fine looking woman in the very prime of life touched his heart and flattered his pride, while it surely got the better of his prudence.

"Mis' ackson, I ain't afeard of thundah, nohow. De Lawd sends it and He kin take care of it. I feel so bad to see you so flustrated dat I don't mind takin' care of you fur de rest of my life, maybe."

"Bless de Lawd!" ejaculated Eliza, with a bewitching air of reverence. "And now," she added, as a softer look came into her eyes, "I kin hev' my child'en."

The deacon started. This was another matter.

"I didn't know you hed child'en, sistah Eliza. How many you got?"

"Two. One is 16 and one is 14. Dey both worked in Tennessee, and when I'se 'quainted heah dey'll git places. Dey's girls, as anyone is glad to git to work when dey wants good help."

"I 'clar, I'se got to meditate on it," said the deacon anxiously.

"It's kind of oneasy business, but I allus goes to Marse Hill fur advice. If he say it's right, I'll know it's right. He don't make no mistakes. I'll step out and see him and let you know."

The time seemed an age to Eliza while waiting for the deacon's return. As she busied herself at her work, she prayed softly, "Lawd, deah Lawd, I do want a home fur my child'en."

Prayer never interfered with the careful preparation of her toilet, so she was even more tastefully arrayed when Deacon Gates stood again at the kitchen door.

"Marse Hill say you come to his house and bring de child'en at 7 dis evenin'. If you kin git away. I'll be dere myself. Sistah kin tell you where Marse Hill lives. I live jes' back of him, but I'll be at his place."

He was gone in a moment to finish his work, and Eliza strained every nerve to have the house in perfect order before Mrs. Hunt's return.

"Please, ma'am," said she, as Mrs. Hunt entered the kitchen a little later, "my little boy is pow'ful bad and I'se 'feared it's bold hives. Kin I go jes' dis once at 7 to take him to de doctah? I shan't ask it no moah, if you'll only let me go tonight. He's so sick, I'se freted 'bout him all day."

After various promises not to ask further favors, she obtained the lady's permission, and was on her way to her cousin's before 7. She gave Sarah Graves a glowing account of the day and proceeded to attire herself in her best, while Sarah helped in the dressing of the younger ones.

"You needn't lay out to dress much to please Marse Hill. He ain't that kind, nohow," said Sarah, warningly.

"What fur you done talk like dat? I'se maybe gwine to be married dis evenin'. I ain't gwine to lose no time foolin' if I kin manage it."

"Don't you lose time now afixin' up. If Marse Hill say he see you at 7, you bettah not stop to dress up too slick," was the answer.

"Ain't Marse Hill quality? If he is I'd be ashamed to go to him without lookin' tol'able."

"Yes, Marse Hill is suah enough quality. De Hills was one of the best No'th Cawlina families, and he is as good as any of his folks that went befoah him! But you jes' hurry up."

Sarah accompanied Eliza until they came within sight of Mr. Hill's residence, when she prudently withdrew, after cautioning the latter to act "like she was in meetin'."

Eliza and her children entered by the sea gate, and the beauty of the grounds, the sweet scent of flowers and the perfect peace impressed yen hr giddy mind.

"Marse Hill is quality, suah enough," she mused. As she drew near the house with a studied jauntiness of movement, she saw a gentleman sitting on one of the piazzas, while Deacon Gates stood near him on the lawn. The instinct of coquetry was stronger upon the woman than ever. It had won battles for her in the past, and now she was fighting one of the hardest. With a dozen mincing movements, she approached, still keeping her eyes upon the ground as if unconscious of the presence of anyone but herself.

Suddenly, she raised her eyes prepared to be surprised.

And surprised she certainly was, in a moment all her arts fell from her and she stood thoroughly ashamed in the presence of Mr. Hill. He was not a severe looking man, yet she stood apparently already condemned in his presence. In all her poor, frivolous life she had never met a man like him before, and her little affectation fell from her, unable to exist in the sight of a great sincerity. Not that she could reason it all out; she was only conscious that before this man's steady gaze she must put aside falsity. For the first time in her life she sincerely wished to be better than she had ever been. A dim thought that it would have been better for her had she only known such men as Marse Hill was struggling her brain, when she was recalled by the voice of Deacon Gates.

"Sistah Eliza, what, what's dis? You done tole me you hed two child'en. Heah's fouah. Does dey all belong to you?"

"La, yes, deacon. I done tole you I'se no scholah. I only wish I was. If I didn't tell you de right numbah, I'se sorry. How did I know?"

"Sistah Eliza, how you know to tell me one is sixteen and one is fourteen, if you can't count no better den to say fouah is two?" demanded the deacon.

"La, deacon, dey's scholahs demselves. Dey know how old dey is. I don't keep no 'count. De two little fellows is pow'ful cute. I done love dem a heap."

Mr. Hill had beckoned the two younger children to him and was engaging them in conversation, when Eliza turned toward them. The mother love shone through the petty frivolity of the woman and the man's heart was touched.

"Take the four children round and ask Julia to give them some fruit. Then you may show them the flowers, Silas. I will call you when I want you."

The deacon bowed gravely. He knew Marse Hill was about to settle the difficulty, and that whatever the decision might be, it would be right.

"Eliza," said Mr. Hill, when they were alone, "this is a serious business. Do you want to marry Silas?"

"Deed, yes, I do, Marse Hill. I want a home fur my child'en. It's pow'ful hard to be away from dem so much. Dey ain't had no pa sence de littlest one was a year old, and now he's six, and I'se hed to leave him most of de time, so I want to get dem a home."

Her eloquence was genuine. No trace was left of the actress who had entered the grounds a few minutes before.

"It's perfectly right to be serious for your children, but you must think of Silas, too. Are you sure you will love him?"

"Deed I will. I'd love any one what would gimme a home for my child'en. But he don't want de little fellows and dey's awful cunnin' and purty. Marse Hill, can't you help me git dem a home?"

This was a bolder stroke than she had heretofore attempted, but straightforwardness was the only course that counted with Mr. Hill, and she dared nothing else. Like Dr. McQueen, Mr. Hill seemed always to receive confidences while asking none.

"Eliza," he said, firmly, "there is no need for you to go in your old way if you want to do better. Silas was my father's own servant, and is a good man. If you feel that you want to marry him, and do what is right for him, I will see that you have the means to keep your children with you. I ask no promise until you are sure you are ready to give it. Silas lost his wife and only child years ago, and has been alone ever since. But, Eliza, you must understand for all time, that there is to be no trifling. The wife of Silas Gates must be above that."

The woman's tears were flowing fast now.

"Oh, Marse Hill, I'se been a sinnah," she began.

"I do not want to hear what any one has been. I am thinking of what the future may be," he said gently.

"Deed, Marse Hill, I swar I'll do de honest way fur Deacon Gates. I swar it, shuah. No one talked to me like you befoah. I'se bo'n again, shuah enough."

And the black face shone as if baptised in the right kind of love hitherto undreamed of.

That evening a select company of members of the deacon's church were very hastily summoned to witness his union in the holy bonds of matrimony with Eliza.

For the first time in years he joined the dancers, proudly leading his wife, who had refused her hand to all the younger men, and declared she would henceforth dance only with her husband.

Late that night, as two tiny black heads were laid upon the best bed they had ever seen, a voice very softly whispered to the other, "Wasn't it lucky that ma forgot how to count us when she told dat she hed two children? Now we'se jolly fine counted fur keeps."

Testamentary Revenge.

From the New York World.

Testators do not always depart this life in a forgiving frame of mind. Mrs. Catharine E. Heckler of Portland, Or., bequeathed to her husband $1, payable in monthly installments. Mr. Heckler is referred to as "the individual who married me in 1905."

Some years ago a certain Colonel Nash bequeathed an annuity of 50 pounds upon condition that the bell ringers of Bath abbey, England, should ring the deathknell from 8 a. m. to 8 p. m. on the anniversary of his wedding day. On the day of his happy release by death there was to be a merry peal for the same length of time. It was the Earl of Stafford who bequeathed to his wife "five and 40 brass halfpence, which will buy her a pullet for her supper, a greater sum than her father can ever make over to her, he being the worst of men and his wife the worst of women."

Another husband provided handsomely for his wife and sister with the condition that they should spend an hour a week in company at the grave. This, he stated, was because they had made the testator's life miserable and he wanted to be certain "that they will torment each other for a while" after his death.

Quest of Secret of Longer Life

(By a Staff Correspondent.)

PARIS, Oct. 3.—Dr. Doyen, the famous scientist, delivered himself of the remarkable phrase, "Preservation of his life through several centuries depends solely on man" at the tenth congress of medicine just ended at Geneva. Interviewed by the Matin, Dr. Doyen supplemented and extended this dictum, affirming, as the Matin puts it, that the prolongation of a man's life until he reaches the age attributed to Methusaleh is not definitely beyond the bounds of possibility.

"My experiments," he said, "are merely the corollary of the discoveries of Dr. Metchnikoff, the eminent bacteriologist og the Pasteur institute. He discovered 'phagocytose,' on which my own studies have been based. It is to him we owe the knowledge of the inner mechanism of life. Hitherto there had been only laboratory experiments. I believe I have arrived at the stage of practical application of the knowledge.

"In multiplying the white corpuscles in the blood (the phagocytes) we increase the coefficient of vital resistance and can estimate its value. It is a new departure in therapeutics which is apparently coming to the front.

"If we succeed in suppressing colds, chest diseases and bronchitis (and in this matter I have attained absolute successes)—and these complications are often the primal cause of rheumatism—we arrive, logically, at the suppression of latent causes of disease.

"Our life is limited by a great number of deteriorations in our organism; among these we should consider not only maladies which are apparent, but also latent infections. If we cause, by the use of 'phagogene' liquids, an increase of vital resistance, we prolong by that very fact the duration of life. The law for the preservation of the human organism is already formulated. What is curious is that it is a surgeon who supplies the basis of a new departure in therapeutics which will perhaps alter the whole science of medicine."

Dr. Metchnikoff, questioned on these statements, said: "I know nothing of the experiments which Dr. Doyen has made, and cannot, therefore, pass judgment on them. But at the root of the matter I think that certainly in the future we shall be able to prolong human life. To attain that end it will first be necessary to determine in all their ways the causes of old age. These causes are not yet perfectly defined, but the subject is being widely studied. Nothing is yet certain, and mankind must be content to hope."

Found the Proper Head.

A bright girl in a large school applied to her teacher for leave to be absent half a day, on a plea that her mother had received a telegram which stated that company was on the way.

"It's my father's half sister and her three boys," said the pupil, anxiously, "and mother doesn't see how she can do without me because those boys always act so dreadfully."

The teacher referred her to the printed list of reasons which justified absence, and asked if her case came under any of them.

"I think it might come under this head, Miss Rules," said the girl, pointing, as she spoke to the words "Domestic affliction."

THE WORLD'S MISER NATION AND IT'S HOARD OF GOLD--Continued From the First Page of This Section

whole country could be secured. The loss in population in the famine districts shown by a comparison of the censuses of 1891 and 1901 reached nearly 8,000,000. And most of them starved to death. Meanwhile the rajahs were collecting gems.

Hundreds of people died in the streets in Madras during the famine of 1833, they were strewn like seeds in the fields and like stones along the highways. In Gantur 200,000 of 500,000 inhabitants starved to death; in 1837 more than 1,000,000 perished in northern India, and in 1860, 200,000 died from want of food. The ghastly famine reaped a harvest in 1866 of one-third of the population of Orissa.

In 1869 there starved in northern India about 1,200,000 persons. In 1887 the mortality during the Madras famine reached 5,000,000, and in 1878 in northern India again there was another ghastly harvest, claiming 1,250,000 lives. During the great famine of 1897 the government fed 5,000,000 persons.

Do you grow sick at the thought of this dreadful picture—of the millions of hideous human skeletons languishing from want of food in the shadows of palaces of silver and pearl?

During a famine, Bishop Thoburn wrote: "The highways are covered with people, many of whom are walking skeletons, vainly seeking a region where food can be found. The spectacle is one of the most painful which can be found on earth. The cries of the orphans, if they could only enter into the ears of all good people in distant lands, would stir the Christian world to such a movement of sympathy and help as has never been witnessed on earth."

The Rev. R. A. Hume, Ahmednagar, wrote to a missionary in the United States: "I have seen within the last few days young mothers with new-born children who have not tasted food in several days. Hundreds of children, deserted by their parents, who could not bear to see them die in hunger, have come to our house, pathetically holding out their tiny hands. A heart of stone would melt at the sight of such suffering."

Why, you wonder, does India not help herself? Why do not the rich help the poor? This brings up the eternal curse of India—caste.

Over the door of the great Jain temple at Ahmadabad are the words:

"Low-caste servants and dogs are not allowed to enter here." A traveler has declared the temple and the words to be an epitome of India.

Castes were originally divided into four, the Brahmins, or priests, coming first, the warriors next, then the farmers and traders, and finally the Sudras, slaves or common laborers. Each caste has since become divided into many subdivisions and grades, each grade and each class despising that beneath it and viewing that of a higher rank with servile veneration, fear and awe.

The brotherhood of man, as taught by the founder of the Christian faith, is not recognized in India. A man born in a low class may degrade himself to a lower caste, but by no act of self-sacrifice, heroism or nobility can he elevate himself. The only gate to a higher caste, they believe, is by reincarnation.

A Sudra's son will be a Sudra, and all the children of his coming generations for years to come. A Sudra is classed with dogs, and a person of higher caste would rather eat with dogs than touch one of this loathed class, a member of which may not pray in the temples or even listen to the reading of the sacred books.

A Hindu may not touch one of the lower class, eat from the same bowl, nor sit with him, recognize him, assist him if he is starving or receive help if he himself is in distress.

Should a Brahmin see a Sudra dying of thirst, the inviolable rules of his religion would forbid him to hand him a drink of water lest he defile himself.

Upon India, at once the wealthiest and poorest of nations, hangs the millstone of caste, a damper to all ambition, a dead weight to all progress. The Sudra may not hope for advancement or reward. The Brahmin and the warrior and the prince remain superior by birth and law. But with both classes, each forbidden to assist the other, there is a desire for gain and the hoarding of gain.

The women of the hill tribes wear necklaces of glass strung on wool; beggar women may wear silver or gold rings, and, if not these, iron rings; the wife who lives in a hut of mud will buy a nose ring, pearl after pearl, and the ambition of her life will be to save for a central ruby. Then, when this is obtained, if a daughter has inherited the nose ring, the next prize will be a set of gold beads.

Then, as generations pass, the daughters and the daughters' daughters will save and skimp for toe-rings, earrings and bangles. There are said to be 10 times as many jewelers in India as in the United States. And, it is said, one third of the wealth of the average Hindu family consists of jewels.

It is plain then that, with this hoarding desire an instinctive and ineradicable tendency with the Hindu, it will be difficult for the government to induce the people to convert their stored wealth into gold and put it into circulation.

India, according to authorities yearly absorbs a little less than one eighth of the world's production of gold!

And yearly—thousands starve there.