A JAPANESE NIGHTINGALE

by ONOTO WATANNA

Chapter X.
A FAREWELL TO JAPAN

B-EY and his mother kept their unrelished watch at the bedside of the sick man. Ever he tossed and turned, and muttered and cried. After a while the little girl, aware of his lips—"Yuki! Yuki! Yuki!"

The mother smoothed the fevered brow; softly she stroked the restless hands, and tried to still their fervor between her own. All was done to make him comfortable in other ways, but he would not be comforted. The sick and the sorrowed, all the home, had traced their shadows on her wan face: gray threads had come to mingle with the gray locks of her hair. But she never permitted herself, after that first night of anguish, to betray her emotions, for if she did she would have been the last to relieve the precious labor of nursing her boy.

Lauria Reynolds went back to Tokyo and began his vigilant search for the missing girl. The services of the entire metropolitan police board were called forth, and money was not spared. The maid who had brought about their marriage was put through a vigorous examination, but he could tell them nothing. The propietor of the tea-garden swore he had not returned to him.

On the fifth day the mystery of the girl's disappearance still remained unsolved. Large rewards were offered for a clue to her whereabouts, but each night the report was only of fruitless efforts. Some one had seen a girl of her description entering a tea-house on the eve of her disappearance; another had seen a female figure in the market-place, and yet another swore she had been seen on board a German vessel with a dried-up foreigner. This last story could not be mistaken—a Japanese girl with blue eyes and red hair. But each clue was found wanting and proven false.

So Lauria Reynolds set out on his journey to Yuki's home, sick-hearted, disappointed, weary, went Lauria Reynolds. A servant met him with the blessed news that the man down with brain-fever was improving; that a merciful calm had at last come to him.

Lauria hurried to his friend's bedside. He found him bathed, his face now smooth, his features softened. The loving cheeks and blue eyes of the sick girl were looking at him. Lauria took to him quietly, fearful he might be incapact to and that the other might refuse to hear through.

"You will go back and find Yuki, but I am going out from your house and your country now, and I am never coming back. You must be bought to my—"

"Don't trust me when you are awake..."

"I am quite positive," said Taro, with slow conviction. He would not go back. "I know that she will not disturb my sister, I believe she has taken her life. It is what a Japanese girl would do under the circumstances."

Lauria shivered.

"Last night" continued the other. "I dreamed it. I have had strange dreams lately..."

"Don't trust me when you are awake..."

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After paying the agent's fee Tara found himself with something over ten thousand dollars. He went down to Tokyo and deposited one thousand dollars of this to the account of his brother-in-law, who had been about the amount his sister had received. He did not know that it was Laurin who was the purchaser of the house.

For a day or two, after his arrival in Japan, Laurin and Taro were busy puzzling what things they wished to take with them. Laurin was in a hurry to get to the United States, to the death of his sister, and could not bear to remain in Japan, so he and his mother were going to America. He had determined to devote his last year in Japan to the study of Japanese art and to the study of Japanese art, he had been rewarded by the tenderness of his love, which dovetailed the sight that welled up from within.

Taro had not been happy," said Laurin, "but we cannot continue here in seclusion; not at least."

Chapter XI
FIVE YEARS AFTER—AMUSEMENT NIGHTGWELE

In the changeable heat of a New York summer the city is abominable. The Reynoldses had not as yet left their summer home in the country. Laura had entered in a dirty cloud and swirling heat. Laurin wanted to come back to them a changed man. It was five years since he had left Japan. Of his wanderings, his vain searching, shattered hopes and harrowing disappointments there is no need to speak; suffice it that he had spent his days in one advertising purpose—to bed and work. It was only the pleading solicitation of a mother that finally brought him home for a season.

Sunshine had been the dominant element in Laurin Reynold's character, and, it is a lesser degree, impecuniosity and generosity. No one had ever given him credit for the deep thought, intensity of feeling and great sense of purpose. But sometimes irritation will bring out such qualities which have lain hidden beneath an apparently superfluous exterior.

A solitude, abiding for his summer bride, had sprung into eternal life in the man's heart. She was never absent from his life, but there were moments when for a time he would notice that she was not there, and feel a loss, and would drift backward into memory, and in fancy re-live again with the same tenderness and the same summer. She had become the soul of him. It was the despair of his old-time friends and the bargain of all their curiosity. Of what had occurred since their last meeting, he had never spoken; one day he told his friend that he might not live; and he might not, for he had always been touched by the fever; he had been insensibility to his heart, for there he had left his heart and soul.

The Reynoldses family was really lingering in the city beyond their wasted time in hopes of frustrating this plan. Laura had left Japan is August. Their friends had all left the city, and the world in which they moved had slipped away from us. Jean Reynolds, a handsome young American, full of good-nature and fun was the moving spirit of the family. Shrewer in each matter that it had to do with his brother, he had gained some of the cause of his brother's restlessness. He set out, as he expressed it, "to jolly him up," and in his effort to accomplish this he has met with the attention of the press and of certain society people, who were ever on the lookout for a new thing.

In the month of August, Jean one evening proposed that Laurin go with him to a social settlement on the East Side, where, according to Mrs. Laurin, as young gentleman of a good family, he would have received some of the cause of his brother's restlessness. He set out, as he expressed it, "to jolly him up," and in his effort to accomplish this he has met with the attention of the press and of certain society people, who were ever on the lookout for a new thing.

“Through the streets they wandered, like simple children — home, in the tall bamboo in the middle garden of his own little house. It had sprung to them in foul and fair weather. Then there came a night when they waited in vain for the sweet, husky voice. Their little guests had thrown. Its beam was as keenly felt as though it had been human. This was shortly after that terrible hodgepodge of constraint had grown up between him and his little wife, and he had been infinitely cruel to her.

One night at dusk, after an exceptionally sad and chilly meal indoors, he had gone out alone and was trying to soothe his senses with a fragrant cigar. Instinctively he was waiting for his wife; he missed her if she was absent from his side but a moment. Suddenly out of the gloaming came the little girl in the yellow dress and blue that quickened and quivered an moment and floated away into the midst of the meadow of poetry, ending in a sob of agony that was exorcising in its intense banishment. The nightingale had returned! He sprang to his feet, and standing by the rimrock-craft stared out into the darkness. And then? A woman came out of the shadows of their garden, and under the light of the moon she looked up into his eyes, and murmured, in a voice thrilled by an inward sob, as timid and weak, as baseless and praying:

"I like you, my lord!"

Laurin smiled. The regrets of a reformer or the repentance of an actress did not interest him; and finding unresponsive to this his fertile-minded brother suggested their going to a certain roof-garden, which he said, had an attraction billed that everybody was talking about and that could not fail to interest Laurin. Laurin’s "It’s a Japanese Nightingale," said Jean.

"Oh!" said Laurin, and he went a trifle pale. Like a whisper out of the past the memory of the Japanese nightingale sang about his ears.

"And suddenly there came a sole diviner! A thrust of ecstasy, a sound entrancing.

The flower pale and silver, and blood

Troubled, and rose, and broke;

Was it the moon that spoke

Through the leaves glowing?"

He remembered reading the lines somewhere. They were very beautiful and true, he thought. Could theatrical recitals bring that voice of noble poetry to this land, and would the bird, indeed, sing to such an audience as filled Gibbon’s roof-gardens? Nothing less; he knew; he rose to his feet, went to the window and looked out at the lights of the great metropolis. Memories crowding in upon him. He thought of the bird that had made its nest in the tall bamboo in the middle of his garden."

The roof-garden was a popular resort, and as usual it was crowded, for its attractions were said to be of the best. The waiters were kept busy filling the glassons, and the men smoked and the women conversed; and the performance was on.

A rake of leaves was wriggling around on the stage, one holding the other on his head. They brought forth veritable applause from the men. After the departure a couple of forlorn carcasses lay there for a time, and then the black and white card changed, and the letters spelt out simple. A Japanese Nightingale.

An expectant bust settled over the crowd; then some one started clapping, which is the house going, so that it was quite a little recep-

The curtain raised disclosed a poor imitation of Japanese scenery; but the dress was good and well worn, and had the effect of softening the stage, and throwing all the familiar objects into the house all over the stage, and through the brush that unembarrassed its face. The mother stole out upon the air that same evening; that it had been reserved for the heart of Laurin Reynolds in Japan. He sprang to his feet, breaking the shrubbery. After that first note the darkness vanished from the stage, leaving a pale yellow in tint, and then the audience saw that the nightingale was a woman—Jean Reynolds, singing there a song without words, her accompaniment, only the clear, piercing, syrup notes of a human nightingale.

At this moment the attention at one of the tables. A man had started something that was going on, and then had fallen with a crash.

Outside the theater Jean Reyn-

olds tried to force his brother into a car. He thought he had better see his mother, but before he did so he took his arm and and tried to steady him. "All right, old fellow, you can do it, or I'll break your window! Be calm a minute!"

"I must go back!" his brother was telling him.

"You have my card," said Laurin, following: "If ever I can—"

"That's all right." The man knocked at a door.

"Come," sounded a voice from within.

His guide opened the door, turned aside for Laurin to pass through, and then closed it.

[CONCLUDED ON PAGE 32]
AN IDYL OF CENTRAL PARK

"You've kept her for the last!" she snapped.

"I've kept her for the last," he acknowledged. "I haven't any right to hope that she would stay. She is not a sister, and she has a task to perform. The train has ordered a third-class seat for her on the Morley this evening, so if she is not back by five o'clock, she is to leave, and her seat will be taken by another passenger."

"You speak of her with such enthusiasm that you seem to be in love with her."

"I do not think I am," he answered. "She is the most beautiful woman I have ever known."

"What is she like?" she asked.

"She is tall, graceful, and full of energy. She has a keen mind, a quick wit, and an unerring sense of humor. She is also a woman of great courage and determination."

"What is her name?"

"Her name is Minnie Cooper."

"Minnie Cooper! I have heard of her. She is a famous actress."

"Yes, she is. She is also a remarkable woman in every way. She has a mind that is as sharp as a knife, and a heart that is as tender as a rose."

"I have heard that she is a very private person."

"She is. She prefers to be alone, and she is not one to tolerate the company of others."

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