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## WHAT CAME OF A FLIRTATION

By E. BARTLET THORPE

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Jack Meadenhall and myself were midshipmen together in the navy. One day while our ship was lying at anchor in Japanese waters, Jack and I got permission to go ashore together.

We sauntered along, one of the streets till we came to the outskirts, where the houses were farther apart and their surroundings more ample. Passing a garden inclosed by a low wall, we saw a couple of pretty Japanese girls picking flowers. Jack took out his handkerchief—the method in those days of flirting; I don't know how they do it now—and waved it. We were not more than a dozen yards from the girls, one of whom, seeing a couple of European youngsters in uniform, tossed a rose over the wall. It fell at Jack's feet. He picked it up, inhaled its odor, kissed it and put it in the buttonhole of his jacket.

Both girls laughed, and the other girl threw another rose, which I picked up, inhaled, kissed and put in my own buttonhole. Then, like good boys, we walked on. We didn't care to appear too presuming, and we didn't wish to frighten the little birds by rushing matters. But we didn't walk very far. We soon turned and went back toward the place where we had seen the girls. We argued that if they wished for our further acquaintance they would remain where they were, expecting our return.

We found them exactly the same place, but as we drew near they turned their backs upon us. Jack gave a loud "Ahem!" One of the girls turned and smiled. I gave another "Ahem!" and the other girl turned also. This was enough for Jack, who needed only a moiety of encouragement, and he vaulted the wall. I followed him. It was making an acquaintance under difficulties, we not speaking the Japanese language and they not knowing a word of English. Jack, whose boldness naturally gave him the initiative, pointed to the flowers growing about us and by a well enacted pantomime indicated that we would like some of them. The girls understood, plucked a lot for each of us, then by pantomime asked us to inspect the grounds.

Of course we got separated, Jack going with her who had thrown him the rose, I with her companion, who had favored me. Why they took the liberty of receiving us so unceremoniously I didn't know. They were surely of the samurai class and must have been of wealthy and respectable parents, for the place in which they lived was a large one and their kimonos

were made of the finest texture. I was inclined to think that papa and mamma were not at home. At any rate, we spent a couple of hours with them, chatting all the while in the unspoken language of love which young people don't need to study. Before parting with them we exhibited sufficient ingenuity to inform them that we would call again as soon as we could get another leave.

It was two days after this that we were ordered to report in the captain's cabin. We found there a couple of Japanese men of the higher class and a third who was an interpreter. The men looked as solemn as owls. "Young gentlemen," said the captain, "since you were the only officers ashore on leave the day before yesterday I think that a message brought by these persons must be for you. Besides, I recognize these gowags as belonging to you."

He held up a scarfpin that I had given one of the girls and a ring Jack had given the other. Jack and I were dumfounded. The captain motioned the interpreter to speak. He told us that each of us having given a present to a young girl—a gift in Japan being considered a proposition of marriage—their fathers had come aboard to say that two noble Japanese families would feel honored at an alliance with so great a nation as the United States by giving a daughter to each of the young officers who had asked for her hand.

The matter was far too serious to warrant any expression of amusement. The captain saw at once that we had got into a flirtation and unwittingly proposed marriage. Not wishing to give offense, he took the matter into his own hands, much to the relief of us youngsters who had got into the scrape.

"Tell the gentlemen," he said to the interpreter, "that representing the United States, I am highly honored that the propositions of my officers should be accepted, but that since the offer was made without permission I shall be obliged to lay the matter before the president. I sail for America tomorrow, will discover his excellency's wishes, if possible obtain his permission and act accordingly."

The interpreter translated the captain's speech, and the Japanese gentlemen signified acquiescence and after leaving their addresses, with all necessary information, departed.

"Gentlemen," said the captain when our would be fathers-in-law had gone, "you may consider yourselves under arrest. To suffer any of my officers to put a slight upon the Japanese people might cost me my commission."

We sailed the next day, and on reaching American waters the captain wrote to Japan that, while the president felt highly honored that two noble Japanese families had accepted the proposition of two of his young naval officers, in the American navy marriage was discouraged and permission could not be granted.

## Maxwell Wins

Thrills followed thrills as speeding automobiles shot around the course of the Ingleside Race Course, on April 24th, in the second and final day events of the successful meet promoted by the members of Islam Temple of the Mystic Shrine.

The honors of the day were divided between Barney Oldfield, with his 200 horsepower Benz machine; and C. O. King, with his Maxwell 30 horsepower stock car. Oldfield lowered his previous record of one mile to 51 5-6, which is a new coast record for the circular track. With the exception of this performance, Oldfield had to take second place in the list of racing honors, as the world's champion met defeat in both the five and fifteen mile handicap events, and in both races King and his Maxwell were the victors. In fact, King proved the surprise of the meet, driving all of his races with much judgment and taking the turns with his car as close to the fence as did Oldfield. In the five mile handicap, Oldfield drove his Knox racer to the utmost, but the handicap was too strong and he could not get the lead away from King. Not only in the handicap events did King and his Maxwell prove stars of the first order, but in one of the first events of the day, the five mile race for cars costing from \$1200 to \$1600, which was one of the best matches of the meet.

The time for the five mile handicap was as follows: Maxwell, King, 4.40.30; Oakland, Nelson, 4.48.25; Chalmers, West, 4.49.30; Auto Car, finished fourth, and the Knox car, Barney Oldfield driving, fifth. In the event number eight, ten miles free-for-all handicap, King and his Maxwell again were the winners, the Maxwell's time being 8.19.30.

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