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A GILDED SIN.

BY BERTHA M. CLAY.

"Never do that again, child," he said "never again."

She glanced at him quickly, not understanding. How should she?

"Have I vexed you?" she asked. "I am sorry, for you are so kind."

"You have not vexed me, Veronica," he said. "Why should you have done so? English people are unused to showing emotion—yours startled me. I am pleased that you like the jewels. I shall be glad to see you wear them when your black dresses are laid aside."

By the middle of December Veronica was quite at home. How she loved Katherine! She had a strange, vague, undefined sentiment about Sir Jasper—a feeling that even she herself could not understand. She was grateful to Lady Brandon; She would have done anything for her. But it was Katherine whom she loved—the beautiful, haughty, capricious young heiress—Katherine, who had been the first to love her. There was something almost pathetic in the way in which she followed her about and waited upon her. She would have served her almost on her knees. She watched her every look, waited for her every word. Lady Brandon was amused by it, Sir Jasper was pained.

She had been introduced to most of their friends and neighbors; the beautiful Venetian girl whose face was a study, whose voice was like music, was admired by all who saw her. She went with Katherine to all the balls, the soirees, the parties in the neighborhood, where they reigned as queens. There was no jealousy, no rivalry between them. How could there be, when Veronica worshipped her brilliant young sister?

So Christmas came, and it was, as usual, kept up in right good English style at Queen's Chase. Every man, woman, and child on the estate was the happier for its coming, and richer; Sir Jasper was most liberal. The friends he had invited came, and among them was Alton, Lord Wynleigh, who had decided not to leave Queen's Chase until he had won the hand of its heiress. He conquered after a few days' hard siege; the lovely, willful girl had plighted her troth to him, and he knew that she would keep it sacred until death. It was a pretty love-story, coming to a crisis on Christmas Eve, as he held her under the mistletoe and demanded the forfeit.

"Give me something else, Kate," he said. "A kiss from you is indeed a favor, but I want something more."

"What do you want?" she asked.

"I want your love, your promise to be my wife, your troth-plight. I want you, my darling, to be my own forever and ever. What do you say?"

The sweet flushed face drooped before his, the blue eyes could not meet his own, the sweet lips opened, but he did not hear the faint whisper that came from them.

"Kate," he said, "what do you say? You know, my darling, if I thought you did not love me, I would go away now from out of the light of your sweet presence, and I would—well, I should be worth nothing all the rest of my life. You see, Kate, you are a great heiress—that makes all the difference."

"What difference does it make?" she asked.

"Just this—that if you were not a great heiress, I would make you love me. I would clasp you now in my arms and kiss you until you said 'Yes' but—"

"But what, Alton?"

"If I urged you too much, and prayed and begged of you as it is in my heart to pray, you might think I cared about your fortune; but I do not."

"I am sure you do not," she replied.

"My darling," he said, drawing her nearer to him, "you trust me; you shall see that your trust is not in vain. Will you be my wife, Kate?"

The answer this time must have satisfied him, for he kissed the lips on which it trembled, murmuring words that were sweetest music to Katherine.

"I shall work for you, Kate," he said—"my Kate, the bonniest Kate in Christendom. I will not ask you to marry me until I have made a position worthy of your father's daughter. I have led a useless life, but it shall be useless no more. I will work for you. Men shall never say I married an heiress for her money. Kate, your sweet love has made a man of me. To-morrow will be Christmas Day, and in the morning I shall go to your father and tell him. Will he give you to me, Kate?"

"I hope so," she replied silently. "He would do anything to make me happy."

That was why Sir Jasper sat on Christmas morning as the gay bells were ringing, with saddened eyes and darkening face, while the great heart of the world beat high with joy. Lord Wynleigh had waited upon him to make his formal request for his daughter's hand. Sir Jasper listened kindly—he had a great liking for the gallant, handsome young lover.

"What am I to say to you, Wynleigh? My daughter has many suitors. I should like her to marry the one she loves best."

"That is myself, Sir Jasper," he replied, proudly.

Sir Jasper smiled.

"You think so. Well, there is one remark I must make. So far as regards 'worldly goods,' you are certainly not the most eligible lover."

"Never mind that, Sir Jasper," said Lord Wynleigh. "I know it, and am going to remedy it. Do not imagine that I am saying to you, Give me your daughter now at once—my hands are empty, but she will fill them. It is not that. I say, give me the hope of one day calling Katherine my wife, and I will set to work at once. I will make such a name that I shall not be ashamed to ask her to share it. Will you say 'Yes' Sir Jasper?"

"You speak bravely. You are sure my daughter loves you?"

"Kate says so," the young man replied, "and she never speaks falsely."

"Then I give my consent," said Sir Jasper. "But Katherine is too young to marry yet. She must wait a year or two. The child is but just seventeen. Come back in two years' time, to claim her, if in the meantime you have made a position for yourself. I do not care that you should make money, but I do care for the other."

"I will do it Sir Jasper," he replied, "and you will help me. I shall study under you—help me with your influence. There is a borough vacant now. Help me to place my foot on the first rung of the ladder, and I will never cease until I reach the top."

Long after Lord Wynleigh had left him Sir Jasper sat silent and motionless, listening to the sound of the joy bells—listening to the music and laughter which filled the old Chace. What was he to do? When the sanguine young lover left him, dark and bitter thoughts came to him. He was an Englishman, with a hatred of all fraud and deceit. What could he do? He could never allow Lord Wynleigh to marry Kate under the impression that she was heiress to the grand domain of Queen's Chace and Hurstwood. She was not so in reality. All his broad lands belonged by right to his elder child, the beautiful dark-eyed Veronica. Before Lord Wynleigh married Katherine he must know the truth. Sir Jasper rose from his seat.

"I am a brave man, and a strong man," he said; "but I would rather face death than tell my story now."

It seemed so far away to the middle-aged statesman, the story of his youth—the mad love that had altered his whole life. It would be profanation to him to hear Giulia's name mentioned now. He could imagine the sneers, the comments that would follow. The Opposition journals would be sure to get hold of it, and hold up to public ridicule, the one treasured poem of his heart. He could not bear it. Come what might, he would, he must keep his secret yet a little longer; and in the meantime he would have his will prepared—a will in which the truth should be told, and Queen's Chace, with all the broad lands round Hurstwood given to his daughter Veronica. At the same time he would put all the papers that went to prove her identity into one packet, and give them to her. Why, because her mother was dead, should he rob her of her birthright? What could he do to atone to her for her long cheerless youth, her cold, joyless life. He could not defraud Giulia's child. If he could have divided the inheritance, all would have been well, but that was impossible. In the Brandon family, where there was no male heir, the eldest daughter succeeded to the barony, to the title and estates; and there had been several baronesses. Therefore the inheritance must go to his eldest daughter. That was Veronica.

What would those proud Valdoraines—the proudest people in England—say to him when they heard that Katherine was not his heiress after all? Katherine Brandon's name was known all over England. Sir Jasper was at a loss. His sense of justice and his love of right, his love and his pride, his honesty and his sensitive reserve were all at war. There was but one gleam of comfort. The marriage between Lord Wynleigh and Katherine would not take place yet. Some unforeseen combination of circumstances might take place before then.

"It is not quite the kind of marriage that I expected for Katherine," said Lady Brandon, when her husband sent for her to tell her. "Still I shall make no opposition—there is a chance, as you know."

"What chance?" asked Sir Jasper.

"They tell me that the young marquis is not only very unsteady, but that he is certainly in declining health," said Lady Brandon. "If it should be so, then Alton will be Earl of Woodwyn. That would be a high position—I should be quite satisfied."

"My dear wife," remarked Sir Jasper, "no good comes of hoping for dead men's shoes."

"I am not hoping for them," said Lady Brandon; "I am merely saying that it would be an excellent thing for Katherine."

* * *

"Veronica," said Katherine, "come to my room when you go to dress for dinner. I want to tell you something."

And when Veronica went in she started at the beautiful vision. Katherine stood before her in a low dinner-dress of white silk, trimmed with glowing crimson holly-berries, her white shoulders and arms gleaming like pearl, a diamond cross on her white breast and diamond stars in her golden hair. She looked like a dream of beauty. Veronica kissed the pretty shoulders and the white arms.

"How beautiful you are, my darling!" she said. "You look like the spirit of Christmas. Now I see how beautiful English women can be."

"I am always beautiful in your eyes, Veronica," she replied.

They were standing side by side, Katherine all bright and radiant, Veronica, in her pale, passionate beauty, in a long trailing black dress. The contrast between them was startling.

"I have something to tell you, Veronica," she said. "Never mind admiring my dress, never mind my diamonds—look at my face."

"I am looking at it, my darling," returned Veronica.

"Does it tell you anything?" asked Katherine, with the low sweet laughter of perfect content.

"Only that it is the dearest face in the world," replied Veronica, kissing the laughing lips.

"Veronica," said Katherine, "whom, at this moment, should you consider the very happiest girl in all the world?"

"The very happiest of all? Oh, how could I tell?"

"I will tell you. It is myself, Katherine Brandon. And can you guess why I am so happy? It is because—oh, Veronica, how shall I tell you?—it is because someone whom I love very much loves me—me, you understand Veronica—not my fortune, not Queen's Chace, but me—loves me—and has asked me to be his wife."

"His wife," repeated Veronica, softly. Katherine, the laughter-loving beauty, was suddenly invested with an importance in her eyes which was marvellous. "How wonderful—how strange!"

"Nay, it is not strange, Veronica. I love him—he loves me. Can you guess, who it is?"

Slowly the dark eyes wandered over the bright face, and then sad Veronica answered:

"It must be Lord Wynleigh."

"Yes," said Katherine, simply, "it is Lord Wynleigh; and I am not one of the happiest, but the happiest girl in all the world. Nevertheless I tell myself that such great joy as mine cannot last—that a time will come when I must suffer and weep and grieve as other people do. What will it be for?" She looked wistfully at Veronica as she spoke. "I have read," she said, "of ships safe enough to sail in when the sea is calm, but sure to sink when the storm comes on. I think I should be like one of those ships—I should go down in the first storm."

"We will hope then that a storm will never come," put in Veronica. "If it depended on me there never should," she added. "Still there is one thing I can safely promise you—one thing that I will do. If ever it lies in my power to give you happiness, I will give it to you."

And the time came when the memory of those words weighed down the balance in which she held both lives.

CHAPTER V.

As Veronica descended the broad staircase she looked in astonishment at the brilliant scene that met her gaze on every side. The shining lights, the wealth of evergreens, holly with lovely laughing crimson berries, the graceful laurel with its shining leaves, the dark stately fir and the sweet mystical mistletoe—it was all like a dream to her. Her heart warmed as she gazed. If this was an English Christmas, then might Heaven bless Christmas for evermore! Everyone had something kind to say; there was a smile on every face, light in kindly eyes, music in the sound of kindly voices. She thought that while she lived she would never forget the words, "I wish you a happy Christmas;" and the speakers, the kindly people so tender and true of heart, were the cold reserved English who her aunt had told her were accursed! She looked at the noble faces of the men, faces that told of power and skill, of courage and self-command; she looked at the fair blonde faces of the laughing girls and the graceful women; and she thought that the English were a great people, greater than the old stately Venetians. There was not even a tinge of envy in her heart as she noted the lovely younger girls. She was quite unconscious of her own picturesque beauty, of the poetical loveliness of her face, the grace of her figure clad in its trailing black robes. Among those fair English girls she looked like a gorgeous passion-flower in the midst of white lilies.

She never forgot the Christmas dinner, her first in England—the grand table with its costly silver and delicate glass, the profusion of flowers and fruits, the sparkling wines, the laughter, the general air of happiness, while outside the wind wailed among the leafless trees and the stars shone in the Christmas sky. She saw Katherine with her bright laughing face and her handsome young lover following her like a shadow. Presently Sir Jasper came up to her.

"Do you like our English way of keeping Christmas, Veronica?" he asked.

She looked at him.

"It is more beautiful than anything I have ever seen," she replied; and then he turned abruptly away, for she had looked at him with dead Giulia's eyes.

"Veronica!" said a low deep voice. She turned quickly and saw Lord Wynleigh standing by her side. "I have come to ask you if you are pleased. Walk with me through the rooms. You have not wished me a happy Christmas yet."

"Then I will do it now," she said; and Lord Wynleigh raised her hand to his lips.

Katherine has been telling me how dearly she loves you, and how good you are to her."

"I love her better than anything or anyone in the world," she replied.

He looked half sadly at her.

"I have to come," he said, "to ask you for a little share of that great affection which you give to my peerless Kate. I will deserve it. I will give you the true, honest, frank, kindly affection of a brother to sister. Will you accept it?"

She looked up at him.

"I am bewildered," she said. "What have I done that Heaven should give me so much—what have I done? Only a few months since no one loved me, now——"

"You accept it, then?" interrupted Lord Wynleigh. "If you want a friend, you will come to me, if ever you want help of any kind you will remember that on Christmas Day you promised a stalwart brother to let him stand between you and the world."

"I shall never forget," she said.

And Lord Wynleigh left her standing by the door of the conservatory while he went in search of Katherine.

Veronica was unutterably happy; into her gray dull life such threads of gold were woven that she was dazzled by them. She had hungered and thirsted for love; now it was lavished upon her. She stood on the same spot still, unconscious of her picturesque loveliness, watching Katherine and her lover, and as she watched them strange sweet possibilities of life came floating to her. She had thought of herself so long and so often as one apart from others, as one for whom life held no pleasures, no hopes; now was the dawn of a golden morning, now the sweet vague delicious fancies that thrill the heart of a young girl thrilled her. It might be that in the golden far-off future such love as Alton's for Katherine would fall to her lot. Perhaps her life too would be crowned by that most pure and perfect gift—a noble lover. If heaven had such happiness in store for her——

"I am afraid," said a deep musical voice near her, "that you will take cold—there is quite a rush of cold air here."

Veronica looked up suddenly. A tall stately figure stood between her and the light; dark gray eyes were looking into her own. She saw a handsome, noble face, a proud, princely head covered with clusters of fair hair. It was a face that from that moment stood out clear and distinct from all other faces. The gentleman smiled at the half-bewildered expression of the dark eyes.

"I must introduce myself again," he said. "Sir Jasper introduced me to you just before dinner, but I was one of so many, I cannot hope to have been noticed. Do you not remember me?"

"No," she replied. "Sir Jasper introduced so many people to me at once, and English names are hard to remember. I should be glad if you would tell me yours," she added, with some hesitation.

"You will say that it is a strange one perhaps," he said. "I am Sir Marc Caryll."

"Sir Marc Caryll," she repeated. "I shall remember that in connection with the patron saint of Venice—St. Mark."

She could not tell why, but the name seemed to sink into the depths of her heart like the echo of a song. Then she looked at him, and decided that, although she had seen some noble men, he was by far the handsomest and noblest. There was an air of command, of power, of authority about him which pleased her. He looked like a man whose will was strong and relentless, whose purpose was fixed, whose judgment was clear and decided. Self-reliance, courage, bravery—all those qualities were written on the fair handsome face, that had in it at times a woman's sweetness and the simplicity of a child. A swift sudden thought came to her that a life would be safe in those strong hands of his—honor, fair fame, everything might be intrusted to him, and the trust would be kept.

Sir Marc smiled at her.

"I can read your thoughts," he said, "you have been estimating my character. I will not ask you what you think of it; I will only say I hope your conclusions are favorable. Miss di Cyntha, try one dance with me. Christmas Day is past; and an example has been set us."

Veronica remembered that Christmas night—it was the beginning of a new life to her. The vague sweet possibilities that had thrilled her as she watched Katherine took shape now—vague, beautful shape; something awoke in her heart which had never been there before—sometimes so tender, so sweet, that the girl's whole soul was moved by it. Life was never to be the same again for her; she had inherited something of the quick love and the quick hatred that characterized the Brandons. She had in her more of her father's nature than her mother's.

"Your face is a poem," said Sir Marc later on that same Christmas night—"a poem that I should never tire of reading."

She danced with him, she talked to him; more than one amused glance followed them—she with her dark Venetian beauty, he with his Saxon comeliness; they seemed to have forgotten the world. Once Sir Marc took her to the great western window in the broad corridor, and drawing aside the hangings, he said to her:

"Look, Miss di Cyntha—I want you to see the poetry of an English Christmas."

Veronica cried out in wonder and awe. The sky was of deep, dark, fathomless blue; the moon was full, and shone with a clear silvery light; the earth lay white, still, and beautiful under the pale clear beams; the hard frost made the tall leafless trees look darker, and the hoar-frost shone in the light of the moon. The wind wailed among the trees, bending their tall heads and swaying the huge branches.

"How beautiful!" she cried. "There is nothing in all Venice so fair as this. I thought there was no poetry in England; but it is full of it. This looks like fairyland."

"You will try to love England?" he said.

"I do love it without trying," she replied. "I could almost fancy there was some mysterious reason why my heart should have warmed so greatly for it; it seems more my home than Venice ever did."

He was looking intently at her with his dark gray eyes.

"You will not wish to return to Venice then?" You would be content to remain in England all your life?"

She raised her beautiful face; the dark eyes looked at the blue wintry night-sky, at the fair white earth, at the quaint shadows the moon made through the trees; and then she turned to Sir Marc.

"Venice would seem a prison to me after this," she said; and as she said it she wondered why he looked so bright and pleased.

"I should like you to see my home," he remarked. "It is, I think, even more beautiful than Queen's Chace. It is called Wervelhurst Manor, and it stands in the loveliest part of Sussex. We have music there—nature's grandest. The sea lies at no great distance; and far away to the right stretches a chain of hills, purple hills, on which the light of the sun lies low. I have a passionate love for my home."

She was silent. He went on.

"And I live there, Miss di Cyntha, all alone. Can you imagine that? I have no mother, no sister. There is a large household of servants, but I am quite solitary. I want what the poets call an angel in the house."

"What is that?" asked Veronica.

"That is English for a wife," he replied; and the beautiful face drooped before his.

Her heart beat; a strange pain, that was yet half pleasure, seemed to thrill her innocent soul.

"I must leave you," she said, hurriedly. "I am quite sure that Katherine wants me."

"Where you go I follow," declared Sir Marc; and for that evening at least he kept his word.

CHAPTER VI.

A new life—a glorious new life, bright, hopeful, pleasant, full of poetry, full of wonder and romance! The time came when Veronica began to wonder what it was that had fallen over her life. What was the dazzling light that had fallen at her feet? Why was it that from morning to night and from night to morning she had but one thought—and that was about Marc Caryll?

Christmas had passed now, and the beautiful springtide had set in. The air was balmy with the sweet breath of flowers, yet Sir Jasper had not recovered much of his strength. The doctors would not allow him to return to his duties; he must rest if he would live. In vain the active energetic statesman rebelled. He refused for a time to submit, until he saw the absolute necessity for it. Then he found Lord Wynleigh of great use to him. He had been returned as member for Hurstwood, and had made his maiden speech—to everybody's great surprise it was simply a masterpiece of eloquence. Sir Jasper gave up some of his duties to the young politician, about whom people prophesied great things.

The baronet was well pleased. It had always been a source of sorrow to him that he had no son to succeed to his honors; but he loved the brave young noble man in whom all Katherine's happiness seemed to be centred. When despondent thoughts came to him, he said to himself that he should have a successor. He insisted upon Lady Brandon's taking Veronica and Katherine to London for part of the season at least, and nothing pleased him better than to read her ladyship's letters in which she told of Veronica's successes and triumphs.

"The girl can marry whom she will," wrote Lady Brandon; "her magnificent beauty has brought all London to her feet. She does not seem to care about anyone in particular."

Veronica had suddenly become famous. Her rare style of face and figure, her wonderful grace and musical voice, had made her the observed of all. She received more invitations than she could possibly accept. Everyone admired and liked her. But, when Lady Brandon had been in town a few weeks she decided upon returning. Sir Jasper was no better, and the doctor attending him did not think it advisable that he should delay consulting some eminent physician. So they went home again, and, as he looked at his two daughters, the master of Queen's Chace was struck afresh. Katherine's animated loveliness and Veronica's pale beauty seemed to have acquired fresh lustre. Those few weeks in town had wonderfully improved Veronica—they had given a finish and elegance to her such as can be acquired only by mixing with the most refined. She had enjoyed her visit, but not much because Sir Marc was away. The season had but little attractions for him. He was not a man of fashion. A cruise to Norway had more charms for him than a season in London. He had written to say that he hoped to pass through Hurstwood in July or August, and would very much like to spend a few days there, to which Sir Jasper had replied by sending him a most cordial invitation, guessing shrewdly what was the attraction; so that Veronica had that to look forward to, and the knowledge of it made her profoundly indifferent to all the homage offered her.

The old bitter struggle was still going on in Sir Jasper's mind. What should he do? His heart was torn with a thousand doubts, a thousand fears. There was hardly an hour of the twenty-four during which he did not again and again review all his reasons and doubts. Do as he would, one or the other must suffer. Should it be Katherine, the bright fair child, the descendant of the proud Valdoraines; or Veronica, who looked up at him with dead Giulia's eyes? Which of the two should it be? He would have given his life to save either. One thing he had done. He had sent for a strange lawyer, and had made another will, in which he told the secret of Veronica's birth, and left to her the grand inheritance of Queen's Chace and Hurstwood. That will he kept by him. Remembering it, he was more at ease whenever he thought of her.

He grew worse. The doctors did not apprehend any immediate danger; he was only suffering from overtaxed strength, from ills that might be remedied. He did not even keep his room. Sir Jasper himself was more alarmed than the people about him. Strange sensations came to him. There were times when he fancied, as he walked through the shady garden paths, that strange voices called him; he saw strange figures in his troubled sleep, strange faces smiled at him from the picture frames.

One day—how Veronica remembered it afterward!—he had walked in the grounds, and when the sun grew warm he went into the drawing-room to rest on a couch. Veronica was there. He asked her to read to him, and she did so until he fell asleep; then she sat and watched him, thinking how very ill he looked, how white and sunken his face was. Suddenly she saw his pale lips quiver; he opened his arms as though to clasp them round someone whom he loved, crying in a passionate voice—

"Giulia. Giulia, my heart's love!"

She touched him gently, and his eyes opened and looked wildly at her.

"Giulia," he cried again, "where am I? It is you, and yet another."

"Sir Jasper," said Veronica, "you are dreaming—you are ill."

He looked in bewilderment at her.—

"Giulia's eyes" he said, "but another face. What does it mean?"

"You have been dreaming," remarked the girl quietly. "Can I get anything for you? Shall I bring Lady Brandon?"

He gave a smothered moan.

"I—you are right, Veronica—I was dreaming. No, do not call anyone; I want nothing. These June days are so warm."

"It was June then, when the days were at their longest, and the bright sweet hours were all filled with heat—June, when Queen's Chace was a picture of loveliness, with its lilies and roses, its rich green foliage and wealth of flowers. Veronica was troubled as she looked at Sir Jasper, for she had grown to love him. She remembered afterward how he awoke from a fevered sleep and would have Katherine by Veronica's side. She remembered every detail of that last day on earth. He would not go into the dining-room, and it was Veronica by his own special request, who took him some little dainties and coaxed him to eat them. She knelt by his side, holding in her fingers a ripe sunny peach.

"This is just like Katherine's cheek," she said, laughingly. And she looked so like her mother at that moment that he could have cried aloud in his longing love and pain.

"You have learned to love Katherine, Veronica?" he said, gently.

"Better than I love my life," she said, blushing to find that she no longer said, "Better than I love anyone else in the world."

He looked up at her suddenly.

"Have you learned to love me, Veronica?" he asked.

"Yes, just as dearly," she replied.

Then they were silent—he mute with emotion, she wondering that he should speak to her in this strain—he who had always been so distant and so reserved. Then he was restless all the day. When evening came, he asked Katherine to sing all her old songs to him—the songs he loved best; and Veronica danced that his eyes filled with tears. Then, when it was growing later, he called Katherine to him. She knelt down by his side, and he drew her golden head down on to his breast.

"My child, my darling," he said, "have I been kind to you?"

"Always, papa," she replied.

"Have you had a happy life—Katie, tell me—a happy life?"

"Yes," she answered. "Papa, you know that I have never had one moment's care or trouble, one moment's sadness, ever since I was a child."

"Thank Heaven for that!" he said gently. "If I should die, Katie—die and leave you—would anyone ever make you think me unkind—ever make you love me less?"

"No, never, papa," she said, laughing at the notion—"never."

"Kiss me. Tell me you love me," he said. "Will you remember in the after years that I would have given my life at any time to save you from pain?"

"Yes," replied Katherine, and, obeying his wish, she clasped her tender arms round his neck. "I love you very dearly, papa," she said, "more than I can tell you, and I am longing for the day to come when you will be strong and well again."

To be Continued.

Tea in Japan.

Although tea has now become a general beverage throughout the world, it has been used in Japan for more than a thousand years, and its preparation there has almost reached the dignity of an art. Green tea in leaf is there almost universally used, and the decoction is made by pouring upon it water heated to 176 deg. F. The Japanese drink tea without milk or sugar, which they think deprive it of its delicate aroma. They are also very particular to use tea-pots made of a peculiar kind of pottery, known by the name of "Raku-yaki," which are not only very elegant, but also have the property of preserving the heat for a long time. It is an example of very bad manners not to offer tea to every visitor, and, even in shopping, the customer is served with tea before the goods are shown to him. The workingman carries with him a complete apparatus for making tea, which is drunk with every new meal, however simple in other respects. The drinking of tea is also made prominent in the social customs of Japan, and has given rise to two kinds of tea-parties which for many years have been an essential part of society. At these gatherings no expense is spared to make æsthetical and literary entertainments prominent, and, although attended exclusively by gentlemen, appear to be carried on with more propriety and profit than can be said of many convivial feasts in the United States.