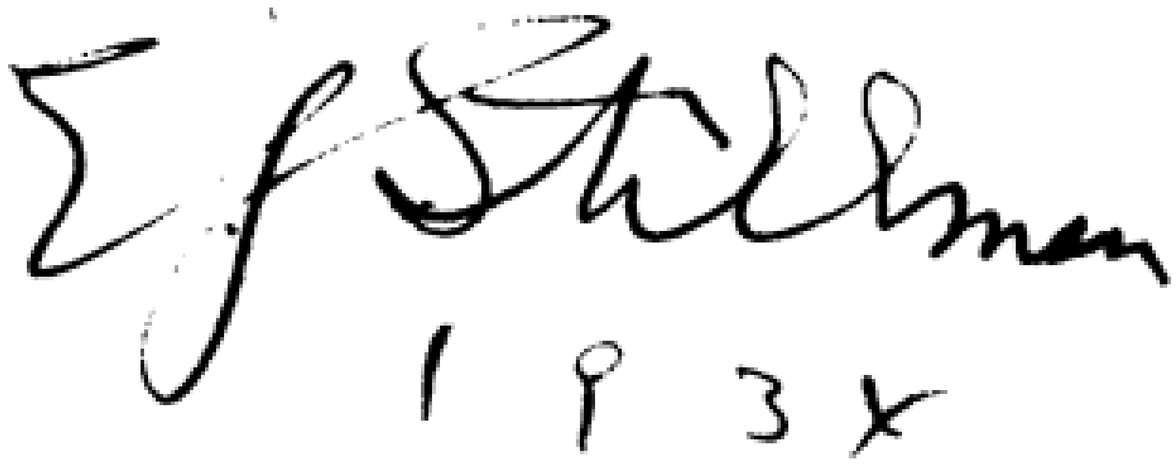

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Our Little Japanese Cousin

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THE
Little Cousin Series

(TRADE MARK)

Each volume illustrated with six or more full page plates in tint. Cloth, 12mo, with decorative cover per volume, 60 cents

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Our Little African Cousin
Our Little Alaskan Cousin
Our Little Arabian Cousin
Our Little Argentine Cousin
Our Little Armenian Cousin
Our Little Australian Cousin
Our Little Austrian Cousin
Our Little Belgian Cousin
Our Little Bohemian Cousin
Our Little Boer Cousin
Our Little Brazilian Cousin
Our Little Bulgarian Cousin
Our Little Canadian Cousin
Our Little Chinese Cousin
Our Little Cossack Cousin
Our Little Cuban Cousin
Our Little Danish Cousin
Our Little Dutch Cousin
Our Little Egyptian Cousin
Our Little English Cousin
Our Little Eskimo Cousin
Our Little French Cousin
Our Little German Cousin
Our Little Grecian Cousin
Our Little Hawaiian Cousin
Our Little Hindu Cousin
Our Little Hungarian Cousin
Our Little Indian Cousin
Our Little Irish Cousin
Our Little Italian Cousin
Our Little Japanese Cousin
Our Little Jewish Cousin
Our Little Korean Cousin
Our Little Malayan (Brown) Cousin
Our Little Mexican Cousin
Our Little Norwegian Cousin
Our Little Panama Cousin
Our Little Persian Cousin
Our Little Philippine Cousin
Our Little Polish Cousin
Our Little Porto Rican Cousin
Our Little Portuguese Cousin
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The Japanese boys and girls are very happy and contented. They are very cleanly and polite. They dislike harsh words and quarreling. They take great delight in the beautiful things God has given, — the green fields, the trees, and the flowers. They are ever ready to join with their parents in making festivals when the peach and plum-trees burst into bloom. Then, away with all care as they go out in gay processions into the country, where they sing songs and write little poems to the trees that give them so much pleasure.

The Japanese take delight in simple things. But there is another side of their nature, we are now discovering. They are very brave. They love their country as themselves. They are willing to give up their lives for her, and they do it gladly. When the Japanese soldiers go forth to battle, their wives and children do not weep. They cheer them onward with all their hearts, for these men whom they

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love so dearly are going in defence of the country that is the mother of them all.

At this very moment, it may be, the Japanese are in battle with their powerful enemies. Their number is small when compared with the great Russian army, but they are brave and fearless; they think little of themselves, and much of the country they are eager to save. Thousands of their American cousins watch eagerly for news and daily send love and greetings to the dauntless Japanese.

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Our Little Japanese Cousin

LOTUS BLOSSOM is the dearest little girl in the world. I beg your pardon — I mean in the Eastern world, for she lives far away across the Pacific, on one of the beautiful islands of Japan.

Lotus Blossom is very pretty. She has a round face, with a clear, yellow skin, and her teeth are like little pearls. Her black hair is cut square across the forehead and braided behind. It is never done up in curl-papers or twisted over a hot iron; the little girl's mamma would think that very untidy.

Lotus Blossom does not smile very often, yet she is always happy. She does not remember crying once in her life. Why should

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she cry? Papa and mamma are always kind and ready to play with her. She is never sent to bed alone in the dark, for she goes to sleep, and gets up in the morning when her parents do. She does not play so hard as to get tired out and cross with everybody. She takes everything quietly, just as the big folks do, and is never in a hurry. Her playmates do not say unkind words to make her sad, for the children of Japan are taught to be polite above everything else. Why, I have heard that once upon a time one little yellow boy so far forgot himself as to call a lady bad names. His parents were terribly shocked. They felt that they had been disgraced, and at once sent for a policeman to go to the lady's house and ask for their child's pardon. As for him! well, he was severely punished in a way you will hear about later on in my story.

Besides all these things which help to make

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going inside. That is one reason why every building can be kept so clean.

The little Japanese girl's clothes are pretty as well as comfortable. It is not possible for pins to prick her tender flesh, because they are never used about her dress. In summer she wears a silk or linen garment made very much like your papa's dressing-gown, except that it has immense sleeves. Beautiful scarlet flowers are embroidered all over it, and a wide sash is wound around her waist and tied in a big, flat bow behind. She is very fond of red, so she has a bow of red crape in her hair, and a small red bag is fastened to her belt in front. What do you suppose she carries in the bag? Paper handkerchiefs! Not linen ones like yours, which are washed when they get soiled, but rather of soft, pretty paper. As soon as each one is used it is thrown away. Don't you think that is a very nice and cleanly custom? Indeed, there are many things about

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the Japanese which we might copy with profit, for they are the cleanest people in the world. Perhaps another reason why our little cousin is so happy is because she is always clean.

Lotus Blossom carries another bag at her belt, filled with amulets. These are charms to keep away any evil spirits that might do her harm. In the bag with the charms, there is a brass plate, which tells her name and where she lives. So if she should get lost, her mother need not worry, for she will be brought safely home without loss of time. But what can be the use of such big sleeves? When her mamma cut them, she made them long enough to nearly reach the floor. Then they were doubled up inside and fastened in front so that they could serve as pockets. How you would laugh to see Lotus Blossom and her brother tuck away their playthings in their big sleeves when their mother calls them away to do something for her! It is

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enough to make an American boy's heart fill with envy. He may boast of six pockets, but what of that? They could all be filled and stowed away in one of Lotus Blossom's sleeves, and room would be still left.

The little girl's life is like a long playtime. In the first place, she lives in a sort of play-house. There is nothing to get out of order; no chairs in the way, no table-scarfs to pull down, no ink-wells to tip over. There is only one big room in the house, but there are many beautiful paper screens, so her mamma can divide the house just as she pleases by moving the screens about. If company should arrive suddenly, there need be no question whether there is a guest-room or not. One can be made with screens in a moment. Even the front of the house is made of screens, which can be closed at night, and folded away in the morning to open up the whole house to the fresh air and sunshine.

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There are no carpets on the floors, but instead of these there are pretty mats made of rushes. They are exactly alike in size, and are shaken every morning. There are no chairs, for Lotus Blossom's family sit on the mats or on cushions on the floor. They cannot lean against the walls either, for remember, there are no walls! And if they should lean against the screens they would tumble over.

The only tables are six inches high. They are pretty and delicate, and are highly lacquered. When Lotus Blossom has nothing else to do, she likes to look at the pictures on these little stands. But where are the stoves? How do the people keep warm in the cold winter days? And where is all the cooking done? In the picture do you see a little box with smoke rising from it? It is lined with metal, and charcoal is burned in it. All the food is prepared over these little fire-boxes. If any one is cold, he

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has only to get a fire-box, light some charcoal, and sit down beside it. And when Lotus Blossom goes to breakfast, she has a fire-box beside the lacquered table, so that water for her tea can be kept hot.

Tea! you say. That little girl, nine years old, drinking tea? Yes, we have to admit that the Japanese child drinks tea at a very early age; and with no milk or sugar, either. But then the cups are so tiny they do not hold much. They are no bigger than those in a doll's china set. How quickly the little tea-table is set at meal times. Each member of the family has one all to himself. There is no table-cloth, no knife, or fork, or spoon; instead of these one sees a pair of chop-sticks, a small cup and saucer, and a plate from which he eats the steaming rice and the minced fish. But suppose that the tea or rice should be spilled on the beautiful table? Please don't imagine such a thing. Japanese

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very red, if you were only to hop in and out again. The whole family bathe in the same tub of water, one after the other, and it is kept hot by a tube which runs to a fire-box. The little girl puts on her day-dress after her bath is finished, and, lying down on the quilt, she rests her head on the hard pillow. Mamma covers her with another quilt, and she is soon sound asleep.

When Lotus Blossom was two years old her brother Toyo was born. How the family rejoiced at having a little son! When he was only seven days old a very important ceremony was performed. He had to receive a name. His papa, who believes in the religion of Shintoism, fully wrote out five of his favourite names on pieces of paper. Then he took his baby in his arms, and, carrying the papers, he went to the temple where he worshipped. The papers were handed to the priest, who placed them in a bowl. After

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some ceremony, the priest began to fish in the bowl with a sacred wand. The first paper he lifted out bore the name of Toyo. This was the way that Lotus Blossom's little brother received his name. When he was about four weeks old he was again carried to the temple by his father and nurse. The Japanese believe in one great power, or god, but under him there are many others; as, a god of flowers, a god of art, and so forth. This time he was put under the care of his special god, who was then expected to protect him for the rest of his life.

All this time Toyo's head was kept perfectly smooth. In fact, his first visit to the barber was very important, for all his hair was shaved off then except a little fringe at the back and sides. When he was four months old another important ceremony was held. Toyo left off baby clothes and was given his first solid food. That was rice, of course,

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the first tooth, and not only that, but the second and the third, — in fact, every tooth. in turn had its arrival celebrated. A poem about each one was written by his loving papa, and a little festival was held in the home. Such happy, childlike people are the Japanese! They are ready to enjoy everything. Even the funerals are cheerful, and have nothing sad and dreary about them. Why should they, when the people believe that they always will live, and that they will come back to earth again to enjoy the beautiful fields and flowers and sunshine in new bodies?

Almost the first words that Toyo learned to speak were, "Thank you," and "If you please." Don't think for a moment that he ever did such a rude thing in his life as to answer "no" or "yes" without some very polite expression with it. For instance, if his mamma asked him a question, he would answer with his baby lips, "No, thank you,

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forget all about it, mamma would bring a new doll from the cupboard.

But perhaps Lotus Blossom is tired of playthings, so she and Toyo run out in the garden to have a frolic with their pets. They have new ones nearly every day, for they are fond of every creature that is alive. To-day they are going to hunt for some big beetles, as Toyo has planned a little carriage which he will make out of paper, with pasteboard wheels and reins of silk thread for the paper doll. The beetles will be harnessed, and the children will train them to draw the carriage. Jolly fun! The whole afternoon is spent in finding some black beauties and playing with them.

Another day the children will catch some grasshoppers and tame them. Toyo will make a pretty paper cage to hold them, while both he and Lotus Blossom will be very careful to feed them regularly on the dainties

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way as to make you wish to laugh. Toyo's mamma has made a big scarlet ruff for the dog's neck, and it makes him feel very fine, I dare say. His master has fastened a wooden label on his collar to tell where he belongs.

I know you will be disappointed when you learn that Lotus Blossom's dear little kitten cannot play with her tail. No fun for her, poor kitty, you are thinking. But why is it? Because she *has* no tail, or at least only the stub of one. So of course she is quite calm and solemn — that is, for a kitten. But then she lives in Japan, and so she ought to be more dignified than kittens of other lands. Don't you think so?

We must leave all these pets now and go to church, or rather to the temple, with Toyo, Lotus Blossom, and their parents. There is no set day for worship, for there is no such thing as Sunday in Japan. The temples are always open, and the children are fond of

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TOYO FEEDING THE PIGEONS.

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stands behind the altar, and a large cloth is spread out on the floor in front of it. Lotus Blossom and Toyo clap their hands. This is to call the attention of the gods. Then they say a little prayer and throw some money upon the cloth. If they are very good and devout children, perhaps the gods will descend into the temple. The queer papers on the wands are to be the clothing of these great beings. No images are needed, you see, only plenty of paper. Rather hard to understand this, and yet all that is necessary for Toyo and Lotus Blossom is to worship their ancestors properly, and believe that the great spirits are working everywhere in nature. This is the reason they are taught to obey their parents at all times, and never to harm anything living. The children are also taught to believe that the Mikado, the Emperor of Japan, is descended from god-kings who once ruled over the country. This is why such

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great honour is paid him wherever he goes. Until a few years ago the people thought him so sacred that they ought not to look at him, so he was obliged to stay inside his beautiful palace like a prisoner. But times have changed, and his subjects have a little more common sense nowadays.

After our little cousins have said their prayers and given their money, they go to a dance-hall in another part of the temple. You know by this time that the Japanese like to enjoy themselves. But isn't it a strange idea to have dancing, praying, and feasting in the same place? The dancers are dressed like butterflies. They have beautiful red and gold wings. They are very graceful, but the music is unpleasant to us. Toyo thinks it is fine, and wishes he could play as well.

Now for a good dinner in the restaurant in the next hall, for the boy's father has promised to treat his family to all the dainties of

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the season, — candied lotus-leaves, and everything they like best. It is a happy day, and the children wish they could go to the temple oftener.

One morning not long after this, poor little Lotus Blossom woke up with a bad pain in her stomach. Her face and hands were hot. She was not able to get up and go to school. Mamma felt very sad, and at once sent to ask the priest for something to make her little daughter well. You say at once, "Is the priest in Japan a doctor? And will he prepare medicine marked in some such way as this: 'One teaspoonful to be taken each hour?'" No, indeed. Lotus Blossom's mamma received from her queer physician two "moxas," with orders that one of them should be placed on the back of the sick child, and the other on her foot. The direction of the priest was followed, although it made Lotus Blossom very unhappy. I think you would not like

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it, if you were in her place, for a moxa makes a burn far worse than a mustard plaster does. You know the punk that you use on the Fourth of July to light your firecrackers and fireworks? The moxas are made of a certain kind of pith, and burn slowly just as the punk does. The Japanese believe in the use of moxas for many things, — bad children, sickness, and I can't tell you what else. The impolite boy I told you about, at the beginning of the story, was burned with a moxa, in such a way that he never forgot himself again. As for fevers, why, the moxa is certain to drive away the bad spirits that cause them.

No doubt you wonder at it, as I do myself, but Lotus Blossom got well enough in two or three days to sit up and be dressed. But she did not care for her dolls or games; she felt tired all the time. Her loving and most honoured father said a change of air would

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do her good. It would be well for her to spend some days at the house of an aunt who lived several miles out in the country. Toyo was allowed to go, too. How were they to get there? In steam or electric cars? What can you be thinking of to ask such questions? Two jinrikishas were brought to the door; one was for Lotus Blossom and one for her brother. Strong men were hired to draw them. I wonder if you ever saw anything like a jin-riki-sha, or man-power-carriage, for that is what the word means. They are very comfortable, much like baby-carriages, and are lined with soft cushions. The men look strong and kind. They are nearly naked, so that they can run easily and rapidly.

It will take only an hour to carry the children to their aunt's, if they do not stop on the way. But there are so many things to see to-day that Lotus Blossom forgets all about her sickness and burns, and wants her

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runners to stop every few minutes to rest. The children spend at least five minutes bidding their mother a proper good-bye. Then, at the word, off they go, down "Dog" Street into "Turtle" Street. There are no sidewalks, but they are not needed, for horses and wagons are rarely seen.

But look! Here is a man standing in the middle of the street, dancing and singing a funny song. The sober Japanese who are passing stop and laugh. The man has a little stand by his side, and on this stand are a dish of wheat-gluten and a bamboo reed. As Lotus Blossom and Toyo draw near, the man ends his song and calls out, "Now who wants me to blow him a candy dog? Or shall it be a monkey eating a nut? You, my most honoured little lady, want one surely."

This he said to Lotus Blossom, who was sitting up straight in the jinrikisha, full of interest. She thought a moment or two, and

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then asked for a stork with wings spread out to fly. She had hardly stopped speaking before the man seized a bamboo reed, dipped it in the sticky paste, and blowing now this way, now that, fashioned the graceful bird. Pinching it here and there to make it more perfect, he put on some touches of colour from a box of paints. It was wonderfully done. Lotus Blossom gave him five yen for the candy toy, the runners took hold of the jinrikisha, and away the children went on their journey.

They came soon to another crowd of boys and girls gathered about a batter-cake man. He had a little stand on which a pan of charcoal was burning. A large griddle rested over the coal, and a tiny little urchin was standing on his tiptoes and baking cakes. The man cut them out for him in pretty shapes. See the pleasure on the youngster's face! All this fun for ten yen, or one cent. The other children

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watch him in envy. As Toyo and Lotus Blossom draw near, the jinrikisha men make a place for them in the crowd, and Toyo jumps out to get a lunch. He has the next turn, and so he asks the pleasant-faced man to cut his batter-cakes in the shape of turtles. Lotus Blossom does not wish any, but lies back in her easy carriage under her pretty sunshade, and watches Toyo cook and eat them. Umbrellas and sunshades are of the same material in Japan. They are made of several layers of tough, strong paper, and will last a long time. When they are worn out, they are thrown away just as the paper handkerchiefs are, and new ones are bought for a very small sum of money. In stormy weather Lotus Blossom and Toyo not only carry umbrellas, but wear long capes of oiled paper to keep off the rain, while very poor people have coats made of grasses. Funny looking things these are! If you should see

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ful country. They pass tea plantations. The glossy green leaves are almost ready to pick. See the man in that field, running wildly about, making hideous noises. Is he crazy? Our little cousins do not seem disturbed as they pass by, for he is only a hired scarecrow. You remember that the people in Japan think it wrong to kill any living thing. But there are great numbers of birds in the country which are likely to eat the crops and do much damage. So men are hired to act as scarecrows and make noises to frighten the birds away.

At last Uncle Oto's rice plantation is reached. The children draw up in front of a large, low house with wide verandas. It is more beautiful than their own home. The roof is magnificent with carvings, and must have cost a great deal of money. It is the pride of Aunt Ocho. The gardens contain the choicest plants and trees, besides a pond and an artificial waterfall. Lotus Blossom and

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time. They think they can enjoy them more fully in this way.

The most honoured father orders some workmen to come and set up some tall pine branches in front of the gateway. One is of black, the other of red pine, and tall bamboo reeds are placed beside them. A grass rope is stretched from one reed to the other, and some funny strips of white paper are hung on it. You saw many of these papers at the temple where the children worship. This work is very important to the childlike people. They think that the rope, with papers fastened to it, will keep away all the evil spirits that are ever ready to spoil the happiness of human beings. They are demons, who take the shape of foxes, badgers, and wolves, and are frightful enough to the imagination of Lotus Blossom and her brother. Of course, the children are glad that the evil spirits are to be surely kept away.

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Now they are allowed to put on their clogs and go to buy the "harvest ship," which they will hang up in the house instead of the holly and evergreens you like to see at Christmas time. The Japanese believe that on New Year's eve a wonderful ship comes sailing into port. Of course, it is sent by the gods. No one has ever really seen it. That does not matter; there are pictures of it, nevertheless, and no New Year's decorations are complete without a miniature harvest ship. The shops are as full of them as our markets are of evergreen trees at Christmas time. They are made of grasses and trimmed with gaily coloured papers. The selection of this ship is a very exciting event, not only for Lotus Blossom and Toyo, but also for their mother. How anxiously they look at one after another as the shopkeeper shows them. Finally one is chosen that suits the children's mother as to price and beauty. But the shopping is by

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on one side he will look like a dancing-girl, while on the other he will appear as some strange beast. He will change about rapidly, and keep the company watching him with excited interest.

Night comes to very tired and happy people, but it does not end the fun by any means. Lotus Blossom's papa will not do any business for a week at least, and there will be new pleasures each day that he is at home with his wife and children. After the festival is over, the family settle down to their daily work until the coming of another holiday.

The children go to school again, but that does not trouble them. They love their teacher and try to please him. The school is closed at noon. Lotus Blossom and Toyo start out every morning with little satchels over their backs. In these they carry their books, a cake of India ink, and a paint-brush.

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easy alphabet is the only one that girls must know, while boys learn both. But Lotus Blossom is a very bright child, so she studies the more difficult characters as well.

Japanese books are printed very differently from ours. The lines run up and down the page, and keep the eyes of the reader busily moving. The children don't have many examples to perform, for the Japanese do not consider arithmetic so important as Americans do. Do you sigh now, and wish you could get your education in that far-away land where long division is not a daily trial? But wait till I tell you about the writing, or rather painting, lessons. You will certainly be envious. When the schoolmaster gives the signal, the children take the brushes and the cakes of India ink from their satchels. They mix a little of the ink with water, and then are ready to paint their words on the beautiful paper made in their country. Many people

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A LESSON IN ARRANGING FLOWERS.

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fun. But the kites! Yours are just babies beside them. Some of them are so large that it takes two men to sail them. In fact, grown-up people, in Japan, seem as fond of kite-flying as the children. Many of these toys have neither tails nor bobs. You wonder how they manage to get up in the air at all, till you see that the strings are pulled in such a way as to raise them. They are of all shapes. The boys sometimes play a game with their kites. They dip the strings in glue and afterward in powdered glass; then they run with the kites and try to cross each other's strings and cut them. The boy who succeeds wins the other's kite. Toyo lost his the other day, and what do you think he did? Pout, or exclaim, as you sometimes do, "I don't care, that isn't fair?" By no means! He made three beautiful bows and gave up his kite with a polite smile. Maybe he did not feel any happier about it than you would, for it

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man's buff," "Hide the thimble," and "Puss in the corner," are great favourites with the Japanese. Instead of hiding the thimble, however, they use a slipper, and instead of puss in the corner, they play that it is the devil. You must not forgot that the Japanese believe there are many devils, or bad spirits, as well as good ones who are ready to help. They even think of them in their games.

How many holidays have we in a whole year? Stop and count. Not a great number, we must admit. Lotus Blossom and Toyo have so many that they can count on their fingers the number of days between any two of them. Next best to New Year's, our little girl cousin likes the Feast of Dolls. It comes on the third day of the third month. At that time the stores are filled with dolls, — big dolls, little dolls, dolls dressed like princesses with flounced silk gowns, dolls made up as servants, as dancing-girls, and

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A festival which everybody loves is the Feast of Lanterns. It is in the summer time, and the children are dressed in their gayest clothes. They form processions and march through the streets singing with all their might. Every child carries a large paper lantern and keeps it swinging all the time. It is such a pretty sight in the evening light, — the bright dresses, the graceful figures, the gorgeous lanterns. Oh, Japan is the land of happy children, young and old.

One pleasant summer afternoon, as Lotus Blossom and Toyo were playing on their veranda, they noticed some one stopping at the gateway and then coming up the walk to the house. It was the man-servant who worked at the home of a friend of theirs, whose father was very rich. Toyo whispered, "Oh, Lotus Blossom, I believe he's bringing us an invitation to Chrysanthemum's party. You know she is going to have one on her

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birthday." Sure enough, the man came up to the children, and, making a low bow, presented them with two daintily folded papers and then departed. They hastened to open them, and found, with delight, that they were really and truly asked to their friend's party. It was to be at three o'clock in the afternoon of the following Thursday. Lotus Blossom ran to her mother, just as her American cousins might do, and cried, "Oh, mamma, my precious, honourable mother, what shall I wear? See this; do look at my invitation." It was a rare thing indeed to see the child so excited. Her mother smiled, and answered, "My dear little pearl of a Lotus Blossom, I have almost finished embroidering your new silk garment. It shall be finished, and you shall have a new yellow crape kerchief to fold about your throat. A barber shall arrange your long hair about your head; and I will buy you white silk sandals to be tied with

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ribbons. Even though your friend is more wealthy than ourselves, you shall not disgrace your honoured father. Toyo, too, must have a new garment."

All was made ready, and Thursday came at last. The children were sent to the party in jinrikishas, so that they should not get dusty. They looked very pretty. Their little hostess and her mamma received the guests with smiles and with many long phrases of politeness. Lacquered trays were brought in and placed in front of each one. On these were beautiful china cups with no handles. What do you think was served in them? Don't get up your hopes now and say "lemonade," or "sherbet," for you will surely be disappointed. It was tea, — simply tea, without milk or sugar. The children drank it in honour of their hostess and her mamma. But something better still was to come. The tea was removed, and fresh trays,

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some hired performers represent one of their loved fairy stories in a play. The actresses have lovely gowns, and are very graceful. It is a very enjoyable occasion.

The time to leave comes all too soon. The jinrikisha men arrive, and after assuring their hostess that they never had had so lovely a time before, Lotus Blossom and Toyo make two deep bows and return home very happy. I believe you would not object to a party like that yourself, would you?

Among all the joyous festivals of the year, I must not forget to tell you of the plum-viewing. The winter season is very short in Japan, and the houses are not built to keep out the cold very well, as you must have already perceived. When the spring days arrive and the blossoms begin to appear, the child people are very happy. If they are happy, of course they must show it. How

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can they do it so well as by having out-door picnics in the plum orchards? The children watch for the great day's arrival when the flowers will be in full bloom. They save up their yen to spend, and plan for a great good time. No school on that day! No practising on the koto! No embroidery for Lotus Blossom! Every one is up early on the bright, clear morning, and baskets are filled with the nice luncheon mamma has prepared. There is actually an air of excitement in the quiet Japanese household. The good father leads the family procession as they start out on their walk to the picnic grounds. It is about two miles from their home. Other families join them as they walk along. The throng of gaily dressed and happy people grows larger every moment. As they near the plum-orchard they find the road lined with stands, which have been put up for the day. It seems as though everything one

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could desire were on sale: cakes, tea, fruit, fans, sweets of all kinds, toys, etc. No wonder Lotus Blossom and Toyo wanted to save up their money. But the orchard! Was there ever a lovelier sight? Hundreds of trees loaded with fragrant pink blossoms!

The people write poems about them, and pin them on the branches, to show how much they appreciate the beautiful sight which Nature has given them. Tea-drinking, story-telling, and the entertainments of travelling showmen take up the day. Sunset bids them leave the beautiful scene and go back to home and work.

And now, children, we must bid these dear cousins good-bye for a little while. Although they worship in strange ways, and read their books upside down, besides doing many other things in a manner that seems strange to us, yet we can learn much from their

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Mary Hazelton Wade

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