

**CHILD-LIFE IN JAPAN,
AND JAPANESE
CHILD-STORIES**

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Child-Life in Japan, and Japanese Child-Stories by M. Chaplin Ayrton

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M. CHAPLIN AYRTON

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AND JAPANESE
CHILD-STORIES**



KANGURA.

Front.

CHILD-LIFE IN JAPAN,

AND

JAPANESE CHILD-STORIES.

BY

M. CHAPLIN AYRTON,

*Bachelier-ès-Lettres, et Bachelier-ès-Sciences (rest.), Paris,
Civis Academicus Edinensis,*

*et
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WITH MANY ILLUSTRATIONS, INCLUDING SEVEN FULL-PAGE PICTURES
DRAWN AND ENGRAVED BY JAPANESE ARTISTS.



GRIFFITH AND FARRAN,
WEST CORNER ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD, LONDON.

1879.

DEDICATION.

TO OJŌSAMA.



AWAI ko ni mo tabi
wo sassero (send the
child you love on a
journey), as saith
great Nipon's pro-
verb,—and whither
do *you* soon journey,
beloved?" says,
showing her black-
stained teeth and

rubbing the head of the young child she tends, an old Japanese nurse. "To my honoured grandmother of my noble country," lisps the little ladyship whose features, though, neither whose dress nor talk, show her to be a European.

"And what shall I, your grandame here, do when you forsake and forget her?"

"She will weep greatly for her *Ōjōsama*," and at this sad thought a little dimpled hand caresses consolingly the brown much-loved cheek.

"This kindly folk, this sunny country,—its tea-gardens, its temples, its pine-groves, its rice-fields, even its toys,—all these on which alone her wondering baby-stare has ever hung, all these will be forgotten," a listener says, "for as the lotus in the moat yonder casts its rosy petals, so will these early memories fade; but as nourishing mud to the edible lotus-root so will your love and that of your gentle nation have caused the very roots of this young life to germinate a loving nature that will itself endure and nourish love in others."

INTRODUCTION.

IN almost every English home are Japanese fans, in our shops Japanese dolls and balls and other nicknacks, on our writing-tables bronze crabs or lacquered pen-tray with outlined on it the extinct volcano that is the most striking mountain seen from the capital of Japan; and at European places of amusement Japanese houses of real size have been exhibited, and the jargon of fashion for "Japanese Art" even reaches our children's ears.

Yet all these things seem dull and lifeless when thus severed from the quaint cheeriness of their true home. To those familiar with

Japan, that bamboo fan-handle recalls its graceful grassy tree, the thousand and one daily purposes for which bamboo wood serves,—the open shop where squat the brown-faced artisans cleverly dividing into those slender divisions the fan-handle,—the wood-block engraver's where some dozen men sit patiently chipping at their cherry-wood blocks,—the printer's where the colouring arrangements seem so simple to those used to Western machinery, but where the colours are so rich and true. We see the picture stuck on the fan frame with starch paste, and drying in the brilliant summer sunlight; and the designs recall vividly the life around, whether that life be the stage, the home, insects, birds, or flowers. We think of halts at wayside inns when bowing tea-house girls at once proffer these fans to hot and tired guests.

The tonsured oblique-eyed doll suggests the festival of similarly oblique-eyed little girls on the 3rd of March, when dolls of every degree obtain for a day "Dolls' Rights;" for in every Japanese household all the dolls of the present and previous generations are on that festival set out to best advantage, with, beside them, sweets, green speckled rice-cake, and daintily gilt and lacquered dolls' utensils. For some time previous, to meet the increased demand, the doll shopman has been very busy, sitting before a straw-holder into which he can readily stick, to dry, the wooden supports of the plaster dolls' heads he is painting, as he takes first one and then another to give artistic touches to their glowing cheeks or little tongue. That dolly that seems but "so odd" to Polly or Maggie is there the cherished darling of its little owner, passing half its day