



Second Sight

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Japanese

Intermediate
3 min read

A traveller arrived at a village, and looking about for an inn, he found one that, although rather shabby, would, he thought, suit him. So he asked whether he could pass the night there, and the mistress said certainly. No one lived at the inn except the mistress, so that the traveller was quite undisturbed.

The next morning, after he had finished break-fast, the traveller went out of the house to make arrangements for continuing his journey. To his surprise, his hostess asked him to stop a moment. She said that he owed her a thousand pounds, solemnly declaring that he had borrowed that sum from her inn long years ago. The traveller was astonished greatly at this, as it seemed to him a preposterous demand. So fetching his trunk, he soon hid himself by drawing a curtain all round him.

After thus secluding himself for some time, he called the woman and asked, "Was your father an adept in the art of second sight?" The woman replied, "Yes; my father secluded himself just as you have done." Said the traveller, "Explain fully to me why you say I owe you so large a sum." The mistress then related that when her father was going to die, he bequeathed her all his possessions except his money. He said, that on a certain day, ten years later, a traveller would lodge at her house, and that, as the said traveller owed him a thousand pounds, she could reclaim at that time this sum from his debtor. She must subsist in the meanwhile by the gradual sale of her father's goods.

Hitherto, being unable to earn as much money as she spent, she had been disposing of the inherited valuables, but had now exhausted nearly all of them. In the meantime, the predicted date had arrived, and a traveller had lodged at her house, just as her father had foretold. Hence she concluded he was the man from whom she should recover the thousand pounds.

On hearing this the traveller said that all that the woman had related was perfectly true. Taking her to one side of the room, he told her to tap gently with her knuckles all over a wooden pillar. At one part the pillar gave forth a hollow sound. The traveller said that the money spoken about by the poor woman lay hidden in this part of the pillar. Then advising her to spend it only gradually, he went on his way.

The father of this woman had been extremely skilful in the art of second sight or clairvoyance. By its means he had discovered that his daughter would pass through ten years of extreme poverty and that on a certain future day a diviner would come and lodge in the house. The father was also aware that if he bequeathed his daughter his money at once, she would spend it extravagantly. Upon consideration, therefore, he hid the money in the pillar, and instructed his daughter as related. In accordance with the father's prophecy, the man came and lodged in the house on the predicted day, and by the art of divination discovered the thousand pounds.

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