

"FOR THIS ONE NIGHT."

BY

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~~CAST.~~

Nara Nomura.....Young Japanese Girl.
Ozawa-san.....Her Uncle.
Yoneo Makino.....Japanese.
Pamela Hubbard.....American Tourist.
Judge and Mrs. Hubbard.....Her Parents.
K. Nagari.....Uncle's Choice for Nara.
Marie.....Maid.
Watson.

"FOR THIS ONE NIGHT."

The tremulous notes of a young girl's voice accompanied by the muffled twang of a samisen, rose and fell gently on the evening air. To the little vine-clad arbor, at the foot of her uncle's property the girl had come to be alone with her thoughts, sad tho they were. On the morrow, Yoneo Makino, her affianced, was going far away to foreign shores and it might be years before he could return to her.

So deeply in thought was she, that she did not hear her uncle when he called her name and was rudely awakened when she locked up to see his form fill the door.

"Ho, this is where you are. Why didn't you answer me when I called? Have you nothing else to do, that you can sit around with a samisen in your hands?"

Ozawa-san seemed to tower above her as she rose trembling and preceded him to the house. When they entered the low-roofed Japanese house, with its scrubbed and spotless porches and its

and its sliding doors, Ozawa-san turned to the girl abruptly.

"Nara, I wish to speak with you."

They entered the long heavily matted room, dimly lighted by candles. At the far end stood a slightly raised platform, the family altar with its bowl of freshly cut flowers an offering to the bronze Buddah sitting there so complacently. An exquisitely painted hanging silk or kakemono, indicating the season of the year, hung just above and relieved the austerity of the room. The atmosphere of the room strangely affected her and chilled her. Some impending fear seemed to tug at her heart.

"Nara, I have not been pleased with you of late. You have been restless and I have found you idle on several occasions. It is time for you to think about marrying and having your own home and the responsibility it brings. To-morrow I will negotiate with a go-between to arrange a marriage with Nagari-san."

"Honorable uncle, please, please do not make me marry Nagari-san. I do not love him." The girl clasped and unclasped her hands nervously.

"You do not need to love him," her uncle replied easily. "Marry first and love afterwards."

"But, honorable uncle, it is so different now. You must love the man you intend to marry".

"Love has nothing to do with it. You shall marry Nagari-san and have a respected position as his wife and the mother of his children".

"I shall not marry Nagari-san or anyone else of your choosing." Ozawa opened his mouth to speak and left it open in sheer amazement at being openly defied under his own roof. It was most un-

heard of. This was a new Nara.

The girl stood with her back against the door and faced her uncle bravely. Both were thoroughly aroused now---determined to fight: one in desperation for the freedom of her own body and soul----the other as a bully---steeping to any means to accomplish his end. Nara spoke rapidly and her voice trembled with the intensity of her emotion³

"Ozawa-san, this once you shall listen to me. You have brought me up from a little child since my parents died. You fed me, clothed me, treated me as your own child. I am not ungrateful. I have tried the best I know how to repay you by obedience as a Japanese daughter. but now I am no longer a child. I am a woman and entitled to live my own life and to live it as I will. You have made me very unhappy. You would not allow me to study music although you were told I had talent. But you only laughed and said 'Japanese girls don't need to have talent'. Now you want to force me to marry a man I do not love. I refuse to obey you."

"Disobedient girl. This is my reward for all my care of you!" I know ---I know Ozawa-san was growing more and more angry and rushed on heedlessly. "you are in love with that Makine. ~~Doc~~ Why didn't you marry him. Huh. Gone off to America to study to be a doctor. Fine excuse. We have schools here and good ones, too. Huh. He wanted to get rid of you. That's why he went to America. Now you're ashamed to marry a good man. Think I don't know? Get out of my house this night. I don't care where you go." Ozawa pushed the girl aside roughly and strode from the room.

Nara sank to the floor---crushed, overpowered by a suffering and shame which seemed to benumb her whole body. She had tried

to say the words which would clear her in her uncle's sight but the words would not come and now it was too late and he would always think.....She bowed her head lower and lower in the hopelessness of her despair. As to a home she did not worry. She was sure of a welcome and a bed as long as Miss Webster was at the Mission School. But Yoner. How could she ever explain to him why she had left home. Even she, simple country girl tho she was, knew however deeply Yoneo might love her, manlike, he would not want to marry her if he thought there was any doubt as to her chastity, even he was the man in question. This much she knew instinctively and her heart contracted in terror. No, she must not tell him all the truth.

With the thought of Yoneo came returning courage. The spirit of Youth is buoyant and call to its own. She knew she must see Yoneo once more before the morrow. She rose to her feet and silently left the house without one look backward of regret. Then through the darkness she sped as on winged feet to their tryst of old. Once she paused hesitating between Love and Pride, but Love won and on she hastened. Nara seemed to have a feeling, too, that he would be there also. Her need of him was so great, surely that must have the power to draw him to her. So she believed. They had said good-bye under the stars the night before, but that was such a long time ago

It was midsummer. The air was sweet and heavy with the fragrance of peonies and camellias. Fireflies twinkled in the velvety darkness. Gentle winds sighed mournfully through the pine branches. A nightingale called plaintively to its mate. A large yellow moon hung low in the sky and scattered weird, fantastic shadows all about.

To the young girl, hurrying onward onward

To the young girl, hurrying onward, the beauty and mysterious charm of the night calmed the storm within. and the soft air kissed away her tears. Her step was light and sure.

"You came." With a joyous note, a form emerged from the shadows.

"Yonee, I had to see you once more."

"I am glad," folding her close in his arms, then suddenly holding her at arm's length.

"You are trembling. You are crying. What has happened ?

Makono led the girl to the shadows of a friendly pine, beneath whose branches an age-old wistaria had stretched its gnarled arms and fashioned a rude seat. Simply and naturally. Nara told of the scene with her uncle, omitting certain details. Her lover listened attentively. Years ago, when they were boy and girl together, he had seemed to know how lonely she was and how she shrank from the boisterous games of the other children. Sometimes he would find her crying down by the little gold-fish pond at the foot of her uncle's property which adjoined the broad acres of the Makino farm. Then in his clumsy, little boy way but inexpressibly sweet to the lonely little girl, he would try to make her laugh. In all eagerness, he would run to get his treasures to show her, perhaps a live cricket in the tiniest of cages or some shiny mounted beetles, or perhaps, most cherished of all, a small turtle. Nara would shiver inwardly, but would give no sign. She was not afraid of turtles. Not she. To prove it, she would touch the ugly thing with the tip of her finger. And then they would both laugh.

As Yonee grew older, encouraged by the girl's childish devotion, he would pour into her willing ears, wondrous stories of the

of the great things he would do when he was a man. He would be a great surgeon in America and people would stand in line to see him. They would come on crutches but he would cure them and they could throw the crutches away. In Nara's eyes and his own, at least, he was going to be a wonderful man.

As a boy, Yoneo had always regarded Nara as some fragile flower, to be sheltered and protected. As years went by, the tight closed bud of childish friendship grew fuller and larger, until with a sudden awakening, it had blossomed overnight into all the beauty and purity of first love. Then a thin veil of shyness dropped between them. But from thereon, all Yoneo's plans included Nara.

Alarmed by his long silence, she touched his arm timidly

Makino-san closed his hand over hers in a warm, firm grip.

"I'm trying to find a way out, Nara."

For answer, she pillowed her head against his shoulder and waited.

"Nara, dear one, last night I dreamed of you. I knew you were in trouble and that is why I came."

"You knew?" she murmured.

"Yes, and I am also unhappy. My Father is very disappointed in me and has refused to the very last to help me financially with my studies. I have no money, except what I have made from my sketches, only enough for my passage. Oh, if I only had enough money, I would never leave you here." The man spoke bitterly and crushed Nara to him.

"I'm sorry for your Father," said the girl softly. "He will be very lonely."

"I'm sorry for him, too, Nara, but I will not be a farmer

Anybody can do that kind of work. Ever since I can remember anything I have wanted to be a surgeon. and I must carry out my ambition. I will make any sacrifice."

"Some day he will be proud of you, Yonee."

"And so shall you. In the meantime we must gain time. It is the best thing for you to do---go to the Mission School and I shall address my letters there. Miss Webster is kind and perhaps she will help you with your music."

"O Yonee, if I only could study music. It would be such a comfort while you are away and maybe some day you might be very proud of me."

"I am proud of you now, dear brave little girl. It will be a long time before I can see you again."

"Yone," and the voice was wistful, "you--you will not forget me, will you?"

"Surely you do not doubt me."

"No, Yonee. but----you are going so far away."

"Nonsense, dear one, don't you know that Love shortens the distance, and----"

"Was that my Uncle?" Nara started to her feet from force of habit then dropped back. "It does not matter now. My Uncle does not care not where I am now," wearily.

"Nara, I want you to wear this to please me," and Makino drew forth from his sash a quaintly carved bracelet and clasped it around her arm. "There may come a time, I pray not, when you might welcome Death with honor rather than life with unhappiness. This circlet has always belonged to the women of our family. My Mother left it to me as the eldest son, and now it passes to you as my betrothed. It has a secret spring and opens a tiny case, containing a sleeping poison---swift, painless and deadly. Makino-san pressed the spring disclosing the poison, then snapped it closed.

"May the good Christian God grant you may never have to touch the spring." His voice was deep with emotion.

"Yenee, you frighten me," and the girl shivered and drew close to him. To add to her feeling of desolation and nervousness an owl hooted dismally in the distance.

"Dear Nara, because I love you so dearly, I don't want you to suffer. I will be far away and cannot protect you. You cannot tell what the Future may hold. Anyway it is only a precaution. But Nara, promise me that you will never marry Nagari---.He held her close in his arms, her head pressed back.

"I promise."

One long, last clinging embrace, and Nara disappeared into the shadows, her feet directed toward the Mission School not far distant.

Amid the shrieking and screaming of sirens and whistles of small river craft, a stately ocean liner nosed her way carefully into New York harbor. The decks were thronged with passengers anxious for a glimpse of some familiar face ashore while those at the pier were even more excited, the boat having been delayed by bad weather.

Somewhat apart from the excitement of those on deck, but interested and enjoying it all as an onlooker, stood a young woman, lounging easily against the deck rail. Her slight figure was enveloped in a soft, misty grey coat, her little nose just peeping above a deep cellar of squirrel, and her eyes all but hidden beneath a close fitting hat. It was Nara, who after seven years of faithful study, abroad had sailed for America, to sign a contract for an extended concert tour. The dream of years was to be fulfilled. By a sudden but

kindly play of Fate, she found herself transplanted to a little town outside of Milan and placed under the tutelage of an excitable but thorough old professor, while his wife assumed the role of a mother to the bewildered girl. All this had come to pass, through the chance visit of a party of tourists who dropped in quite unexpectedly one morning at the little Mission School just outside of Yokahama. Miss Webster, the teacher in charge, after giving an exhibition of her pupils' work, asked Nara to sing. Anxious to please, she sang most willingly and was gratified by the expressions of approval from her audience, especially from one, named Miss Pamela Hubbard, who recognized at once the girl's talent. It was not long before Miss Hubbard had a brief outline of Nara's story, together with an account of her longing to study music. Miss Webster did all she could to further her young friend's cause. Pamela's sympathetic interest and Hubbard dollars did the rest.

Seven long years of effort had brought their reward. And now, with a heart full of love and gratitude, Nara was coming to thank this dear benefactress, this fairy godmother, who with a wave of her wand, had spread before her eyes new vistas and awakened old longings for a future, rich in purpose and fulfillment.

The boat was anchored at last. Coils of rope were flung across and the gangplank let down. People goodnaturedly jostled one another in their eagerness to go ashore. Porters, at once humble and willing besought your baggage, meanwhile speculating as to the size of the tip they were going to receive. In all the general confusion and noise, the taxi-driver joined his voice none too melodiously.

One of the last to go ashore, Nara suddenly felt herself

drawn into a quick and loving embrace, accompanied by a sounding kiss on each cheek.

"You dear thing. I thought you'd never come. I've been here for hours." Pamela linked her arm within that of her companion and piloted her skillfully through the crowd. They entered the family car, while Watson brought up the rear with the bags and boxes.

With a sigh of content, Nara sank down into the soft luxuriousness of the cushions and remarked with a laugh, "Well, I'm glad that's over."

"Are you so tired?"

"Tired? I didn't close my eyes all night. I was so anxious to get a glimpse of your wonderful New York."

"You don't look tired? Nara, you haven't changed a bit?"

"And you, Pamela, look younger."

"You flatterer," but she looked pleased, nevertheless.

After a circuitous route through the lower part of the city, the Hubbard car swung its way into Fifth Avenue. Our young traveler was in ecstasies over the beautiful things displayed so alluringly in the shop windows. She was filled with childish anticipation when Pamela promised her a shopping tour on the morrow.

"Nara, darling, what am I going to do? You see, I expected you yesterday and planned accordingly to give a small musicale this evening at home, just our friends, informal, you know. But you are so tired. I couldn't ask you---

"Of course I will sing--- Why Pamela," her weariness suddenly fled, "for this one night, I have worked hard and long and dreamed often.

often. Would I miss it? Never. Not if you had to carry me fainting from the room", and she laughed merrily. Then wistfully. "American audiences are very hard to please, are they not? Pamela?"

"They are critical," admitted Pamela.

Later, refreshed from her bath and clad in a silken robe, Nara curled herself on a pillow at Pamela's feet.

"To-day I am almost happy."

"Almost happy", exclaimed Pamela. You have Youth, beauty and a future. What more do you want?"

"Yes, I suppose I should be satisfied. Many have less.

Turning suddenly, she clasped the other's hand.

"Pamela, if I only could express somehow, someway, how much I appreciate all you have done for me. I can never repay you. Why, you've been wonderful, wonderful. Tears were in her voice and eyes.

"you dear silly child", Pamela said, stroking the dark head. "Just think how proud I will be to-night. Didn't I 'discover' you?"

"O, but Pamela, you have done more than that. You have saved me from a lifetime of unhappiness---even from death."

"What do you mean, Nara?"

Nara smiled slowly and sadly and licked her hands about her knees.

"Seven years ago, you found me in the little Mission school. I had sought refuge there because my uncle had sworn that I must either marry a man of his choice, whom I hated or leave home. I chose to leave home."

"But why should your uncle force you to marry someone

you hated. Surely there were other men----. Pamela was indignant.

"Do not blame my uncle. Even I do not, now. He was only looking out for my future, but I didn't appreciate it then.

Nagari was a good man---"

"But you said you hated him."

"I would have hated anyone then".

"Then there was someone else, for whom you did care?"

Pamela asked the question with a sly little smile.

"Yes?"

"Did he care for you?"

"He said so, but after he came to this country to study he just seemed to forget." Her voice trailed off wearily.

"Tell me, Nara, if I had not gone to the Mission that morning and---" she stopped, afraid of her own words.

Nara looked up into ~~her~~ the sweet, sympathetic face bending over her.

"Surely you know, Pamela."

"You poor dear child"? the other exclaimed, putting her arm about the girl and drawing her close. "But that is all past. A glorious future awaits you. To-night you will be very happy, but first of all, I am going to put you to bed myself. You need every bit of rest you can get. You really look tired. Now hup in."

Pamela tucked the silken coverlets about her lovingly, darkened the room and left her.

Nara lay quietly in the soft bed. Its gentle yielding to her body was soothing and restful. The touch of the blankets against her cheeks, felt like soft caressing hands. How good it felt, just to lie there in the quiet. Even the street noises, seemed

far away. Hardly she seemed to think. Then by degrees, as the physical weariness lessened, her brain became more active and alert.

"Happiness," she mused, "what was it? Everyone had some different idea. She wondered if anyone had ever found lasting happiness. As soon as you thought you had found it, there was always something just a little further beyond. Pamala thought she had sought to be happy. Apparently she was, but what of the ache, the loneliness, that lay deep within her heart. To her innermost self, only, would she admit and humbly confess, that her music was but a medium, whereby she had hoped to bring back Makine. If she only could achieve fame and make him proud of her, perhaps the old love might return. For this only, had she struggled and persevered, through these long seven years. She loved her music. Yes--- but she loved Makine more. She knew not where he might be, but only to be living on the same soil as he, gave her a sense of nearness. And always, always, there was the chance, that they might meet. With this bare comfort, she dropped off to sleep.

Could Nara have known. One morning, a couple of months after she had left the shores of Japan, the postman was on his way to the Mission School with two letters addressed to her. But before he reached there, he met Ozawa-san, out for his morning walk. Instead of delivering them as directed, he unsuspectingly gave them to the uncle. The wily Ozawa took them greedily and slipped them into his ~~belt~~ sash, with instructions that any further mail thus postmarked should be also delivered likewise, and he would forward it. ^P Nara was adjusting her sash when Pamela came into the room, radiant in pale blue and silver. Her eyes were softly shining with joy and excitement and hinted of some deeper emotion.

"Just in time to tie your sash. You are wonderful in your gorgeous kimono. Your audience will gasp."

"Pamela, you are a flatterer."

"Am I? Come into my room where there is a long mirror and see for yourself." Laughingly, she led the way ~~to the~~, while Nara followed more sedately, her sandals patting the floor lightly as she walked.

While she stood before the mirror, surveying herself and nodding her head birdlike fashion in satisfied approval, her gaze wandered beyond her own reflection and held. With a startled expression, she turned abruptly and pointed a trembling finger to a portrait on Pamela's dressing table. By now, a pitiful look as of some dumb, hurt creature, had come into her eyes.

"Nara darling, are you ill? Sit here." and Pamela gently pushed the girl down among the pillows.

Touching a bell. "Marie, bring some water." ~~for~~

"Who--who is he?"

Pamela followed the direction of her eyes.

"Why that is ^{DR.} Yenee Makine, my fiance. I have not told you my big secret, and you are to meet him to-night, too. I---"

~~"You are going to marry him"~~

"You are --are going to marry him, you say?" The question was almost whispered.

"Why yes, but why are you so disturbed? Do you know him? It was Pamela's turn to be alarmed now.

"Yes--that is ne----I---you see." Then more slowly,

"Pamela, you see, he looks very, very much like someone I u

someone I knew in Japan, and I thought it was he". Nara leaned back against the pillows and relaxed wearily. As if struck by a sudden thought, she suddenly leaned forward.

"Pamela, where did you meet him?"

"Why-er--it was quite romantic. I was out alone one morning riding in the Park when my horse threw me. Dr. Makine just happened along and came to the rescue. Took me to my home in his car and tended me for a broken arm for five weeks. By that time he had formed the habit of coming, with what result you know."

"And has he ever heard of me? Does he know that I'm to sing to-night?" She endeavored to speak calmly.

"Not a word. I planned it all so quietly. No wonder you were so surprised. And to think I am going to marry one of your own countryman. We will be sort of sisters, then."

"Yes, Pamela, but---."

"But what?"

"Are you sure that you love him, Pamela? Remember we are so different to you, our color, our customs, our religion. Everything is so different. I don't want you to be unhappy and disappointed."

"Oh Nara, you don't know Yenee Makine, or you would never fear for my happiness. After all, what difference does it make, color, race, religion or nationalith, if a man loves you and he loves you. As long as his heart is white and you share the same ideals, that is enough. I love Yenee Makine better than life itself." Impulsively, she slipped to her knees, and threw her arms around Nara. "You know how happy I am, Nara, you understand."

"Yes, Pamela, I understand. But you have won where I have

lest."

"Don't say that, dear. Someday you will find the man you love, too, I'm sure of it. Now I must leave you. Don't you move from these pillows, and I will rearrange the programme so that you can rest as long as possible. You seem to be all nerves to-night. Sayonara, O Nara San."

Below, guests were arriving in a pleasant mood of anticipation, received by the gracious Mrs. Courtney Hubbard, Pamela's mother. There was a pleasant hum of well-bred voices intermingled with light laughter and the rattling of programs? Every one was curious as much to see as to hear this imported novelty, Mlle? Nemura. A musical treat and diversion which their kind hostess had provided. They were eager for her appearance.

After some moments of quiet, assured that she was alone, Nara stole softly to the dressing table and took up the portrait of Makine. She laid it against her cheek, seeking courage and comfort from him as of old, for she was terror-stricken. She realized now, for Pamela's sake, she must not meet Makine----yet how to avoid him. After all these years of longing and waiting, now the knowledge that he was so near, threw her into a panic. Yet she had to sing--- for Pamela's sake. She felt as if trapped. If Makine was really indifferent to her, and to prevent awkward explanations, he might pretend he did not know her? Still she shrank from that? She was not an actress. She knew she would betray herself by some sign.

As she stood there, in a moment of exaltation, it came to her that more than anything in the world, she wanted these two people, Pamela and Yoneo, to be happy and it lay in

her power to make or mar their happiness. The spirit of Bushide's teaching's, of the nobility of self-sacrifice, moved her heart, or was it a little verse, learned at the Mission School, "Greater love hath no man than that he shall lay down his life for another" She was sure God meant woman too. Then that would mean her. Yes, she loved Pamela and Yoneo enough. Pamela would cry---for a little while and Yoneo, too, would feel sorry, perhaps, but afterwards, they would love each other more deeply. Her sacrifice would not be in vain, it would but bind them more closely.

Nara replaced the portrait carefully. The house was very quiet. Someone was playing the violin. Lured by the sweet strains, the girl stepped on to the balcony overlooking the music-room. She forgot everything in listening to the music; she felt as if under a spell. The bow was drawn across the strings with such a masterly sweep, with a sweetness that thrilled every fibre of her being. Under its witchery, she was carried to undreamed-of heights, capable of any sacrifice---uplifted, exalted. Suddenly her one hand clutched the rail. ^{while} the other she held tightly over her mouth, lest she make some outcry. Her heart was pounding against her ribs. She reached for the heavy curtain for support, but only in time to grab a fold and sway backwards with it. She had seen him. It had happened in a moment. In answer to a servant's message, Dr. Makino had risen quietly and had stood a moment just beneath her. Impelled by some mysterious power, he had raised his eyes and had recognized her-----.

A lack of fear, of consternation, was replaced by one of yearning, so full of unspoken eloquence, that she who beheld it, thrilled and her heart began to sing. All the loneliness

of years vanished in that one ecstatic moment. Yet another, and Yoneo was gone.

Nara groped her way back to Pamela's room and sank down on the pillows, thankful for every moment in which she could relive that memory. The rapture of a lifetime was crystalized into that one flash of understanding. "He loves me. He loves me. Only me." She hugged the thought to herself again and again, until.....she remembered Pamela. Then hope and joy died within her. Yes, Yoneo belonged to Pamela now. How useless a thing her music had suddenly become. Hope and Music, hand in hand, had led her on, along the trail, but she had come to her journey's end, now. She would sing once for Pamela's sake..... and devoutly hope Makino would not return. She would sing this night as she had never sang before. She would sweep her audience along with her.....enthrall them, charm them and make them laugh with her and weep with her. This would be her triumph. bitter-sweet tho it was. For this one night.....And after that?

With a movement, expressive of a sudden determination, nara aro
Nara arose. She smoothed her hair and patted the silken folds of her kimono with elaborate care. Thus Pamela found her.

"are you really able to sing for us? Oh, I am so glad. I have explained how very tired you are after your journey, but I know the guests would be keenly disappointed if they were not to hear you this evening. You are quite sure you are not too tired, dear?"

"I am quite rested now, thankyou," said Nara simply.

"Nara, I have had such a disappointment. Dr. Makino was called away suddenly to a very sick patient. It is quite doubtful if he can return in time to hear you sing. ~~It is such a~~

I am so sorry because I had planned this evening's surprise so carefully and now....."

"Will we go down? I am ready." Nara spoke abruptly for her.

Pamela and her guest entered the music room through a door concealed by a wall of palms and oak leaves, while yellow chrysanthemums ran riot over the room, peeping out of every corner to smile a welcome to Nara. Seated at the piano, idly turning over some music, was the accompanist, a young Italian. He acknowledged the introduction with a profound bow. After a few moments occupied ~~with~~ in selecting certain music, Nara was announced. Smiling and bowing, she took her place beside the piano and waited for the opening chords....a caprice. with its rippling, laughing movement. This was followed by a Venetian Love Song, rendered with tenderness and warmth of expression? The last of the trio was an aria from "Madame Butterfly".

Applause was generous and sincere. Pamela ~~was~~ ^{ed} beaming proudly upon her protegee, who acknowledged the applause with a graceful bow and lowered lids.

Standing by the piano, her arm resting lightly on its polished surface, Nara felt more and more mistress of herself, almost calm. The song was a Japanese Ballad, sad, wailing, tragic. Suddenly, from somewhere, a cold sweet breath of night air blew across her face. A door opened and closed noiselessly. Someone had come in. For the moment her sense of security deserted her. She knew intuitively that Dr. Makino had entered, that he had come back to hear her sing.

The thought gave her ~~new~~ courage and spirit. A new note crept into her music....a new force. She swept her listeners along with her, through the various phases of hope and fear, sorrow and despair. During the song, many a tear was removed surreptitiously by a dainty bit of linen and lace. while others were vainly trying to swallow the lumps that would persistently rise in their throats. Nara held her audience to the last note, until

in a final wail of despair, her voice gradually died away to scarcely more than a whisper.

For a few moments, there was no sound. the room seemed vibrant with the emotions of the singer. Mere clapping of hands would have shattered the spell. have jarred the fine sensibilities of some. But it came finally. Enthusiasm....warm. glowing. resounding. Again and again, Nara bowed her thanks.

Being human, she could not resist the feeling of pride and satisfaction that seemed to send the blood leaping through her body like some powerful stimulant, as she listened to these people so warmly acclaim her. And greatest happiness of all... Dr. Makino had heard also. He could remember her now as an artist, not as a simple country girl, timid, tearful. Once she had dared to glance in the direction of the balcony, under which she knew him to be standing, and met his eyes, as she knew she would. She could feel the warm tingling color suffuse her face and neck.

"Why should she take the scare of happiness, that she had worked so hard for and now cast it away. Why should she.... And how could she, with the memory of that look in Yoneo's eyes? Even Pamela would not expect it of her.....Pamela....Pamela. Oh. How could she ever wrong her, even in thought.....No. No. No. With that, she brushed her hand across her eyes, to shut out the vision of what might have been.

Still applauding. Ah. how sweet is success. Yes, she would sing once more..... a song of her own land, her beloved Japan. She sang unaccompanied. the music of an old song, but the words ~~she~~ were her own. Her song was for one person alone. Once more Yoneo and she were back in Japan under the yellow moon, hanging low in the sky; once more they heard the gentle winds sighing mournfully through the pine branches, once more smelt the fragrance of the camelia and the peony. She sang to him of her undying love for him, but he belonged to

another now, and she would go away. He must love Pamela
~~He must love~~ and forget Nara. Goodby, my beloved" she sang
softly, "make Pamela happy....sayonara....sayonara." The
words died away, slowly, sadly to a whisper. Her audience
felt drawn under the spell of some nameless impending sorrow,
a parting.

Suddenly those nearest saw her cover her face with one
hand while the other groped blindly, then the swaying form
dropped in a crumpled heap, as a mass of crushed roses and lay
still. A quaintly carved bracelet rolled across the floor.

Dismay spread quickly through the room. With calm
presence of mind, Pamela was the first to reach Nara. She
gathered the unconscious girl in her strong young arms and
started for the stairs. Conscience-stricken, she reproached her
self bitterly for having allowed Nara to sing.

Pamela turned as she felt a hand lightly on her arm.
It was Dr. Makino.

"Oh, Dr. Makino. when did you return? Nara has faint-
ed. Please help me."

"Let me carry her, please," Something in the man's
eyes, hurt, grief-stricken, made Pamela look sharply at him.
She relinquished her burden without a word and led the way up-
stairs.

A great understanding had come to her. The memory
of Nara's words....her startled look, when she had first not-
iced Makino's portrait, now returned to her forcibly, and with
it, an invisible cold hand seemed to clutch at her heart.

Dr. Makino followed with Nara in his arms, her head pillowed against his shoulder. Laying her tenderly upon the silk-draped bed, he applied his professional skill to restore consciousness, simply because it was expected of him. He had known the meaning of that ^{at once} ~~raised hand, the~~ groping, frightened movement, the wilting of that flower like body. The fine white powder had done its work quickly and thoroughly.

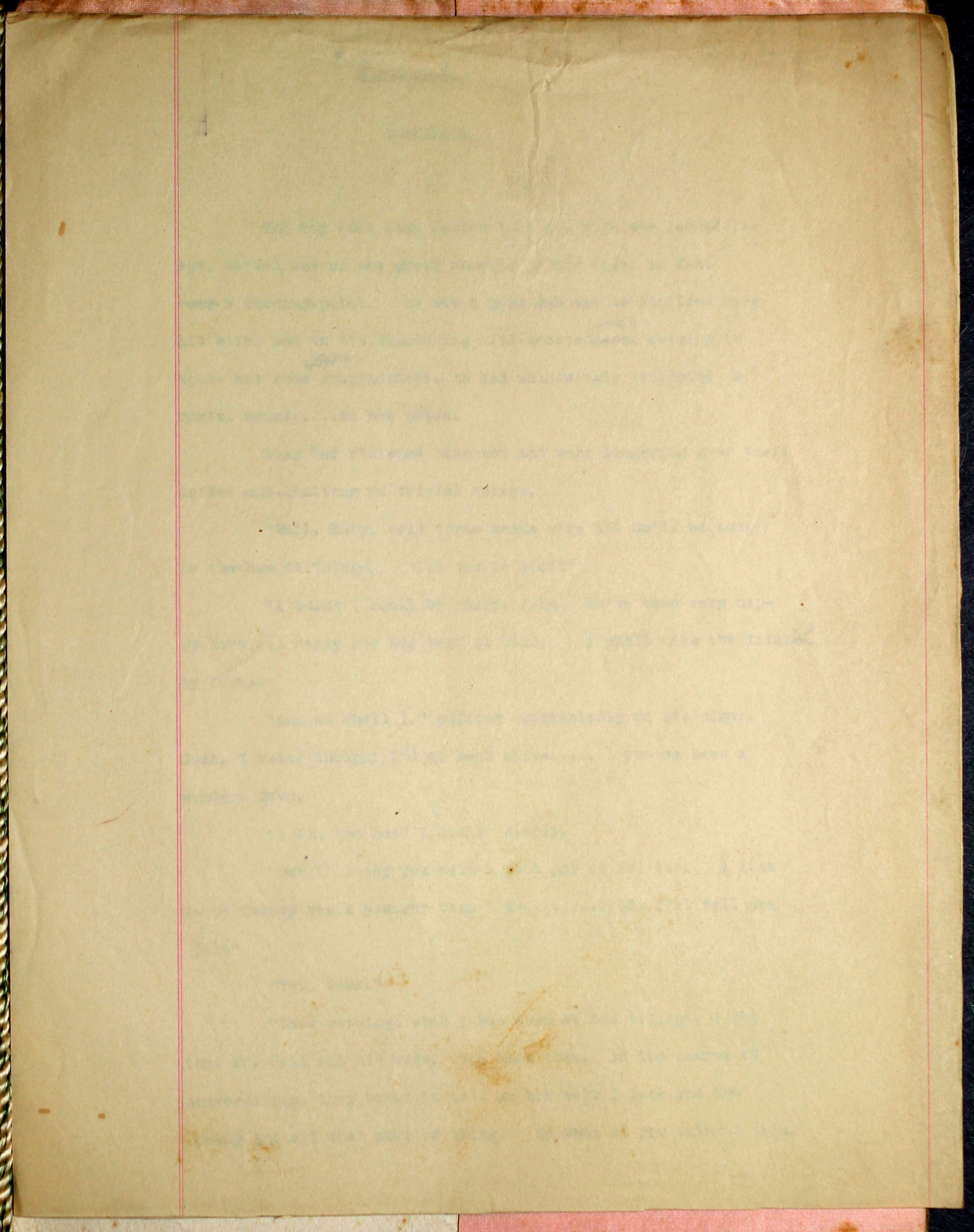
"We can do nothing for her, Pamela". said Dr. Makino gravely. "Nara is.....dead."

"Dead." breathed Pamela, "dead? What do you mean?" and she took a step forward.

Suddenly the man went down on his knees, beside the bed, and buried his face in the crumpled rose kimona, his lips pressed against one slim one white arm. His shoulders shook with hard, silent sobs, and words came brokenly.

"Nara, my own dear little Nara.....why have I found you..... only to lose you."

And Pamela, standing by, looked through a blur of tears upon the sweet tranquil face of one, who had given all for the two she loved best.



"Sunset."

SURRENDER.

The day that John Weston told his wife she looked her age, marked one of the great moments of her life, in fact ~~was~~ a turning-point. He was a good man and he idolized Mary his wife, and in his blundering kind-heartedness, ^{was} seeking to spare her some ^{future} embarrassment, he had unknowingly inflicted a mortal wound.....to her pride.

They had finished luncheon and were lingering over their coffee ~~and~~ chatting of trivial things.

"Well, Mary, only three weeks more and we'll be back in the hum of things. Will you be glad?"

"I think I shall be sorry, John. We've been very happy here and every one has been so kind. I shall miss the friendly faces."

"And so shall I." puffing contentedly on his cigar. Gosh, I never thought I'd go back alive..... you've been a wonder. Mary.

"I did the best I could" simply.

"And I'll say you made a good job of it, too. I look about twenty years younger than I am.....Oh, I'll tell you joke"

"Yes, dear."

"This morning, when I was down at the village, I met that Mr. Colt and his wife. You know them. In the course of conversation, they began to tell me how well I look and how young and all that sort of thing. So what do you think I said."

Ha. Ha. Ha. Why Mrs. Colt. I'm old enough to be my wife's father.

Ha. Ha. Ha. You ought to have seen their faces."

"I don't see the point"

"Why--er--- don't you see, Mary, anyone would know you were around Forty-five or so and ---er --I wouldn't er-- want these people up here to --er-- think you had married a man so much.....er younger than yourself. So I said I was old enough to be your father. You see now?"

"I see now," said Mary faintly.

"Well-l-l", rising and stretching out his arms, "guess I'll go out on the porch and finish my smoke. Want any help?"

"No thanks."

~~David, stunned,~~ ^{Saydehow} Mary Weston found the way upstairs to her room. and entered, thankful for its quiet and orderliness. Her ~~own~~ brain was in a whirl. She closed the door noiselessly and locked it, then dropped into a low chair nearby..... She felt dazed and stunned as if she had been dealt a severe blow, which indeed she had. The hardest kind of a blow for a woman. To make it worse, it had been dealt by the one who loved her best. But it was her own battle and no one must ever know.....

"If he had told me I ~~was~~ looked Ten years older than I am. I could still have found some comfort.....and forgiven him. There is no comfort now. I am beaten. I am growing old and I can't push Time back any longer. He is gaining on me.....Oh. I don't want to **grow**

old. I don't want to grow old." and she dropped her head on the table and wept bitter tears. She was vanquished. She had put up a brave fight....she had deceived herself. She thought she had deceived others.

"Oh, the poor silly fool I've been. I suppose people have been laughing at me all the time. Blind fool I've been."

The ache in her heart was almost more than she could bear. She felt like some ^{caged} bird beating its wings in futile despair, trying to escape. For her there was no escape..... Age advances relentlessly and has no mercy.

She ~~had~~ reviewed the past two years in the mountains with John. He had suffered a mental and physical collapse. She had brought him up to these mountains, confident that in their calm restfulness and living the simple life of the farmer folk, her husband would regain his health and vigor.

And she had not been disappointed. She had missed her son, Evan, of course, but he was launched on his business career and at present was travelling for his company. He hoped soon to be in New York and spend a few days with his parents.

Wholeheartedly, she had given herself up to the one purpose in life of getting John well. She cultivated a happy, gay disposition and was delighted beyond bounds, when she could provoke a smile from the big serious man. She pampered him and babied him and delighted in waiting upon him. Simple, youthful clothes became her slim straight figure and she wore them. Now she covered her face in an agony of shame and

mortification as she remembered the pleasurable little thrills which accompanied the ringing of the door-bell, when the young minister came to call or old Mr. Yates' son, the lawyer. She recalled the hurried glance in the mirror.....the patting and puffing of the hair about her forehead, the Spanish comb set at a more coquettish angle, the drop of perfume with its mysterious fragrance....these and other details...so trifling at the time but now.....

Suddenly she rose, like one possessed, infuriated..... She walked to her dressing table and gathering up a hand full of jars and tubes, she swept them into the wastebasket.

"You deceived me and anyone else who is fool enough to use you. You've lied to me. Youyou... ." and she gave the basket a vicious kick.

Somehow she suddenly seemed to feel old. There was a heaviness, a numbness. Her face felt tight and drawn. She leaned over and surveyed her face in the mirror and studied herself honestly. Yes...there were lines...many of them. John was right. He ~~was~~ always was.....

"Mary. Mary." She heard her husband's voice at the foot of the stairs. "Uncle Mat's car is coming down the street at top speed. Wonder what's up. Can you come down?"

Instinctively, she reached for the powder-puff, then her hand dropped to her side. She gave a short, bitter laugh.

~~She heard the car stopped, "Uncle Mat", he was Uncle Mat to everybody, Oh~~ It was Mat Duncan or "Uncle Mat" as ~~everyone called him~~

Acar stopped. It was Mat Duncan or "Uncle Mat" as everyone in the town of Pinehill called him.

"Helloa there", boomed his hearty voice.

"Helloa yourself, returned John Weston, "what's the news?"

"Got a telegram for you. Wasn't a boy around so they asked me to bring it up. Hope it aint any bad news. Phew. but its hot.....Thanks, I will" seating himself on the porch.

Mary was at her husband's elbow as he calmly and deliberately slit the yellow envelope.

"From Evan?" she breathed, her cheek paling. "Is he ill? Oh, my baby.....!let me see it..."

'Dear Dad and Mother: Will be in Pinehill at 4:20. Everything O. K. Good-bye, Evan."

Mary was trembling now and tears were running down her face.

"O, I am so happy."

"You look it," and John laughed as he put his arm around her. "Women do have the darndest way of showing they're happy."

"Bully for Evan. What time is it now....3:0'clock. One hour and twenty minutes and my son will be here. Thanks, awfully, old man, for bringing that message. Sorry you can't stay longer. Good-bye."..... Come Mary, we'll have to primp for that boy of ours. Can't have him ashamed of us, you know." The two walked arm ~~and~~ ⁱⁿ arm and entered the house.

"Uncle Mat" chuckled to himself, as he walked leisurely

down the garden path. "Want to get rid of me, eh. Well, well, it must be a great thing to be a Father.....wouldn't mind being one myself, but guess it is too late now.....the girls won't look at an old duffer like me" and he stepped into his car and settled himself comfortably back in the seat.

"O, I say, you.o.o..Which way are you going, "Uncle Mat?" a silvery voice called.

"O hello. Amelita Galli-curci Geraldine Farrar, "I'M going the same way you are. Which way is that?"

"I'm going to the Post Office".

"Fine. So am I." The young girl jumped in and they drove on.

Back at the house was all happy confusion. Chloe, the maid, hurriedly dusted the guest room, arranged fresh flowers and slicked up the house generally.

"Goodness, Mary, are you ready so soon. Remarkable. I'll soon be ready.

In a few minutes, John appeared, hair carefully parted and brushed, clean collar and an especially gay necktie for the occasion.

"How do I look, Mother?"

"Fine."

Mary, with all thought of self lost in the anticipation of once more clasping her boy in her arms, ^{had taken} ~~took~~ from the closet a soft grey silka motherly looking dress. She had had it for five years.

"Hello, Mary, is that a new dress

"Hello, Mary, is that a new dress. Never saw it before. Looks nice. I like it."

My how forgetful and stupid and blind men are, she thought, but aloud, she replied sweetly, "No, dear, I've had it five years. I'm glad you like it."

Weston took out the car and helped Mary. They reached the station as the train was approaching.

Mary suddenly grabbed her husband's arm convulsively. "Just think, John, we haven't seen our boy for three years..... I wonder if we'll recognize him. I'm so excited and nervous. I can hardly wait."

"I might admit feeling a bit nervous myself, Mary," he said, feeling of his necktie.

As the passengers alighted, they were all eagerly scanned by the ~~eager~~ waiting parents, but somehow they had overlooked him. The first they knew of his arrival was when Mrs. Weston felt herself drawn into a pair of strong young arms and a kiss loudly imprinted on each cheek. "Mother."

"You dear boy.....you dear boy....." the mother cried between smiles and tears and hugging her son tightly while the father endeavored to get possession of one hand which he clasped in a warm firm grip.

"Well, well, my boy.....nearly three years since we've seen you. You sure have changed."

"Can't say that about you and Mother. You don't look like a sick man, Dad, and as for Mother, she looks simply great. Not a day older. So saying, he slipped an arm around his

Mother's waist. Evan never did appreciate the meaning of that grateful look his Mother bestowed upon him at those words. Something warm and comforting seemed to steal over her. The afternoon had been a horrid nightmare. Evan did not see any change in her. In his eyes, at least, she looked no older..... With a light step, she jumped into the car and drove her little family home.

Later as Father, Mother and son were grouped on the porch (description) Father contentedly smoking his pipe, Mother in a low chair with her boy at her feet..... The sun dropping lower and lower in the western sky.... mother birds calling softly to their little ones and gathering them lovingly under their wing for the night.....flowers.... sleepy flowers, gradually closing their eyes as the shadows lengthen, and a ~~quiet~~ ^{hush}, almost solemn (~~hush~~) fell sweetly and gently over the earth. But the sun, ~~shone~~ ^{shining} in unabashed splendour, boldly painted the sky in gorgeous splashes of orange, rose and violet.

They had talked of many things.....of Evan, past, present and future and now a silence had fallen. A silence. so sympathetic and satisfying that it seemed to bind the three more closely together and create a perfect harmony of mind and soul. Into the heart of Mary Weston there flowed a great peace, a revelation in itself. How petty and insignificant were those moments in her room, the hot tears, the heartache..... Poor, hurt vanity.that's all it was. Her pride was wounded...nothing mere....and she

and she would get over it. But she had come to a realization that there are some things which Time cannot change....those qualities which she had built up in a ~~useful~~ life of service. cheerfulness, sympathy ~~and~~ understanding and charity. Not fleeting joys. As she stroked the head at her knee, she knew ^{here} this was the reward for all of Life's trials and struggles... her boy.....The years had given him to her, now returned, ~~honest~~ manly and self-reliant. Her boy would be the reward of vanished youth and fleeting beauty.

"Mother," said Evan softly, "what a glorious sunset you have up here."

"Yes, dear, ~~it is~~. And I was thinking of another sunset, when you spoke, the sunset of Life. It is also very beautiful. Mine is. But you, dear boy, are not interested in sunsets. You are facing the East," and she leaned over and laid her cheek against Evan's.

