

# SUNNY-SAN

By ONOTO WATANNA.

## SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS INSTALMENTS.

It was the night of the Festival of the Full Moon, but Hirata, the proprietor of the House of a Thousand Joys, was infuriated, for was not Madame Mary Smiles, the famous dancer, lying dead among her robes? At her feet knelt her child, crushed and hurt by a grief that nothing could assuage, and it was for the sake of her mother's honour that presently she stood a-tiptoe on the tight-rope, laughing at the sea of faces round her and throwing her kisses right and left. So charming was she that the Lord of Negato, amorous for this lovely child, tossed her a jewel and a handful of coin, which she cleverly caught on her fan, but, acting under a sudden impish impulse, she suddenly threw them in her admirer's face and, jumping to the ground, vanished into the tea-house.

A party of English students visiting Japan had witnessed this scene and, learning that she was to be punished for her slight to the Japanese nobleman, they made a sudden raid on the tea-house and carried off the girl before Hirata's lash could fall a second time upon her shoulders.

These four students and their tutor then decided to adopt Sunny-San, the dancer's child, whose father was a white man. They formed a syndicate, and together raised sufficient money to provide for Sunny during her lifetime.

Soon a time came when the Englishmen had to return to their own country, and they regretfully departed, leaving Sunny in charge of a missionary. She begged them to take her with them, but the hardest moment came when she said good-bye to Jerry Hammond, who had been her faithful champion from the first. However, the ship carrying the Englishmen sailed away, and left a sorrowful Sunny languishing in Nagasaki.

As time went on, Sunny's friends across the sea reached a period where they thought of her as a charming and amusing episode of an idyllic summer in Japan. One bleak March day Jerry was surprised to learn, on the telephone, that Sunny-San was in London and waiting instructions from the Syndicate. He hastily collected her other friends, and while they were discussing the position Sunny entered. She had grown to be a charming young woman, and her friends, agreeably surprised, cannot do enough for her. Jerry asked the Professor to return from Canada to take

charge of Sunny, but he was unable to do so, and she took up her abode in Jerry's flat.

Sunny has proposals from Monty, Bobs, and Jinx, but refuses them all. Acting on the advice of Hatton, Jerry's valet, she decides to wait till Leap Year, and then ask Jerry to marry her. She learns then that Jerry is already engaged, but he goes home to break off his engagement, because he realises that he loves Sunny. Two days later Jerry's mother and fiancée arrive and drive Sunny out of the flat while Hatton is in a drunken sleep, and Jerry returns to find her gone.

Katey Clarry, a shopgirl, takes charge of Sunny, and goes with her to deliver a letter addressed to Stephen Wainwright, the financier, given to Sunny-San by her mother. In the meantime, after an unsuccessful search for the missing girl, Jerry is taken seriously ill.

## CHAPTER XVII (*continued*)

**S**UNNY took the chair opposite him. Their glances met and remained for a moment locked. Then the man tried to speak lightly.

" You wished to see me. What can I do for you ? "

Sunny extended the letter. When he took it from her hand his face came somewhat nearer to hers, and the closer he saw that young girl's face, the greater grew his agitation.

" What is your name ? " he demanded abruptly.

" Sunny, " said the girl simply, little dreaming that she was speaking the name that the man before her had himself invented for her seventeen and a half years before.

The word touched some electrical cord within him. He started violently forward in his seat, half arising, and the letter in his hand dropped on the table before him face up. A moment of gigantic self-control, and then with fingers that shook, Stephen Wainwright slipped the envelope open. The words swam before him, but not till

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they were indelibly printed upon the man's conscience-stricken heart. Through blurred vision arose the message from the dead to the living :

" On this sixth day in the Season of Little Plenty, in the reign of Meeijii. A thousand years of joy. It is your honourable daughter, who knows not your name, who brings or sends to you this my letter. I go upon the long journey to the Moido. I send my child to him through whom she has her life. Sayonara. Haru-no."

For a long, long time the man sat with his two hands gripped before him on the desk, steadily looking at the girl before him, devouring every feature of the well-remembered face of the child he had always loved. It seemed to him that she had changed not at all. His little Sunny of those charming days of his youth had that same crystal look of supreme innocence, a quality of refinement, a fragrance of race that seemed to reach back to some old ancestry, and put its magic print upon the exquisite young face. He felt he must have been blind not to have recognised his own child the instant his eyes had fallen upon her. He knew now what that warm rush of emotion had meant when lie had looked at her in that outer office. It was the intuitive instinct that his own child was near—the only child he had ever had. By exercising all the self-control that he could command, he was at last able to speak her name huskily.

" Sunny, don't you remember me ? "

Like her father, Sunny was addicted to moments of abstraction. She had allowed her gaze to wander out through the window to the harbour below, where she could see the great ships in their moorings. It made her think of the one she had come to England on, and the one on which Jerry had sailed away from Japan. Painfully, wistfully, she brought her gaze back to her father's face. At his question she essayed a little propitiating smile.

" Mebbe I are see you face on ad-vertise-men. I are hear you are very grade man," said the child of Stephen Wainwright. " He winced, and yet grew warm with pride and longing at the girl's delicious accent. He, too, tried to smile back at her, but something sharp bit at the man's eyelids.

" No, Sunny. Try and think. Throw your mind far back—back to your sixth year, if that may be."

Sunny's eyes, resting now in troubled question upon the face before her, grew slowly fixed and enlarged. Through the mists of memory slowly, like a vision of the past, she seemed to see again a little child in a fragrant garden. She was standing by the rim of a pool, and the man opposite her now was at her side. He was dressed in Japanese kimona and bakama, and Sunny remembered that then he was always laughing at her, shaking the flower-weighted trees above her, till the petals fell in a white and pink shower upon her little head and shoulders. She was stretching out her hands, catching the falling blossoms, and delightedly exclaiming that the flying petals were tiny birds fluttering through the air. She was leaning over the edge of the pool, blowing the petals along the water, playing with her father that they were white prayer ships, carrying the petitions to the gods who waited on the other side. She remembered drowsing against the arm of the man, of being tossed aloft, her face cuddled against his neck, of passing under the great wistaria arbour. Ah, yes, how clearly she recalled it now. As her father transferred her to her mother's arms, he bent and drew that mother into his embrace also.

Two great tears welled up in the eyes of Sunny, but ere they could fall the distance between her and her father had vanished. Stephen Wainwright, kneeling on the floor by his long lost child had drawn her hungrily into his arms.

" My own little girl ! " said the Man of Steel.

## CHAPTER XVIII

Stephen Wainwright, holding his daughter jealously in his arms, felt those long locked founts of emotion that had been pent-up behind his steely exterior bursting all bounds. He had the immense feeling that he wanted for evermore to cherish and guard this precious thing that was all his own.

" Our actions are followed by their consequences as surely as a body by its shadow," says the Japanese proverb, and

that cruel act of his mad youth had haunted the days of this man, who had achieved all that some men sell their souls for in life. And yet the greatest of all prizes had escaped him—peace of mind. Even now, as he held Sunny in his arms, he was consumed by remorse and anguish.

In his crowded life of fortune and fame, and a social career at the side of the brilliant woman who bore his name, Stephen Wainwright's best efforts had been unavailing to obliterate from his memory that tragic face that like a flower petal on a stream he had so lightly blown away. O-Haru-no was her name then, and she was the child of a Japanese woman of caste, whose marriage to an attaché of a Russian embassy had, in its time, created a furore in the capital. Her father had perished in a shipwreck at sea, and her mother had returned to her people, there, in her turn, to perish from grief and the cold neglect of the Japanese relatives who considered her marriage a blot upon the family escutcheon.

Always a lover and collector of beautiful things, Wainwright had harkened to the enthusiastic flights of a friend, who "discovered" an incomparable piece of Satsuma, and had accompanied him to an old mansion, once part of a Satsuma yashiki, there to find that his friend's "piece of Satsuma" was a living work of art, a little piece of bric-à-brac that the collector craved to add to his collections. He had purchased O-Haru-no for a mere song, for her white skin had been a constant reproach and shame in the house of her ancestors. Moreover, this branch of the ancient family had fallen upon meagre days, and, despite their pride, they were not above bartering this humble descendant for the gold of the Englishman. Haru-no escaped with joy from the harsh atmosphere of the house of her ancestors to the gay home of her purchaser.

The fact that he had practically bought his wife, and that she had been willing to become a thing of barter and sale, had from the first caused the man to regard her lightly. We value things often, not by their intrinsic value, but by the price we have paid for them, and Haru-no had been thrown upon the bargain counter of life. However, it was not in Stephen Wainwright's nature to resist anything as pretty as the wife he had bought. A favourite and sardonic jest of his at that time was that she was the choicest piece in his collections, and that some day he purposed to put her in a glass case, and present her to the Museum of Art of his native city. Had indeed Stephen Wainwright seen the dancer, as she lay among

her brilliant robes, her wide sleeves outspread like the wings of a butterfly, and that perfectly chiselled face on which the smile that had made her famous still seemed faintly to linger, he might have recalled that utterance of the past, and realised that no object of art in the great museum of which his people were so proud could compare with this masterpiece of Death's grim hand.

He tried to delude himself with the thought that the temporary wife of his young days was but an incident, part of an idyll that had no place in the life of the man of steel, who had seized upon life with strong hot hands.

But Sunny! His own flesh and blood, the child whose hair had suggested her name. Despite the galloping years, she persisted ever in his memory. He thought of her constantly, of her strange little ways, her pretty coaxing way, her smile; her charming love of the little live things, her perception of beauty, her closeness to nature, her innocence. There was a quality of psychic sweetness about her, something rare and delicate that appealed to the epicure as exquisite and above all price. It was not his gold that had purchased Sunny. She was a gift of the gods, and his memory of his child contained no flaw.

It was part of his punishment that the woman he married after his return to England from Japan should have drifted farther and farther apart from him with the years. Intuitively his wife had recognised that hungry heart behind the man's cold exterior. She knew that the greatest urge in the character of this man was his desire for children. From year to year she suffered the agony of seeing the frustration of their hopes. Highly strung and imaginative, Mrs. Wainwright feared that her husband would acquire a dislike for her. The idea persisted like a monomania. She sought distraction from this ghost that arose between them in social activities and passionate work in the cause of woman's suffrage. It was her husband's misfortune that his nature was of that unapproachable sort that seldom lets down the mask, a man who retired within himself, and sought resources of comfort where indeed they were not to be found. Grimly, cynically, he watched the devastating effects of their separated interests, and in time she, too, in a measure was cast aside, in thought at least, just as the first wife had been. Stephen Wainwright grew grimmer and colder with the years, and the name applied to him was curiously suited.

This was the man whose tears were falling on the soft hair of the strange

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girl from Japan. He had lifted her hat that he might see that hair, so bright and pretty that had first suggested her name. With awkward gentleness, he smoothed it back from the girl's thin little face.

"Sunny, you know your father now fully, don't you? Tell me that you do—that you have not forgotten me. You were within a few weeks of six when I went away, and we were the greatest of pals. Surely you have not forgotten altogether. It seems just the other day you were looking at me, just as you are now. It does not seem to me as if you have changed at all. You are still my little girl. Tell me—you have not forgotten you father altogether, have you?"

"No. Those year they are push away. You are my chichi (papa). I so happy see you face again."

She held him back, her two hands on his shoulders, and now true to her sex, she prepared to demand a favour from her father.

"Now I think you are going to give Katy and me mos' bes' job ad you business."

"Job? Who is Katy?"

"I are not told you yet of Katy. Katy are my frien'."

"You've told me nothing. I must know everything that has happened to you since I left Japan."

"Thas too long ago," said Sunny sadly, "and I am hongry. I lig' eat liddle bit something."

"What! You've had no lunch?"

He leaned over to the desk and pushed the button. Miss Holliwell, coming to the door, saw a sight that for the first time in her years of service with Stephen Wainwright took away her composure. Her employer was kneeling by a chair on which was seated the strange girl, whose hat was off, and who was holding one of his hands with both of hers. Even then he did not break the custom of years and explain or confide in his secretary, and she saw to her amazement that the eyes of man she secretly termed "The Sphinx" were red. All he said was:

"Order a luncheon, Miss Holliwell. Have it brought up here. Have the restaurant rush it through. Something warm and nourishing. That is all."

Miss Holliwell slowly closed the door, but her amazement at what she had seen within was turned to indignation at what she encountered without. As the door opened, Katy, pressed up against the keyhole, fell back upon the floor. Now during the period when Sunny had been in the private office of Miss Holliwell's employer, she had had her hands full with the curious young person left behind.

Katy had found relief from her pent-up curiosity in an endless stream of questions and gratuitous remarks which she poured out upon the exasperated secretary. Katy's tongue and spirit were entirely undaunted by the chilling monosyllabic replies of Miss Holliwell, and the latter was finally driven to the extremity of requesting her to wait in the outer office:

"I'm awfully busy," said the secretary, "and really when you chatter like that I cannot concentrate upon my work."

To which, with a wide friendly smile, rejoined Katy:

"Cheer up, Miss Frozen-Face. Mum's the word from this one from this time on."

"Mum," she actually kept, but her alert pose, her cocked-up ears and eyes, glued upon the door had such a quality of upset about them that Miss Holliwell found it almost as difficult to concentrate as when her tongue had rattled along. Now here she was engaged in the degrading employment of listening and seeing what was never intended for her ears and eyes. Miss Holliwell pushed her indignantly away.

"What do you mean by doing a thing like that?"

Between what she had seen inside her employer's private office, and the actions of this young gamin, Miss Holliwell was very much disturbed. She betook herself to her seat with a complete absence of her cultivated composure. When Katy said, however: "Gee! I wish I knew whether Sunny is safe in there with that old man," Miss Holliwell was forced to raise her hand to hide a smile that would come despite her best efforts. For once in her life she gave the wrong number, and was cross with the girl at the telephone desk because it was some time before the restaurant was reached. The carefully ordered meal dictated by Miss Holliwell aroused in the listening Katy such mixed emotions that, as the secretary hung up the receiver, the hungry youngster leaned over and said in a hoarse pleading whisper:

"I say, if you're orderin' for Sunny, make it a double."

Inside Sunny was telling her father her story. "Begin from the first," he had said. "Omit nothing. I must know everything about you."

Graphically, as they waited for the lunch, she sketched in all the sordid details of her early life, the days of their mendicancy making the man feel immeasurably mean. Sitting at the desk now, his eyes shaded with his hand, he gritted his teeth, and struck the table with repeated soundless blows, when his daughter told him of the lash of the

man Hirata. But something, a feeling more penetrating than pain, stung Stephen Wainwright when she told him of those warm-hearted men who had come into her life like a miracle and taken the place that he should have been there to fill. For the first time he interrupted her to take down the names of her friends one by one on a pad of paper. Professor Barrowes. Zoologist and Professor of Archeology. Wainwright had heard of him somewhere recently. Yes, he recalled him now. Some dispute about a recent "find" of the Professor's. There was some question raised as to the authenticity of the fossil. Opposition to its being placed in the Museum. Newspaper discussion. An effort on the Professor's part to raise funds for further exploration in Canada north-west.

Robert Mapson, Jr. Wainwright knew the reporter slightly. He had covered stories in which Wainwright was interested,

Montague Potter, Jr. City people. His firm did business with them.

J. Lyon Crawford, son of a man once at college with Wainwright. Sunny's father recalled some chaffing joke at the club aenent "Jinx's" political ambitions. As a prospect in politics he had seemed a joke to his friends.

And, last, J. Addison Hammond, Jr.—"Jerry."

How Sunny had pronounced that name! What was there about that soft inflection that caused her father to hold his pencil suspended and look at her keenly, while a stab of jealousy struck him.

"What does he do, Sunny?"

"Ho! He are goin' be grade artist-arki-tuck. He make so beautiful pictures, and he have mos' beautiful thought on inside his head. He goin' to make all these city loog beautiful. He show how make houses, where all good light and there's garden grow on top, and there's house where they not put out liddle bebbey on street. He's go sleep and play on those garden on top house."

Her father, his elbows on desk, his chin cupped on his hand, watched the girl's kindling face, and suffered pangs that he could not analyse. Quietly he urged her to continue her story. Unwillingly she turned from Jerry. Of her life in Jerry's flat, of Hatton and his "yuman hankerrings"; of Itchy, with his two fleas; of the canaries in the gold cage, of the gold-fish who swam in the glass bowl; of the honourable mice; of the butcher and caretaker gentlemen; of Monty, of Bobs, of Jinx, who had asked her to marry them, and up to the day when Mrs. Hammond and Miss Falconer had come to the apartment and turned her out.

Then a pause to catch her breath in a wrathful sob, to continue the wistful tale of her prayer to Kuonnon in the raging, noisy street; of the mother's gentle spirit that had gone with her on the dark long road that led to—Katy.

It was then that Miss Hollowell tapped, and the waiters came in with the great loaded trays held aloft, bearing the carefully ordered meal and the paraphernalia that accompanies a lunch *de luxe*. Someone else besides the waiters had slipped by Miss Hollowell. Katy, clucking with her tongue against the roof of her mouth, tried to attract the attention of Sunny, whose back was turned. Sniffing those delicious odours, Katy came farther into the room, and following the clucking she let out an unmistakably false cough and loud Ahem.

This time Sunny turned, saw her friend, and jumped up from her seat, and ran to her. Said Katy in a whisper:

"Well, you're smarter than I gave you credit for being. Got him going, ain't you. Well, pull his leg while the going's good, and say, Sunny, if them things on the tray are for you, remember, I gave you half my hot dogs, and I always say—"

"This are my frien', Katy," said Sunny proudly, as the very grave-faced man whom Katy had tried to trip up came forward and took Katy's hand in a tight clasp.

"Katy, this are my—Chichi—Mr. Papa," said Sunny.

Katy gasped, staring with wide-open mouth from Mr. Wainwright to Sunny. Her head reeled with the most extravagantly romantic tale that instantly flooded it. Then, with a whoop curiously like that of some small street boy, Katy grasped hold of Sunny about the waist.

"Whuroo!" cried Katy. "I knew you was a princess. It's just like a novel—better than any story I've read."

There in the dignified office of the steel magnate the shopgirl drew his daughter into a delicious war dance, full of sheer fun and impudent youth. For the first time in years Stephen Wainwright threw back his head and burst into laughter.

Now these two young radiant creatures, who could dance while they hungered, were seated before that gorgeous luncheon. Sunny's father lifted the top from the great steak, entirely surrounded with fried potatoes, ornamental bits of peas, beans, carrots, asparagus, cauliflower, and mushrooms.

Sunny let forth one long ecstatic sigh as she clasped her hands together, while Katy laid both hands piously upon her

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stomach, and, raising her eyes as if about to deliver a solemn Grace, she said :

" Home, sweet home was never like this ! "

## CHAPTER XIX

Society enjoys a shock. It craves sensation. When that brilliant and autocratic leader returned from several months' absence abroad, with a young daughter of whose existence no one had ever heard, her friends were mystified. When, with the most evident pride and fondness she referred to the fact that her daughter had spent most of her life in foreign lands, and was the daughter of Mr. Wainwright's first wife, speculation was rife. That the financier had been previously married, that he had a daughter of eighteen years, set all society agog, and expectant to see the girl, whose *début* was to be made at a large coming-out party given by her mother in her honour, the final touch of mystery and romance was added by the daughter herself. An enterprising society reporter had through the magic medium of a card from her chief, Mr. Mapson, obtained a special interview with Miss Wainwright on the eve of her ball, and the latter had confided to the incredulous and delighted newspaper woman the fact that she expected to be married at an early date. The announcement, however, lost some of its thrill when Miss Wainwright omitted the name of the happy man. Application to her mother brought forth the fact that that personage knew no more about this coming event than the reporter herself. Mrs. Wainwright promptly denied the story, pronouncing it a probable prank of Miss Sunny and her friend, Miss Clarry. Here Mrs. Wainwright sighed. She always sighed at the mention of Katy's name, sighed indulgently yet hopelessly. The latter had long since been turned into the efficient hands of a Miss Woodhouse, a lady who had accompanied the Wainwright party abroad. Her especial duty in life was to refine Katy, a task not devoid of entertainment to said competent young person, Miss Woodhouse, since it stirred to literary activity certain slumbering talents, and in due time Katy, through the pen of Miss Woodhouse, was firmly pinned on paper.

However, this is not Katy's story, though it may not be inappropriate to mention here that the Mrs. J. Lyon Crawford, who for so long queened it over, bossed, bullied, and shepherded society, was under her skin ever the same little shopgirl who had marched forth with her army of one down the steps of a tenement house.

Coming back to Sunny. The newspaper woman persisting that the story had been told her with utmost candour and seriousness, Mrs. Wainwright sent for her daughter. Sunny, questioned by her mother, smilingly confirmed the story.

" But, my dear," said Mrs. Wainwright, " you know no young man yet. Surely you are just playing ? It's a game between you and Katy, isn't it, dear ? Katy is putting you up to it, I'm sure."

" No, mamma, Katy are—is—not do so. I am ! It is true ! I am going to make marriage wiz English gentleman mebbe very soon."

" Darling, run along. That will do for just now, dear. I'll speak to Miss Ah—What is the name of the newspaper reporter ? "

" Holman."

" Ah, yes, Miss Holman. Run along, dear"—in a tone an indulgent mother uses to a baby. Then, with her club smile turned affably on Miss Holman : " Our little Sunny is so mischievous. Now I'm quite sure she and Miss Clarry are playing some naughty little game. I don't believe I'd publish that if I were you, Miss Holman."

Miss Holman laughed in Mrs. Wainwright's face, which brought the colour to a face that for the last few months had radiated such good humour upon the world. Mrs. Wainwright smiled now, discomfited, for she knew that the newspaper woman not only intended to print Sunny's statement but her mother's denial.

" Now, Miss Holman, your story will have no value, in view of the fact that the name of the man is not mentioned."

" I thought that a defect at first," said Miss Holman shamelessly, " but now I'm inclined to think it will add to the interest. Our readers dote on mysteries, and it will make a good story on those lines. Later I'll do a bit of detective work on the track of the man ! We'll get him !" And the man-like young woman nodded her head briskly, and betook herself from the Wainwright home, well satisfied with her day's work.

An appeal to the editor of the paper on the telephone brought back the surprising answer that they would not print the story if Sunny—that editor referred to the child of Mr. Wainwright as " Sunny " —herself denied it. He requested that " Sunny " should speak on the telephone. Mrs. Wainwright was especially indignant over this, because she knew that that editor had arisen to his present position entirely through a certain private " pull " of Mr. Wainwright. Of course, the editor himself did not know this, but Mr. Wainwright's wife did, and she thought him

exceedingly unappreciative and exasperating.

Mrs. Wainwright sought Sunny in her room. Here she found that bewildering young person with her extraordinary friend, enthusing over a fashion book devoted to *trousseaux* and bridal gowns. They looked up with flushed faces, and Mrs. Wainwright could not resist a feeling of resentment at the thought that her daughter (she never thought of Sunny as "stepdaughter") should give her confidence to Miss Clarry in preference to her. However, she masked her feelings, as only Mrs. Wainwright could, and with a smile to Katy advised her that Miss Woodhouse was waiting for her. Katy's reply: "Yes, ma'am—I mean, Aunt Emma," was submissive and meek enough, but it was hard for Mrs. Wainwright to overlook that very pronounced wink with which Katy favoured Sunny ere she departed.

"And now, dear," said Mrs. Wainwright, putting her arm around Sunny, "tell me all about it."

Sunny, who loved her dearly, cuddled against her like a child, but nevertheless shook her bright head.

"Ho! That is secret I not tell. I are a tomb," said

"Tomb?"

"Yes, thas word lig' Katy use when she have secret." She say it are—is—lock up in tomb."

"To think," said Mrs. Wainwright jealously, "that you prefer to confide in a stranger like Katy rather than your mother."

"No, I not told Katy yet," said Sunny quickly, "She have ask me one tousan' time, and I are not tol' her."

"But, darling, surely you want me to know. Is he any young man we are acquainted with?"

Sunny, finger thoughtfully on her lip, considered.

"No-o; I thing you are not know him yet."

"Is he one of the young men who—er—"

It was painful for Mrs. Wainwright to contemplate that chapter in Sunny's past, when she had been the ward of four strange young men. In fact, she had taken Sunny abroad immediately after that remarkable time when her husband had brought the strange young girl to the house, and for the first time she had learned of Sunny's existence. Life had taken on a new meaning to Mrs. Wainwright after that. Suddenly she comprehended the meaning of having someone to live for. Her life and work had a definite purpose and impetus. Her husband's child had closed the gulf that had yawned so long between

man and wife, and was threatening to separate them for ever. Her love for Sunny, and her pride in the girl's beauty and charm was almost pathetic. Had she been the girl's own mother she could not have been more indulgent or anxious for her welfare.

Sunny not answering the last question, Mrs. Wainwright went over in her mind each one of the young men whose ward Sunny had been. The first three, Jinx, Monty and Bobs, she soon rejected as possibilities. There remained Jerry Hammond. Private inquiries concerning Jerry had long since established the fact that he had been for a number of years engaged to a Miss Falconer. Mrs. Wainwright had been much distressed because Sunny insisted on writing numerous letters to Jerry while abroad. It seemed very improper, so she told the girl, to write letters to another woman's *fiancé*. Sunny agreed with this most earnestly, and after a score of letters had gone unanswered she promised to desist.

Mrs. Wainwright appreciated all that Mrs. Hammond had done for her daughter. Sunny's father had indeed expressed that appreciation in that letter (a similar one had been sent to all members of the Sunny Syndicate) penned immediately after he had found Sunny. He had moreover done everything in his power privately to advance the careers and interests of the various men who had befriended his daughter. But for his engagement to Miss Falconer, Mrs. Wainwright would not have had the slightest objection to Sunny continuing her friendship with this Hammond, but really it was hardly the proper thing under the circumstances. However, she was both peeved and relieved, when Sunny's many epistles remained unanswered for months, and then a single short letter, that was hardly calculated to revive Sunny's childish passion for this Jerry arrived. Jerry wrote:

"Dear Sunny,—Glad to get your many notes. Have been away. Glad you are happy. Hope see you when you return.  
JERRY."

Why, a telegram would have contained more words, the ruffled Mrs. Wainwright was assured, and she acquired a prejudice against Jerry, despite all the good she had heard of him. From that time on, her rôle was to, as far as lay in her power, distract the dear child from thought of the man who very evidently cared nothing about her.

Of course Mrs. Wainwright did not know of that illness of Jerry Hammond when he had hovered between life and death. She did not know that all of Sunny's letters

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had come to his hand at one time, unwillingly given up by Professor Barrowes, who feared a relapse from the resulting excitement. She did not know that that shaky scrawl was due to the fact that Jerry was sitting up in bed, and had penned twenty or more letters to Sunny, in which he had exhausted all of the sweet words in a lover's vocabulary, and then had stopped short to contemplate the fact that he had done absolutely nothing in the world to prove himself worthy of Sunny, had torn up the aforementioned letters, and penned the blank scrawl that told the daughter of Stephen Wainwright nothing.

But it was shortly after that that Jerry began to "come back." He started upon the high road to health, and his recuperation was so swift that he was able to laugh at the protecting and anxious Barrowes, who moved Heaven and earth to prevent the young man from returning to his work. Jerry had been, however, "away" long enough, so he said, and he fell upon his work with such zeal that no mere friend or mother could stop him. Never had that star of Beauty of which he had always dreamed seemed so close to Jerry as now. Never had the incentive to succeed been so vital and gloriously necessary. At the end of all his efforts he saw no longer the elusive face of the imaginary "Beauty," of which he loved to tell Sunny, and which he despaired ever to reach. What was a figment of the imagination now took a definite lovely form. At the end of his rainbow was the living face of Sunny.

And so with a song within his heart, a light in his eyes, and a spring to his step, with kind words for everyone he met, Jerry Hammond worked and waited. Mrs. Wainwright by this time knew the futility of trying to force Sunny to reveal her secret. Not only was she very Japanese in her ability to keep a secret when she chose, but she was Stephen Wainwright's child. Her mother knew that for months she had neither seen nor written to Jerry Hammond, for Sunny herself had told her so when questioned. Who then was the mysterious *fiancé*? Could it possibly be someone she had known in Japan? This thought caused Mrs. Wainwright considerable trepidation. She feared the possibility of a young Russian, a Japanese, a missionary. To make sure that Jerry was not the one Sunny had in mind, she asked the girl whether he had ever proposed to her, and Sunny replied at once, very sadly :

"No-o. I ask him do so, but he do not do so. He we got 'nother girl he marry then. Jinx and Monty and Bobs

are all ask me marry wiz them, but Jerry never ask so."

"Oh, my dear, did you really *ask* him to ask you to marry him?"

"No! I hint for him do so," said Sunny, "but he do not do so. Thas very sad for me," she admitted dejectedly.

"Very fortunate, I call it," said Mrs. Wainwright.

Thus Jerry's elimination was completed, and for the nonce the matter of Sunny's marriage was dropped for the time being, to be revived, however, on the night of her ball.

### CHAPTER XX

There have been many marvellous balls given in London, but none exceeding the famous Wainwright Cherry Blossom ball. The guests stepped into a vast ballroom that had been transformed into a Japanese garden in spring. On all sides, against the walls, and made into arbours and groves, cherry trees in full blossom were banked, while above and over the galleries dripped the long purple and white heads of the wistaria. The entire arch of the ceiling was covered with cherry branches, and the floor was of heavy glass, in imitation of a lake in which the blossoms were reflected.

Through a lane of slender bamboos the guests passed to meet under a cherry blossom bower the loveliest bud of the season. Sunny, in a fairy-like chiffon frock, springing out about her diaphanously, and of the pale pink and white colours of the cherry blossoms. Sunny, with her bright, shining hair coiffed by the hand of an artist. Sunny, with her first string of perfect pearls and a monstrous feather fan, that when dropped seemed to cover half her short fluffy skirts. Sunny, with the brightest eyes, darting in and out and looking over the heads of her besieging guests, laughing, nodding breathlessly, parrying the questions that poured in on all sides. Everybody wanted to know who *the man* was.

"Oh, do tell us who he is," they would urge, and Sunny would shake her bright head, slowly unfurl her monstrous fan, and, with it thoughtfully at her lips, she would say :

"Ho, yes, it are true, and mebbe i will tell you some other day."

Now among those present at Sunny's party were five men whose acquaintance the readers of this story have already made. It so happened that they were very late in arriving at the Wainwright dance, this being due to the fact that one of their number had to be fairly brought there by physical force. Jerry at dinner

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had read that story in the newspaper, and was reduced to such a condition of distraction that it was only by the united efforts of his four friends that he was forcibly shoved into the car. The party arrived late, as stated, and it may be recorded that as Sunny's eyes searched that sea of faces before her, moving to the music of the orchestra and the tinkle of the Japanese bells, they lost somewhat of their shining look, and became so wistful that her father, sensitive to every change in the girl, never left her side; but he could not induce the girl to dance with him. She remained with her parents in the receiving arbour. Suddenly two spots of bright rose came to the cheeks of Sunny and she arose on tiptoes, just as she had done as a child on the tightrope. She saw that arriving party approaching, and heard Katy's voice as she husbanded them to what she called "the royal throne."

At this juncture, and when he was within but a few feet of the "throne," Jerry saw Sunny. One long look passed between them, and then, shameless to relate, Jerry ducked into that throng of dancers. To escape further the wrathful hands of his friends, he seized some fat lady hurriedly about the waist and dragged her upon the glass floor. His rudeness covered up with as much tact as his friends could muster, they proceeded, as far as lay in their power, to compensate for his defection. They felt no sympathy or patience with the acts of Jerry. Were they not all in the same boat, and equally stung by the story of Sunny's engagement?

Both hands held out, Sunny welcomed her friends. First Professor Barrowes:

"Ho! How it is good ad my eyes seek your kind face again."

Alas! for Sunny's several months with especial tutors and governesses, and the beautiful example of Mrs. Wainwright. Always in moments of excitement she lapsed into her strangely twisted English speech and topsy-turvy grammar.

Professor Barrowes, with the dust in his eyes and brain of that recent triumphant trip into the north-west of Canada brushed aside by the illness of his friend, was on solid enough earth as Sunny all but hugged him. Bowing, beaming, chuckling, he took the fragrant little hand in his own, and with the pride and glow of a true discoverer his eye scanned the fairy-like creature before him.

"Ah, Miss—ah—Sunny. The pleasure is mine—entirely mine, I assure you. May I add that you still to me strongly resemble the child I first saw in tights?"—Ah, Man of Fossils!"—"the child, who came

upon the tightrope, with a smile upon her face and a dewdrop on her cheek."

(Before this I have observed that poetry is not absent from the soul of any dreamer.)

"May I add," continued Professor Barrowes, "that it is my devout hope, my dear, that you will always remain unchanged. I hope so devoutly. I wish it."

"Ho! Mr. dear Professor, I am jus' nothing but little moth. Nothing moach good on these earth. But you—you are do so moach I am hear. You tick all those worl' how those worl' are be ad the firs' day of all! Tell me 'bout what happen to you. Daikoku (God of fortune) he have been kind to you—yes?"

"Astoundingly kind—amazingly so. There is much to tell. If you will allow me, at an early date, I will do myself the pleasure of calling upon you, and—ah—going into detail."

Miss Holliwell, smiling and most efficiently and inconspicuously managing the occasion, noting the congestion about Sunny, and the undisguised expressions of deepening disgust and impatience on the faces of Sunny's other friends, here interposed. She slipped her hand through the Professor's arm, and with a murmured:

"Oh, Professor Barrowes, do try this waltz with me. It's one of the old ones, and this is Leap Year, so I am going to ask you."

Now, Miss Holliwell had had charge of all the matters pertaining to the dinornis, and had had the pleasure of an acquaintance with Professor Barrowes that was very pleasant and gratifying to the man of science.

If any one imagines that sixty-year-old legs cannot move with the expedition and grace of youth, he should have witnessed the gyrations and motions of the legs of Professor Barrowes as he guided the financier's secretary through the mazes of the waltz.

Came then Monty, upright and rosy, and as shamelessly young as when over four years before, at seventeen, he imagined himself wise and aged looking with his bone-ribbed glasses. The down was still on Monty's cheek, and the adoration of the puppy still in his eyes.

"Sunny! It does my soul good to see you. You look perfectly great—yum-yum. Jove, you gave us a fright all right. Haven't got over it yet. Looked for you in the morgue, Sunny, and here you are shining like—like a star."

"Monty! That face of you will make me always shine like star. What you are doing these day?"

"Oh, just a few little things. Nothing

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worth mentioning," returned Monty, with elaborate carelessness, his heart thumping with pride and yearning to pour out the full tale into the sympathetic pink ear of Sunny. "I got a year or two still to put in—and then I'm going to Panama, Sunny. Connection with fever and sanitary work. Greatest opportunity of a lifetime. I'm to be first assistant—it's the literal truth, to—" He whispered a name in Sunny's ear, which caused her to start back, gasping with admiration.

"Monty, how I am proud of you!"

"Oh, it's nothing much. Don't know why in the world they picked *me*. My work wasn't any better than the other chaps'. I was conscientious enough and interested, of course, but so were the other fellows. You could have knocked me down with a feather when they picked me for the job. Why, I was fairly stunned by the news. Haven't got over it yet. Your father knows Dr. Roper, the chief, you know. Isn't the world small? I say, Sunny, who's the duck you're engaged to. Go on, tell your old chum."

"No, Monty, I will tell you—to-nide mebbe some time."

"Here, here, Monty, you've bagged enough of Sunny's attention. My turn now." Bobs pushed the unwilling Monty along, and the youngster, pretending a lofty indifference to the challenging smiles directed at him by certain members of the younger set, was nevertheless soon slipping over the floor with the prettiest one of them all, whom Mrs. Wainwright especially led him to.

Bobs meanwhile was grinning at Sunny, while she, with a maternal eye, examined "dear Bobs," and noted that he had got into his clothes hastily, but that, nevertheless he was the same charming friend.

"Hello, old thing!" was his greeting. "By gum, you look positively edible. What you been doing with yourself, and what's this latest story I'm hearing about your marrying someone?"

"Bobs, I are goin' to tell you 'bout those someone some time this nide," smiled Sunny. "But I wan' know firs' of all tings, whad you are do, dear Bobs?"

"I?" Bobs rose up and down on his polished toes. "City editor of my paper, old top, that's my job. Youngest ever known on the desk, but not, I hope, the least competent."

"Ho, Bobs. You are one whole editor man! Now I am proud of you. How you are goin' right up to topnotch. Mebbe by'n you got to be ambassador ad anudder country and—"

"Whew-w! How can a mere man climb to the heights you expect of him.

What I want to know is—what about that marriage story? I printed it because it was good stuff, but who is the lucky dog? Come on now, you know me. You can tell me anything."

"Ho, Bobs, I are goin' tell you anything. Loog, Bobs, here are a frien', I wan' you speag ad. She also have wrote a book. Her name are—is Miss Woodhouse. She is ticher to my frien', Miss Clarry. She are——"

"Are! Sunny?"

"Am. She am—no, is very good ticher. She am—is—make me and Katy spik and ride English jos same English lady."

The young and edified instructor of Katy Clarry surveyed the young and edified editor with a quizzical eye. The young editor in question returned that quizzical glance, grinned, offered his arm, and they whirled off to the music of a rippling one-step.

Sunny had swung around and seized the two plump soft hands of Jinx, at whose elbow Katy was pressing. Katy, much to her delight, had been assisting Miss Holliwell in caring for the arriving guests, and had indeed quite surprised and amused that young person by her talent for organisation and real ability. Katy was in her element as she bustled about in somewhat the proprietary manner of the floor walkers and the lady heads of departments in the stores where she had one time worked.

"Jinx, Jinx, Jinx! My eyes are healthy jos loog ad you! I am *that* glad see you speag also wiz my bes' frien', Katy." She clapped her hands excitedly. "How I think it nize that you and Katy be—"

Katy coughed loudly. Sunny's ignorance at times was extremely distressing. Katy had a real sympathy with Mrs. Wainwright at certain times. Jinx had blushed as red as a peony.

"Have a heart, Sunny!"

Nevertheless he felt a sheepish pride in the thought that the piquant-looking and piquant-talking young person who was Sunny's best friend should have singled him out for special attention. Jinx, though the desired one of aspiring mothers, was not so popular with the maidens who were pushed forward and adjured to regard him as a most desirable husband. Katy was partial to flesh, and she made no bones about letting the world know it. She had no patience with the artist man who declared that bones were aesthetic, and, to suit his taste, he liked to hear the bones rattle. Katy averred that there was something awfully cosy about fat people.

"I are hear some grade news of you,

Jinx," said Sunny admiringly. "I are hear you are got nomin—ation be on staff those governor."

"Gosh! That's only the beginning, Sunny. I—well, the fact is, I'm going in for politics a bit. Life too purposeless heretofore, and the machine wants me. At least, I've been told so. Your father, Sunny, has been jolly nice about it—a real friend."

"Sunny," said Katy in her ear, "ain't it perfectly scrumptious to be refined like this. It's positively painful. How're you gettin' on? Hope your tongue don't blister twistin' about words you don't know the meanin' of."

A broad grin lighted up Katy's wide Irish face. Shoving her arm recklessly through Jinx's, she said :

"Come along, old chap, let's show 'em on the floor what reg'lar dancers like you and me can do."

Sunny watched them with shining eyes, and once as they whirled by Katy's voice floated above the murmurs of the dance and music :

"How light you are on your feet. Plump men usually are. I always say——"

And Katy and Jinx, Monty and Bobs and the Professor, and all her friends were lost to view in that moving, glittering throng of dancers, upon whom, like fluttering moths the cherry blossom petals were dropping from above, lighting upon their heads and shoulders and giving them that festival look that Sunny knew so well in Japan. She had a breathing space for a spell, and now that very wistful longing look stole like a shadow back to the girl's young face. All unconsciously a sigh escaped her. Instantly her father was at her side.

"You want something, my darling?"

"Yes, papa. You love me very much, papa?"

"Do I? Can you doubt it, dear? If there's anything in the world you want that I can give you you have only to ask, my little girl."

"Then, papa, you see over dere that young man stand. You see him?"

"Young Hammond."

"Jerry." Her very pronouncement of his name was a caress. "Papa, I wan speag to him. All these night I have wan see him. See, wiz my fan I are do lig this, and nod my head, and wiz my finger, too, I call him, but he do not come"—dejectedly. "Loog! I will do so again. You see!" She made an unmistakable motion with her hand and fan at Jerry, and that unhappy young fool turned his back and slunk behind some artificial camphor trees."

"By George!" said Wainwright.

"Sunny, do you want me to bring that young puppy to you?"

"Papa, Jerry are not a puppy, but jus' same, I wan' you bring him unto me. Please. And then, when he come, please you and mamma stand liddle bit off, and dean let nobody else speag ad me. I are got something I wan' ask Jerry all by me."

The music had stopped, but the clapping hands of the dancers were clamouring for a repetition of the crooning dance song that had just begun its raging career in the metropolis. Sunny saw her father clap Jerry upon the shoulder. She saw his effort to escape, and her father's smiling insistence. A short interval of breathless suspense, and then the reluctant, very white, very stern young Jerry was standing before Sunny. He tried to avoid Sunny's glance, but fascinated, found himself looking straight into the girl's eyes. She was smiling, but there was something in her dewy glance that reached out from that smile and twisted the boy's heart strings sadly.

"Jerry!" said Sunny softly, her great fan touching her lips, and looking above him with such a glance that all his best resolves to continue calm seemed threatened with panic. He said, with what he flattered was an imitation of composure :

"Lovely day—er—night. How are you?"

"I are so happy I are lig' those soap bubble. I goin' burst away."

"Yes, naturally you would be happy. Beautiful day—er—night, isn't it?"

He resolved to avoid all personal topics. He would shoot small talk at her, and she should not suspect the havoc that was raging within him.

"How are your mother?"

"Well, thank you."

"How are your frien', Miss Falconer?"

"Don't know 'm sure."

"Hatton are tol' me all 'bout her," said Sunny.

"Hatton? He's gone. I don't know where?"

"He are officer at Salvation Army. He come to our house, and my father give him money for those poor people. Hatton are tell me all 'bout you.' I are sawry you sick long time, Jerry. That very sad news for me."

Jerry, tongue-tied for the moment, knew not what to say or where to look. Sunny's dear glance was almost more than he could bear.

"Beautiful room this. Decoration——"

"Jerry, that are your beautiful picture you are made. I am remember it all. One time you draw those picture like thes,

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for me, and you say thas mos' nize picture for party ever. I thing so."

Jerry was silent.

"Jerry, how you are do ad those worl? Please tell me. I lig' to hear. Are you make grade big success? Are you found those Beauty thad you are loog for always?"

"Beauty!" he said furiously. "I told you often enough that it was an elusive jade, that no one could ever reach. And as for success. I suppose I've made good enough. I was offered a partnership—I can't take it—I'll—I'll have to get away. Sunny, for God's sake, answer me. Is it true you are going to be married?"

Slowly the girl bowed with great seriousness, yet somehow her soft eyes rested in caress upon the young man's tortured face.

"Jerry," said Sunny dreamily, "this are the Year of Leap, and I are lig' ask you liddle bit question."

Jerry neither heard nor understood the significance of the girlish words. His young face had blanched. All the joy of life seemed to have been extinguished. Yet one last passionate question burst from him.

"Who—is—he?"

Slowly Sunny raised that preposterous fan. She brought it to her face, so that its great expanse acted as a screen and cut her and Jerry off from the rest of the

world. Her bright, lovely gaze sank right unto Jerry's, and Sunny answered softly: "You!"

Now what followed would furnish a true student of psychology with the most irrefutable proof of the devastating effect upon a young man of the superior and civilised caste of association with a heathen people in a heathen land. Even the unsophisticated eye of Sunny saw that primitive purpose leap up in the eye of Jerry Hammond, as held in leash only a moment, he purposed then and there to seize the girl bodily in his arms. It was at that moment that her oriental guile came to the top. Sunny stepped back, put out her hand, moved it along the wall, behind the cherry-petalled foliage, and then while Jerry's wild, ecstatic intention brought him ever nearer to her, Sunny found and pushed the button on the wall.

Instantly the room was plunged into darkness. A babble of murmuring sounds and exclamations; laughter, the sudden ceasing of the music; a soft pandemonium had broken loose, but in that blissful moment of complete darkness, oblivious to all the world, feeling and seeing only each other, Jerry and Sunny kissed.

THE END.



Society is a species of variety entertainment where everyone performs for everyone else's amusement.



*Vertebra* is a bone up and down the back; your head sits on one end and you sit on the other.



A prude is a young girl who knows entirely too much.



Imperialism is international kleptomania.



Love-making is man's fancy; woman's fact.

