THE BLUE BOMB

By J. V. Gisey

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SYNOPSIS

Ned Gafford, who has been unjustly accused of treason when at West Point, and feeds Japan, has become an opium slave. While in an opium dream, he overhears a conversation between two Japanese who want a war against the U. S. for the sake of selling their "Blue Bombs," which are an invention of Karloff, a Russian Nihilist.

Oshitu chuckled. "Thou hast said it, Yamata," he said lightly. "Karloff is apt to disappear. He came from a Russian cruiser, as you will remember. He is doubtless reported lost in action in his own country."

"And you are sure these things are practical—there can be no mistake?"

"None. Personally Karloff has demonstrated to me with a small one. The coming demonstration is for the government.

"It is wonderful!" Yamata exclaimed.

"It means that we hold the world in our hands," declared Oshitu, with his frame tense of excitement. "One will destroy the greatest ship afloat. A dozen will lay waste a city or annihilate an army. The yellow race will triumph. What cares Nippon how terrible war becomes so long as she holds the instrument of supreme destruction?"

"Therefore," said Yamata, "is your cause of war, my Samurai. There could be an accident. The Americans fought quickly enough when they lost their Maine. If one of their ports of call be a friendly call were to be destroy—"

"Or," interrupted Oshitu, "if one of their diplomats or high officials or a member of his family should drop out of sight—"

"Excellency!" gasped the other. "What dost thou mean?"

"Perhaps," drawled Oshitu, "you noticed the cruising yacht in the harbor, my good Yamata?"

"Yes, I saw it, as you suggest."

"Or noticed the man and woman who came from it this evening?"

"Them, too, I saw. The girl is a beauty. She—"

"Bah! Be still! The man is a high government official of the United States on a secret mission. His presence is not supposed to be known here."

Yamata clapped his hands. "Wise Oshitu! His incognito is his danger. They would have to fight. And a bomb would destroy the vessel as though it had never been."

Oshitu hissed in annoyance. "That is the second time. Yamata, you have mentioned the things by name."

"But we are alone—"

"Are we? We are fools not to have made sure of that, Yamata."

Gafford had barely time to relax himself on the bank before he heard the man's feet hit the floor, and an instant later the bamboo curtain was swept aside.

"By the two swords of my father!" swore Oshitu. "Look at this!"

A fervious note of menace choked his voice.

Gafford lay still.

The two Japs approached his side and bent down. Gafford felt their breath upon his cheek as they sought to discover if he really slept. Presently one of them spoke:

"There is only one thing to do, Yamata. If he sleeps we may leave him and thank the gods that he had smoked before we came. If he is feigning—dead men speak little, my friend."

Gafford thought fast. They would test his apparent slumber, and his was the task to make it seem genuine. Escape from that underground room was not to be even considered.

Much experience had taught him that a person normally asleep will respond readily to surface irritation; also that a person opium drugged reacts but sluggishly. He decided that his course lay between normal and insensibility, and prepared for the ordeal which he knew would inevitably come.

Oshitu and Yamata whispered together so low that he could not catch their meaning. Then as he lay with closed eyes and regular breathing he felt one bare foot lifted and experienced a darting, lancing pain. In dazed anger he realized that the man who held the foot had deliberately slashed its sole with a knife.

The moan which burst from his lips was not all acting, but the effort of will which held him from a violent wresting away of the foot was worthy of supreme self-control.

As one roused against his will, he turned his head and half opened his eyes. "Take 'em away—please take 'em away," he begged in maudlin fashion. He let his lids fall again in simulated stupor and drew a deep breath.

Inwardly he found his brain on fire. For an instant he had looked into the cruel, sneering face of the man Oshitu, who bent above his wounded foot with a blood-stained knife in his hand. It was the face he had sometimes dreamed of finding in those days when he had hoped that he might be able to prove his innocence.

Oshitu cast the foot he held from him and addressed Yamata again. "A sodden pig," he sneered. "Lucky for him that slumber wrapped him. Come, we will go."

Their footsteps moved to the door. Gafford heard it close behind them. Bathed in a sweat of pain and unaccustomed self-control, he moved on his couch and sat dizzily up. He lifted the foot and examined the wound. The under side of the instep was wickedly gashed. The blood had stained the canvas of the couch.

Gafford whimpered in pain. A sense of giddy sickness gripped him and held. He struggled feebly to reach his tray, and lighted the little lamp he had accidentally extinguished while smoking his last pipe.

By a great effort he prepared a pellet of gum and placed it in the pipe.

Through what seemed long minutes he sucked hungrily at the mouthpiece until it ceased to give off the least particle of smoke. He was sick and giddy and sleepy all at the same time. His fingers relaxed on the pipe, which fell to the floor. A great lassitude laid hold upon him, which he did not seek to resist. He seemed to be floating softly away from all conscious perception. In the end he slept.

CHAPTER III.

First Steps.

Gafford came out of his drugged sleep with recollection of three things; a girl with brown hair and blue eyes, who had smiled at him; a something vaguely described as a "blue bomb"; and the knowledge that Iwanya Oshitu was in Nagasaki, in some way mixed up in plots and counter plots.

They were fit things to bring back from the sleep of the poppy. He lay for some time after he woke, trying to decide whether he had really heard the remembered conversation and seen Oshitu's evil face bent to scrutinize his own.

At least he was satisfied that the man had failed to recognize him in the slatternly thing he had become. Had a suspicion of his identity waked in the engineer's mind, Gafford felt certain that he would not have been permitted to live. So far as Oshitu was concerned, therefore, his secret was safe, and he might, if he wished, hunt his man without that man's knowing.

The pain in his foot finally brought him quite awake and convinced him of the reality of last night's experience. He dragged up the injured member and inspected it. It was a nasty, blood-clotted gash which Oshitu had made. Gafford cursed him as he looked at it, and wondered if he could hobble the few doors to White Kate's tea-house and find relief of a sort.

He crawled off the couch and moved toward the door.

His wounded foot made a spotted trail across the matting, but he got on, left the room and hobbled up the stairs, and so finally from behind the bamboo curtain and out to the street. There he turned and set haltingly off for the House of Moon Faces, cursing Oshitu as he went.

No one paid any attention to him. Wounded brawlers are not uncommon sight in the streets or shops. He came, after a tedious progress, to the place which he sought, and found its portals closed. Un amayed, he made his way back to the alley and found a way of entrance. Presently he sat on a teakwood divan, with his foot in White Kate's lap.

While she washed and dressed and bound it, he told her what was sufficient—that a Japanese had slashed it while he slept at Oku Kobe's and vowed that he would be revenged. Kate finished her ministrations and advised against any violent reprisal. Then she sent a servant for food.

Fed, and with his wound dressed, Gafford slept.

An incongruous object in his dirty rags, he lay upon a richly tapestried couch, with a cover of brocaded silk drawn across the foot of White Kate's bed. After a time his fever came up and he dreamed. White Kate, near by, listened to his muttered fragments of speech: "With a blue bomb I could own the world—own the world and have a—have a—blue-eyed girl—with brown hair. And I could—break Oshitu—break him—into bits."

With a rustle of soft silken things Kate rose and approached the side of the sleeper. He was hot and tossed in his sleep. The woman put down a hand and laid it on his forehead. His hand came up and his fingers closed about hers.

"That's good," he murmured. "That's good." He pressed her palm against his face. The eyes of the woman who watched lost some of their hardened glitter and grew almost soft.

Four days passed.

In the interval Gafford's foot mended apace. His blood was at least free from taint, and it built back the broken tissues at a wonderful rate. His habit may ever have had something to do with that, for it's a fact that opium users are rapid to heal of their wounds.

On the afternoon of the fourth day Gafford insisted on going out. Walking was still painful, but the wound did not bleed, and it seemed to Gafford that something drove him forth. He badgered Kate until she wound a fresh bandage about his foot, gave him an old pair of sandals and laughingly told him he was the worst patient she ever had.

Gafford turned and caught her hands. "You're good, Kate. You're too good to a thing like me, and I'm an ungrateful pig."

"You're a man," said White Kate, looking down as she spoke.

"I wish to God I were!" flashed Gafford. "Honestly, Kate, I'm sick of the whole game. I wish I could be—a man."

Kate shook her head. "Oh, no, you don't, Gaffy!" she told him slowly. "If you did, you would be, you know."

Gafford regarded her for some time out of narrowed eyes. His head drooped forward. "I guess you're right," he said shortly, and turned away.

He left the room and went out through the tea-house. The geishas lounging about the inner room paid no heed to his passing. They knew him for White Kate's friend.

The few patrons in the outer room, which fronted on the street, saw only the familiar sight of a poorly clad man in threadbare through now clean garments, who passed by.

A brilliant sunshine lay over the street of shops as he reached the door and paused to look up and down. There was no particular place he wanted to go. His desire to get out had Leen compounded of a restive hatred of restraint and a desire to escape for a time from the intimate sense of his obligation to the white waif who had proven his friend.

His foot was not sufficiently strong to permit his return to his precarious way of living, as he realized from the twinges of pain it sent up his limb. He stood and surveyed the scene, debating whether to walk farther or return and confess that he had been premature.

A few doors up the street a good-sized curio-shop flaunted its red and gold ideographs before the eye. It was frequented more or less by tourists, and Gafford had even received a few stray commissions for guiding them to it on their rounds.

For a moment he was tempted to go up and extract some possible yen from the proprietor for past and prospective services rendered. He had even taken the first two steps in the direction when he stopped and forgot his intention in a greater interest. From the door of his destination a woman came forth. She was clad all in white, even to the shoes she wore.

A white parasol dangled in her hand. She glanced up and down the street, and turned directly toward Gafford. Beyond any doubt she was the woman he had seen at the quay.

Gafford's heart recoiled from her presence. With an instinctive shrinking he desired to avoid the meeting. That remnants of pride were still his urged him to remove himself from the ange of the blue eyes which had smiled so understandingly into his a few nights before.

Acting purely on impulse, he swung around and retreated to the House of Moon Faces, entered, and sat down at a little table, from which he might see her as she passed. With a snap of the fingers he called an attendant and ordered a cup of sake, but not for a moment did he take his eyes from the outer street.

But the girl did not pass.

To Gafford's amazement, a white-clad figure darkened the door of the tea-house, paused an instant, and came forward. The girl selected a vacant stall, sank upon one of the backless stools, and laid her parasol and one or two parcels upon an end of the table.

With a frank interest she turned her eyes about the room, taking in all its details of lacquered ceiling, carved stool and table of teakwood, its festoons of colored lanterns and trailing streamers of painted banners, and the other patrons of the place.

Her gaze was the glance of one who did not understand, but found much of interest. It answered Gafford's first mental question as to why a woman of her evident station should walk the streets of Nagasaki unattended.

It came to him in that moment that her act was that of innocence and ignorance combined. Doubtless he felt she had been shopping, and, wanting a cup of tea, had dropped into the first tea-house she found.

A tea-house would be a tea-house to her comprehension. She was unaware of the lines of distinction which put the better houses on the second street of shops instead of the first, or that the geisha houses were not frequented by women, either yellow or white.

In the house of the Setting Sun, a street beyond, she would have been as safe as in any tea-room of her own country. Gafford stiffened in his seat and was glad that her back was turned toward him.

The girl bent her head above a menu-card and studied it until an attendant approached her table.

"Tea," she ordered quite distinctly, "and cakes—some of those little rice-cakes of yours. I like them." She smiled quite frankly into the writer's eyes.

The attendant scurried away after a hurried bow, and Gafford continued to study that alluring back. It was while he was so engaged that there came between it and him a vision of a small figure, brave in frock coat, silk hat, and tan gloves, carrying a rattan cane.

Gafford stared as though hardly believing his eyes, and then, without any apparent good reason, picked up his cup of sake and moved to a seat in a booth directly behind the carved screen, which separated its table from that of the girl in white. Moreover, one might have noticed that he walked with his head down, and in a course calculated to keep his own shoulder turned against the figure in the frock coat.

The latter, in apparent high good humor, and puffing a cigarette, had now surrendered his hat, coat and stick to an attendant, and was surveying the room.

Peering from his booth, Gafford saw his dark face suddenly light with a smile. A moment later he was hurrying directly toward the table where the girl in white sat. As he approached his hand came up before him and his teeth gleamed between his lips in what he evidently hoped was an ingratiating manner.

"Mees McRae," he exclaimed, as the partition cut off Gafford's view, "thees is so grea' a pleasure. I am so bold as to be hope tha' you remember—night before las'—at the hotel."

"Of course I remember you, Mr. Yamata," said the girl, while Gafford's pulses leaped that he had learned her name. "Won't you sit down?" she invited. "I was just having a cup of your tea. It is rarely the only tea there is. We Americans don't know the real beverage at all."

A stool scraped, and Gafford could fancy the little boulevardier taking a seat opposite the girl. "I, too, s'all have tea," he began speaking, "an' your commendation will give it added savor. Your honorable father—how is he?"

"Quite well, thank you," replied Miss McRae. "I shall tell him I met you. This is awfully jolly—having tea like this. Are all your tea-rooms furnished in this way?"

"Oh, thees!" deprecated Yamata. "Thees is but one of the poorer sort, Miss McRae. You should see some of the others. They far surpass thees poor place. If you will accept my most humble service, I should be pleas' to show you."

"You are awfully kind," said the girl's voice.

They drifted on in small talk, and Gafford, listening, frowned. Four nights before he had looked for an instant into the swarthy face of Yamata in the house of Oku Kobe.

He had smiled then as now, because Oshitu had slashed a sleeping man's foot. He recalled what he could of the conversation he had overheard between this man and the officer of engineers. He had recognized him as soon as he had come into the tea-house, and it was that which had made him change his seat.

It had seemed to his fancy that Yamata turned, too, directly to the table where Miss McRae sat. He wondered if the man might have followed the girl from the street. Yet if so, what was his object?

The conversation which filtered to him through the screen was innocent enough, in all conscience.

The attendant came back with the girl's tea on a tray, with a little inverted, bowl-like cup and a plate of sweetmeats and cakes. Yamata gave an order for a second service, and urged Miss McRae to allow her own to grow cold while waiting for him.

Presently he was served in turn. Gafford signalled for another cup of sake, and consumed it without having perceived any real reason why he should have constituted himself a sort of invisible guardian for the woman in the booth at his back. He set down his empty cup, half determined to remove himself elsewhere, when Yamata began speaking again.

"The traveler in Nippon sees but a part of the things which are, Mees McRae. They see only the surface. Take thees tea-house, which is call the House of Moon Faces. The traveler sees it comes in an' buys the little cup of tea, an' he thinks he has seen. Does he see the moon faces? No.

"He fancies the name is but a pretty appellation. He does not know that the moon faces are here in reality. He does not know that he has seen but half, an' the poorer half—the half which is no index to our real bohemian life. He does not know tha' beyond the door where the waiter goes for his order is a bigger an' far more beautiful room, where are beautiful women—thoes we call geisha—who play on the samisen an' sing.

"That beautiful room is the real House of Moon Faces. It is only those who know who go there, where the moon faces shine and they are of men. Our women are not as yours are, an' they go not to the cafe. But our men—yes, an' some of your men—the knowing, go into the room of the moon, where the moon faces are. No white woman, so far as I know, has ever been there. It would be what you call dangerous, an' would not be allow'. But if you should weesh, I could show you—just once. It would be an adventure; yet safe—with me—for I know and am known."

"You mean you could really show me this room, Mr. Yamata?" There was a thrill of excitement in Miss McRae's voice now.

"Precisely, Mees McRae. I, Yamata, can so do—if you weesh, an' would not be afraid."

"Afraid?" questioned the girl, and Gafford felt himself stiffen to attention. "Afraid of what, if I went under your escort?"

Yamata laughed softly. "Ah, yes," he made answer. "Of what should you be afraid?"

There was a sound of dishes being shoved aside. "I am ready, if you really mean it," the girl challenged.

A stool scraped its legs on the floor. "Come, then," Yamata replied.

Instantly Gafford was on his feet. Edging along the partition, he peered around it in time to see Yamata lift the heavy curtains at the end of the outer room and permit the girl in white to pass.

The next moment he had followed her into the room of the geishas. In his soft sandals Gafford slipped out of his booth and followed at their heels.

He had no difficulty in going whither he pleased. He was too well known in that place. He slipped into the inner room and found himself a partly secluded seat, waited until Yamata and the girl were seated and the swarthy host had called a geisha with a samisen and ordered a play; then slipped to a little table not too far off and sat down with his back to the pair. He mumbled an order for sake to a girl who approached and sank his face in his hands, the observer would have said that he needed the sake not at all.

But, despite his seeming intoxication, he was straining his ears to hear through the plays and strumming what Yamata might say.

Conversant with the ways of the inscrutable men of the east, he knew that the girl's companion spoke the truth when he said no white woman knew the inner rooms of the tea-house. If perhaps they had done so, certainly they had not departed to tell the tale. They would constitute another instance of mysterious disappearance.

What, then, was Yamata's object in leading this daughter of an American diplomat behind the forbidden portals? Another fragment of the conversation in the house of Kobe flashed momentarily in his brain, illuminating a picture beyond any imagining of his narcotic slumbers—a picture of possibility, though not of pleasant face. But Yamata was now addressing an attendant, who was taking his order. Gafford put away conjecture and gave ear.

Yamata was speaking wholly in Japanese. The fact mattered little to Gafford. Three years on the waterfront had taught him the language, so that he both understood and spoke it like a native. The samisen of the geisha had dropped to a low, strumming, out of deference to the voice of Yamata, and Gafford could catch each detail of his speech.

As he listened one might have noticed the hands on either side of his bowed head, gather themselves together and clench. The muscles along his spine stiffened and drew him inward against the table. His feet crept backward around his stool and rested on their toes, ready to hurl him erect.

For as the sing-song directions went on Gafford began to understand all the answer to his mental questions, and the why of his inward mentor, which had kept him close by the girl. Anxiety suddenly gripped him, turned into a burning tide of rage, and ebbed, leaving him cold and calm.

The servitor bowed before Yamata and departed, and Gafford came to his feet. Swinging on his heel he turned to the table where sat Yamata and the girl. With swift strides he approached and bowed before the woman. "Perhaps you recognize me, Miss McRae," he began.

The blue eyes came up and swept his face somewhat coldly. Gradually, however, their scrutiny underwent a change and softened. "Aren't you the gentleman we saw on the quay the other evening?" she asked.

"I am," Gafford assured her quickly. "That being the case, perhaps you will believe me when I say that I am thoroughly conversant with native customs, and place some credence in my statement that you are at present in deadly danger."

The eyes widened, and the woman's lips half opened. One hand gripped the edge of the table. "Danger—the second time!" she faltered.

Gafford's gaze left her and swung upon Yamata, who had moved on his stool as if to rise. "Mr. Yamata has told you the truth in part," he stated briefly. "Women are not allowed in the geisha houses. Whether you are the first who has ever entered, as he says, I do not know, but, if others have, I can assure you they have never returned to their friends!"

Yamata interrupted on the instant. "The man is drunk, Mees McRae. I heard him order sake when he came in. Pay no attention to his sayings. He is a poor wharf lounger, an opium user, a low theeng. He speaks without any true understanding. I s'all have him remove."

Gafford leaned forward, and his face was unpleasant. "You'll do nothing of the sort, Yamata," he rasped. "You'll sit down and keep still, or I'll break you. You heard me order sake, but I didn't drink it, and I'm not intoxicated in the least. I heard you order tea for Miss McRae, and tell the attendants to drug it. The game's up, Yamata. Miss McRae won't drink that tea, and she'll leave this room with me, either without trouble or after a fight."

The woman rose slowly to her feet. "Did he really tell them that?" she faltered. "That was what you meant? Oh! I will go with you. You are a white man. I believe you. I will go."

"I theenk not," snapped Yamata. His hand darted beneath the table and came up clutching something which glittered blue-black.

Gafford laughed on the instant. His fist crashed against the snarling face of Yamata. His left hand caught at the wrist of the hand which held the revolver and wrenched it with all his might. The weapon fell from the hasty clutch of Yamata's fingers and rattled to the floor.

Miss McRae stooped quickly and picked it up in a manner which showed she was familiar with things of the sort. Gafford followed up his advantage of the moment, and pinned his man back against the wall. "Go out the way you came in," he cried to the woman. "Wait for me at the street door."

She obeyed without question. A moment later the curtains fell behind her. Gafford relaxed his hold on Yamata and stepped back. Be good, now, and don't try to follow, or you may get hurt," he cautioned, and went backward toward the door. Yamata, straightening his disarranged clothing, said nothing, but scowled in his face.

As his hand, groping behind him, reached for the curtains, it encountered a soft touch of flesh. Gafford, turning quickly swung pretty face to face with the girl who had gripped his hand and guided him through the door. He stared for an instant in surprise. She had evidently remained on the other side of the draperies during his retreat, and she held Yamata's revolver firmly gripped in one hand.

"Come," snapped Gafford, rousing from his surprise. "We must get out of here. Why didn't you do as I told you and go outside?"

"Take the gun," she answered as shortly as he questioned. "I was waiting to see if you could let go of the bear you had caught."

Gafford shot her a glance of admiration and laughed. "Bully!" said he and took the weapon. He seized her arm and led her quickly to the street and along it a ways to the door of the curio store where she had shopped. Even in those few steps she noticed his limp.

"Are you injured?" she asked as they paused. "Did he hurt you—that dreadful little man?"

"Not yet," Gafford returned with another laugh. "I had my foot cut the other day. It is practically well, but tender. You stop at the Nippon, I think. We would better return there without delay."

"You mean we are not yet out of danger?" said Miss McRae.

"It is well to play safe," returned Gafford. "Yamata is rich. He is a power in his way, with extensive financial interests, and government pull. People can be hired to do strange things in this country."

Miss McRae's face flushed. "I've acted like a fool and caused you to make an enemy on my account. I am sorry, and deeply grateful. I shall always thank God that I met an American gentleman when I was in danger."

"You must be careful how you go about in this place," Gafford cut in almost shortly. "It isn't like your country—women aren't safe. I shall call a rickshaw. There's an empty one up the street a ways. Shall we walk up there?"

"She nodded, and they set off. Presently she broke the silence. "Don't you want my thanks, Mr.—"

"Gafford," he supplied, as against his will. "I value your thanks above all things, Miss McRae; but the service was nothing more than any white man would render a woman in danger. Please forget it, save to let it make you more careful in going around."

"Still," said the girl as though of some set purpose. "I'm glad it was a countryman of mine who saved me from my folly."

Gafford flushed slowly; then as by an effort: "I am not an American, Miss McRae."

"Australian?"

"I have no country, Miss McRae," he replied after a painful moment. He signed to the rickshaw boy.

"Oh—" Shiela McRae caught her breath as she took his hand to step into the rickshaw. "I beg your pardon, Mr. Gafford. Will you forgive me, and—me to see me at the hotel, where I can thank you more fully than here?"

"You are very kind," he made answer. Then he laughed. "What's the use of pretending, Miss McRae," he burst out in an irony that was bitter. "The clothes I stand in are as good as any I have. One does not call upon a lady at the Nippon in rags."

The girl's blue eyes looked full into his. "It was the man I was asking to call," she told him. "Please come." She put out her hand.

Gafford wavered. "Perhaps," he said in the tone of good-by.

"Good-by," Shielda told him. Her face was almost wistful.

Gafford took the outstretched hand. "Good-by," said he, and stepped back.

He stood looking after the vanishing rickshaw for some time. As he turned with a sigh to retrace his steps to the tea-house, a heavy object in his pocket thumped against his thigh. His fingers stole into the pocket and closed on the butt of Yamata's revolver.

Gafford grinned

To Be Continued.

JAPANESE DWELLINGS.

Where White Paper Screens Take the Place of Windows.

The houses are built upon unhewn stones or large beams, placed at regular intervals upon the ground. One or two of the four sides of the house are made of planks of wood, or posts of bamboo filled in with plaster. The remaining sides are inclosed by screens made of white paper to let the light through; for windows, such as we have, are unknown in native Japanese houses. These screens are frail, and the rains in Japan are often drenching downpours; therefore, on these unsubstantial sides of the house verandas are built, which are closed in at night, or during severe storms, by wooden shutters that slide easily to and fro in grooves in the floor, as do also the white paper screens. The roofs are thatched, shingled or tiled. The interior of the house is divided into rooms, mainly by screens covered with thick colored paper that forms the background for exquisite decorative work.—Florence Peltier in Good Housekeeping.

Arizona's Unique Jail.

Graham County Jail, at Clifton, Ariz., is probably the most unusual in America. It comprises four large apartments hewn in the side of a hill of solid quartz rock. The entrance to the jail is through a box-like vestibule, built of heavy masonry, and equipped with three sets of gates of steel bars. Here and there in the rocky walls holes have been blasted for windows, and in these apertures a series of massive bars of steel have been fitted firmly in the rock. The floor of the rockbound jail is of cement, and the prisoners are confined wholly in the larger apartments. In some places the wall of quartz about the jail is fifteen feet thick. Some of the most desperate criminals on the Southwest border have been confined in the Clifton jail, and so solid and heavy are the barriers to escape that no one there has ever attempted to make a break for freedom. The notorious Black Jack was there for months.—Tombstone Epitaph.

The United States as Others See Them.

One brother is a rich merchant in the Straits Settlements on the Malay peninsula. The other brother was until a few weeks ago the cook in a cheap restaurant on South Clark street.

The merchant sent to the cook a draft for sufficient money to pay his expenses out to Asia, and the cook gave up his job and has started for his brother's home. The interesting thing about the whole incident is the letter, written by the wealthy merchant, which accompanied the draft.

In the first place the draft was made payable in New York.

"I send you the money in a draft payable in New York," wrote the brother from far-off Asia. "You can go over and get it cashed there. On the way I wish you would stop at Texas and see brother Thomas. I haven't heard from him for two years now and I'd like to know how he's getting along."—Chicago Tribune.

The Best of Three.

Lord Brampton tells a story of the late Sir Frank Lockwood. After a criminal case in which Sir Frank had secured an acquittal for the prisoners, Lord Brampton—then Sir Henry Hawkins — privately congratulated him on the excellent way in which he had conducted the case, and remarked especially on the alibi that had been established. "Yes," was the characteristic reply. "I thought it was pretty good—anyhow, the best of the three I had offered to me!"—Golden Penny.

The Most Expensive Street.

The most expensive street to rebuild during the last century was the Rue de Rivoli. It cost $14,000,000.—Exchange.