



East is West

Stapledon, William Olaf

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About Stapledon:

He was born in Seacombe, Wallasey, on the Wirral peninsula near Liverpool, the only son of William Clibbert Stapledon and Emmeline Miller. The first six years of his life were spent with his parents at Port Said. He was educated at Abbotsholme School and Balliol College, Oxford, where he acquired a BA in Modern History in 1909 and a Master's degree in 1913[citation needed]. After a brief stint as a teacher at Manchester Grammar School, he worked in shipping offices in Liverpool and Port Said from 1910 to 1913. During World War I he served with the Friends' Ambulance Unit in France and Belgium from July 1915 to January 1919. On 16 July 1919 he married Agnes Zena Miller (1894-1984), an Australian cousin whom he had first met in 1903, and who maintained a correspondence with him throughout the war from her home in Sydney. They had a daughter, Mary Sydney Stapledon (1920-), and a son, John David Stapledon (1923-). In 1920 they moved to West Kirby, and in 1925 Stapledon was awarded a PhD in philosophy from the University of Liverpool. He wrote *A Modern Theory of Ethics*, which was published in 1929. However he soon turned to fiction to present his ideas to a wider public. *Last and First Men* was very successful and prompted him to become a full-time writer. He wrote a sequel, and followed it up with many more books on subjects associated with what is now called Transhumanism. In 1940 the family built and moved into Simon's Field, in Caldy. After 1945 Stapledon travelled widely on lecture tours, visiting the Netherlands, Sweden and France, and in 1948 he spoke at the Congress of Intellectuals for Peace in Wrocław, Poland. He attended the Conference for World Peace held in New York in 1949, the only Briton to be granted a visa to do so. In 1950 he became involved with the anti-apartheid movement; after a week of lectures in Paris, he cancelled a projected trip to Yugoslavia and returned to his home in Caldy, where he died very suddenly of a heart attack. Olaf Stapledon was cremated at Landican Crematorium; his widow Agnes and their children Mary and John scattered his ashes on the sandy cliffs overlooking the Dee Estuary, a favourite spot of Olaf's, and a location that features in more than one of his books. Source: Wikipedia

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I LEFT MY LODGINGS IN WEST KIRBY IN THE MIDDLE OF the morning and walked along the Estuary shore, I arriving at my favourite bathing place when the tide was only a few yards from the foot of the clay cliffs. The sand, as usual on a fine Sunday, was crowded with parties, bathing and sun-bathing. I undressed and swam out till the coast was but a strip between sea and sky. At my farthest point I floated for a long while, the sun pouring through my closed eyelids. I began to feel giddy and slightly sick, so I hurried back to land.

During the rather lengthy swim I was surprised to see that the shore and the cliff-top, which I thought had been crowded, were in fact deserted. The one heap of clothes which I could detect, and which I therefore took to be my own, perplexed me by its colour. I was still more perplexed when I walked out of the water to it and found that apparently someone had removed my own flannels and had substituted a queer fancy dress of "Chinesy," pyjama-like trousers and jacket, both made of richly ornamented blue brocade. Even the towel was decorated with a Chinese or Japanese pattern; but in one corner it was marked with my own name. After a vain search for my proper clothes, I dried myself, and began experimenting with the fancy dress, shivering, and cursing the practical joker.

A bright silver coin, about the size of a florin, fell out of one of the pockets. Picking it up, I was surprised by its odd look. Closer inspection surprised me still more, for it bore on one side a grim but not unhandsome female profile, surrounded by the legend, "Godiva Dei Gra. Brit. et Gall. Reg." On the obverse was a seemingly archaic version of the royal arms, which included the French lilies but omitted the Irish harp. Round the edge I read "One Florin 1934." There were also some Japanese characters, which, to my amazement, I read. They signified, "Kingdom of Britain. Two Shillings." Other coins in the pockets proved to be of the same fantastic type. There was also a letter, in its torn envelope, inscribed in Japanese characters. I recognized the name at once as the Japanese transcription of my own. The address was that of a well-known shipping firm in Liverpool. Well-known? Collecting my wits, I realized that, familiar as it seemed, I really knew nothing about it.

By this time I was thoroughly alarmed about the state of my mind. How came it that I could read Japanese? Whence these clothes? What had become of the holiday crowd?

Since the letter was addressed to me, I read it. The writer accepted an invitation to visit me for a few days with his wife. After referring to various shipping matters, which came to me with a distressing blend of

familiarity and novelty, he signed himself, if I remember rightly, "Azuki Kawamura."

Sick with cold and fright, I put on the clothes, and could not help noting that every movement executed itself with the ease of well-established habit, not with the clumsiness of one struggling with fancy dress.

I hurried along the shore toward West Kirby. With a fresh shock I discovered that the distant buildings looked all wrong. It was comforting to see that Hilbre Island at least was more or less as it should be, and that the contours of the Welsh hills across the Estuary left nothing to be desired. The black-headed gulls were indistinguishable from those of my normal experience. Half a dozen shell-duck, floating on the receding tide, were correctly attired.

Two figures approached me. What would they think of my fancy dress? But apparently it was not fancy dress; it was the orthodox costume of a gentleman. As the couple advanced, it revealed itself as a man and a girl, walking arm in arm. A few paces from me, they unlinked. He touched his cap, she curtsied. Indifferently, almost contemptuously, I acknowledged their salute. We passed.

I had been surprised to see that their dress was neither that of modern Europe nor yet Eastern like my own. It suggested a very inaccurate and ragged version of the costume of Elizabethan England as worn by the humbler sort. But he smoked a cigarette, and she bore aloft a faded Japanese sunshade.

Arriving at the town, I found that it was not West Kirby at all, not the West Kirby that I knew. The natural setting of the place was normal, but man's works were completely unrecognisable. With perfect assurance I walked along the entirely unfamiliar marine parade. The houses were mostly half-timbered, some were even thatched. But others showed unmistakably the influence of Japanese or Chinese culture. There was a "pagoda-ish" look about them. One or two were tall ferro-concrete buildings, whose vast window-space made them appear like crystal palaces. Even these betrayed in their decoration an Asiatic inspiration. It was almost as though China or Japan had been the effective centre of "Americanisation."

The parade was thronged with people of all ages and both sexes, dressed mostly in semi-Asiatic style. In some cases a native English costume had been overlaid with foreign additions, here a Chinese dragoned scarf, there a coloured sunshade. The best dressed women wore what I should describe as silk kimonos; but many of these garments were sleeveless, and none reached to the ankles. They displayed silk stockings

of a type that in my own world would be regarded as European and modern, save for their great diversity and brilliance of colouring. One or two of the women, seemingly the bolder, wore very gay silk trousers and sleeveless vests. The loose brocade suits of the men were mostly of more sombre colour. I was surprised to note that many even of the best dressed promenaders had pock-marked faces. I was surprised, too, at the large number of smartly uniformed men, evidently army officers, in Robin Hood green with wide-brimmed hats. On their hips large-hilted cutlasses and neat pistol holsters combined the medieval and the modern.

The language of all these strange people was recognisably English, but of a grotesque and, I judged, a somewhat archaic type. Words of Japanese origin occurred, but not frequently. Most technical words, it seemed, were English translations of Japanese or Chinese originals. On a minute concrete building, which turned out to be a telephone call box, I noticed the phrase "Public Lightning Speaker," and under it in Japanese characters the Japanese word "Denwa."

Motors there were in plenty; but horse-drawn vehicles also, and a number of sedan chairs. Out at sea I saw a small, high-pooped, antique sailing vessel, and on the horizon a great ocean liner, trailing her black smoke.

At a certain point I turned off the Parade and passed along the shop-lined streets. The windows were all veiled for the Sabbath. Many of the large shops displayed Chinese or Japanese signs as well as English ones. I passed a small Asiatic building which I took to be a Buddhist temple. Examining the printed notices displayed at its entrance, I judged that it catered not only for Asiatic visitors but for English converts. My course now led me into the poorer quarter, and I was shocked to note the overcrowding and filth of this part of the town. Swarms of ragged urchins in native English dress played in every gutter. They had an unpleasant tendency to flee as I approached, though a few stood their ground and sullenly touched their forelocks. Many were also rickety, or covered with festering sores. In the heart of this poor district I came upon an old Gothic church. It turned out to be the parish church, and Roman Catholic. A constant stream of the devout, mostly rather shabby, flowed in at one door and out at another.

After a while the streets began to improve, and presently I emerged upon a great avenue bordered by gardens and opulent-looking houses of the sort which I now recognized as both Asiatic and modern.

One of these pocket-mansions was apparently my own, for I entered it without permission. It was a delightful, even a luxurious building, and I reflected that changing my world I had also "gone up in the world."

At the sound of my entry a manservant appeared in a vaguely "Beefeater" kind of livery. Flinging him my bathers and towel, I opened a door out of the entrance hall and went into a sitting room. Before I had time to study it, a woman rose from some cushions on the floor and caught me in her arms.

"Tom! Base Tom," she said, smiling gaily. "'Tis but a month since we wed, and already thou art entarded for thy Sunday dinner! Foolish me to let thee practice thy Asiatic water-vice unkeepered!"

A bachelor, I might have shown some confusion at this reception, but I found myself embracing her with proprietary confidence and zestfully kissing her lips.

"Sweet Betty, let me envisage thee," I said, "to see if thou art worn with pining for me."

So this was my wife, and her name was Betty, and we had been married a month and were evidently still very pleased about it. She was fair, superbly Nordic. Behind the sparkle of her laughing eyes I detected a formidable earnestness. She was tall. Her green silk kimono veiled the contours of an Amazon. As she broke from me and swept through the door, smiling over her shoulder, I wondered how I had ever persuaded such a splendid creature to marry me.

The gong (a Chinese bronze) was sounding for our Sunday dinner. I rushed upstairs to wash, but on the landing I encountered our Japanese guests. He was a slim middle-aged figure in brocade of decent grey. She, much younger, was slight, trousered in deep blue shantung, and vested in crimson. The light was behind her, and I saw almost nothing of her face.

I bowed deeply and began to speak in Japanese. It was rather terrifying to watch the appropriate thoughts emerge in my mind and embody themselves fluently in a language of which I supposed myself to be completely ignorant. "I hope, sir, that you had a successful morning, and that you will not have to leave us again today. We should like to take you to call on some friends who long to meet you." The couple returned my salute, I thought, rather sadly. I was soon to discover that they had reason for gloom.

"Alas," he said, "our experience this morning suggests that we had better not appear in public more than we can help. Since the crisis, your countrymen do not like the Yellows. If you still permit, we will stay with

you till my business is done and our ship sails; but for your sakes and our own, it is better that we should not risk further trouble." I was about to protest, but he raised his hand, smiled, and ushered his wife downstairs.

After washing in the tiled and chromium-plated bathroom (the taps screwed the wrong way), I hurried into our bedroom to brush my hair. It was a relief to find that the mirror still showed my familiar face; but whether through the refreshment of the bath or owing to more enduring causes, I appeared rather healthier and more prosperous than was customary in my other world.

On the dressing table was a newspaper. The bulk of it was written in English, but a few columns and a few advertisements were in Japanese. I vaguely remembered reading it in bed over an early cup of tea. It was called, I think, *The Sunday Watchman*. I opened it, and discovered on the main page, in huge headlines, "Ultimatum to the Yellow Peoples. Hands off Europe. Britain will defend her allies."

Betty's clear voice bade me hurry, and not be so "special" over my toilet.

When I arrived downstairs, she was explaining to the guests, in her serviceable but rather inaccurate Japanese, that she had again taken them at their word, and ordered a typical English meal for them. "Although," she said, with the faintest emphasis, "we ourselves are now more used to Eastern diet."

It fell to me to carve the roast beef of old England and at the same time to make conversation in Japanese. To judge by the ease with which I combined these actions, both must have been familiar.

Yet every moment of my experience was completely novel and fantastic. With curiosity and yet familiarity my eyes roamed about the room. The dinner service was of China, in both senses. To be in keeping with the affectedly native meal it should have been of pewter or wood. With some amusement I noted our elegant little thin-stemmed, flat-bowled sake cups, of silver, gold-inlaid. These I had bought in Nagasaki on my last visit to the East. Evidently my wife had been unable to resist the temptation of displaying them, though they were quite incongruous in a sample English meal. The furniture was vaguely Tudor, so to speak. On the walls hung painted silks which I knew to be Chinese and Japanese, though some of them were confusingly reminiscent of modernist European art in my other world. I regarded with special pride and affection a tall silken panel on which was very delicately and abstractly suggested a slender waterfall surrounded by autumnal trees. Wreaths of

mist or spray veiled the further foliage. Above, and more remote, domes of forest, receding, one behind the other, loomed ghostly through clouds. "Forest on forest hung about his head," I murmured to myself, and wondered whether in my new, strange world Keats had any footing. This much prized panel, this silken forest of copper and gold and pearl grey, I had bought from an artist in Tokyo.

The company was as hybrid as the room. Two English maidservants in mobcaps and laced bodices moved demurely in the background. Opposite me sat my exquisitely English wife, the warm tone of her sunned arms contrasting with the cool parchment-like skin of the Japanese lady. The grave and slightly grizzled Mr. Kawamura was typical (I half guessed it, half remembered) of the finer sort of Japanese man of affairs. He was a "shipping director," which was the Japanese equivalent of a ship owner. That is, he was a civil servant in control of a line of steamers. In Japan, I recollected, all the means of production were now state-owned.

This fact, along with others that cropped up in the course of conversation, made me revise my view of the relation of my new world to my old. I had guessed that the roles of Japan and Britain were simply reversed. But evidently the situation was more complicated than that, for Japan was some sort of socialist state. I was soon to have further evidence of complication.

My intense curiosity about everything, and my anxiety lest my own behaviour should betray me, bid fair to be eclipsed by a third interest, namely the fascination of Mrs. Kawamura's personality. I was at first inclined to think of her as a modernized and world-conscious reincarnation of the Lady Murasaki; but presently I learned that she was in fact a native not of Japan but of China. Though her shining black hair was cut short, and her whole bearing, like her dress, was frankly modern, her features (of old ivory) and also her grave intelligent expression suggested the ancient culture of her race. In spite of her "shingle" and bare arms, she reminded me of a certain very delicate Chinese miniature painter and embroidered on silk. This I had long ago encountered in my other world, and its pale perfect face had become my symbol of all the best in China. Mrs. Kawamura's was this face done large and with an added largeness of spirit. Her heavy eyelids gave her an expression of perpetual meditation. A sweet and subtle mockery played about her eyes and lips. But more particularly I was intrigued by her manner, by the way in which she moved her hands and turned her head. Her whole

demeanour reminded me of the action of an artist engaged on some very precise but ample piece of brush-work, so exact it was, yet flowing.

Between the courses Mrs. Kawamura drew a cigarette case from her pochette and asked if it was permitted to smoke at such an early stage in an English meal. Betty, after a minute pause, hastened to say, "Why, of course, in the houses of those who have travelled." Up to this point I had played my part without a single lapse, but now at last I tripped. Automatically I produced a matchbox from my pocket, struck a light, and offered it for her convenience. Mrs. Kawamura hesitated for a moment, looked me in the eyes, glanced at my wife, then smilingly shook her head and used her own cigarette lighter. Betty, I saw, was blushing and trying not to show bewilderment and distress. In a flash it came upon me that in England (of this new world) one did not offer to light a woman's cigarette unless one was very intimate with her. I began to stammer an apology; but Mr. Kawamura saved the situation with a laugh, and said to Betty, "Your husband forgot that he is no longer in Japan, where that action is considered only common politeness." I snatched at this excuse. "Yes," I said, "I grew so used to it. And today I have had too much sun." It was Betty's turn to laugh, as best she could. Lapsing into English, she said, "Thy Oriental ways keep surprising me, Tom, but I expect I shall get used to them." In Japanese she added, "Of course England is rather stupid about some things."

Mrs. Kawamura leaned toward Betty and lightly touched the hand that still nervously crumbled a piece of bread. There was nothing of patronage in the act; or if there was, it was rendered inoffensive by the sincere and rather timid respect of the culture which is already in full and determinate blossom for the culture which has still to unfold. "You English women," she said, "have a great task. You have to see that your men preserve what is best in England while they absorb what is best in the East." Smiling at her husband, she continued, "Men are all such boys. They run after flashy new things and throwaway the well-tried old things. Azuki, there, is much more interested in his new turbo-electric liner than in the incomparable literature of my country." This mischievous sally was evidently well directed, for Mr. Kawamura responded with amiable indignation, asserting his claim to be an amateur of letters, and adding that if no one thought about ships and other practical matters, no one would have leisure to enjoy Chinese literature.

Thus far the talk had avoided the subject which was in all our minds, the international crisis. By common consent we had spoken only of personal matters, of a Kawamura nephew who was studying in Canton and

of Betty's young sister, at an Orientalised school in London. But the conversation was now definitely turned to the differences between East and West. Our guests generously praised the courage and enterprise which, within eighty years, had changed Britain from a feudal to a modern industrial community of the first rank. To this I politely replied that we had but copied what Japan's genius had created. For had not the Japanese been the pioneers of mechanical invention and commercial organization during four of the most momentous centuries of human history? "If at the dawn of our era, after Rome's fall, we English had been as great seamen as the Japanese have always been, we might have forestalled you. But though Nordic sea-rovers contributed to our racial stock, we did not preserve their maritime habits. Nor did the continent of Europe." The words slid easily from my lips, but they were startling news to my mind.

Mrs. Kawamura remarked that in the East there was now a strong conviction that commercialism and mechanization had in fact done more harm than good. It had blinded the great majority to all that was most desirable in life. Were not the English now in grave danger of ruining their own admirable native culture in their haste to dominate the world with their new industrial power? "To us," she said, "it seems terrible that, in spite of our tragic example, you should plunge blindly into the modern barbarism and grossness from which we ourselves are only today struggling to escape. And now, just when we are at last finding the beginnings of peace and wisdom and general happiness, when the Chinese nations are at last outgrowing their age-old enmities, when all the Yellow Peoples are becoming reconciled even to the half-European but mellowing culture of Russia, must we be drawn into this terrible quarrel between yourselves and New Nippon? If there is war, how can I ever think of you two dear English people as my enemies?"

At the mention of New Nippon, I remembered with a shock of surprise the great independent Federation which included the whole of North America. This vast community was formerly the most successful of Japan's colonies and had since become the mightiest of all the "Eastern Powers."

"But why," I asked, "should you come in at all? This quarrel is so remote from you. You have no longer any European possessions except Gibraltar, which you are in the very act of selling to us. Your empire has fallen from you, and you are happier without it. Your reduced population makes you far less dependent on foreign trade than formerly. Your traditional championship of the oppressed should induce you to side

with us, or at least not against us. And what have you to gain by coming in? Your social conditions are the envy of the East, and of the West also. And though you are politically eclipsed, you share with North China the cultural leadership of the world. War will simply destroy all this. If you come in, you will merely be used as a tool by your more powerful and less civilized kinsmen. But why should there be any question of your coming in?"

"Why indeed?" said Mr. Kawamura. Then, after a pause, "The true reason, I think, is this. Though we have lost our empire we are still bound to it. Our former dominions in South Africa and South Nippon" (by this name I knew he referred to Australia) "and our ally the Maori Kingdom, have a firm hold on us. Such foreign trade as we have (and we do still need foreign trade) is nearly all of it trade with them. Well, some of those former dominions are terribly frightened of your rising power. They have large unoccupied territories; while you and your inseparable allies the Irish are over-crowded. We have long ago learned to control the growth of our population, but you persist in refusing to do so. Inevitably then you must expand. Together with Ireland, and with the support of your European dependencies, you constitute a formidable military power." Here he hesitated. "Your imperialism is at least as ruthless as ours was in the old days. Our former colonies know well that you will attack them sooner or later. Better at once, they say, before you are invincible."

Betty broke in to say, "But surely you see that we must free Europe. I know our policy has often been harsh and provoking. I am not one of those who think we are always right. But this time we must be firm. It's a solemn duty."

"Well," continued Mr. Kawamura, "on the whole you have a pretty strong case; though of course we can't believe you are really going to free Europe. You are going to take over the management of Europe from New Nippon. That is the real aim of your elder statesmen. Anyhow, I personally agree that it is folly for Japan to come into the war. But racial passion has been roused, partly by the propaganda of trade interests in New Nippon, partly by your own press. And your Queen, your great but dangerous Queen, has said things which were bound to enrage the less balanced sections of our public."

"Yes, Azuki," said Mrs. Kawamura. "But surely by now the less balanced sections of our public have very little effect on government action. After all, since our Great Change we are rapidly becoming civilized enough and cosmopolitan enough to laugh at a few cattish insults." She

checked herself, smiled deprecatingly at Betty, and proceeded. "No, if our government wanted to keep out, it could. But somehow it seems to lack the courage to do so. I wonder whether New Nippon has some horrible secret financial control over us. Not that we can actually help them much by coming in. But the wealthy caste of New Nippon are inclined to hate us because we have learned the lesson that they cannot bring themselves to learn. They know that war would ruin our modest prosperity and make nonsense of our new, hard-won culture. Might they not bring us in for sheer spite?"

Her husband raised his eyebrows, and said nothing. The dessert was now over, and we moved into our "withdrawing room." Here there was rather more of Japanese influence than in the dining room. The furniture was of lacquer. A great stone or concrete fireplace, however, betrayed the English character of the house.

Tea was served in cups of eggshell china, which Mrs. Kawamura tactfully admired. Betty explained with some self-consciousness that though tea was not included in the orthodox English diet, we had grown very dependent on this most refreshing Oriental drink and could not face the prospect, of doing without it after our Sunday dinner. The habit was indeed rapidly spreading.

Before seating myself I had picked up a large book which I rightly expected to be an atlas. During the ensuing conversation I turned over its pages. I came first on a map of the British Isles. The "Kingdom of Ireland" was coloured green, the Kingdoms of England and Scotland red. Towns, mountains, and rivers mostly bore familiar names. A population map revealed the well-known concentrations around London and in the industrial North, but towns and rural areas were both more populous than in my "other world." Ireland, moreover, contained almost as many people as England, presumably because throughout its history it had developed as an independent community. The total population of the British Isles was over seventy million.

Turning to a map of Europe, I found the northern half of France labelled "Kingdom of France," and coloured red, like Britain. The Netherlands and all the coastlands of the Western Baltic appeared pink and were dubbed "Liberated Nordic Principalities." Pink proved to be the colour of "British Protectorates and Dependencies." Most of these principalities, together with much of Central Europe and Italy, were embraced within a crimson border. Across this vast territory was printed "Holy Roman Empire." This region, and indeed most of Europe, was divided into a mosaic of principalities, duchies, free cities. Scattered

around all the coasts of the continent were little patches of yellow, the largest of which included Hamburg. The key gave yellow as "Terrains seized by New Nippon." Large tracts in the Iberian Peninsula, the Balkans, Western Russia, and the eastern marches of the Empire were coloured buff and labelled "War Lords," or "No Settled Government," or "Workers' Councils." The eastern half of Russia bore the legend, "Union of Socialist Conciliar Republics."

A map of the world showed this "Soviet" Union (if I may so translate it) as extending to the Pacific. Its centre of gravity was evidently well to the east, for its capital was a town not far from the Chinese frontier, bearing a Mongolian name unfamiliar to me. China consisted of three great republics. Korea and Manchuria were independent "Empires." India was a congeries of native states. Across the whole subcontinent was printed, "Aryan Peoples Liberated from Japan," with appropriate dates. Many others were coloured with the yellow of; New Nippon. That most formidable of the "Eastern" Powers, which extended from the Arctic to Mexico, was covered with Japanese names. Its capital was a city where San Francisco should have been. In South America, which was cut up into many states, such names as were not native were obviously of Chinese origin. In place of the three great British dominions of the Southern Hemisphere appeared "Nippon in Afric," "South Nippon," and "Maori Kingdom," all of them independent.

While I was still poring over the atlas, the church clock chimed the hour. Betty rose, saying to the guests, "It is almost time for the Queen's speech. I hope you will excuse us if we listen, for it is a solemn duty for all Britons to hear Her Majesty today." The Kawamuras assured her that, though they could not understand English, they would gladly listen to the world-famous voice. Betty thanked them, pressed the switch, and resumed her seat.

The news bulletin was being announced in an intensively cultivated English voice. The language was a kind of English which in my "other world" I should have regarded as a fantastic hybrid of Babu and Elizabethan. Familiar words bore strange yet intelligible meanings, or were piquantly misshapen. As I listened I interjected an occasional sentence of Japanese translation for our guests. If my memory is faithful, what I heard was roughly as follows; but much of the linguistic oddity has escaped me.

In the East End of London, the voice assured us, revulsion was now stilled. The Lord High Sheriff, mindful of the foreign peril, had gripped this homely peril firmly. He was resolved to convince the erring

commonalty of that region that they had been abducted by foreign tongue-wielders, and that the witful British people would none of their treason. All good Europeans should be mindful that, though Russia was partly European, the dangerous political thoughts of the Conciliar Union and its emissaries were wholly Asiatic. The Lord Sheriff had therefore encompassed the whole revulsive region in a martial cincture. Two war-ships in the Thames had cast shell on Poplar and Canning Town, till all the rebel holds were disrupted. Soon after dawn the obsedient troops advanced. Their compressive movement met no repugnance. The rebels abjected their arms, and twelve score ringleaders were enchained. These were judged; and duly hanged, drawn, and quartered, in the presence of a God-thanking crowd. Some thousands of the less outstanding rebels were being concentrated in temporary castrations, afield in Essex, to await Her Majesty's pleasure.

After a pause the voice resumed in an awed tone which skillfully suggested suppressed excitement. Listeners, it said, were now to hear the living voice of their Sovereign. When the speaker solemnly commanded all who heard to stand, Betty and I promptly rose to our feet. Our guests, after one bewildered glance, followed suit. In an awed monotone, the announcer proclaimed: "Her Most Pure and Invincible Majesty, Godiva, by the Grace of God, Defender of the Christian Faith, Protector of the Holy Roman Empire, Queen."

After another pause another voice possessed the air, a somewhat husky, but regal, and withal seductive contralto.

"My subjects! My most loyal friends, English and Scottish! And ye, my few but faithful Welsh! All, all whose home is Britain, this demi-paradise, as our immortal Strongbow names it, this insel set in the silver sea. And you, my gallant French! And all my indefatigable Teutons! Others, too, I call; you my loving neighbors in the Green Isle, subjects of my dear cousin Shean. And not only to these I speak, but to all Europeans, of whatever nation and estate. For all, all of us together, are now affronted by this most severe and instant peril. Oh my peoples, all mine in spirit, though not all in title! Our homely differings now slip from us. We remind us only that we are one kin, colleagued together at last against the cunning, the heartless, the lascivious and Godless Yellows."

Such undiplomatic language was startling, even from our outspoken Queen. Explanation was soon to follow.

"It is not long since the last great war obtended its dark bloody wings over our continent. I myself, though scarce in the full bloom of my womanhood," (Betty at this point made a movement of surprise) "even I can

remember the victorious geste of British and French hosts against the heroic but miswitting Germans, whom foreign devils had abducted. I can recall well the day, soon after the handfasting of the peace, when I, the child Queen of Britain, was plauded by the rejoiced Parisians and crowned Queen of France, thereby resuming the lapsed title of my forebears. I can remember how the North German lords, who had by then destroyed their own traitorous princes, now wishfully and gladly laid their crownlets at my feet, my small ensatined feet."

Here the Queen paused. Mrs. Kawamura took the opportunity of disposing of a lengthy and precarious cigarette ash. Our eyes met. She knew no English, but it seemed that merely through the Queen's vocal demeanour she sensed the essence of the situation. I shall not forget how, when I had signalled mock distress, the noncommittal politeness of her glance was lit by relief and sad amusement.

Her Majesty continued. "Oh, Great White Peoples, since that war, much has happened. Through all those years I have striven to be worthy of the task which the ensworded Christ has set upon me, the delivery of Europe. For let us remind ourselves of well-known truth. In all our churches, our divine and most courageous Captain hangs crossed upon the blade and hilt of the Sword. That same Sword, when he had risen from the dead, he himself grasped, and wields today, leading the Faithful. He came not to bring peace. And I, though till today I have besieged my just aims by parley, am his lieutenant. Though it was by parley and fine machinations that I and my counsellors defted the Japanese from all their treaty ports, it was the springing strength of my army and navy and my aerals that rendered those pacific arguments convictive. But now, today, argument has failed; and I am here to call upon you, all White Peoples, to take arms in earnest. For the hour has come when we must constrain New Nippon to disgorge her rapine, or else betray irrevocably the cause for which we stand together."

Strange, I thought to myself, that only yesterday, before I had my mysterious dream of the other world (for I was beginning to reverse my view as to which world was real and which was fantasy) I might have applauded the Queen's apologia! And there stood Betty, till now my soul's twin, drinking the royal words with no misgiving.

The Queen continued. "I have recently and justly claimed on behalf of the Germans, Hamburg; for the French, Bordeaux; and for the Lambards, Genova. As ye already wit, Europeans, parley having failed, I have been constrained, after close heart-prying, to obdict an ultimatum. But what I shall now tell you, my peoples, will be newspell to you. Prevising clearly

the rebutment of that ultimatum, I forestalled the New Nippon retort. I struck. And already, even as I speak they bring me word that Hamburg's defences have been destrued by my brave aerials. A gallant geste, and most enheartening newspell, oh White Peoples! But let us not deceive ourselves. Dire days leap toward us. The whole force of New Nippon and of the Chinese Republic, and haply of Japan also, will be oppugned against us. Nothing can save us now but crazy hardihood."

Again the Queen paused. Betty's large eyes sought mine, but I dared not face them. Mrs. Kawamura's had found diversion in watching a tomtit through the window. Her husband was obviously wondering if he could sit without committing lese majeste.

The royal voice resumed. "Oh men and women of Europe! We shall one and all be stricken by the hugest and most contorturous of wars. The sky will rain fire and poison. Millions shall die. But oh Europeans, let such as die, die singing to the ensworded Christ, whose truth we stand for. Let such as live, live hate fast toward the Yellows, till all the coasts of Europe be purged of these slot-eyed commercers of the East: who suck and squander the natural wealth of our continent; who undo the native toughness of our bodies by teaching us their own soft life; who undo the strength of our souls by logiking that our holy Church is founded on lies, and that our Christ, like their own Buddha, prized gentleness above fortitude. They gave us opium. They have tempted our coupling lovers with filthy lore to prevent the sacred burden of motherhood, hoping thereby to thin our numbers. Women of Europe, consider! In Japan, so little do men prize virtue, that husbands lend out their wives to any guest for the night. And what wives, what women! Painted! Lewdly exhibiting their jaundy breasts, and... "

I sprang to the radio and snapped the switch. "Tom, Tom," cried Betty, gripping my arm. "What ails thee? Her Majesty! If someone should have heard you check her!" Then laughter seized me. Mrs. Kawamura smiled, perplexed, demure. Mists and irrelevant shapes came before my eyes. Still laughing, I woke in my "other world." I was in the horsehair chair by the fireplace in my lodging-house sitting room. My landlady, who was clearing away my Sunday dinner, was laughing too, apparently at something I had said or done, for she now remarked, "Well, you are a queer one!" The lace curtains fluttered by the open window. In the garden my "bather" and towel were swinging on the clothesline.

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