My Japanese prince (being some startling excerpts from the diary of Hilda Patience Armstrong of Meriden, Connecticut, at present travelling in the Far East)

Gunter Archibald Clavering
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Author: Gunter Archibald Clavering

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My Japanese Prince

(Being some startling excerpts from the diary of Hilda Patience Armstrong of Meriden, Connecticut, at present travelling in the Far East)

By

ARCHIBALD CLAVERING GUNTER

AUTHOR OF

"MR. BARNES OF NEW YORK," "MR. POTTER OF TEXAS," ETC.

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MY JAPANESE PRINCE

(Being some extraordinary passages in the Diary of Miss Hilda Armstrong, formerly of Meriden, Connecticut, but at present on a journey to the Far East.)

EPISODE THE FIRST.

THE WATER FETE AT TOKYO.

CHAPTER I.

THE ACTOR OF THE KABUKIZA THEATRE.

The time was yesterday.

"Come on, Angel," cried Miss Pinkie Caldwell, "the Kabukiza Theatre and a picnic on the river won't do you much harm, even without a chaperone."

"Pooh, I have been at New York theatres, minus that undesirable article," I replied airily. "Father's down at Yokohama and will be busy all day." Then I suggested eagerly: "Who are coming with us?"

"Baron Serge Schevitch of the Russian Legation and Charlie Alston Brown."

"Oh, yes, the Tokyo representative of the great firm of Jabez, Slocum & Walters, of New York, San Francisco, Yokohama, Shanghai and Niuchwang," I
laughed. "Mr. Brown has told me of his commercial importance a dozen times since I have been in Tokyo." To this I added with American determination: "I'll do it! Only you had better say nothing to papa. He believes in chaperones."

"Funny taste for a Yankee," said Miss Caldwell critically. "Where did he pick that up?"

"In Russia," I replied, "building railways. Dad has lived in Russia so long working on the Trans-Siberian that he is half a Muscovite."

"Well, Madame de Comoron of the French Legation would have come with us but she happens to be indisposed—hot weather and a jealous husband," laughed Miss Pinkie. "Perhaps, who knows, we may see that Japanese officer, the one you told me about, that black-eyed fellow who was on those bridge contracts for his government in Meriden, Connecticut, when you were there."

"Tum, tum, dark eyes are no more interesting to me. I have seen too many of them around here lately," I jeered.

"Well, if you have," said Pinkie inquisitorially, "why are your cheeks as red as lotus flowers now? Are you in love with him?"

"What, in love with a Japanese!" I concealed my embarrassment in a giggle.
“Don’t you know, the Japs are the coming people,” remarked Miss Caldwell. “Anyway, this afternoon you will see something of them that will give you new sensations.”

This conversation takes place between Miss Pinkie Farnham Caldwell, who is the daughter of an attaché of the American Legation at Tokyo, and myself, Hilda Patience Armstrong, of Meriden, Connecticut, daughter of Peter Milliken Armstrong, head of a great bridge building and railroad constructing firm of the same place, an institution that has large contracts with the Russian Government for the completion of its railways in Manchuria. It is on this business that my father is on his way to Port Arthur now, having me in his charge; and, en route, is spending a few days in Tokyo, looking after some contracts he also has with a native firm in connection with a railway in Yezo, also the furnishing of bridges for the Japanese road in Korea. My father knows that the Russians and Japs hate each other, but one’s money is as good as the other’s—and Dad takes contracts from either of them.

The day is a superb one, and for the season, not warm. We are standing in my rooms in the Imperial Hotel, Tokyo, looking over its beautiful grounds on the city’s sunny unsidewalked street and watching the
crowd of jinrikishas carrying the throng of bare-headed people to the great lotus fete and water picnic given during the mid-summer of 1903 in the Japanese Capital.

Miss Pinkie Caldwell is a dashing American girl of about twenty-two and looks exquisitely pretty in a diaphanous costume made from a French model by a Tokyo milliner. I am in a New York summer gown. In its exquisite gauzes and laces I am not afraid to stand up beside her or anyone else.

Pinkie is the daughter of one of Uncle Sam’s Legation attachés, who has been kept in Tokyo through several American administrations on account of his knowledge of things Japanese. Consequently, Miss Caldwell having grown up from extreme youth to young ladyhood amid the cherry blossoms and plum groves of the Tokiando is as nearly Japanese as an American girl can be. She jabbers the language with what to me seems the fluency of a native and knows the customs and etiquette of Dai Nippon from a court reception to a country ramble amid green rice fields and Shinto temples. In addition, she can do what we would call in America a little polite “slumming,” being quite at home at entertainments at tea-houses on the Shimbashi or by the banks of the Sumida River, where she calls out “Ha irashi!” to entering geisha