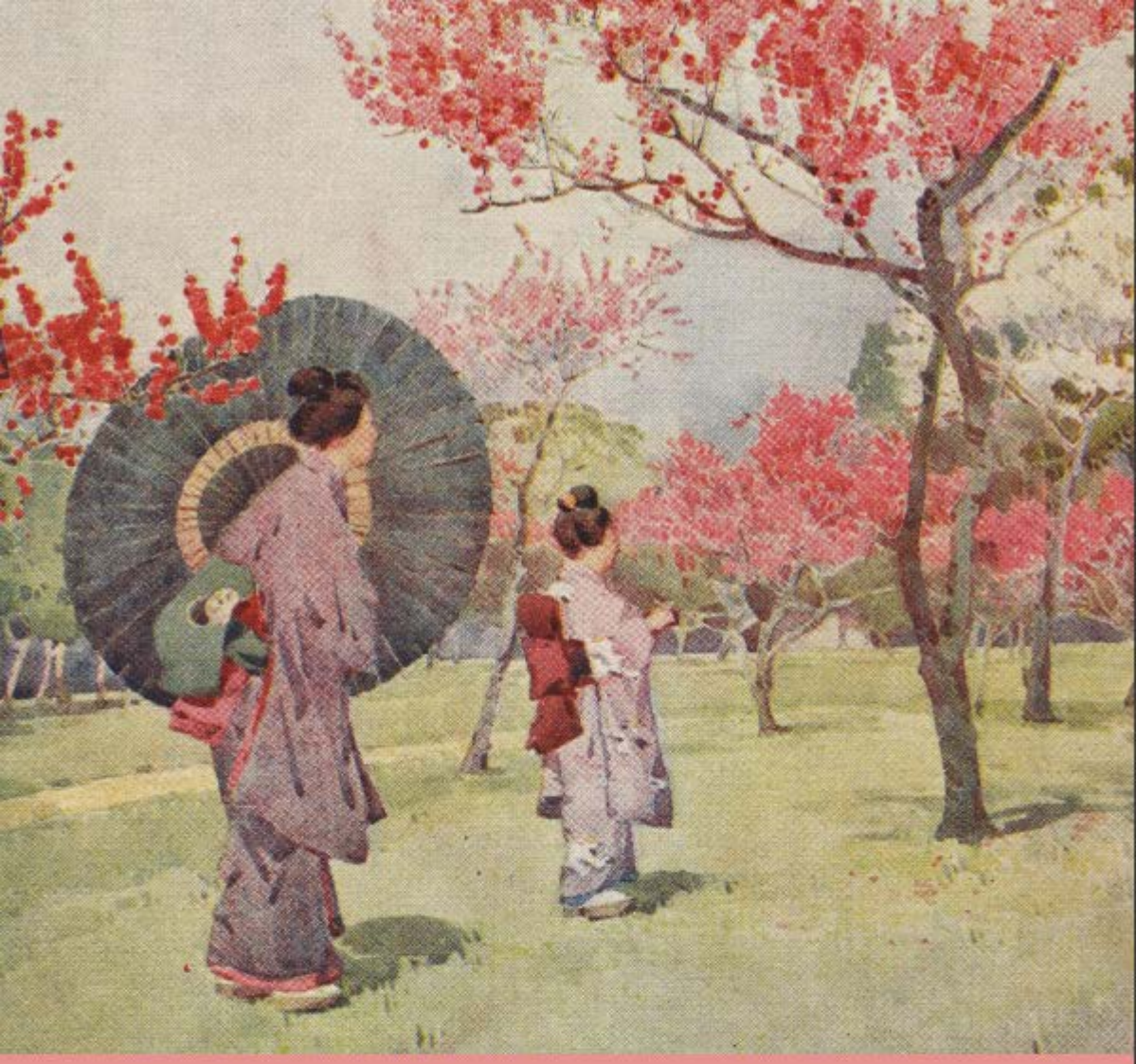


Our Little Japanese Twins and Siamese Cousin

VOLUME THIRTEEN

LUCY FITCH PERKINS
MARY HAZELTON WADE

Our Little Japanese Twins and Siamese Cousin

Volume 13

Lucy Fitch Perkins
Mary Hazelton Wade

Libraries of Hope

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and Siamese Cousin

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The Japanese Twins

Lucy Fitch Perkins

Illustrated by Lucy Fitch Perkins




This Book
belongs to



To The
"Dutch Twins"
and their friends.





Introduction—The Japanese Twins and Bot'Chan

Away, away, ever so far away, near the western shores of the Ocean of Peace, lie the Happy Islands, the Paradise of Children.

Some people call this ocean the "Pacific" and they call the Happy Islands "Japan," but the meaning is just the same. Those are only their grown-up names, that you find them by on the map, in the geography.

They are truly Happy Islands, for the sun shines there so brightly that all the people go about with pleasant, smiling faces, and the children play out of doors the whole year through without ever quarreling. And they are never, never spanked! Of course, the reason for that is that they are so good they never, never need it! Or maybe their fathers and mothers do not believe in spanking.

I have even been told—though I don't know whether to think it's true or not—that Japanese parents believe more in sugar-plums than in punishments to make children good!

Anyway, the children there are very good indeed.

In a little town near a large city on one of the Happy Islands, there is a garden. In the garden stands a house, and in that House there live Taro, who is a boy, and Take (Pronounce Tah'-kay), who is a girl.

They are twins. They are Japanese Twins and they are just five years old, both of them.

Of course, Taro and Take do not live alone in the house in the garden. Their Father and Mother live there too, and their Grandmother, who is very old, and the Baby, who is very young.

Taro and Take cannot remember when Grandmother and Father and Mother happened, because they were all there when the Twins came; and the Twins could not possibly imagine the world without Father and Mother and Grandmother.

But with the Baby it was different. One day there wasn't any Baby at all, and the next day after that, there he was, looking very new but quite at home already in the little house in the garden, where Taro and Take lived.

"Taro" means eldest son, and the Baby might have been

called "Jiro," because "Jiro" means "second," and he was the second boy in the family; but from the day he came they called him just "Bot'Chan." That is what they call boy babies in Japan.

"Take" means "bamboo," and the Twins' Father and Mother named their little daughter "Take" because they hoped she would grow up to be tall and slender and strong and graceful like the bamboo tree.

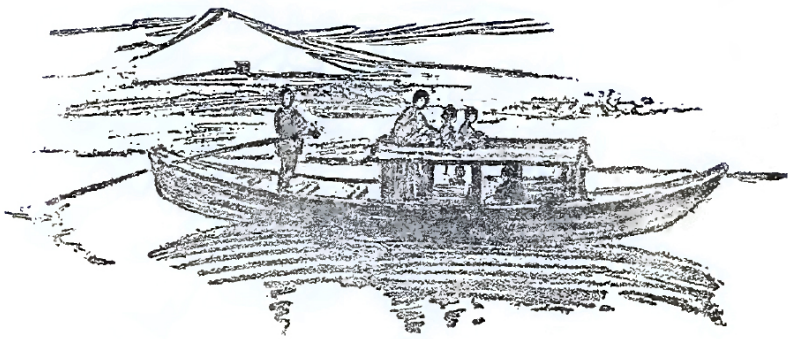
Now, can you think of anything nicer in this world than being Twins, and living with a Mother and Father and Grandmother and a Baby Brother, in a dear little house, in a dear little garden, in a dear little, queer little town in the middle of the Happy Islands that lie in the Ocean of Peace?

Taro and Take thought it was the nicest thing that could possibly have happened; though, as they hadn't ever lived anywhere else, or been anybody but themselves for a single minute, I don't see how they could be quite so sure about it.

This book is all about Taro and Take and the Baby, and what a nice time they had living. And if you want to know some of the things that happened on the very first day that

the Twins and Bot'Chan ever saw each other you can turn over to the next page and read about the day the Baby came. That tells all about it, just exactly as it was.







I

The Day The Baby Came

Taro and Take were standing right beside their Father early one morning when the nurse came into the room with a bundle in her arms.

It was a queer-looking, knobby kind of a bundle, and there was something in it that squirmed!

The nurse looked so happy and smiling that the twins knew at once there must be something very nice in the bundle, but what it was they could not guess. Taro thought, "Maybe it's a puppy." He had wanted a puppy for a long time. And Take thought, "Perhaps it's a kitten! But it looks pretty large for a kitten, and it doesn't mew. Kittens always mew." And they both thought, "Anyway, it's alive."

The nurse carried the bundle across the room. She knelt down on the floor before the Twins' Father and laid it at his feet.

The Twins' Father looked very much surprised, and as for Taro and Take, they felt just exactly the way you feel

when you look at your stocking on Christmas morning.

They dropped down on their knees beside the bundle, one on each side of their Father. They wanted dreadfully to open it. They wanted so dreadfully to open it that they had to hold their hands hard to keep from touching it, but they never even laid a finger on it, because the nurse had given it to their Father!



Taro just said aloud: "Is it a puppy?"

At the very same moment Take said: "Is it a kitten?"

And then their Father said: "I haven't opened the bundle yet, so how can I tell? We must ask the nurse. What is it, Natsu?"

And Natsu, the nurse, put her two hands together on the matting

in front of her, bobbed her head down nearly to the floor, and said: "It is a little son, Master. Will you accept him?"



Then the Father sat right down on the floor, too, between Taro and Take. He took the little squirming bundle in his arms, and turned back the covers—and there was a beautiful baby boy, with long, narrow eyes and a lock of hair that stood straight up on the top of his head!

"Oh! oh! Is he truly ours—a real live baby, for us to keep?" cried Take.

"Would you like to keep him?" her Father asked.

Take clapped her hands for joy. "Oh, yes, yes!" she said. "For then I can have a little brother of my own to carry on my back, just the way O Kiku San carries hers! I've never had a thing but borrowed babies before! And O Kiku San is not polite about lending hers at all! Please, please let me

hold him!"

She held up her arms, and the Father laid the little baby in them very, very gently.

Taro was so surprised to see a baby in the bundle that he had not said a word. He just sat still and looked astonished.

"Well, Taro, how is it with you?" said his Father. "Would you like to keep the Baby, too?"



"I'd even rather have him than a puppy!" said Taro very solemnly. And that was a great deal for Taro to say, for he had wanted a puppy for ever so many weeks.

"So would I rather have him than a puppy," the Father said; "ever so much rather."

Just then the Baby puckered up his nose, and opened his

little bit of a mouth—and a great big squeal came out of it!



You would never have believed that such a big squeal could possibly come out of such a little mouth. And he squirmed more than ever.

Then Natsu, the nurse, said, "There, there, little one! Come to your old Natsu, and she will carry you to Mother again."

"Let me carry him," Take begged.

"No, let me," said Taro.

But Natsu said, "No, no, I will carry him myself. But you may come with me, if you want to, and see your Mother."

So Taro and Take and their Father all tiptoed quietly into the Mother's room, and sat down on the floor beside her bed.

They sat on the floor because everybody sits on the floor in Japan. The bed was on the floor, too.

It was made of many thick quilts, and the pillow a little block of wood! We should think it very uncomfortable, but the Twins' Mother did not think so. She lay with the wooden pillow under her head in such a way that her hair was not mussed by it— instead, it looked just as neat as if she were going to a party. And it was just as nice as a party, because they all had such a happy time together watching the new baby.

Bot'Chan acted just like all the other babies in the world. First he got his fist into his mouth by accident, and sucked it. Then he got it out again without meaning to, and punched himself in the nose with it—such a funny little nose, no bigger than a small button! Then he opened his mouth wide and yawned.

"See how sleepy the little mouse is," said the Mother. "Run out and play now, my children, and let him rest."

Taro and Take left the room softly and went out on the porch. They sat down on the top step to talk over the wonderful thing that had happened.

It was springtime and the flowers in the garden were just pushing their leaves through the ground. The sun was

shining, and a little new yellow butterfly, that had only just crept out of its snug cocoon that very day, was dancing about in the sunshine.

"I suppose we were new once, too, weren't we?" said Take, watching the butterfly.

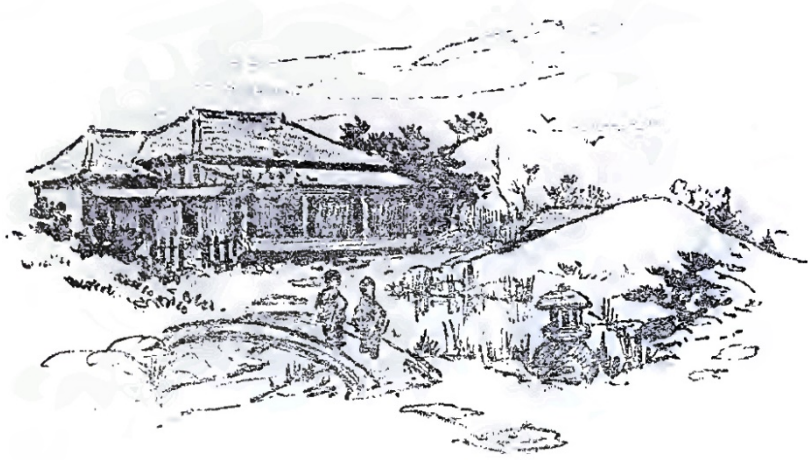
"I suppose we were," Taro answered. "We grew right up out of the root of a tree. Natsu told me so."

"I wonder which tree it was," Take said.



"It must have been one of the trees in our own garden, of course," Taro answered; "or else we shouldn't be here."

"Wouldn't it have been a terrible accident if we had



happened to grow in some other garden?" said Take. She looked quite scared just at the very thought of such a thing.

"Maybe if we had we shouldn't have been ourselves at all," Taro answered. He looked a little scared, too.

"Who should we have been, then?" asked Take.

"I don't know, I'm sure," Taro said. "I can't think. But, anyway, we're lucky that it didn't happen. We're here—and we're ourselves!"

"Let's go into the garden this minute and see if we can find Bot'Chan's tree," said Take. "He's so new that maybe we can find the very spot where he grew."

"The fairies would surely hide the place so we couldn't find it," said Taro; "but we can try. Let's go softly; then maybe they won't hear us."

They tiptoed out into the garden. How I wish you could see their garden! There are all sorts of wonderful places in it! It isn't very large, but it has in it a little bit of a toy mountain, and a tiny lake with little weeny goldfish in it, and a little stream of water, like a baby river, that runs into the lake. And, best of all, there is a curved bridge, painted red, just big enough for the Twins to walk over, if they are very careful and don't bounce! The Twins' Grandfather made this garden for their Father to play in when he was a little boy, so they all love it dearly.

There are iris plants and lilies beside the tiny lake, and a funny little pine tree—a very little pine tree, just a few feet high—grows out of some rocks on the side of the mountain.

The Twins crossed the tiny red bridge and crept up the stepping-stones on the mountain-side until they reached the little pine tree.

"Do you s'pose it could be the pine tree?" Take whispered.

"Maybe; it's so small—just the right size for Bot'Chan," Taro whispered back.



The Twins looked carefully all around the pine tree, but its trunk was gnarled and old. It is hard to believe that so little a tree could be so old, but the Japanese know how to keep a tree small, like a toy tree, even if it has been growing for a hundred years.

This tree wasn't a hundred years old, because their Grandfather had set it out when the Twins' Father was a little boy, and the Twins' Father wasn't anywhere near a hundred years old.

"I don't believe a darling little pink baby could ever grow

here," said Take, when she had looked all around the pine tree. "Let's look at the plum tree."

They ran to the plum tree that stood at the other end of the garden. They looked all about it.

On the south side of the plum tree, in the sunshine, there was a long branch near the ground; and on the branch—what do you think?—there was a whole row of tiny pink buds, almost ready to burst into bloom!



"Oh, Taro, Taro, look here!" Take cried. "Here's the Baby's very own branch; I'm sure of it, for there aren't any

other buds on the whole tree that are as near out as these!"

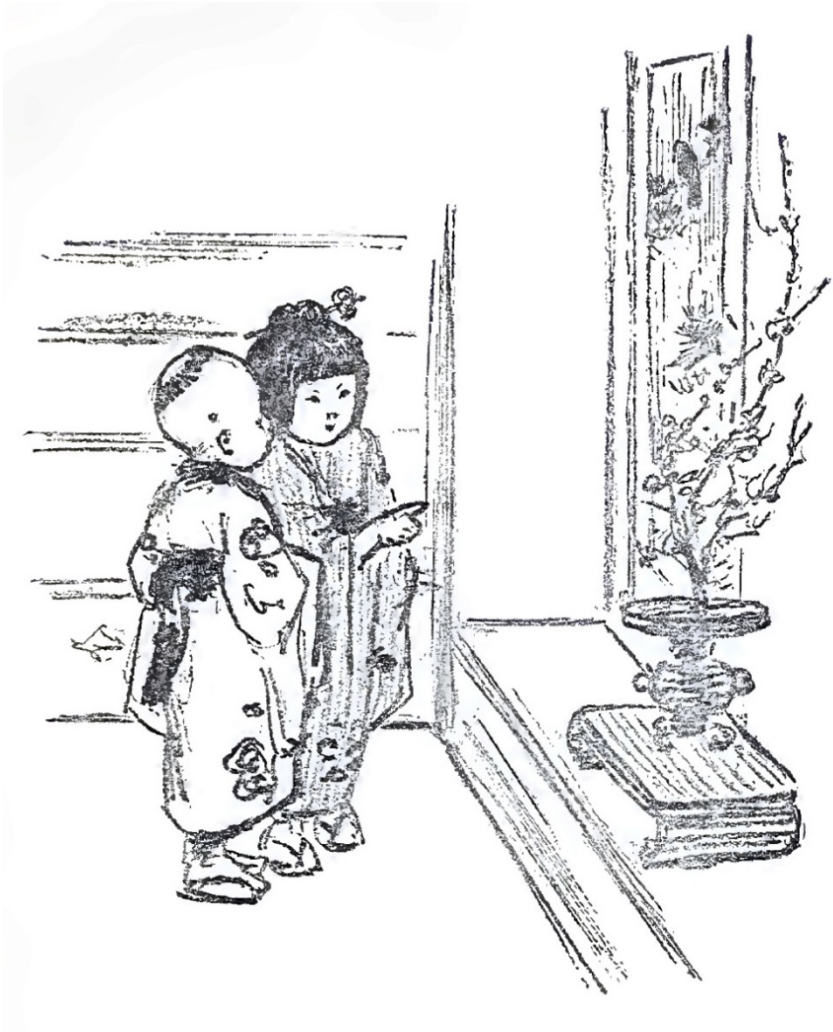
"Let's cut off this spray and carry it into the house to put in the vase," said Taro.

"Oh, yes, and I'll show Mother how beautifully I can arrange it— just the way I was taught to do it," Take answered. "Nothing could be nicer for a baby's flower than a dear little branch like this with pink buds on it!"

"I'll break it for you," said Taro. "I'm strong." He broke the branch carefully, just where Take told him to. He took great pains not to tear the bark or hurt the tree.

Then they carried it into the house. In one corner of the room there was a little alcove. There is one in every Japanese house. It is called the "honorable recess," and it is where their most beautiful things are placed. There is always a picture—or perhaps two or three of them—hanging like long banners on the wall at the back of the "honorable recess." These banner pictures are called kakemono. There is also a small table with a vase on it standing near. In this vase there are always flowers, or a beautiful branch with green leaves. In Japan the little girls are taught to arrange flowers just as carefully as they are

taught to read, so that the "honorable recess" may be kept beautiful to look at.



Take filled the vase with water. She fitted a little forked stick into the top of the vase, and stuck the plum branch through the crotch of the forked stick, so it wouldn't fall over. She twisted it this way and that until it looked just

right. Then she called Taro to see it.

On the wall of the recess was the picture of a black crow perched on the branch of a pine tree, in a rainstorm. His shoulders were all hunched up to shed the rain, and he didn't look happy at all. He looked funny and miserable.

The Twins looked at the honorable recess a long time. Their Father came and looked too. Then Taro said, "I don't think that crow in the rainstorm looks right hanging up beside the plum branch. The crow looks so sorry, and we are all so glad."

"I think just the same," said Take.

"So do I," said their Father. "How would you like to go out to the Kura and see if we can find a real happy picture to hang up there?"

Taro and Take jumped up and down and clapped their hands for joy, they were so glad to go out to the "Kura."

The "Kura" is a little fireproof house in the garden. You can see the corner of the roof sticking out from behind the mountain in the picture. In it Taro and Take and their Father and Mother and Grandmother keep all their greatest treasures. That is why Taro and Take were so glad

to go there.

Nearly everybody in Japan has just such a safe little house in the garden. Maybe you can guess the reason why. It isn't only because of fires. It's because of earthquakes too.

Every once in a while—almost every day, in fact—the earth trembles and shakes in the Happy Islands. The houses are built mostly of wood and paper, and if the earthquakes tumble them over, they sometimes catch fire, but if the nicest things are safe in the Kura, it doesn't matter so much, if the house is burned up, you see.

There are always plenty of fires for boys to see in Japan.

Taro had seen ever so many, before he was five years old, and the Twins had both felt ever so many earthquakes. They were so used to them that they didn't mind them any more than you mind a thundershower.

All of Taro's kites were kept in the Kura. The big dragon kite had a box all to itself; Take's thirty-five dolls were there, too;—but, dear me,—here I am telling you about kites and dolls, when I should be telling you about the picture of the crow, and what they did with it!

First the Twins' Father took it down off the wall and

rolled it up. Then he took it in his hand, and he and Taro and Take all went out into the garden.

When they reached the Kura, the Father unlocked the door, and all three stepped inside.



It was not very light, but the air was sweet and spicy. On the shelves about the room were many beautiful boxes of

all sizes and shapes.

The Father reached up to a high shelf and took down three boxes, that looked just alike on the outside. He opened the first and took out a roll neatly wrapped and tied with a silk string. It was this picture of a Japanese lady who



has run out quickly to take her washing off the line because of a shower of rain.

He held it up high so the Twins could see it.

"Ho, ho," laughed Taro. "The lady has lost her clog, she is in such a hurry!"

"She's just as wet as the crow," Take said, "and I don't believe she feels a bit happier!"

"She'll be wetter still before she gets her washing in, won't she?" the Father said. "The clouds seem to have burst just over her head! And, dear me,—how the wind is blowing her about! No, she won't do beside the plum branch."

He opened another box and unrolled the next picture. Here it is.

Taro and Take looked at it a long time.

Then Take said, "What a beautiful dress the lady has on! I'd like to dress just like that when I grow up!"

"But she is walking out in the snow with an umbrella over her head," said Taro. "It isn't winter now."

Then the Father unrolled the third.

"How do you like this one?" he asked.

It was a picture of a bird with a grasshopper in her bill, flying to a nest with three little birds in it. The little birds had their mouths wide open.

"Oh, that's the very one!" cried Take. "It's just like Mother, taking care of Taro and the Baby and me! Let's take that one."

So they left that one out and carefully rolled up the others and put them back in place. They put the crow away too.

The Twins were just turning round to go out the door when their Father reached down one more package from a high shelf. "Wait a minute," he said; "I have some thing else to show you."

The package was long and thin, and the covering was a piece of silk with the family crest embroidered on it in colored silks.

This was the crest.



Taro and Take knew it at once, for it was embroidered or stamped upon the sleeves of their kimonos. It was the sign of their family.

The Father took off this cover. Under it was a covering of brocaded silk.

It seemed a long time to the Twins before it was all unwrapped, they were so eager to see what was in the package.

At last their Father held up a beautiful sword with both his hands.

It was a long sword, with a handle of carved ivory, and a sheath with curious designs on it.

The Father bowed to the sword.

"You bow to the sword also, my son," he said to Taro. "It is wonderfully made. It commands respect."

Taro bowed to the sword.

Then his Father drew the long blade from the sheath. He turned the edge carefully toward himself, and away from the Twins. "I want you to see this sword, Taro," he said, "for some time it will be yours, because you are my oldest son."

"Whose was it?" asked Taro.

"It was your Grandfather's sword," his Father answered, "and you are old enough now to know what it means. I want

you to remember what I say to you as long as you live.

"Your Grandfather was a gentleman, a Samurai of Japan. This was the sword he always wore. Many years ago there was trouble in Japan, and to help the Emperor, all the great dukes in the kingdom gave up their dukedoms. The Samurai also gave up their honorable positions in the service of these dukes, and became common citizens.

"Then your Grandfather put away his sword. Years after, when he was old, he gave it to me. But I do not wear it either, although I too am of the Samurai, and the sword is their badge of honor. It is much better to keep it safely here, and think sometimes of what it means, than to wear it only for display. You can show that you are a son of the Samurai, by acting as a gentleman should act. You do not need the sword for that. A Samurai should never do a mean thing. He should keep his life clean and shining, like the sword. And he must always do what is best for Japan, whether it is best for him or not."

This was a long speech. The Twins listened with all their ears—four of them—but they did not quite understand it all. They understood that their Father loved the sword, and



that some time it was to be Taro's, and that he must be a brave, good boy or he would not be worthy of it; and that was a good deal, after all.

"May I touch it?" Taro asked.

"You may take it in your own hands," said his Father. And he gave it to Taro almost as tenderly as he had given Bot'Chan to Take that morning.

He showed him the polite way to hold it, with the edge toward himself.

Then while Taro held the sword, his Father said: "I want to tell you a poem that our Emperor's father wrote while he was Emperor, and by and by when you are bigger I want you to learn it by heart. Then, when you are a man, and look at the sword, you will remember it. This is the poem:

"'There is no second way whereby to show
The love of Fatherland,
Whether one stand,
A soldier under arms, against the foe,
Or stay at home a peaceful citizen,
The way of loyalty is still the same.'"

The Father's voice was very solemn as he said this verse. The Twins were quite still as he wrapped the sword in

its silken coverings and put it back again on the high shelf.

This was a long time for Take to be quiet, but she was thinking. When their Father had locked the Kura and they were on their way to the house with the picture of the birds, she said to him, "Father, am I not a child of the Samurai, too?"

"Yes, my daughter," her Father answered, "but you are a girl. It is not your fault, little one," he added kindly. "We cannot all be boys, of course. But to the keeping of the Sons is given the honor of the Family. It is a great trust."

"Don't I do anything at all for the honor of my Family?" asked Take.

"When you are grown up you will marry and live with your husband's family and serve them in every way you can," her Father answered. "You will belong to them, you see. Now, you must just be a good girl and mind your Father and Grandmother, and Mother, and your brothers."

"I'm just as old as Taro," said little Take, "and I think I know just as much. Why can't he mind me some of the time? I think it would be fair to take turns!"

"But Taro is a boy," said her Father. "That makes all the

difference in the world. Japanese girls must always mind their brothers!"

"Must I mind Bot'Chan, too?" asked Take.

"Yes, Bot'Chan, too."

"Won't anybody ever mind me at all?" asked Take.

"When you get to be a mother-in-law, then you can have your turn," said her Father, smiling. "Your son's wife will obey you."



"Will my son obey me, too?" asked Take.

"No, you must obey him if he is the head of the house," her Father explained.

"It's a very long time to wait," sighed Take, "and nothing but a daughter-in-law to mind me at last."

Her under lip puckered a little and she frowned—a little frown—right in the middle of her forehead.

"Tut, tut," said her Father.

"Girls and women should always be gentle and smiling. You must never frown."



He looked quite shocked at the very idea of such a thing.

Take tried to look pleasant, and a funny thing is that when you make yourself look pleasant, you begin to feel so, too. Take felt pleasant almost right away.

They went into the house and hung the picture of the mother bird in the place of the crow, beside the spray of plum. When it was all done, this is the way the honorable recess looked.

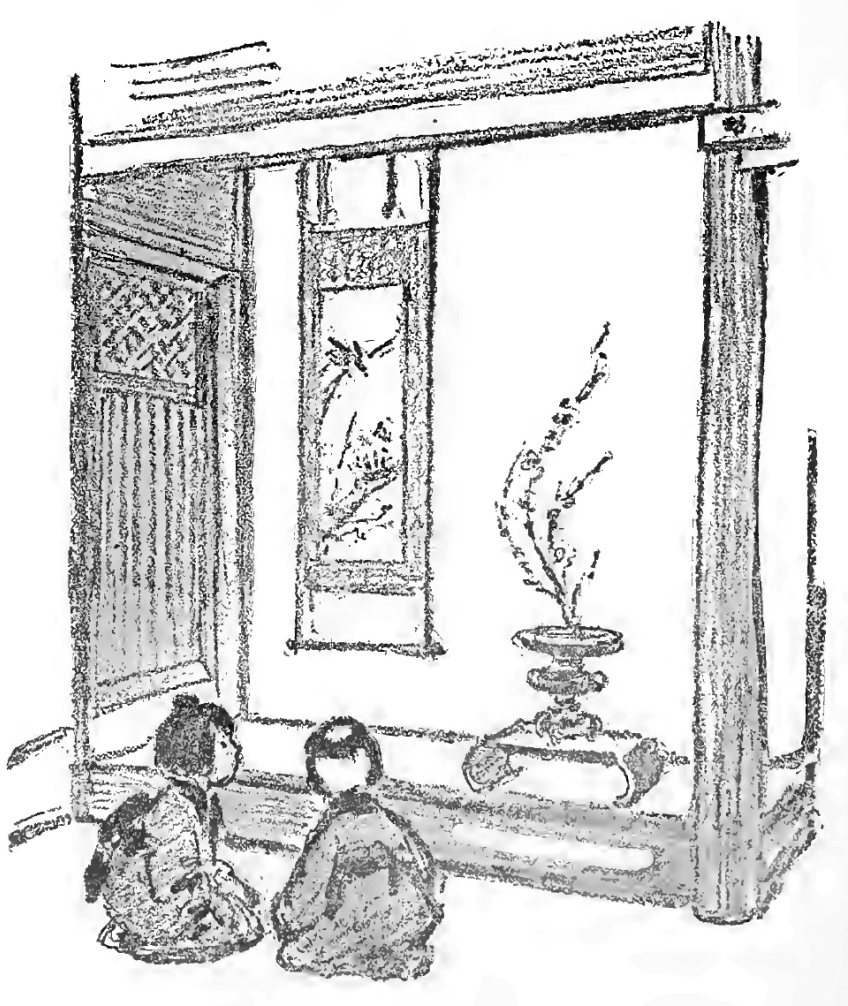
Take looked at it for a while, and then she said, "I don't believe I shall feel sorry about minding Bot'Chan after all,

because I love him so much."

"That's the way a little Japanese girl should feel," said her Father. "Now, come in and let us take a look at him."

They found Bot'Chan awake. Take knelt down on the mat in front of him, to see him better.

"Put your head down on the matting, Take," her Father





said, and Take bowed her head to the floor.

Then the Father took the Baby in his arms and placed his tiny foot on Take's neck.

"That means that you must always do what he wants you to," he said.

"I will," said little Take. The Mother smiled at Take as she knelt on the floor with the Baby's foot on her neck.

Then she turned her face the other way on her little wooden pillow and sighed—just a very gentle little sigh, that nobody heard at all.

II

Morning in the Little House

One morning when Bot'Chan was just one month old, his big brother Taro woke up very early. The birds woke him. They were singing in the garden. "See, see, see," they sang. "Morning is here! Morning is here!" Taro heard them in his sleep. He turned over. Then he stretched his arms and legs and sat up in bed, rubbing his eyes.

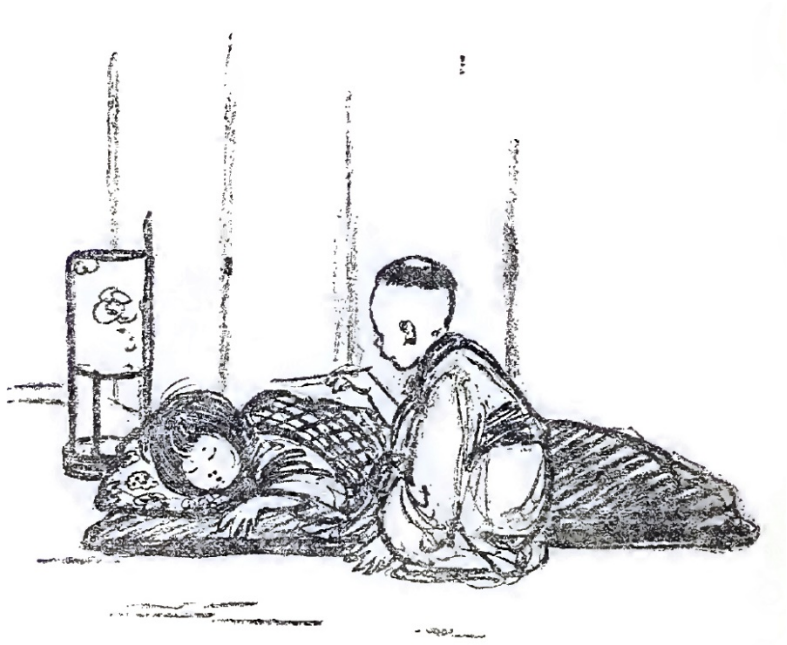
The candle in the tall paper lamp beside his bed had burned almost out, but it was light enough so he could see that Take, in her bed across the room, was still asleep, with her head on her little cushion.

Taro called very softly, "Take, Take, wake up!" But Take slept so soundly she did not hear him.

Father and Mother and the Baby were all asleep in the next room. He did not want to wake them, because it was still so early in the morning. So he crept softly along the floor to Take's bed, and whispered in her ear, "Wake up, wake up!" But she didn't wake up. Then Taro took a jay's

feather which he had found in the garden the day before, and tickled Take's nose!

First she rubbed her nose. Then she sneezed. Then she opened her eyes and looked at Taro.



"Sh-sh," whispered Taro.

"But I haven't said a single word!" Take whispered back.

"You sneezed, though," said Taro. "That's just as bad. It will wake up our honorable parents just the same."

"Well, you shouldn't tickle my poor little nose, then," said Take.

"Your honorable nose was tickled so that you would



wake up and hear the birds sing," said Taro. "It is much nicer than sleeping! Besides, do you remember what is going to happen to-day? We are going to take Bot'Chan to the Temple!"

A temple is something like a church, only they do not do the same things in temples that we do in our churches.

The Twins loved to go to the Temple, because they had a very good time when they went there. They liked it as much as you like Thanksgiving Day and the Fourth of July.

When Take remembered that they were going to take Bot'Chan to the Temple, she clapped her little brown hands. "Oh, I'm so glad!" she said. Then she popped out

from under the covers of her bed and stood up on the soft straw matting.

She was no sooner out of bed than from far away came the "Cling-cling-clang" of a great gong. And then, "Tum-tum-t-y-y-rum" rolled a great drum.

"Hark!" said Taro. "There go the Temple bells, and the priests are beating the sunrise drums! It's not so very early, after all."



"Now, you'll hear Grannie's stick rapping for the maids to get up," Take answered. "The Temple bells always wake her."

And at that very minute, "Rat-tat-tat" sounded Grannie's stick on the woodwork of the room where the maids slept.

In the little house in the garden where the Twins lived, there are no thick walls. There are only pretty wooden screens covered with fine white paper. These screens slide back and forth in grooves, and when they are all shoved back at once the whole house is turned into one big, bright room. This is why the Twins had to be so careful not to make any noise. Even a tiny noise can be heard all through a house that has only paper walls, you see.

But every one is supposed to get up at sunrise in the little house in the garden, anyway.

The maids were stirring as soon as Grannie called them. They rolled back the shutters around the porch and made so much noise in doing it that Father and Mother woke up too.

Then the Twins didn't keep so quiet any more. "I'll beat

you dressing," Take said to Taro.

She ran to the bathroom to wash her face and hands, and Taro ran to wash his in a little brass basin on the porch.

"Be sure you wash behind your ears, Taro," Take called to him. "And it's no fair unless you brush your teeth hard!"

Taro didn't say anything. His toothbrush was in his mouth, and there wasn't room for words too. So he just scrubbed away as hard as he could. Then he ran back to his room and dressed so quickly that he was all done and out in the garden before Take began to put on her little kimono! You see, all Taro's clothes opened in front, and there wasn't a single button to do up; so he could do it all himself—all but the sash which tied round his waist and held everything together. Take always tied this for him.

When Take came out into the garden she had her sash in her hand. Taro had his in his hand.

"I beat!" Taro called to her.

"You haven't got your sash on yet," Take called back.

"You haven't either," said Taro.

"We both of us didn't beat then," said Take. "Come here and I'll tie yours for you."

Taro backed up to Take, and she tied his sash in a twinkling.

Then she held up her sash. "Now, you tie mine for me, Taro," she said.



"Wait until Mother can help you," said Taro. "Boys shouldn't do girls' work."

"Oh, please, Taro," said Take. "I tied yours for you. I don't see why you can't tie mine for me!"

"Well, you know what Father said," Taro answered. "He said you are a girl and must mind me. You get Mother to do it."

"He said you should be kind and noble, too," said Take.

"It would be kind and noble of you to tie my sash, because I'm just suffering to have it tied." She looked at him sidewise. "Please do," she said.

Taro thought it over. Then he said, "Well, come behind the lantern, and just this once I'll do it. But don't you tell, and don't you ask me to again."

"Cross my heart, Taro," Take promised. "I won't tell. You are a good, kind boy."

Taro tied the sash the best he could, but it looked very queer. It looked so queer that when, after a while, their Mother saw it she said, "Come here, my child; your sash is tied upside down! But I know it is hard to reach behind you. I must teach you how to make a nice big bow all by yourself." And Take never told her that Taro did it. No one ever knew it until this minute!

When they were all dressed, the Twins ran out into the garden.

There had been a shower in the night, and the leaves were all shiny, they had been washed so clean by the rain. The dew sparkled on the green iris leaves beside the tiny river, and the sunshine made the fish look like lumps of



living gold in the blue waters of the little lake. The birds were singing in the wistaria vine that grew over the porch, and two doves were cooing on the old stone lantern that stood by the little lake. They were Taro's pet doves.

Taro held out his fingers. "I haven't forgotten to bring you something," he called.

The doves flew down and lit upon his shoulders. Taro took a few rice kernels from the sleeve of his kimono—which he used as a pocket—and fed the birds from his hand. They were so tame they even picked some from his lips.

"I will feed the fish too," Take said. And she ran to the kitchen where the maids were preparing breakfast. She came back with some white rice wafers in her fingers. First she threw some tiny bits of the wafer into the water. The fish saw them and came to the surface. Then Take reached down and held the wafer in her fingers. The little fish came all about her hand and nibbled the wafer without fear. One of them even nibbled her finger!

Take laughed. "Mind your manners," she said to the little fish. "It's not polite to try to eat me up when I'm



feeding you! I'm not your breakfast, anyway!"

Just then they heard the tinkling sound of a little gong.

"Ting—ting—ting!" sang Take to the sound of the gong. "Breakfast is ready." And she danced up the gravel walk to the house, her hair bobbing up and down, and her sash flying in the wind, so that she looked like a big blue butterfly.

Taro came too, and they sat down on mats in the kitchen, to eat their breakfast.



Their Mother was already serving their Father's breakfast to him in the next room. By and by she and Grandmother would have their breakfast with the servants.

This is a picture of the Twins eating their breakfast.

They each had a tiny table of red lacquered wood. On each table were two bowls. In one bowl was soup, and in the other rice.

Taro took up his soup-bowl with both hands. He was in a hurry.

"Oh, Taro!" Take said. "What would Mother say! You must be more polite. You know that isn't the way to hold your bowl."

Taro set his bowl down again, and took it up carefully with one hand, just as you see him in the picture.

Take began to eat her rice. She had two little sticks in her right hand. She used these sticks instead of a fork or spoon.

But Take was in a hurry too. She spilled a little rice on the front of her kimono.

Taro saw it. "You're just as impolite as I am," he said. "It's just as bad to spill as it is to hold your bowl wrong."

"Oh, dear me! Then we're both impolite," said Take. "What would Mother say!"

"She'd be ashamed of us," said Taro.

"Let's see if we can't remember every single one of our

manners after this," said Take.

Just as they were finishing their rice there came the sound of steps—Clumpity—clumpity-clump!

"Who's coming?" said Taro.

"I think it's the hairdresser," Take answered.



She ran out to see. An old woman was on the porch. She had just slipped off her clogs.

In Japan no one thinks of such a thing as wearing street shoes in the house. It would bring in dirt and soil the pretty white mats. That was why she took them off.

Take bowed to the old woman. "Oha-yo?" she said politely.

"Oha-yo?" said the old woman to Take.

The Twins' Mother heard them. She came to the door. She bowed to the old woman, and the old woman bowed to her.

"Come in," said the Mother. "I hope you will make my hair look very nice to-day, because we are going to the Temple."

The old woman smiled. "I will make it shine like satin," she said.

The Mother got out her little mirror and sat down on the floor. The hairdresser stood behind her and began to take down the Mother's long black hair.

Bot'Chan had been awake a long time. Taro was playing with him on the floor.



The Mother called Take. “Daughter,” she said, “a little nap would make our baby wide awake and happy when we start for the Temple. Would you like to put him to sleep?”

Take loved to put Bot’Chan to sleep better than anything else in the world. She took him in her arms and hugged him close. Then she swayed back and forth, and sang this little song:

“How big and beautiful Sir Baby Boy is growing.

“When he becomes a good boy, too, then I will make our garden larger, and build a little treasure house for him.

“Next to the treasure-house I will plant pine trees. Next to the pine trees I will plant bamboo. Next to the

bamboo I will plant plum trees.

"To the branches of the plum trees shall be hung little bells! When those little bells ring, O Sir Baby Boy, how happy you will be!"

(Adapted from translation by Sir Edwin Arnold.)

She sang over and over, and softer and softer, about the little bells; and by the time the hairdresser had finished the Mother's hair and gone away, Bot'Chan was fast asleep.

Then Natsu put him down on some soft mats, and combed Take's hair.

Take stood still, like a brave little girl, though there were three snarls in it, and Natsu pulled dreadfully!

When every one was ready to go, they looked very splendid indeed. They all wore kimonos of the finest silk, with the family crest embroidered on the back and left sleeve. And Bot'Chan had new clothes that Grannie and Mother had made especially for him to wear on his first visit to the Temple.

When everybody else was dressed and ready, Natsu waked Bot'Chan and put his new clothes on him.

"Now, we can start," said the Mother.

She took Bot'Chan in her arms. Natsu slid open the door, and they all stepped out on the porch.





III

How They Went to the Temple

The Twins were just stepping into their clogs when the front gate opened, and what do you think they saw! In came trotting three brown men, each one pulling a little carriage behind him! They came right up to the porch. Take was just standing on one foot, ready to slip her other one into the strap of her clog, when they came in. She was so surprised she fell right over backward! She picked herself up again quickly, and hopped along, with one shoe on and one shoe off:

"Are we going to ride?" she gasped.

Her Father laughed. "Yes, little pop-eyes," he said; "we are going to ride to the Temple, and you and Taro shall ride in one rickshaw all by yourselves."

The name of these little carriages drawn by men instead of horses is "jinrickshas," but he called them "rickshaws" for short.

The Twins were so happy they could hardly keep still.

They looked at all three rickshaws and all three men, and then they said to their Father:

"May we ride in this one?"

It had red wheels.

"Yes, you may ride in that one," he said.

Then he got into the one with green wheels, and rode away.

Mother and Grannie and the Baby got into the next one, and their rickshaw man trotted away after Father.

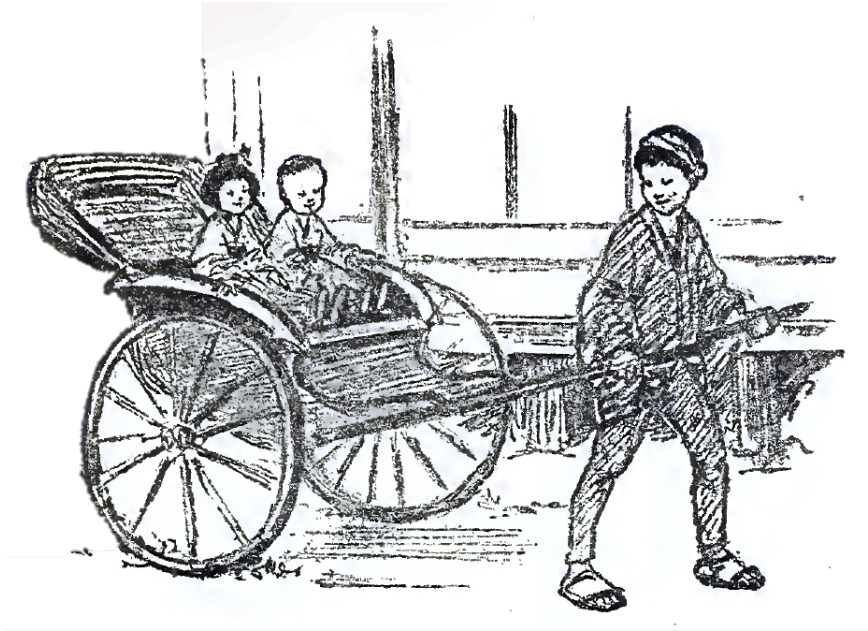
"Keep close behind us," the Mother called back to the Twins.

They got into the rickshaw with the red wheels, and away they flew.

The Twins had never been in a rickshaw alone before in all their lives. They sat up very straight, and held on tight because it bounced a good deal, and the rickshaw man could run very fast.

"I feel as grand as a princess," Take whispered to Taro. "How do you feel?"

"I feel like a son of the Samurai," Taro whispered back. That was the proudest feeling he could think of.



There were so very many interesting things to see that the Twins didn't talk much for a while. You see, it's hard work to use your mouth and your eyes and your ears all at once. So the Twins just used their eyes.

It was still quite early in the morning when they reached the city streets. Here they saw men with baskets hung from poles going from house to house. Some were selling vegetables, some had fish, and others were selling flowers, or brooms.

They saw little girls with baby brothers on their backs, skipping rope or bouncing balls. The baby's head wobbled dreadfully when his little sister skipped, but he didn't cry



about it. He just let it wobble!

The Twins rode by fruit-shops, and clothing-shops with gay kimonos flapping in the breeze; by little shops where people were making paper lanterns, by tea-shops and silk-shops, by houses and gardens in strange places they had never seen before.



They saw an old priest going from door to door, holding out his bowl for money.

In one street carpenters were putting up a new house, and once they caught a glimpse of the very bridge that leads to the

Emperor's palace.

By and by they reached the gate of the Temple grounds. All the rickshaws stopped here, and everybody got out.

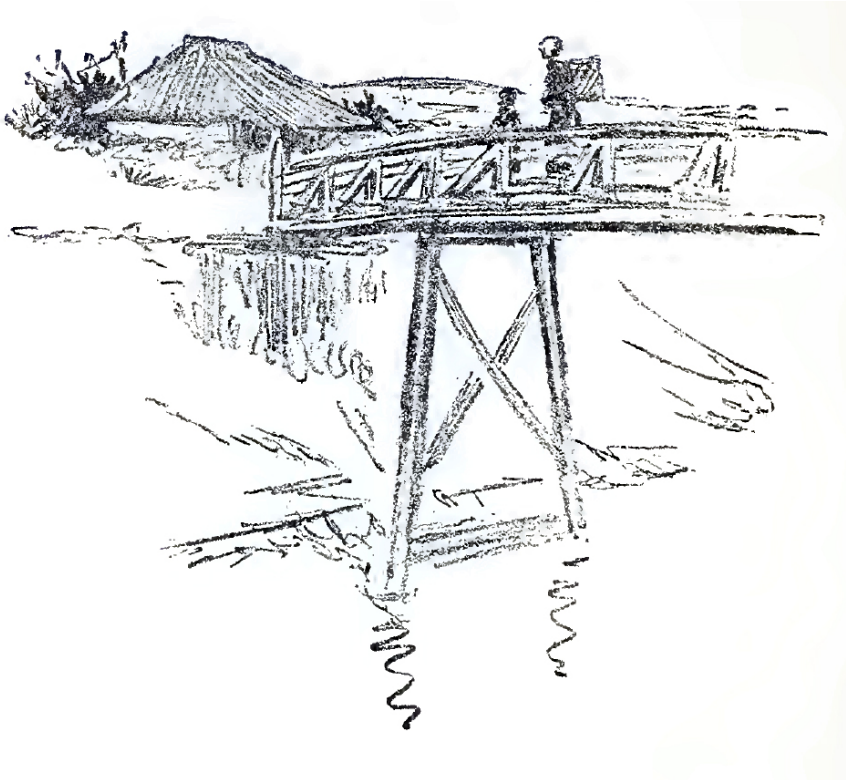
The Mother put Bot'Chan on her back, and they all started in a procession for the Temple. First walked the Father, looking very proud. Then came the Twins, looking quite proud, too. Then came Mother and Grannie and Bot'Chan and they looked proudest of all!



When they got inside the gate, the Twins thought they were in fairyland. You would have thought so, too, if you could have been there with them.

They saw so many wonderful things that day that if I were to tell you about every one of them it would fill up this whole book!

First of all, they came into a broad roadway with beautiful great cedar trees on each side. Under these trees



were little booths. Great paper lanterns and banners of all colors hung in front of the booths; and when they waved gayly in the wind, the place looked like a giant flower-garden in full bloom.

Near the Temple entrance was a great stone trough full of clear water. There was a long-handled wooden dipper floating on it.

"Come here," said the Father.



The Twins, Grandmother, and Mother, with Baby on her back, all came at once and stood in a row beside the trough. They put out their hands. The Father took the dipper and poured water on their hands.

When their hands were quite clean, they rinsed their mouths, too. Then they entered the Temple vestibule.

There were more little booths in the Temple vestibule, and there were so many people, big and little, crowding about that the Father took the Twins' hands so they wouldn't get lost.

First he led them to a place where they bought some cooked peas on a little plate, and some rice. He gave the peas to Taro and some of the rice to Take.

The Twins wondered what in the world their Father wanted with peas and rice. They soon found out. In the very next place was a little stall, and in the little stall was a tiny, tiny white horse—no bigger than a big dog! Even its eyes were white.

"Oh, Father," the Twins said, both together, "whose little horse is it?"

"It's Kwannon's little horse," the Father said. "Taro, you may give him the peas."

Taro held out the plate. The little white pony put his nose in the plate and ate them all up! He sniffed up Taro's sleeve as if he wanted more.

Take patted his back. "Who is Kwannon?" she asked.

"Kwannon is a beautiful goddess who loves little children," said the Father.

"Does she live here?" asked Taro.

"This is her Temple, where people come to worship," the Father answered. "We are going to pray to her to-day

to take good care of Bot'Chan always."

"Did you ask her to take care of us, too?" asked Take.

"Yes; we brought you both here when you were a month old, just as we are bringing Bot'Chan now," the Father replied.

"Does she take care of all little children?" Take said.

"She loves them all, and takes care of all who ask for her protection."

"My!" said Take. "She must have her hands full with such a large family!"

Her Father laughed, "But, you see, she has a great many hands," he said. "If she had only two, like us, it would be hard for her to take care of so many."

"I never saw her take care of me," said Taro.

"We do not see the gods," their Father answered. "But we must worship and obey them just the same."

"I think Kwannon must love little children," said Take, "because she wants them to have such good times in her Temple."

They said good-bye to the little horse, and walked through an opening into a courtyard beyond. The moment

they stepped into the courtyard a flock of white pigeons flew down and settled all about them.

"Take may feed the pigeons," the Father said. "They are Kwannon's pigeons."

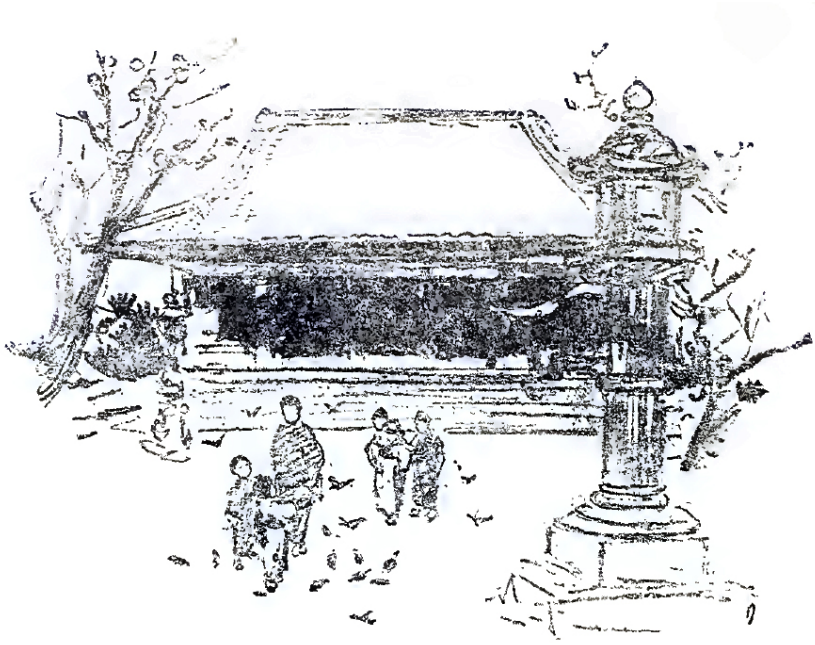
Take threw her rice on the ground. The pigeons picked it all up. So many people fed them that they were almost too fat to fly!

At another booth their Father bought some little rings of perfumed incense. He put them in his sleeve. His sleeves could hold more things than all a boy's pockets put together!

When they reached the great door of the Temple itself, the Father said: "Now, we must take off our shoes." So they all slipped their toes out of their clogs, and went into the Temple just as the bell in the courtyard rang out with a great—boom— BOOM—BOOM! that made the air shiver and shake all about them.

The Temple was one big, shadowy room, with tall red columns all about.

"It's just like a great forest full of trees, isn't it?" Taro whispered to Take, as they went in.



"It almost scares me," Take whispered back; "it's so big."

Directly in front of the entrance there was another bell. A long red streamer hung from its clapper, and under it was a great box with bars over the top. On the box there perched a great white rooster!

The Father pulled the red streamer and rang the bell. Then he threw a piece of money into the box. It fell with a great noise.

"Cock-a-doodle-doo," crowed the rooster! He seemed very much pleased about the money, though it was meant for the priests and not for him. "The rooster is saying thank you," cried Take. "Hush," said her Mother.

Then the Father drew from his sleeve a little rosary of beads. He placed it over his hands, and bowed his head in prayer while Grannie and Mother and Baby and the Twins stood near him and kept very still. When he had finished, a priest came up.



The Father bowed to the priest. "Will you show us the way to the shrine of Kwannon?" he asked.

Away off at the farther end of the Temple, the Twins could see a great altar. Banners and lanterns hung about it, and people were kneeling on the floor before it, praying.

Before the altar was an open brazier with incense burning in it.

"Come this way," said the priest. He led them to the altar.

The Father took Bot'Chan from his Mother, and held him in his arms. The priest said a prayer to Kwannon, and blessed the Baby. Then the Father threw incense rings on the little fire that burned in the brazier before the altar. Wreaths of smoke began to curl about their heads. The air was filled with the sweet odor of it. Some of it went up Bot'Chan's nose. It smarted. Bot'Chan didn't like it. He had behaved beautifully up to that time, and I am sure if the incense hadn't gone up his nose he would have kept on behaving beautifully. But it did, and Bot'Chan sneezed just as the priest finished the prayer.

Then he gave a great scream. Then another, and another. Three of them!

The priest smiled. But the Father didn't smile. He gave Bot'Chan back to his mother just as quickly as he could.

He said, "The honorable worshippers will be disturbed. We must go out at once."

They hurried back to the entrance and found their clogs, and the moment they were outdoors again, in the sweet, fresh air, Bot'Chan cuddled down on his Mother's back and went to sleep without another sound.

Near the Temple they found an orchard of cherry trees in full bloom. People were sitting under the cherry trees, looking at the blossoms. Some of them were writing little verses, which they hung on the branches of the trees. They did this because they loved the blossoms so much. Children were playing all about. Near by was a pretty little tea-house.

Grannie saw it first. "I am thirsty," she said.

"So am I," said Take.

"So am I," said Taro.

"We're all thirsty," the Father said.

Outside the tea-house, under the trees there were wooden benches. They sat down on these, and soon little maids from the tea-house brought them trays with tea and sweet rice-cakes.

They sat on the benches and sipped their tea, and watched the people moving about, and looked up at the cherry blossoms against the blue sky, and were very happy,



indeed.

The Mother had carried Bot'Chan all the way on her back, so maybe she was a little tired. Anyway, she said to the Father:—

"If you and the Twins want to go farther, let Grannie and me stay here and rest. You can come back for us."

"Would you like to see the animals?" the Father asked the Twins.

Taro and Take jumped right up, and took their Father's

hands, one on each side, and then they all walked away together under the blossoming trees to another part of the park.

In this part of the park there were cages, and in the cages were lions, and tigers, and monkeys, and zebras, and elephants, and all kinds of animals! There were birds, too, with red and blue plumage and beautiful golden tails. There were parrots and cockatoos and pheasants. Wild ducks were swimming in the ponds; and two swans sailed, like lovely white ships, to the place where the Twins stood, and opened their bills to be fed.

In the Father's sleeve was something for each one. Taro and Take took turns. Take fed the swans, and Taro fed the great fish that swam up beside them and looked at them with round eyes. When they saw the food the fish leaped in the water and fought each other to get it, and when they ate it they made curious noises like pigs.

"I don't think they have very good manners," said Take.

By and by they came to a queer little street. This little street must have been made on purpose for little boys and girls to have fun in, for there were all sorts of astonishing

things there. There were jugglers doing strange tricks with tops and swords. There were acrobats, and candy-sellers and toy-sellers going about with baskets hung from long poles over their shoulders. It was almost like a circus.

The street was full of people, and every one was gay. The Twins and their Father had gone only a little way up the street when an old woman met them. She had a pole on her shoulder, and from it swung a little fire of coals in a brazier. She had a little pot of batter and a little jar of sweet sauce,





a ladle, a griddle, and a cake-turner!

"Would you like to make some cakes?" she said to Take.

Take clasped her hands. "Oh, Father, may I?" she said.

The Father gave the old woman some money out of his sleeve. She set the brazier on the ground.

Then Take tucked her sleeves back, put the griddle on the coals, poured out some batter, and cooked a little cake on one side until it was brown. Then she turned it over with the cake-turner, and browned it on the other side. Then she put it on a plate and put the sauce on it.

My, my! but it was fun!

The first cake she made she gave to her Father.

He ate it all up. Then he said, "Honorable daughter, the cake is the very best I ever had of the kind. I am sure your

honorable brother would like one too."

The Japanese are so very polite that they often call each other "honorable" in that way. They even call things that they use "honorable," too!

So Take said very politely, "Honorable Brother, would you like one of my poor cakes?"

It would be impolite in Japan to call anything good that you had made yourself. It would seem like praising your own work. That was why Take called them "my poor cakes."

"I should like a cake very much," Taro said.

Take poured out the batter. She watched it carefully, to be sure it did not burn. When it was just brown enough she gave it to Taro.

Taro ate it all up. Then he said to Take, "Honorable Sister, I should like to eat six."

The Father laughed. "If you stay here to eat six cakes, we shall not see the dolls' garden," he said. "Take must have one cake for herself, and then we will go on."

Take baked a cake for herself and ate it She called it a "poor" cake aloud, but inside she thought it was the very best cake that any one ever made!

When she had finished, she and Taro and the Father bowed politely to the old woman.

"Sayonara," they said. That means "good-bye."

The old woman bowed. "Sayonara," she called to them.

The Twins and their Father walked on. They soon found the dolls' garden. In it were many tiny pine trees like theirs at home. There were little plum trees, and bamboos, and a tiny tea-house in it. There was a pond with a little bridge, too.

"Oh!" cried Take, "if it only had little bells on the plum trees, this would be the very garden I sang about to





Bot'Chan; wouldn't it?"

She stooped down and peeped under the little trees.

"Let's play we are giants!" she said to Taro.

"Giants roar," said Taro.

"You roar," said Take. "It wouldn't be polite for a lady giant to roar!"

"Giants are different. They don't have to be polite," Taro explained.

"Well, you can roar," said Take, "but I shall play I'm a polite lady giant taking a walk in my garden! My head is in

the clouds, and every step I take is a mile long!"

She picked up her kimono. She turned her little nose up to the sky, and took a very long step.

Taro came roaring after her.

But just that minute Take's clog turned on her foot, and the first thing she knew she was flat on her stomach on the bridge! She forgot that lady giants didn't roar.

Taro was roaring already.

Their Father was ahead of them. He jumped right up in the air when he heard the noise. He wasn't used to such sounds from the Twins. He turned back.

"What is the matter?" he said.

He picked Take up and set her on her feet.

"We're giants," sobbed Take.

"Her head was in the clouds," said Taro.

"It is well even for giants to keep an eye on the earth when they are out walking," the Father said. "Are you hurt?"

"Yes, I'm hurt," Take said; "but I don't think I'm broken anywhere."

"Giants don't break easily at all," her Father answered.

"I think you'll be all right if we go to your castle!"

"My castle!" cried Take. "Where is it?"



"Right over there through the trees." He pointed to it.

The Twins looked. They saw a high tower.

"Would you like to climb to the top with me?" their Father said.

"Oh, yes," Taro cried. "We aren't tired."

"Or broken," Take added.

So they went into the tower and climbed, and climbed,

and climbed. It seemed as if the dark stairs would never end.

"I believe the tower reaches clear to the sky!" said Take.

"I don't believe it has any top at all!" said Taro.

But just that minute they came out on an open platform, and what a sight they saw! The whole city was spread out before them. They could see gray roofs, and green trees, and roadways with people on them. The people looked about as big as ants crawling along. They could see rivers, and blue ponds, and canals. It seemed to the Twins that they could see the whole world.

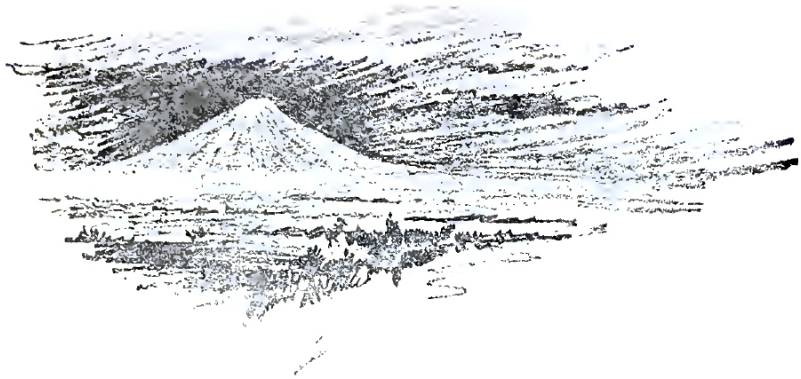
In a minute the Father said, "Look! Look over there against the sky!"

The Twins looked. Far away they saw a great lonely mountain-peak. It was very high, and very pale against the pale blue sky. The top of it was rosy, as if the sun shone on it. The shadows were blue. Below the top there were clouds and mists. The mountain seemed to rise out of them and float in the air.

The Twins clasped their hands.

"It is Fuji!" they cried, both together.

"Yes," said the Father. "It is Fuji, the most beautiful mountain in the world."



By and by Take said, "I don't feel a bit like a giant any more."

And Taro said, "Neither do I."

For a long time they stood looking at it. Then they turned and crept quietly down the dark stairs, holding tight to their Father's hands.

They went back to Mother and Grandmother and Bot'Chan under the cherry trees.

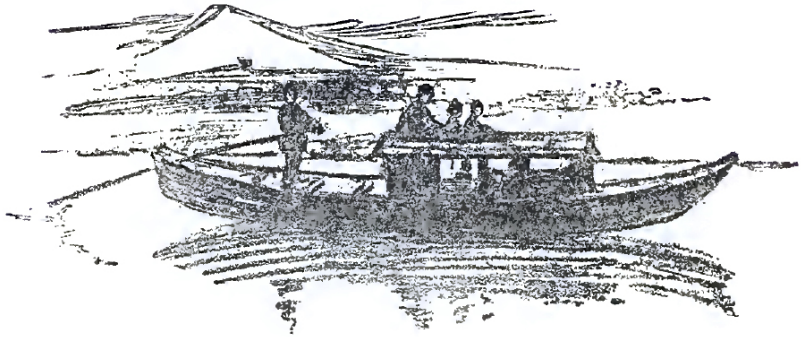
"We must take the Baby home," said the Mother as soon as she saw them. "It's growing late."

"Oh, mayn't we stay just a little longer?" Take begged.

"Please," said Taro.

"If we go now, we can go home by boat," said the Father.

"I didn't believe a single other nice thing could happen this day," sighed Take. "But going home by boat will be



nicer than staying. Won't it, Taro?"

But Taro was already on his way to the landing.

There was a pleasure-boat tied to the wharf. The whole family got on board; the boatman pushed off and away they



went over the blue waters and into the river, and down the river a long way, through the city and beyond. They passed

rice-fields, where men and women in great round hats worked away, standing ankle deep in water. There were fields where tea-plants were growing. There were little brown thatched roofs peeping out from under green trees. There were glimpses of little streets in tiny villages, and of people riding in a queer sort of basket hung from a pole and carried on the shoulders of two men.



At last they came to a landing-pace near their home. They were glad to see the familiar roofs again.

Taro and Take raced ahead of the others to their own little house in the garden.

At the door they found ever so many clogs. There were sounds of talking inside the house.

"What do you suppose is going to happen now?" Take asked Taro.

"I don't know—but something nice," Taro answered, as he slipped tiff his clogs and sprang up on the porch.



They slid open the door.

"Ohayo!" came a chorus of voices.

The room was full of their aunts and cousins!

Taro and Take were very much surprised, but they remembered their manners. They dropped on their knees and bowed their heads to the floor.

"Where are your Father and Mother, and Grannie and Bot'Chan?" said all the aunts and cousins. "They are late."



"We came back by the boat, and it stopped at ever so many places," said Taro. "That's why we are late."

Soon their Father and Mother and Grandmother came in. Then there was great laughing and talking, and many polite bows.

Bot'Chan was passed from one to another. Everybody said he was the finest baby ever seen, and that he looked like his Father! And his Mother! And his Grandmother! Some even said he looked like the Twins!

Everybody brought presents to the baby. There were toys, and rice, and candied peas and beans, and little cakes, and silk for dresses for him, and more silk for more dresses, and best of all a beautiful puppy cat. Here is his picture! [The picture shows a portly little toy animal with curly whiskers, large round ears, and a fierce expression.] The Twins thought Bot'Chan could never use all the things that

were given him but they thought they could help eat up the candied things.



Bot'Chan seemed to like his party. He sucked his thumb and looked solemnly at the aunts and cousins. He even tried to put the puppy cat in his mouth. Natsu took him away at last and put him to bed. Then everybody had tea and good things to eat until it was time to go home.

It took the Twins a long time to get to sleep that night.



Just as she was cuddling down under her warm, soft mats, Take popped her head out once more and looked across the room to Taro's bed.

"Taro!" she whispered.

Taro stuck his head out, too. She could see him by the soft light of the candle in the tall paper lamp beside his bed.

"Don't you think it's about a week since morning?" she

said. "So many nice things have happened to-day!"

"There never could be a nicer day than this," said Taro.

"What was the nicest of all?" Take asked. "I'll tell you what I liked the best if you'll tell me."



Then Taro told which part of the day he liked the best, and Take told which she liked the best. But I'm not going to tell whether they said the little horse, or the tiny garden, or the cherry trees, or the animals, or the boat-ride—or the party. You can just guess for yourself!

IV

A Rainy Day

When the Twins woke up the next morning it was cold, and the rain was beating on the roof. They couldn't look out of the window to see it, because there were no glass windows in their house. There were just the pretty screens covered with white paper.

Taro slid one of the screens back and peeped out into the garden. "It's all wet," he said to Take. "We can't play outdoors to-day."

"We'll have a nice time in the house, then," said Take. "I can think of lots of things to do."

"So can I, if I try," Taro said.

"Let's try, then," Take answered.

They thought all the time they were dressing. They put on three kimonos because it was cold. It made them look quite fat.

"I've thought of one," Take called just as she was putting on the last kimono.



"I have, too," Taro said.

"You tell me and I'll tell you," Take begged.

"No, not until after breakfast," Taro answered. "Then first we'll play one and then the other."

After breakfast Mother was busy waiting upon Father and getting him off to his work. Then she had to bathe the Baby. So the twins went to Grandmother for help.

"O Ba San" (that means "Honorable Grand-mother"), Take said to her, "it is rainy and cold, and Taro and I have thought of nice games to play in the house. Will you get the colored sands for us?"

"I know what you're going to do!" cried Taro.

Grandmother brought out four boxes. In one box was yellow sand. In another was black sand. The other two were filled with blue and red sand. Grandmother brought out some large pieces of paper.



"Thank you, O Ba San," the Twins said.

They spread the paper on the floor. Taro had one piece, and Take had another.

"I'm going to make a picture of a boat on the sea," said Taro.

He took some of the blue sand in his right hand. He let it run through his fingers until it made a blue sea clear across the paper.

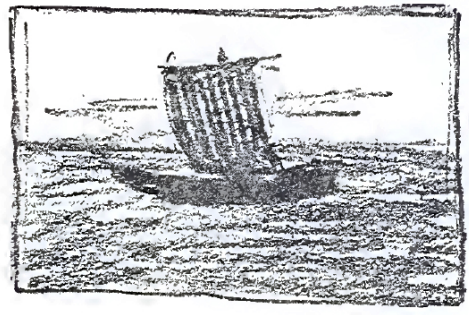
"And now I'm going to make a yellow sky for a sunset." He let the yellow sand run through the fingers of his left hand.

"I'll put some red clouds in it," he said. Then he let red sand run through his fingers.

When that was done he took some black sand. He made a boat.

This was the way his picture looked when it was done, only it was in colors. The sail of the boat was blue.

"Oh, Taro, how beautiful!" Take said. "Mine won't be half so nice, I'm sure. I'm going to make—I'm going to make—let's see. Oh, I know. I'll make the pine tree beside the pond."



She took some blue sand and made the little lake. Then she took the black

sand and made the trunk of the tree and some branches.

She spilled a little of the black sand. It made black specks.

"Oh, dear!" she cried. "I've spilled."

Taro looked at it. "Put the green leaves over the spilled place," he said.

"It isn't the right place for leaves," Take said.

She took some blue sand in one hand and some yellow in the other. She let them fall on the paper together. They made the green part of the tree.



"I know what I'll do about the black that spilled," she said. "I'll call it a swarm of bees!"

This is Take's picture. You can see the bees!

"I think your picture is just as good as mine," said Taro.

"Oh, no, Honorable Brother! Yours is much better," Take answered politely.

They showed them to Grannie when they were all

finished. Grannie thought they were beautiful.

"Now, Taro, what's your game?" Take said when the sand was all put away.

"I have to go out into the garden first for mine," Taro said.

"Put on your clogs and take an umbrella, and don't stay but a minute," Grannie said.

Taro put on his clogs and opened his umbrella, and ran into the garden.

Take couldn't guess what he wanted. She watched him from the door.

Taro ran from one tree or vine to another. He looked along the stems and under the leaves. He looked on the ground, too. Soon he jumped at something on the ground, and caught it in his hand.

"I've got one," he called.

"One what?" Take called back.

"Beetle," Taro said.

Then he found another. He brought them in very carefully, so as not to hurt them.

In the house he put them into a little cage which he

made out of a pasteboard box. Then he got more paper and a little knife.

"Oh, Taro, what are you going to make?" Take asked.

"If you and grannie will help me, I'll make some little wagons and we'll harness the beetles," Taro said.



"Won't it hurt them?" Take asked.

"Not a bit; we'll be so careful," Taro answered.

So Take ran for thread, and Taro got Grannie to help him. Grannie would do almost anything in the world for the Twins. And pretty soon there were two cunning little paper wagons with round paper wheels!



Taro tied some thread to the front of each little wagon. Then he opened the cage to take out the beetles.

One of the beetles didn't wait to be taken out. He flew out himself. He was big and black, and he flew straight at Take! He flew into her black hair!

Maybe he just wanted to hide. But he had big black nippers, and he took hold of Take's little fat neck with them.

Take rolled right over on the floor and screamed. Her Mother heard the scream. She came running in. The maids came running too to see what was the matter.

"Ow! Ow!! Ow!!!" squealed Take. She couldn't say a word. She just clawed at her neck and screamed.

Everybody tried to find out what was the matter.

"I know—I know!" shouted Taro.

He shook Take's hair. Out flew the beetle!

Taro caught him. "He isn't hurt a bit," he said.

"But I am," wailed Take.

Mother and Grannie bathed Take's neck, and comforted her; and soon she was happy again and ready to go on with the play.

She and Taro harnessed the beetles with threads to the little wagons. But Take let Taro do the harnessing.

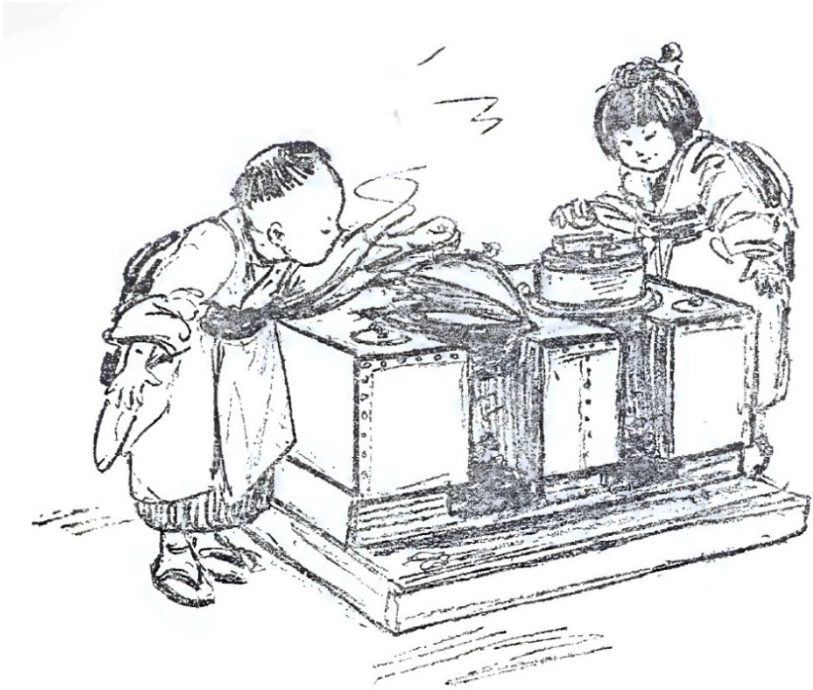
"You can have that one, and I'll have this," Taro said; "and we'll have a race."

He set the beetles on the floor. They began to crawl along, pulling the little carriages after them.

Taro's beetle won the race.

They played with the beetles and wagons a long time until Grannie said, "Let them go now, children. Dinner will soon be ready."

The Twins were hungry. They unharnessed the beetles and carried them to the porch. They put them on the porch railing.



"Fly away home!" they said. Then they ran to the kitchen to see what there was for dinner. They sniffed good things cooking.

Take went to the stove and lifted the lid of a great kettle. It was such a queer stove!

Here is a picture of Take peeping into the kettle. It shows you just how queer that stove was.

"It's rice," Take said.

"Of course," said Taro. "We always have rice in that kettle. What's in this one?"

He peeped into the next kettle. It was steaming hot. The

steam flew out when Taro opened the lid, and almost burned his nose!

That kettle had fish in it. When it was ready, Grannie and Mother and the Twins had their dinner all together. Bot'Chan was asleep.

After dinner Grannie said, "I'm going for a little nap."

"We shall keep very quiet so as not to disturb you and Bot'Chan," Taro said.

When the little tables were taken away, the Mother said, "Come, my children, let us sit down beside the hibachi and get warm."

The "hibachi" is the only stove, except the cook-stove, that they have in Japanese houses. It is an open square box, made of metal, with a charcoal fire burning in it. In very cold weather each person has one to himself; but this day it was just cold enough so the Twins loved to cuddle close up to their Mother beside the big hibachi.

The Mother put on a square framework of iron over the fire-box. Then she brought a comforter—she called it a "futon"—from the cupboard. She put it over the frame, like a tent. She placed one large cushion on the floor and on

each side of the big cushion she put a little one.

She sat down on the big cushion. Taro sat on one side and Take sat on the other, on the little cushions. They drew the comforter over their laps—and, oh, but they were cozy and warm!

"Tell us a story, honored Mother," begged Taro.

"Yes, please do!" said Take.

"Let me see. What shall I tell you about?" said the Mother. She put her finger on her brow and pretended to be thinking very hard.

"Tell us about 'The Wonderful Tea-Kettle,'" said Take.

"Tell us about 'The Four and Twenty Paragons,'" said Taro.

"What is a Paragon?" asked Take.

"A Paragon is some one who is very good, indeed—better than anybody else," said the Mother.

"Are you a Paragon?" Take asked her Mother.

"Oh, no," cried the Mother. "I am a most unworthy creature as compared with a Paragon."

"Then there aren't any such things," said Take, "because nobody could be better than you!"

The Mother laughed. "Wait until I tell you about the Paragons. Then you'll see how very, very good they were," she said.



"Once there was a Paragon. He was only a little boy, but he was so good to his parents! Oh, you can't think how good he was! He was only six years old. He was a beautiful child, with a tender, fine skin and bright eyes. He lived with his parents in a little town among the rice-fields. The fields were so wet in the spring that there were millions and millions of mosquitoes around their home. Everybody was

nearly bitten to death by them. The little boy saw how miserable and unhappy his parents were from the mosquito-bites. He could not bear to see his dear parents suffer; so every night he lay naked on his mat so the mosquitoes would find his tender skin and bite him first, and spare his father and mother."

"Oh, my!" said Take. "How brave that was! I don't like mosquito-bites a bit!"

"You don't like beetle-bites any better, do you?" Taro said.

"Well," said Take, "I'd rather the beetle should bite me than Mother."

"Well, now, maybe you'll be a Paragon yourself sometime," the Mother said.

"There weren't any women paragons, were there?" asked Taro.

"Oh, yes," said the Mother. "Once there was a young girl who loved her father dearly, and honored him above everything in the world, as a child should. Once she and her father were in a jungle, and a tiger attacked them. The young girl threw herself upon the tiger and clung to his jaws

so that her father could escape."

"Did the tiger eat her up?" said Taro.

"I suppose he did," the Mother answered.

"Was it very noble of her to be eaten up so her father could get away?" Take asked,

"Oh, very noble!" said the Mother.

"Well, then," said Take, "was it very noble of the father to run away and let her stay and be eaten up?"

"The lives of women are not worth so much as those of men," her Mother answered.

Take bounced on her cushion. "I don't see how she could honor a man who was so mean," she said.

Take's mother held up her hands. She was shocked. "Why, Take!" she said. "The man was her father!"

"Tell us another," said Taro.

"Please, honored Mother, don't tell me about any more Paragons," said Take.

Her Mother was still more shocked.

"Why, little daughter," she said, "don't you want to hear about the Paragon that lay down on the cold, cold ice to warm a hole in it with his body so he could catch some fish

for his cruel stepmother to eat?"

"No, if you please, dear Mother," said Take, "because all the Paragons had such horrid parents."

"My dear little girl," the Mother said, "you must not say such dreadful things! We must honor and obey our parents, no matter what kind of persons they are."

"Well," said Take, "we love and honor you and our Father—you are so good and kind." She put her hands on the matting in front of her, and bowed to the floor before her Mother.

Taro saw Take do this, and he wanted to be just as polite as she was; so he rolled over on his cushion and bowed to the floor, too.

"Now, tell us about the 'Lucky Tea-Kettle,'" begged Take.

Their Mother began: "Once upon a time—"

But just as she got as far as that they heard a little sound from Bot'Chan's cushion in the corner, and the covers began to wiggle.

"There's Bot'Chan awake," said the Mother. "I must take care of him now. The 'Lucky Tea-Kettle' must wait

until another time."

And just at that minute bright spots of sunshine appeared on the paper screen, and the shadows of leaves in pretty patterns fluttered over it.

"The sun is out! The sun is out!" cried the Twins.

They ran to the door, put on their clogs, and were soon dancing about in the bright sunshine.



V

Take's Birthday

Taro and Take loved their birthdays the best of all the days in the year.

They had two of them. Most twins have only one birthday between them, but Japanese twins have two.

That is because all the boys in Japan celebrate their birthdays together on one day, and all the girls celebrate theirs together on another day.

So, you see, though they were twins, Taro and Take didn't have the same birthday at all.

Take's birthday came first. She knew days beforehand that it was coming, for every once in a while she would say to her Mother, "How many days is it now?" and her Mother always knew she meant, "How many days is it to my birthday?"

One morning when she woke up, Take said, "Only six days more." The next morning she said, "Only five days more." One morning she jumped out of bed very early and

said, "Oh, it's to-day! To-day! It begins this very minute."



Taro didn't get up early that day. When he heard Take singing, "It's to-day," he just buried his nose under the bedclothes and pretended to be asleep!

He remembered Take's last birthday, and he remembered that boys seemed to be in the way that day. They weren't asked to play with the girls, and they wouldn't have done it anyway, because the girls spent the whole day playing with dolls! Taro didn't think much of dolls.

Before breakfast, her Father took Take out to the Kura. He reached up to the high shelf and brought down the big red box that held the dolls. It was as big as a trunk. Then he reached down another box and carried them both into the house.

Although it was so early in the morning, the Mother had already put fresh flowers in the vase, in honor of Take's birthday.

The bedding had been put away, and on one side of the room there were five shelves, like steps against the wall. Take knew what they were for.

"Oh," said Take, "everything is all ready to begin! May I open the boxes right now?"

Her Mother said, "Yes." She even got down on her knees beside the boxes and helped Take open them. They opened the red box first. It was full of dolls! A whole

trunkful of dolls. Thirty-five of them!

The first doll Take took out was a very grand lady doll, dressed in stiff silk robes, embroidered with chrysanthemums.



"Here's the Empress," she cried; she set the Empress doll up against the trunk. Then she ran to get her dear everyday doll. She called her everyday doll "Morning Glory," and sometimes just "Glory" for short. Glory was still asleep in Take's bed.

"Why, you sleepy head!" Take said. "Don't you know

you are going to have company to-day? Where are your manners, child?"

She took Glory to the trunk and put her down on her knees before the Empress. "Make your bow," she said. Glory bowed so low that she fell over on her nose!

"Oh, my dear child!" said Take. "I must take more pains with you! Your manners are frightful! You will wear out your nose if you bow like that!"

She reached into the box and carefully lifted out the Emperor doll. He was dressed in stiff silk, too. He sat up very straight against the trunk beside the Empress.

Take made Morning Glory bow to the Emperor, too. This time Glory didn't fall on her nose.



These dolls had belonged to Take's Grandmother. She had played with them on her birthdays, and then Take's Mother had played with them on her birthdays, and still they were not broken or torn; they had been so well cared for.

They were taken out only once in the whole year, and that time was called the "Feast of Dolls."

Take's Mother had covered the five steps with a beautiful piece of silk. Take placed the Emperor and Empress in the middle of the top step. Then she ran back



to the trunk to get more dolls.

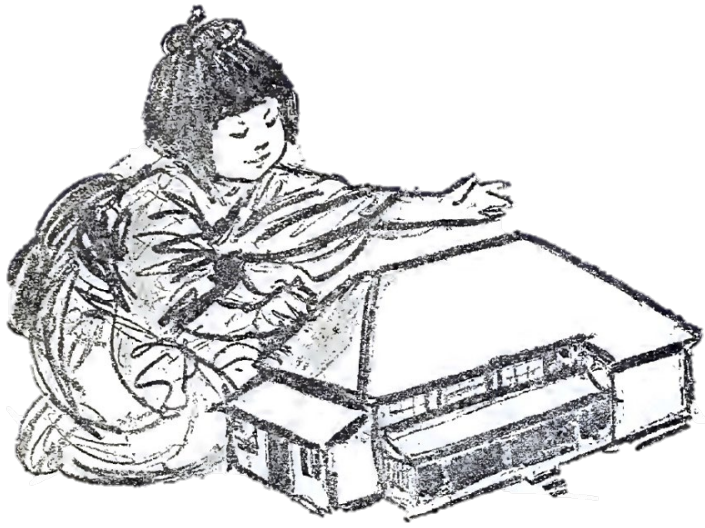
There were girl dolls and boy dolls and lady dolls in beautiful dresses, and baby dolls in little kimonos, strapped to the backs of bigger dolls.



Take took each one to the steps. She made each one bow very low before the Emperor and Empress before she put him in his own place. All the shelves were filled so full that one baby doll spilled over the edge and fell on the floor! Take picked her up and strapped her on Glory's back. "I know you won't let her fall," she said to Glory. Glory looked pleased and sat up very straight and responsible.

Then Take opened the other box. She took out a little stove and some blue-and-white doll dishes and two tiny lacquered tables.

While she was taking out these things, her Father brought in a new box that she had never seen before. He



put it down on the floor before the steps. Take was so busy she didn't see it at first. When she did, she shouted, "Oh, Father, is it for me?"

"Yes, it is for you," the Father answered.

"Oh, thank you, whatever it is!" said Take.

She flew to the box and untied the string. She lifted the cover and there was a beautiful big toy house, made almost like the house the Twins lived in! It had a porch and sliding screens, and a cunning cupboard with doll bedding in it. It even had an alcove with a tiny kakemono, and a little vase in it! There was a flower in the vase! There were little straw mats on the floor!

Take lifted the mats and slid the screens back and forth.

She put her little stove in the kitchen. She was too happy for words. She ran to her Father and threw herself on her knees before him and hugged his feet. "Thank you, ten thousand times, dear honored Father," she said.

When her own breakfast-time came, Take was very busy getting breakfast for the Emperor and Empress. She was so busy she couldn't stop. "It wouldn't be polite for me to have my breakfast before the Emperor and Empress have theirs," she explained.

Her Mother smiled. "Very well," she said, "You may get their breakfast first; we must be polite, whatever happens."

So Take had Morning Glory place the tiny lacquered tables before the Emperor and Empress. She put some rice in the little bowls on the tables. She placed some toy chop-sticks on the tables, too. Then she made Morning Glory bow and crawl away from the august presence on her hands and knees! "It wouldn't be at all right to stay to see them eat," she said.

Just then Taro came in, rubbing his eyes. He was still sleepy.

"Oh, Taro," cried Take, "look at my new house!"

Taro didn't think much of dolls, but he liked that house just as much as Take did. When he saw the little stove with its play kettles, he said: "Why don't you have a real fire in it?"

"Do you think we could?" Take said.

Of course they were never, never allowed to play with fire, but because it was Take's birthday the Mother said, "Just this once I will sit here beside you and you may have three little charcoal-embers from the tobacco-ban to put in the stove."

The tobacco-ban is a little metal box with a place for a pipe and tobacco. It always had a few pieces of burning charcoal in it so that the Father could light his pipe any time he wanted to. The Mother sat down beside the tobacco-ban.

She let Taro take a pair of tongs, like sugar-tongs. He put three pieces of charcoal in the tiny stove. Take put water in the kettle. Soon the water began to boil! Real steam came out of the spout.

"I can make real tea!" cried Take.

She got some tea leaves and put some in each tiny cup.

Then she poured the boiling water into the cups. She put the cups of tea before the Emperor and Empress.

"Now you'd better have your own breakfast," the Mother said. She put the fire out in the little stove and the Twins sat down before their tiny breakfast-tables.

While they were eating, Taro had a splendid idea. "I know what I'll do. I'll make you a little garden for your house!" he said.

"Oh, that will be beautiful!" cried Take.

The moment they had finished eating, they ran into the garden. Out by the well the maids were drawing water.

"I need some water, too," Taro said.

They let Taro draw a pail of water himself. Here is a picture of him doing it.

Then he found a box-cover—not very deep—and filled it with sand. He set a little bowl in the sand and filled it with the water, for a pond. Then he broke off little bits of branches and twigs and stuck them up in the sand for trees. He made a tiny mountain like the one in their garden and put a little bridge over the pond. He put bright pebbles around the pond. When it was all done, they put the garden

down beside the toy house. They put Glory in the garden, beside the tiny pond.

But a horrible accident happened! Glory fell over again, and this time she fell into the pond! At least her head did. Her legs were too long to go in. She might have been drowned if Take hadn't picked her out in a hurry.

Just as Take was wiping Morning Glory's face, her Mother came in dressed for the street. She had Bot'Chan on her back. He was awake and smiling.



Take ran and squeezed his fat legs. "You are the best doll of all," she said.

"You take your doll, and I'll take mine," the Mother said, "and let us go for

a walk."

Take had put on one of her very gayest kimonos that morning because it was her birthday, so she was all ready to go. Her Mother helped her strap Glory on her back and the two started down the street.

There were other mothers and other little girls with dolls on their backs in the street, too. They were all going to one place,—the Doll Shop! Each little girl had some money to buy a new doll.

Such chattering and laughing and talking you never heard! And such gay butterfly little dresses you never saw! nor such happy smiling faces, either.

At the Doll Shop there were rows and rows of dolls, and swarms and swarms of little girls looking at them. Take saw a roly-poly baby doll, with a funny tuft of black hair on his head. "This is the one I want, if you please," she said to the shopkeeper. She gave him her money. He gave her the doll.

"Glory," she said over her shoulder, "this is your new little brother!" Glory seemed pleased to have a little brother, and Take promised that she should wear him on her back whenever she wanted to. Take bought a little doll

for Bot'Chan, too, with her own money. It was a funny little doll without any legs. He was fat, and when any one knocked him over, he sat up again right away. She called him a "Daruma."

Bot'Chan seemed to like the Daruma. He put its head in his mouth at once and licked it.

Just then Take saw O Kiku San. O Kiku San was Take's best friend, and her home was not far from the little house where the Twins lived. O Kiku San had been to buy a doll, too. She had her new doll on her back. It was a large doll, with a red kimono.

She ran to speak to Take. "Won't you come into my house on your way home?" she asked.

"May I, Mother?" said Take.

Her Mother said, "Yes," so the little girls ran together to O Kiku San's house.

Other little girls came, too, to see O Kiku San's dolls. She had just as many dolls as Take. She had five shelves, too, and she had an Emperor and Empress doll. But she had no little house to play with.

"Come home with me and see my new house, all of you,"

Take said when the little girls had looked at O Kiku San's dolls.

So they marched in a gay procession to the little house in the garden. All the other girls' brothers had had a very lonesome day, but Taro had had fun all the afternoon with the little garden. He had made a little well, and a kura to put in the garden He made them out of boxes. The little girls looked at Take's dolls. They thought the doll-house the most beautiful toy they had ever seen, and when they saw the garden, you can't think how happy they were!

"We wish our brothers would make gardens like that for us," they said.

Taro felt proud and pleased to have them like it so much, but all he said was, "It is very polite of you to praise my poor work!"

Then the Mother brought out some sweet rice-cakes. The maids brought out tiny tables and set them around. Take brought a doll teapot and placed it with toy cups on her little table. Then she made real tea, and they had a party! For candy they had sugared beans and peas. They gave some of everything to the dolls. It was nearly time for

supper when the little girls bowed to Take and her Mother, said "Sayonara" very politely, and went home.

Take sat up just as late as she wanted to that night. It was eight o'clock when she went to bed. She hugged each one of the thirty-five dolls when she said good night to them.

"Sayonara, Sayonara," she said to each one; "good-bye for a whole year, you darling dolls!"

Then she took her dear old Glory and went happily to bed.





VI

Going to School

One morning Taro and Take heard their Father and Mother talking together. They thought the Twins were asleep, but they weren't. The Mother said, "Honored Husband, don't you think it is time Taro and Take went to school?"

"Yes, indeed," the Father said; "they have many things to learn, and they should begin at once. Have you spoken to the teacher yet?"

"I saw him yesterday," the Mother answered. "He said they might enter to-day. I have everything ready."

Taro and Take looked at each other.

"Do you suppose we shall like it?" Take whispered.

"I don't know," Taro whispered back. "I've liked everything so far, and I think going to school must be some fun, too. But of course, if I don't like it, I shall not say a word. A son of the Samurai should never complain, no matter how hard his lot."

"No, of course not," Take answered.

Before they were dressed, the Mother came into their room. "The bath-tub is ready, Taro," she said. "Hop in and get your bath early to-day, for you and Take are to begin school."

The Twins had a hot bath every day, but they usually took it before going to bed. The bath-tub was in a little room by itself. It was shaped a little like a barrel, and it had a stove set right in the side of it to heat the water. Taro went to the bathroom and climbed over the edge of the tub. It was hard to get up because the tub was high. He dropped into the water with a great splash. Take and her Mother heard the splash.

Then they heard something else. They heard screams! "Ow-ow-ow!" shrieked Taro. "Take me out! take me out! I'm boiled!"

The Mother and Take ran as fast as they could to the tub. Taro's head just showed over the edge. His mouth was open, the tears were streaming down his cheeks, and the air was full of "ows." His Mother reached her arm down into the water.

"It isn't so very hot, Taro," she said; "I can bear my hand in it."

"Ow—ow!" said Taro. He didn't even say, "Ow! ow! Honorable Mother!" as one might have thought such a very polite boy would do.



And he tried to get both feet off the bottom of the tub at the same time!

The Mother put some cold water into the tub. Taro stopped screaming.

"Oh, Taro," Take called to him, "you aren't really and

truly boiled, are you?"

"Almost," sniffed Taro; "I'm as red as a red dragon. I think my skin will come off."

"I know you are dreadfully hurt, poor Taro," Take said, "because a son of the Samurai never complains, no matter how hard his lot."

The water was cooler now. Taro's head disappeared below the edge of the tub. He splashed a minute, then he said:—

"I guess a real truly Samurai would scream a little if he were boiled." His words made a big round sound coming out of the tub.

Pretty soon it was Take's turn. She climbed into the tub. She splashed, too, but she didn't scream. Then she stuck her head over the edge of the tub.

"I'm boiled, too," she called to Taro, "but I'm not going to cry."

"Then the water isn't hot," was all Taro said.

When they had finished their baths, they were dressed in clean kimonos. Then they had their breakfast and at seven o'clock they were all ready for school.



Their Mother gave them each a paper umbrella in case of rain. She hung a little brocaded bag, with a jar of rice inside it, on the left arm of each Twin. This was for their luncheon. Then she gave them each a brand-new copy-book and a brand-new soroban. A soroban is a counting-machine.

It is a frame with wires stretched across it and beads hung on the wires. The Twins felt very proud to have sorobans and copy-books.

"Now trot along," the Mother said.

The Twins knew the way. They marched down the street, feeling more grown up than they ever had felt in all their lives. Their Mother watched them from the garden-gate.

When they turned the corner and were out of sight, she went back into the house. She picked up Bot'Chan and hugged him. "Don't grow up yet, dear Sir Baby Boy," she said.

Taro and Take met other little boys and girls, all going to school, too. They all had umbrellas and copy-books and sorobans.

The children got to the school-house before the teacher.

They waited until they heard the clumpty-clump of his wooden clogs. Then all the children stood together in a row. Taro and Take were at the end. The moment the teacher came in, the children bowed very low.

"Ohayo," they called. "Please make your honorable entrance." They drew in their breath with a hissing sound. In Japan this is a polite thing to do. The teacher bowed to the children. Then each child ran to his little cushion on the floor and sat down on it. Taro and Take did not know where to go, because they had not been to school before.

The teacher gave them each a cushion. Then he placed beside each of them a cunning little set of drawers, like a doll's bureau. In the little bureau were India ink and

brushes. The teacher sat down on his cushion before the school.

He told the children where to open their books. Taro and Take couldn't even find the place, but O Kiku San, who sat next, found it for them.



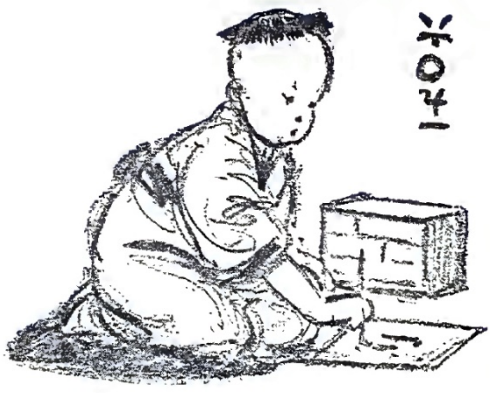
The teacher gave Taro and Take each a little stick. "Now I will tell you the names of these letters," he said, "and when I call the name of each one, you can point to it with the little stick. That will help you to remember it."

He began to read. Taro and Take punched each letter as he called it. They tried so hard to remember that they

punched a hole right through the paper! But you might have punched something, too, if you had thousands of letters to learn! That's what Taro and Take have to do, while you have only twenty-six letters. They were glad when the teacher said, "Now we will learn how to count."

Taro and Take took out their new sorobans. The teacher showed them how to count the beads. They thought it as much fun as a game.

Then they tried to make some letters in their copy-books with a brush. That's the way they write in Japan.



Taro's and Take's letters were very big and queer-looking, and the paper got so wet that the teacher said, "Children, you may all carry your copy-books outdoors and hang them up to dry, and you may eat your rice out of doors."

The children took their copy-books and their bags of rice and ran out. The Twins found a nice shady place to eat their luncheon.

O Kiku San ate her rice with Taro and Take. They had a real picnic.

At half-past three all their lessons were finished, and the Twins ran home. Their Mother was waiting for them on the porch, with Bot'Chan in her arms.

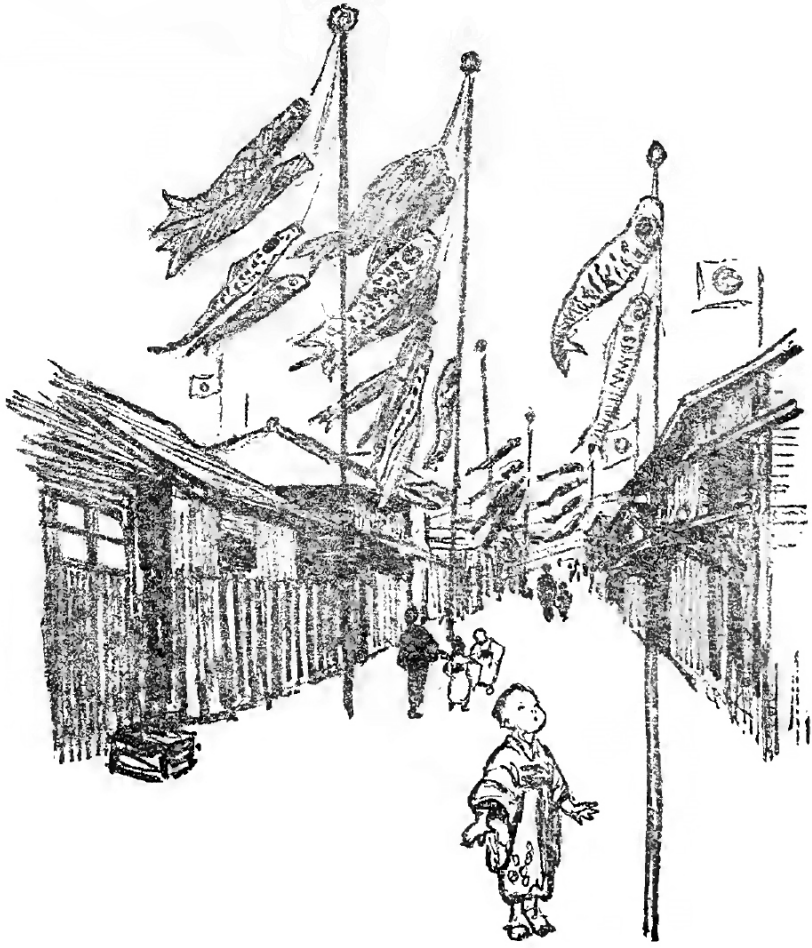
"See what we made for you!" the Twins cried. They gave her the letters they had made that morning.



"You have made them beautifully, for the first time," she said.

She put the blistered papers with the staggery letters away in the cupboard to keep. "I will show them to Father when he comes home," she said.





VII

Taro's Birthday

I wish there was room in this book to tell you about all the good times that Taro and Take have, but they have so many holidays and such good times on every one of them that it would take two books to tell about it all.

They have cherry festivals and wistaria festivals and chrysanthemum festivals when everybody goes to picnics and spends the whole day with the flowers.

On the day of the Lotus Festival they go very early in the morning, before the sun is up, to a pond where the lotus flowers bloom. They go with their teacher and all the children.

When they get to the pond, the teacher says, "Listen!" Every one is still as a mouse. Just as the sun comes up, the lotus flowers open. Pop, pop, pop, they go, like fairy guns! The children love to hear them pop. "The flowers salute the sun," they say.

One of the best days of all is New Year's Day, when all

the boys and their fathers and grandfathers fly kites. And such wonderful kites! The air is full of dragons and boxes and all sorts of queer shapes. Sometimes the dragons have a battle in the air!

But one day I must tell you about, anyway, and that is Taro's birthday!

It isn't only Taro's birthday, you know. All the boys celebrate together. The girls—even if they are your very own twins—don't have a thing to do with it. And it lasts five days! On the first morning Taro woke very early. He was just as excited as Take was on the day of the Festival of Dolls. But Take didn't stay in bed on Taro's birthday. She flew out early, for she wanted to see all the fun, even if she wasn't in it.

First she went to the Kura with Taro and their Father to get out the flags. The boys' birthday is called the Feast of Flags.

They took Bot'Chan with them to the Kura. Take carried him on her back.

"It's Bot'Chan's birthday, too," she said, "so he must go."

In the Kura was a long bamboo pole. The Twins' Father

took the pole and set it up in the street before their house. Then he brought out two great paper fish. They were almost larger than Taro. They had great round mouths and round eyes. A string was fastened to their mouths.

"There's one fish for Taro and one for Bot'Chan," said the Father. "We have two boys in our house."

He tied the fish to the pole. The wind filled the great round mouths and soon away up in the air the two fish were bobbing and blowing about just as if they were alive!

There was a bamboo pole with one or two—and sometimes three or four—fish on it before every house in the street!

"My! how many boys there are in the world!" Take said; "more than I can count!"

The street was as gay as a great flower-garden. There were not only fish flags; there was the flag of Japan, with a great round red disk on it. And there was the flag of the navy, which was a great round red sun like the other, only with red rays around it, and there were banners of all colors waving in the breeze.

"Why are the fish flags all made just like the carp in the

pond at the Temple?" asked Take.

"Because the carp is such a plucky fish," the Father answered. "He isn't a lazy fish that only wants to swim downstream, the easy way. He swims up the rivers and jumps up the falls. That's the way we want our Japanese boys to be. Their lives must be brave and strong, like the carp."



"And clean and bright like the sword, too?" Taro said.

"Yes," said his Father. "I'm glad you remember about the sword."

When the fish flags were bobbing about in the air, the Father and children went back into the house.

There were the steps in the side of the room again, just

where they were when Take had her birthday. And Taro had his dolls, too. They were not like Take's. They were soldier dolls, enough for a whole army. Taro set them up in rows, as if they were marching! There were General dolls, and officers on horseback, and bands. There were even two nurses, following after the procession. There were toy guns, and ever and ever so many flags all in a row.

Taro was so excited he could hardly eat any breakfast! As soon as he had finished, he sprang up from his cushion. He almost upset his table, he was in such a hurry. He put on a play uniform like a soldier. And he had a wooden sword!

"There's going to be a war!" he said to Take.

"Where?" asked Take; "can I see it?"

"It's going to be in the street. I'm the General," said Taro.

"Oh, how I wish I could be a General," cried Take.

But Taro never even heard her. He was already on his way to join his regiment.

In a few minutes Take heard the "rap-a-tap, tap! rap-a-tap, tap!" of a drum. "They're coming! They're coming!"

she called to her Mother and Father. The Mother rolled Bot'Chan on to her back. Take took her Father's hand.



They all ran to the gate to see the procession. The servants came out, too, and last of all Grannie. They gave Grannie the best place to see. Soon around the corner came the procession.

First marched a color-bearer with the big Japanese flag. Then came Taro. He looked very proud and straight, walking all alone at the head of the procession. He was the General because he had a sword!

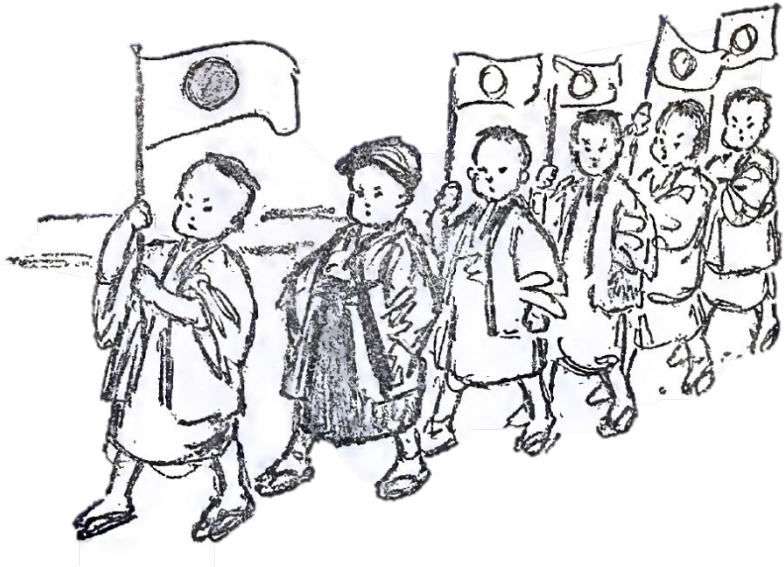
All the boys carried flags. They kept step like little soldiers.

"Oh, doesn't Taro look beautiful?" said Take. She climbed up on the gate-post. She waved a little flag with all her might, but Taro never looked round. He just marched

straight along.

Just then "rub-a-dub-dub" came the sound of another drum. Around the next corner came another army of little boys.

They carried flags, too. They marched straight toward Taro's army.



"Now the war is coming! Now the war is coming!" shouted Take.

All at once Taro's soldiers began to run. The other soldiers ran, too. They ran straight toward each other and tried to get each others' flags.

Take saw Taro wave his sword. "On, soldiers, on!" he shouted.

Then there was a great mix-up of boys and flags. It seemed like a bundle of waving arms and legs and banners. Every boy was shouting at the top of his voice.

Take climbed right on top of the gate-post, she was so excited. She stood up on it and waved her arms!

"Look at that child," cried the Mother. "She'll fall."

Take was dancing for joy.

"There they come! There they come!" she cried.

Her Father reached up and held her still. "Be quiet, grasshopper," he said.

"But Taro is coming! They beat, they beat!" cried Take.

Taro and his army were coming up the street on the run. Nearly every little boy had two flags! The other army was running away as fast as it could go. They had only two banners left.

"Beat the drum!" shouted Taro. The drummer boy began, "rat-a-tat-tat," and the whole victorious army marched down the street and right into Taro's garden!

As he passed his Father and Mother and Grannie and Bot'Chan, Taro saluted. His Father saluted Taro, and every one of the family—Grannie and all—cried "Banzai!

Banzai!" That means the same as hurrah!



Then Take tumbled off the gate-post and raced up to the porch after the soldier. At the porch, the soldiers broke ranks.

The General's Mother ran into the house and brought out sweet rice-cakes and sugared beans. She fed the entire

army. There were six boys in it.

"Fighting makes a soldier very hungry," Taro said.

Then his Mother went into the house and brought out more cakes and more beans.

The boys ate them all.

The army stayed at Taro's house and played with his soldiers and drilled on his porch until lunch-time, when they all went to their own homes.

After luncheon Taro played with his tops. He had two beautiful ones. One was a singing top.

He was spinning the singing top when all of a sudden there was a great noise in the street. He ran to see what was the matter.

There, almost right in front of his own house, was a real show! There was a man and a little boy and a monkey! The monkey had on a kimono. The monkey and the little boy did tricks together. Then the man and the boy did tricks. The man balanced a ladder on his shoulder. The little boy climbed right up the ladder and hung from the top of it by his toes.

Every boy in the street came running to see them. Take

came, too. The little boy, hanging from the top of the ladder, opened a fan and fanned himself! Then he climbed to his feet again and stood on one foot on the top of the ladder. Then he made a bow!

Taro and Take almost stopped breathing, they were so afraid the little boy would fall.

The little boy threw his fan to the monkey. The monkey caught it and fanned himself, while the little boy came down the ladder to the ground, all safe and sound.

The Twins' Mother came out, too. She saw the little boy. She felt sorry for him. She felt sorry for the monkey, too. "Come in and have some rice-cakes," she said.

The man, the boy, and the monkey all came into the garden of the little house. All the other children came, too.

The Mother brought out cakes and tea. Everybody had some. The man and the boy thanked her. They made the monkey thank her, too. He got down on his knees and bowed clear to the ground.

When they had eaten the cakes and drank the tea, the man and the boy said, "Sayonara, Sayonara." The monkey jumped on the man's shoulder, and away they went down

the street, with all the boys following after.



Taro and Take did not go with them, because their Mother said, "It is almost time for supper." They watched the others from their gate. Then they came back and sat down on the top step of the porch.

"I think you've had just as good a time on your birthday as I had on mine," Take said.

"Better," said Taro.

"Taro, we are getting very old, aren't we?" Take went on.

"Yes," said Taro, "we are six now."

"What are you going to be when you are seven or eight years old and grown up?" asked Take.

"Well," said Taro, "I'm not sure, but I think I shall be either a general or a juggler," Taro said. "What are you going to be?"

"There's only one thing I can grow to be," said Take. "If I am very, very good, maybe I'll grow to be a mother-in-law sometime."

Just then they heard their Mother's voice calling them to supper. It was very late for supper—it was really almost night.

The shadows in the little garden were growing long. The birds were chirping sleepily to each other in the wistaria vine. The iris flowers were nodding their purple heads to the little goldfish in the pond. Everything was quiet and still.

The Twins stopped to look at the little garden before

they went in to their supper.

"Good night, pretty world," they said, and waved their hands.

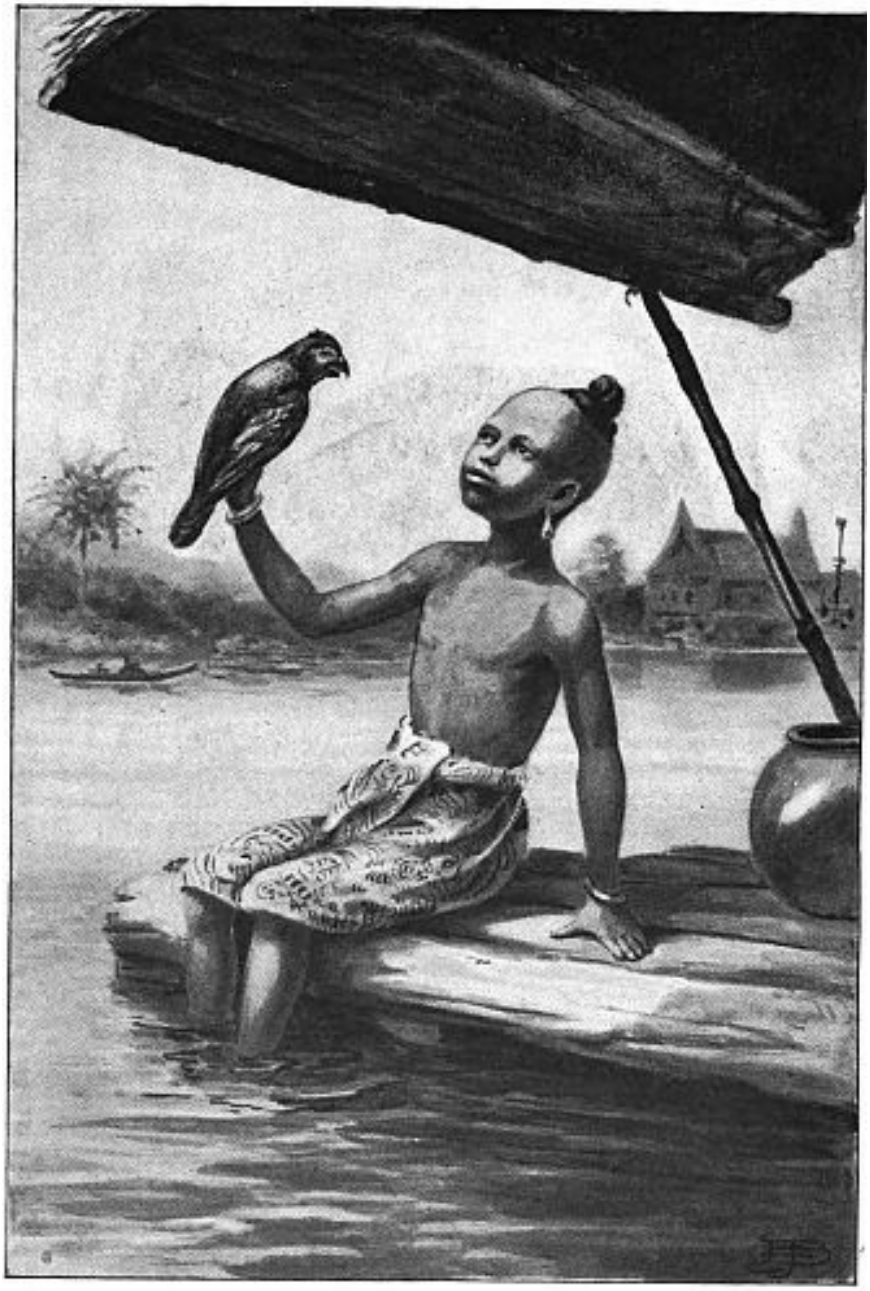
THE END



Our Little Siamese Cousin

Mary Hazelton Wade

Illustrated by L.J. Bridgman



Chin

Preface

Many years ago there came to America two young men who were looked upon as the greatest curiosities ever seen in this country.

They belonged to another race than ours. In fact, they were of two races, for one of their parents was a Chinese, and therefore of the Yellow Race, while the other was a Siamese, belonging to the Brown Race.

These two young men left their home in far-away Siam and crossed the great ocean for the purpose of exhibiting the strange way in which nature had joined them together. A small band of flesh united them from side to side.

Thus it was that from the moment they were born to the day of their death the twin brothers played and worked, ate and slept, walked and rode, at the same time.

Thousands of people became interested in seeing and hearing about these two men. Not only this, but they turned their attention to the home of the brothers, the wonderful land of Siam, with its sacred white elephants and

beautiful temples, its curious customs and strange beliefs.

Last year the young prince of that country, wishing to learn more of the life of the white people, paid a visit to America. He was much interested in all he saw and heard while he was here.

Now let us, in thought, return his visit, and take part in the games and sports of the children of Siam.

We will attend some of their festivals, take a peep into the royal palace, enter the temples, and learn something about the ways and habits of that far-away eastern country.

CHAPTER I

The First Birthday

If you had seen Chin when he was born, you would have thought his skin yellow enough to suit anybody.

But his mother wasn't satisfied, for the baby's nurse was told to rub him with a queer sort of paste from top to toe. This paste was made with saffron and oil, and had a pleasant odour. It made Chin's skin yellower and darker than ever.

It did not seem to trouble him, however, for he closed his big brown eyes and went to sleep before the nurse had finished her work.

After this important thing had been done, the tiny baby was laid in his cradle and covered over. This does not appear very strange until you learn that he was *entirely* covered. Not even the flat little nose was left so the boy could draw in a breath of fresh air.

It is a wonder that he lived, for his home is very near the equator and the weather is extremely warm there all the

time. But he did live, and grew stronger and healthier every day. Each morning he was rubbed afresh and stowed away under the covers of his crib.

He had one comfort, although he did not realize it. The mosquitoes could not reach him, and that was a greater blessing than you can, perhaps, imagine. There are millions of these insects in Siam—yes, billions, trillions—and the people of that country are not willing to kill one of them!

"Destroy the life of a living creature! It is a dreadful idea," Chin's mother would exclaim. "Why, it is against the laws of our religion. I could never think of doing such a thing, even if my darling boy's face were covered with bites."

If she were to see one of Chin's American cousins killing a fly or a spider, she would have a very sad opinion of him.

She was only fourteen years old when Chin was born. People in our country might still call her a little girl, yet she kept house for her husband, and cooked and sewed and spun, and watched over her new baby with the most loving care.

The father was only a little older than the mother. He

was so glad that his first baby was a boy that he hardly knew what to do. He was quite poor and had very little money, but he said:

"I am going to celebrate as well as I can. Rich people have grand parties and entertainments at such times. I will hire some actors to give a little show, at any rate."

He invited his friends, who were hardly more than boys themselves, to come to the show. The actors dressed themselves up in queer costumes, and went through with a play that was quite clever and witty. Every one laughed a great deal, and when it was over the guests told the new father they had enjoyed themselves very much.

After a few months, Chin had grown strong enough to walk alone. He did not need to be covered and hidden away any longer. His straight black hair was shaved off, with the exception of a round spot on the top of his head, and he was allowed to do as he pleased after his morning bath in the river was over.

The bath did not last long, and was very pleasant and comfortable. There was no rubbing afterward with towels, for the hot sunshine did the drying in a few moments.

Nor was there any dressing to be done, for the brown baby was left to toddle about in the suit Dame Nature had given him. It was all he could possibly desire, for clothing is never needed in Siam to keep one from catching cold.

Chin's mother herself wears only a wide strip of printed cloth fastened around her waist and hanging down to the knees. Sometimes, but not always, she has a long scarf draped across her breast and over one shoulder.

There are no shoes on her little feet, nor is there a hat on her head except in the hottest sunshine. There are many ornaments shining on her dark skin, even though she is not rich; and baby Chin did not have his toilet made till a silver bracelet had been fastened on his arms, and rings placed on his fingers.

After a year or two the boy's ears were bored so that gilt, pear-shaped earrings could be worn there. Soon after that a kind relative made him a present of silver anklets, and then he felt very much dressed indeed. Few boys as poor as he could boast of as much jewelry.

Chin was born on the river Meinam in a house-boat. There was nothing strange about that, for the neighbours

and friends of the family had homes like his. It was cool and pleasant to live on the water. It was convenient when one wished to take a bath, and it was easy for the children to learn to swim so near home.

Yes, there were many reasons why Chin's parents preferred to make their home on the water. Perhaps the strongest one of all was that they did not have to pay any rent for the space taken up by the boat. A piece of land would have cost money. Then, again, if they should not like their neighbours, they could very easily move to a new place on the river.

Chin's father built the house, or the boat, just before he was married. He had some help from his friends, but it was not such hard work that he could not have done it all alone.

A big raft of bamboo was first made. This served as the floating platform on which the house should stand. The framework of the little home was also made of bamboo, which could be got from the woods not far away, and was very light and easy to handle.

How should the roof be protected from the heavy rains that fell during a portion of the year? That could be easily

managed by getting quantities of the leaves of the atap palm-tree for thatching. These would make a thick, close covering, and would keep out the storms for a long time if they were carefully cemented with mud.

The broad, overhanging eaves would give shade to baby Chin when he was old enough to play in the outdoor air, and yet not strong enough to bear the burning sunshine.

Of course, there were many windows in the little house, you would think. There were openings in the walls in the shape of windows, certainly, but they were openings only, for they were not filled with glass, nor any other transparent substance. Chin's father would say:

"We must have all the air we can get. At night-time, when the rain falls heavily, we can have shutters on the windows. They are easily taken down whenever we wish."

Why, the whole front of the house was made so it could be opened up to the air and sunshine, as well as the view of passers-by. The family have few secrets, and do not mind letting others see how they keep house.

At this very moment, perhaps, Chin's mother is sitting on the edge of the bamboo platform, washing her feet in the

river; his grandmother may be there preparing the vegetables for dinner; or, possibly, Chin himself is cleaning his teeth with a stick of some soft wood.

The boy's mother has taught him to be very careful of his teeth. It is a mark of beauty with her people to have them well *blacked*. They will tell you, "Any dog can have white teeth." But there is nothing they admire more than bright red gums showing plainly with two rows of even, dark-coloured teeth.

How do they make their gums such a fiery red? It is caused by chewing a substance called betel, obtained from a beautiful kind of palm-tree very common in Siam.

Many of Chin's brown cousins chew betel, as well as the people of his own land. It is even put in the mouths of babies. Betel-chewing grows to be such a habit with them that they become unhappy and uncomfortable if long without it. Even now, although Chin is only ten years old, he would say:

"I can go without food for a long time, if need be, but I must have my betel."

Let us go back to the boy's home.

If we should count the windows, we should find their number to be uneven. The Siamese believe something terrible would be sure to happen if this were not so. They seem to think "There is luck in odd numbers," for not only the steps leading to the houses, but the stairs leading from one floor to another must be carefully counted and made uneven.

There are three rooms in Chin's home. First, there is the sitting-room, where friends are received, although there is much less visiting done in Siam than in many other countries. It took little time and money to furnish the room. There are no pictures or ornaments here. There are two or three mats on which one may sit, and there is a tray filled with betel from which every one is invited to help himself.

If callers should arrive and the betel were not offered to them, they would feel insulted and would go away with the intention of never coming to that house again.

The second room is that set apart for sleeping. Very little furniture is found here, as well, for all that Chin's father had to prepare was a number of long, narrow mattresses, stuffed with tree-cotton. Some pillows were

made in the shape of huge bricks. They were also packed full of tree-cotton, and were stiff, uncomfortable-looking things; but Chin and his parents like them, so we should certainly not find fault.

You remember there are great numbers of mosquitoes in the country. How do they manage to sleep when the air around them is filled with the buzzing, troublesome creatures? Coarse cotton curtains hang from the roof down over the beds. While these keep the mosquitoes away from the sleepers, they also keep out the air, so it is really a wonder that one can rest in any comfort.

When Chin is in the house during the day, he spends most of his time in the kitchen, which is also the eating-room. But, dear me! it is a smoky place, for the boy's father never thought of building a chimney.

The cooking is done over a little charcoal stove and, as the flames rise, the smoke rises, too, and settles on the ceiling and walls. Chin has had many good meals cooked over the little fire, and eaten as the family squatted around the tiny table.

Just think! It stands only four inches above the floor,

and is not large enough to hold many dishes. That does not matter, for each one has his own rice-bowl on the floor in front of him. Chin has been brought up so that he is satisfied with one or two things at a time. The little table is quite large enough to hold the dish of curried fish or meat from which each one helps himself.

Chin is a very nice boy, yet I shall have to confess that he usually eats with his fingers! Yes, not only he, but his father and mother and sister, and even grandmother, do the same thing. One after another helps himself from the same dish and thinks nothing of it.

People who are a little richer use pretty spoons of mother-of-pearl; Chin's mother owns one of these useful articles herself, but of course, that won't serve for five persons, so it is seldom seen on the table. As for knives and forks, she never even saw any.

One of her friends once watched a stranger from across the great ocean eating with these strange things. She laughed quietly when she told of it, and said:

"It must take a long, long time before one can get used to them. They are very clumsy."

As Chin squats at his dinner he can look down through the split bamboos and see the water of the river beneath the house. It does not matter if he drops some crumbs or grains of rice. They can be easily pushed through the cracks, when down they will fall into the water to be seized by some waiting fish.

The good woman doesn't even own a broom. Her house-cleaning is done in the easiest way possible. Anything that is no longer useful is thrown into the river, while the dirt is simply pushed between the wide cracks of the floor.

The dish-washing is a simple matter, too. Each one has his own rice-bowl, and after the meal is over it is his duty to clean it and then turn it upside down in some corner of the kitchen. It is left there to drain until it is needed again.

Chin's mother cooks such delicious rice that he wonders any one can live without it. He needs no bread when he can have that, for it is a feast in itself. When poured out, it looks like a mountain of snow; each grain is whole and separate from the others.

It is cooked in an earthen pot with the greatest care,

and, when it is done, never fails to look beautiful and delicate. Chin's mother would think herself a very poor housekeeper if she should make a mistake in preparing the rice.

When a dish of rat or bat stew is added to the meal, Chin feels that there is nothing more in the world that he could wish. He knows that the rich people in the city often have feasts where twenty or thirty different dainties are served. But he does not envy them. A person can taste only one thing at a time, and nothing can be better than a stew with plenty of curry and vegetables to flavour it. We don't need to think of the rats and bats if it is an unpleasant idea.

As for Chin, if he had seen you shudder when they were spoken of, he could not have imagined what was the matter.

CHAPTER II

Little Chie Lo

"Chie Lo! Chie Lo! come out quickly, or you won't see it before it passes," called Chin to his sister.

She was playing with her dolls in the sitting-room, but when she heard Chin calling she put them down and came out on the platform where her brother sat dangling his feet in the water and holding his pet parrot.

"Chie Lo! Chie Lo!" screamed the parrot, when she appeared. He was a bright-looking bird with a shining coat of green feathers and a red tuft on his head. He must have loved Chie Lo, for he reached up for her to pat him as she squatted beside her brother.

"Look, look," said Chin, "isn't that grand?"

The boy pointed to a beautiful boat moving rapidly down the river.

"It is the king's, you know," he whispered. "Do you see him there under the canopy, with his children around him?"

"Yes, yes, Chin, but don't talk; I just want to look."

It was no wonder that Chie Lo wished to keep still, for it was a wonderful sight. The boat was shaped like a huge dragon, whose carved head, with its fierce eyes, could be seen reaching out from the high bow. The stern was made in the shape of the monster's tail. The sides of the royal barge were covered with gilded scales, inlaid with pearls, and these scales shone and sparkled in the sunlight.

A hundred men dressed in red were rowing the splendid boat, and they must have had great training, for they kept together in perfect time.

"Isn't the canopy over the king the loveliest thing you ever saw?" said Chin, who could not keep still. "It is made of cloth-of-gold, and so are the curtains. Look at the gold embroidery on the king's coat. Oh, Chie Lo, it doesn't seem as though he could be like us at all. I feel as though he must be a god.

"The young prince who took the long journey across the ocean last year is there with him," Chin went on. "Father told me that he visited strange lands where all the people have skins as white as pearls, and that he has seen many

wonderful sights. But, Chie Lo, there is nothing in the world grander than our king and his royal boat, I'm sure."

As the barge drew nearer, the children threw themselves face downward on the platform until it had passed down the river. It was their way of showing honour to the ruler of the land.

In the olden times all who came into the presence of the king, did so in one way only. They *crawled*. Even his own little children were obliged to do this. No one dared to stand in his presence.

But such things have been changed now. The king loves his people and has grown wiser since he has learned the ways of other countries. When he was a little boy, an English lady was his teacher for a long time, and she taught him much that other Kings of Siam had never known.

It is partly because of this that he is the best ruler Chin's people have ever had.

The royal barge was decorated with beautiful white and yellow umbrellas, many stories high. There was also a huge jeweled fan, such as no boat was allowed to carry except the king's.

Other dragon-shaped boats followed the royal barge, but they were smaller and less beautiful. They were the king's guard-boats, and moved along in pairs.

Many other interesting sights could be seen on the river this morning. Vessels were just arriving from distant lands, while here and there Chinese junks were scattered along the shores. Chin and his sister can always tell such boats from any others. An eye is always painted on the bow.

A Chinaman who was once asked why he had the eye there, answered, "If no have eye, how can see?"

It is so much pleasanter outside, it is no wonder that Chin and his sister do not spend much time indoors.

After the royal procession had passed out of sight, Chie Lo went into the house and brought out her family of dolls. Of course they did not look like American dolls; you wouldn't expect it.

Some of them were of baked mud and wore no clothes. Others were of stuffed cotton and made one think of the rag dolls of Chie Lo's white cousins. The father and mother dolls were dressed in strips of cloth wound around their bodies, just like the real grown-up people of Siam,



Chin’s Home

but the baby dolls had no more clothes than the children of the country.

Chie Lo talked to her dolls and sang queer little songs to them. She "made believe" they were eating, just as other little girls play, far away across the great ocean. Then she kissed them and put them to bed on tiny mattresses under the shady eaves of the house.

Perhaps you wouldn't have known that Chie Lo was kissing them, however, for the fashions of Siam are quite different from those of our country. She simply touched the dolls' noses with her own little flat one and drew in a long breath each time she did so. That was her way of showing her love—gentle little Chie Lo.

Chin didn't laugh, of course. He was used to seeing his sister playing with her dolls, and as for the kissing, that was the only way of doing it that he knew himself.

"Chie Lo, I saw some beautiful dolls in a store yesterday," he said, as he stopped working for a minute. He was making a new shuttlecock for a game with his boy friends the next day.

"What kind were they, Chin?" asked his sister.

"They were lovely wooden ones. Only rich children could buy them, for they cost a great deal. I wish I could get one for you, Chie Lo, but you know I haven't any money."

"What else did you see, Chin?"

"There were doll-temples in the store, and boats filled with sailors, and lovely ivory furniture for the doll-houses. You must see the things yourself."

Chie Lo went on with her play. She finished putting her own toy house in order. It was one Chin had made for her. It looked like her own home—it stood on a bamboo platform, it had a high, slanting roof, covered with palm leaves, and there were three rooms inside. Chin was a good boy to make it. All brothers were not as kind as he.

"Yes, I should like to see all those things," Chie Lo answered, after awhile. "But I am happy here with my own toys. I must row up the river to-morrow and sell some fruit for father. I won't have any time for play then."

"Come to dinner, children," called their mother. "Chin, take this jug and get some fresh water before you come in."

She handed a copper jug to Chin. He quickly filled it by reaching over the platform, and followed his sister into the

kitchen a moment later.

Every one was thirsty, and the jug was passed from one to another for each to help himself. There were no tumblers nor cups. Chin had made small dishes for his mother by cutting cocoanuts in halves and scooping out the delicious cream from the inside; but they did not use them for drinking the water.

Nor did they put their lips to the jug. Each one cleverly twisted a palm leaf into the shape of a funnel and received the water through this. It was done more quickly than I can tell you about it.

Chin and his sister thought it was a fine dinner. The evening dews were falling, and a gentle breeze came floating down the river. The terrible heat of the day was over and it was the very time to enjoy eating.

In the first place, there was the dish of steaming rice. There was also a sort of stew made of meat chopped very fine and seasoned with red pepper. If you had tasted it, you would probably have cried:

"Oh dear, my mouth is burnt; give me a drink of water at once."

But Chin and Chie Lo thought it very nice indeed, and not a bit too hot.

"Isn't this pickled turnip fine?" said Chin's mother. "I bought it this morning from a passing store."

What could she mean by these words? It was a very common thing for these little brown cousins to see not only houses but stores moving past them down the river. The storekeepers were always ready to stop and sell their goods to any one who wished them.

Chin's mother never made bread, nor pies, nor cake, nor puddings. She bought most of the vegetables already cooked from the floating stores, so you can see she had quite an easy time in preparing her meals.

But to-day, after the rice and stew had been cooked, she laid bananas to roast in the hot coals, and these were now taken out and handed to her family as they squatted on the mats around the table.

If the children had no bread with their dinner, they ought to have had milk, you think. But they never drink it. The cows of Siam are not milked at all, and so the rich children of the country are brought up in the same way as

Chin and his sister.

When the meal was finished, Chie Lo did not forget that her dear pussy must still be fed. It was an odd-looking little creature. Although it was a grown-up cat, yet its eyes were as blue as those of a week-old American kitten. It had a funny little tail twisted up into a knot. It was better off than many other cats of Siam, however, who go about with none at all.

CHAPTER III

Night on the River

After Chie Lo had watched her pussy eat all the fish she could possibly wish, the children went outdoors again to sit in the cool evening air.

The night was already pitch-dark, for there was no moon, and there is no long twilight in the tropics at any season of the year.

But what a beautiful sight now met the children's eyes! It seemed almost like fairy-land, there were so many lights to be seen in every direction.

Their home stood just below the great city of Bangkok, and along the shores of the river the houses and palaces and temples could be seen almost as plainly as in the daytime. Floating theatres were passing by, each one lighted with numbers of coloured paper lanterns.

"Look! look!" cried Chin. "There are some actors giving a show outside. They want to tempt people to stop and come in to the play. See the beautiful pointed finger-nails

on that one. What fine care he must take of them!"

It is no wonder Chin noticed the man's finger-nails, for they were at least five inches long.

"See the wings on the other actor, Chin," said his sister. "I suppose he represents some strange being who does wonderful deeds. I should like to go to the play. Look! there is a party of people who are going on board of the theatre."

The children now turned their eyes toward the small boat of a Chinaman who was calling aloud to the passers-by: "Come here and buy chouchou; it is a fine dish, indeed."

A moment afterward he was kept so busy that he had no time to call. His canoe was fairly surrounded by other boats, for many people were eager to taste the delicious soup he served from an odd little stove in front of him.

It is hard to tell how chouchou is made. Many kinds of meat and all sorts of vegetables are boiled down to jelly and seasoned with salt and pepper. He must have had a good recipe, for every one that tasted his chouchou seemed to like it and want more.

"Listen to the music, Chie Lo," said her brother, as he turned longingly away from the chouchou seller.

It seemed more like *noise* than music. Two men stood on a bamboo raft causing loud, wailing sounds to come from some queer reed instruments. A third player was making the loudest noise of all. He sat in the middle of a musical wheel, as it is called. This wheel is made of metal cups of different sizes placed next each other in a circle.

It seems strange that Chin and his sister should enjoy such "music," and stranger still that the grown-up people should also like it; but they seemed to do so. Were they doing it for their own pleasure? Oh no, they had dainties to sell as well as the chouchou maker, and this was their way of attracting attention.

New sights could be seen constantly. Here were the beautifully-trimmed boats of the rich people taking a ride for pleasure after the heat of the day. There were the canoes of the poor, who were also out to enjoy the sights, for Bangkok is a city built upon the water.

The river Meinam flows through its very centre. The name of the river means "Mother of Waters," just as the name of our own Mississippi means "The Father of Waters." It is well named, for many canals reach out from

it in different directions.

If a person is going to a temple to worship, if he has shopping to do, or a visit to make, he does not take a car or carriage, nor does he often walk. He steps into a boat, and after a pleasant sail or row, he finds himself at his journey's end.

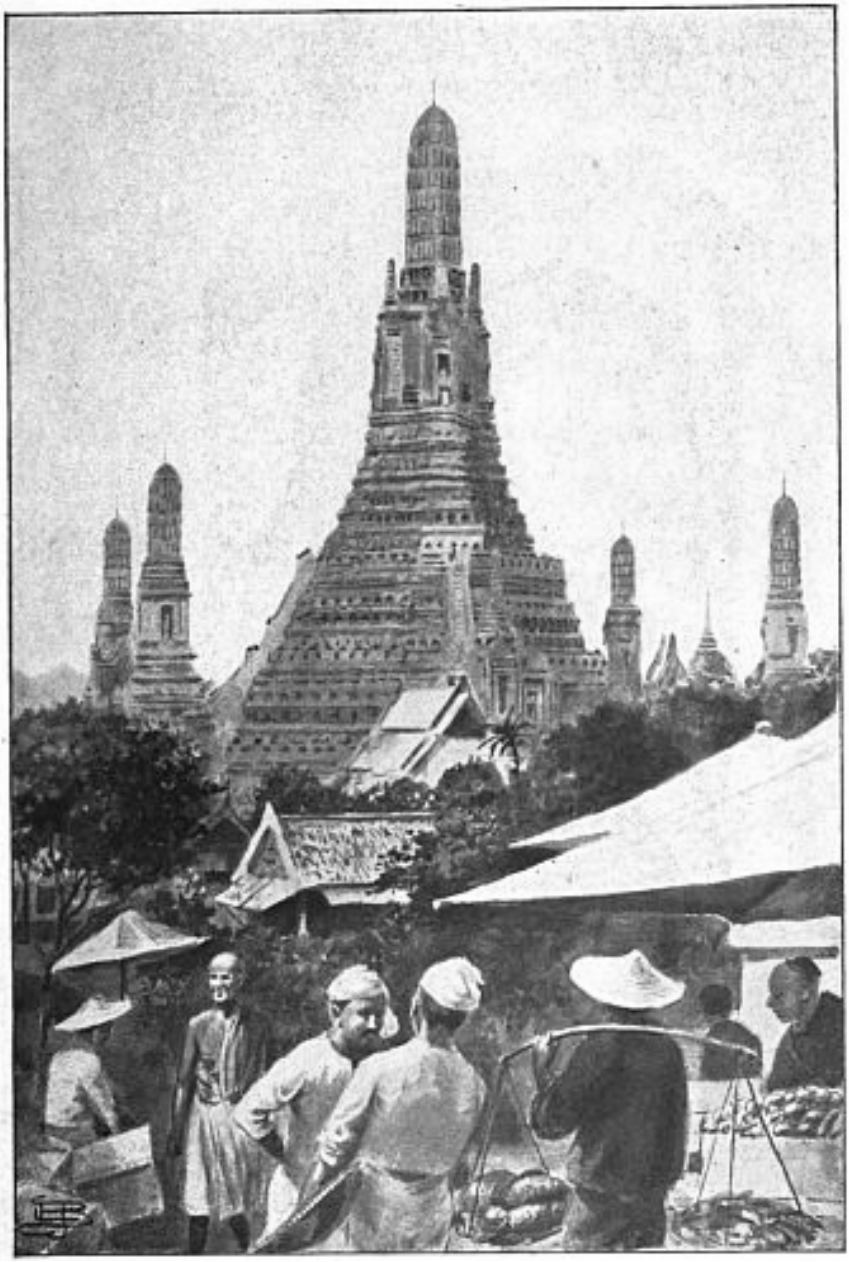
"Let's go down the river before we go to bed," said Chin, who had grown tired of sitting still.

He stepped from the platform into his own little canoe and Chie Lo followed him.

The children looked very much alike. Their faces were of the same shape, their eyes were of the same colour, and the two little round heads were shaved in exactly the same way. A tuft of hair had been left on the top of each and was coiled into a knot.

When Chin grew a little older there would be a great celebration over the shaving of his tuft. It would mark his "coming of age," but that would not be for two or three years yet. He was only eleven years old now and was left to do much as he pleased.

The little canoe made its way in and out among the big



The Great Temple at Bangkok

boats and soon left the city behind. Tall palm-trees lined the banks of the river and waved gently in the evening breeze.

Suddenly there was a loud sound, like a big drum, in the water directly under the boat. "Tom, tom! Tom, tom!" It startled Chie Lo, and she exclaimed:

"What is it, Chin? What is it?"

"It must be a drum-fish, Chie Lo. Nothing else could make a sound like that."

"Of course, Chin. It was all so quiet, and then the sound was so sudden, I didn't think for a moment what it could be."

They had often seen this ugly-looking fish, which is never eaten by the people of their country. It is able to make a loud noise by means of a sort of bladder under its throat, and it is well called the "drum-fish."

The children still went onward, keeping time with their sculls. Suddenly the air around them blazed with countless lights, and a moment afterward the darkness seemed blacker than ever. Then, again the lights appeared, only to be lost as suddenly, while Chin and his sister held their oars

and watched.

"Aren't they lovely?" said Chie Lo. "I never get tired of looking at the fireflies."

It is no wonder she thought so. The fireflies of Siam are not only very large and brilliant, but they are found in great numbers. And, strange to say, they seem fond of gathering together on certain kinds of trees only. There they send forth their light and again withdraw it at exactly the same moment. It seems as though they must be under the orders of some leader. How else do they keep together?

"I can hear the trumpeter beetle calling along the shore," said Chin, as the boat floated about. "He makes a big noise for his size, and takes his part in the song of the night. There must be hundreds of lizards singing up there among the bushes, too, and I don't know what else."

"I suppose the parrots are asleep in the tree-tops by this time, as well as the monkeys. Don't you love to go about in the woods, Chin?"

"It is almost the best fun in the world, I think. Oh, Chie Lo, I saw something the other day I didn't tell you about. You made me think of it when you spoke of the monkeys.

Father and I had gone a long way up the river in the canoe to get wild bananas. We had just turned to come home when I saw a crocodile ahead of us, lying close to the shore. His wicked mouth was wide open and his eyes were glittering.

"All at once I saw what was the matter. A chain of monkeys was hanging from a tree-top above him. They were having sport with the monster. The lowest monkey would suddenly strike out with his paw and touch the crocodile's head when he was off his guard. Then the whole chain of monkeys would swing away as quick as a flash, and the crocodile would snap too late.

"Oh, he did get so angry after awhile, it made me laugh, Chie Lo. The monkeys grew bolder after awhile, and chattered more and more loudly.

"Then the crocodile began to play a game himself. He shut his eyes and pretended to be asleep. Down swung the monkeys, straight over his head. His jaws opened suddenly in time to seize the little fellow who had been teasing him. That was the last of the silly little monkey, whose brothers and sisters fled up into the tree-tops as fast as they could

go. I didn't see them again, but we could hear them crying and wailing as long as we stayed near the place."

"I wish I had been there," sighed Chie Lo. "It must have made you laugh to watch the monkeys before they were caught. But they are easily scared. I shouldn't be afraid of monkeys anywhere."

Chin smiled when his sister said these words.

"If there were enough monkeys together, Chie Lo, and if they were all angry and chasing you, I don't think you would exactly enjoy it.

"Father told me of a time when he was off with a party of men in a deep forest. They caught a baby monkey, and one of the men was going to bring it home. It made the mother wild to have her child taken from her. She raised a loud cry and started after the men. Her friends and relatives joined her, crying and screaming.

"But this was not all, for every other monkey in the forest seemed to get the idea of battle. On they came by the hundreds and the thousands. Do you think those men weren't scared? They hurried along as fast as they could, stumbling over bushes and floundering in the mud. They

were only too glad to reach the bank of the river, where they jumped into the canoes and paddled quickly away. The monkeys crowded on the shore and screamed at them. I wish I could have seen them."

Chin lay back and laughed as he finished the story.

"We mustn't stop to talk any more, for it is getting late," said Chie Lo. "But I love to hear you tell these stories, Chin. I hope you will remember some more to-morrow night. Now we must paddle home as fast as we can go."

CHAPTER IV

Work and Play

The next morning the children were awakened early by the cawing of large flocks of crows. These noisy birds were leaving their resting-places in the trees near by, and starting out to search for breakfast in the fields and gardens of the country.

Chie Lo and her brother jumped out of bed, and a moment afterward were taking a refreshing swim in the waters of the river. The water felt cool and pleasant before the hot sunshine had warmed it.

"Come to breakfast," called their mother, as they were in the midst of a game of chase around the platform. "Come and eat the fine hoppers I have just bought from the baker."

The children did not need to be called twice, for they loved the delicious cakes made of rice flour and cocoanut milk. The breakfast was soon eaten, and then Chin and his sister made haste to load Chie Lo's boat with the fruit she must sell on the river.

The mangosteens were placed in the first pile. They would surely be sold, because they were not only beautiful to look at, but fragrant to smell and delicious to taste. You may look for them in many parts of the world, but you will fail to find them unless you visit Chin and Chie Lo in their own country, or go to the islands near by.

The rind is of a brownish purple that changes its tints in the sunlight. Cut the fruit carefully in halves and you will find a creamy, white pulp, with a dark-red rim.

"They look too good to eat," you say. But if you have once tasted them, you will long for more.

Chin and his sister are very fond of mangosteens, and so is nearly every person who has the pleasure of eating them.

But Chie Lo likes the durions better still. When she sorted the boat-load this morning, she was very careful to place this fruit so it should not touch any other kind. What an odour came from it! Ugh! It makes one think of bad eggs and everything else unpleasant.

But people who stop to-day to buy from the little girl will not consider that. If they have lived in the country for only a short time, they have grown to think of it as the finest of

all fruits.

Picture the nicest things you have ever eaten—walnuts, and cream and strawberries, and a dozen other delicious things—they are all mingled together in the flavour of the durion.

Besides the durions and the mangosteens, there were great luscious oranges, noble pineapples, mangoes and bananas, breadfruit and sour-sops. Chie Lo would certainly have no trouble in selling her goods.

When she had rowed away from the house, Chin went inside and got his shuttlecock. He must find his boy friends and have a game before the day grew too hot. You mustn't blame him for letting his sister work while he played. It is the way of his people, and the idea never entered his head that girls should have, at least, as easy a life as boys. Yet this cousin of ours is gentle and good-natured and loving.

An hour after Chie Lo had gone away, Chin and his friends were having a lively game in the shade of some tall palm-trees, near the bank of the river. It was great sport. The shuttlecock was made of bamboo and was very light and easy to toss. But it took great skill to keep it moving

through the air for ten minutes at a time. The boys did not once touch it with their hands. As it came bounding toward Chin, he held the sole of his foot to receive it, and kicked it off in another direction. Perhaps the next boy struck at it with his heel, and the next with the side of his ankle or his knee. Forward and back it flew from one to another.

These naked boys of Siam were wonderfully graceful in their play. They must have spent many days of their short lives in gaining such skill as this.

There was little noise about it. There are places in the world where children think they are not having much fun unless there is a good deal of shouting and yelling. Siam is not such a country, and Chin is not that kind of a boy. He has many good times and many pleasures, although he enjoys them in a quiet manner.

How was Chie Lo getting along with her load of fruit this morning? She paddled down the river among the vessels which had come to anchor there.

"Fine oranges! Ripe durions!" her sweet voice called. And the people on the decks of the English steamers and the queer Chinese boats looked down at the little girl in her

canoe.

Many of them smiled at the tiny fruit-seller, and beckoned to her to bring some of her fruit on board.

By noontime her wares were all sold and Chie Lo started homeward with a bag of odd-looking coins to give her father. It was very hot and the sunlight was so bright as it sparkled on the river that the little girl kept shutting her eyes.

All at once she felt a tremendous thump and the next moment she found herself far down under the surface of the water. The boat had been overturned and was bobbing around over her head.

Do you suppose she tried to scream, or that she lost her senses from fright? Certainly not. As soon as she got her breath, she began to swim with one arm; with the other she reached out for the boat and quickly righted it.

After half a dozen strokes, she was able to spring into the canoe, and was soon paddling homeward as if nothing had happened.

What had caused her boat to upset? A passing fisherman had carelessly run into her. The accident did not

seem to worry him, however. He did not even stop to see if Chie Lo needed help, but kept straight on his way. He did not mean to be unkind. He simply did not think there was any danger to the little girl. And there was none, for swimming is as natural as walking to the children of Siam, who have no fear of the water.

All that Chie Lo thought of was her precious coins, and those were safe in the little bag hanging around her neck. The next day would be a holiday and she knew her father would wish the money to spend.

CHAPTER V

New Year's

It was the 27th of March, but to Chin and his sister it was the first day of a new year.

They woke up happy and smiling, for they would have much fun for three whole days. It is all very well for some people to be satisfied with a festival which lasts only twelve hours, but it is not so with the Siamese. They think they cannot do justice to such a joyful time unless they frolic and feast three times as long as that, at least.

On the first day the children must go to the temple and carry offerings. This duty should certainly not be forgotten. But before they left home that morning they helped their mother give dishes of rice to the yellow-robed priests who rowed slowly down the river as the sun was rising.

These priests in their long yellow gowns looked alike. Each one held before him a begging-bowl. He did not ask for food or money. It was the duty of the people to feed him and give what was needed to keep him from want.

This was what Chin and those of his country believed. And so, when each night was over, the priests left their cells and entered their boats. They passed along the river and through the canals. Some people gave to one, and some to another; some gave money, and some, food. But each one thought as he gave, "I am gaining merit by this deed of kindness." And he felt better for doing so.

When the priests had passed along, Chin and his sister began to think of their friends. They had presents of sweetmeats for them. They had saved all their spare coins for many days to buy them. These sweetmeats looked very tempting as they divided them up and placed them in tiny baskets they had woven out of grasses.

Some of them were made of sugar and cocoanut. Others were rich with glutinous rice and peanuts. Their friends would be delighted with their gifts.

Before the day was over, Chin and Chie Lo had received many presents themselves, for the poorest people in the country manage to remember the New Year's festival.

The day was noisier than usual. The children laughed and shouted more than Siamese children commonly do.

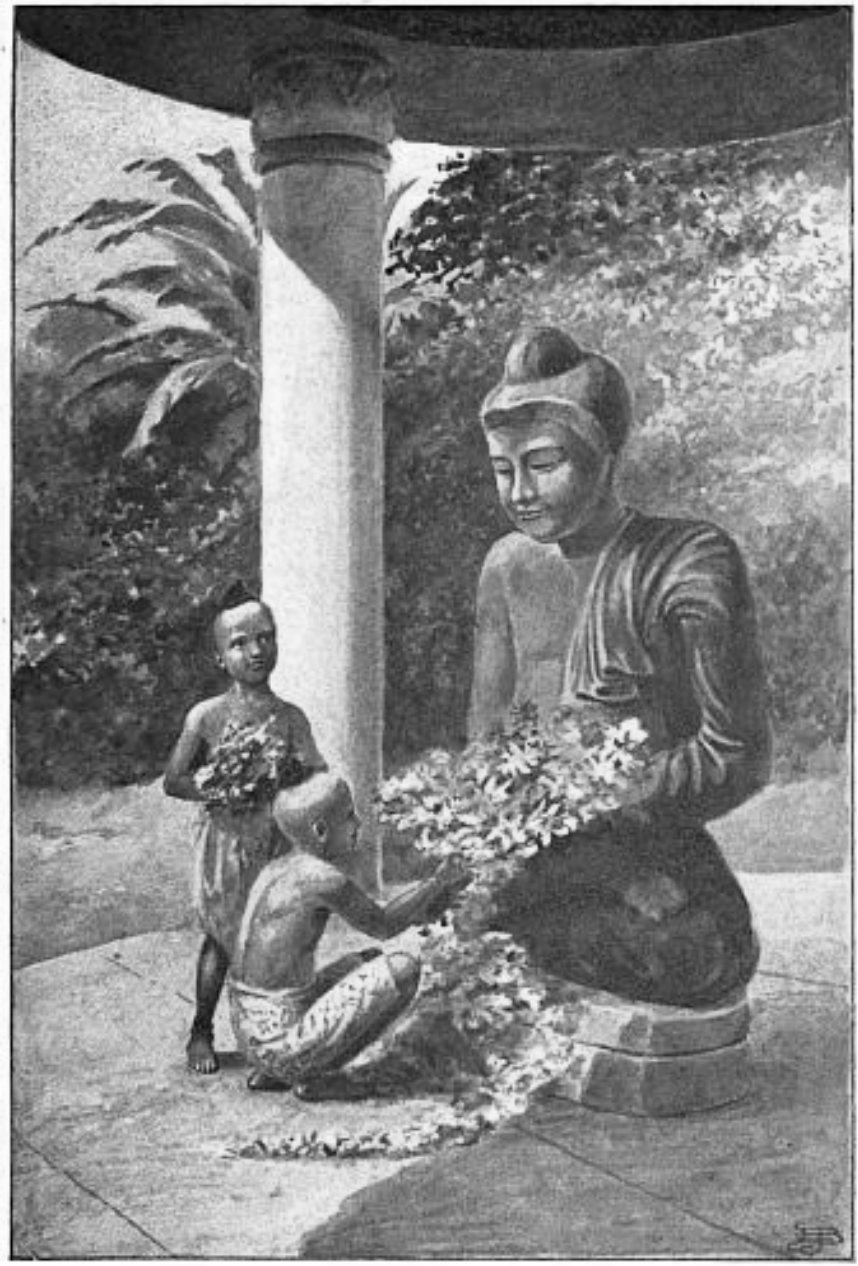
They danced and they sang. They went into the country and gathered flowers. They made wreaths and garlands. They carried some of their flowers to the statue of Buddha and placed them in the open palms of their saint.

They played tricks on each other. Chin and Chie Lo were both caught by their playmates before the day was over and their faces blackened, and then they were shoved into the river. But they took the joke with perfect good nature, and laughed over it as merrily as their friends.

The best sport of the day was with their dear old grandmother. As she sat on the platform by the water's edge, Chin came up suddenly and dashed water all over her. After that, he sprinkled her with perfume and a sweet-smelling powder.

But this was not all, for he ran into the house and brought her out a new waist-cloth and a scarf to throw over her old shoulders. At the same time Chie Lo pressed two silver coins into her hand, and shouted with delight at the smile on the dear grandmother's face.

Without doubt the New Year's festival was very merry. Best of all, the children were allowed to do just as they



"They carried some of their flowers to
the statue of Buddha."

pleased for the three long, happy days. It is no wonder they were sorry when it was over.

"It is even better than the Swing Days," Chie Lo said to her brother, as they settled themselves for a good night's rest.

"Yes, I think so, too, yet we have a great deal of fun then," answered her brother, sleepily.

Girls never take part in the exercises of the Swing Days, but Chin had been training for two or three years to try his skill when he should be a little older.

A part of the city is set aside for the entertainment, and it is there that the swings are set up on high poles. A short distance away stands another pole marked with a waving banner. Just below this banner hangs a purse filled with gold.

Each person who enters the swing is allowed to work it back and forth till he brings himself near the precious purse. He has one chance given him to reach out and seize it in his mouth. If he succeeds, it is his to keep, and he goes down to the ground on a rope ladder by the side of the pole, while the bystanders greet him with shouts and cheers.

If he fails, however, he is obliged to jump from the swing and slide down to the ground on the pole, while every one joins in a laugh at his awkwardness.

On Swing Days there are many processions through the streets. Banners and flags are waving everywhere, no work is done, and every one is gaily dressed and full of joy.

CHAPTER VI

White Elephants

"I never rode on an elephant in my life," said Chie Lo with a sigh.

Chin had just been telling her of a trip he had made with his father. He had gone into the teak forest, and had travelled every bit of the way on an elephant.

"Perhaps you wouldn't like it if you had a chance to try," answered her brother. "You would feel safe enough, and the howdah is big enough for you to lie down in and take a nap. But the elephant swings from side to side as he walks, and the motion might make you feel sick until you get used to it."

"It looks comfortable, anyway," said Chie Lo. "A howdah looks like a tiny house, and the bamboo top keeps off the hot sun nicely. Doesn't it ever slip on the elephant's back, Chin?"

"Of course not. It is fastened behind by a crupper that goes under the tail, while it is held in front by a band of

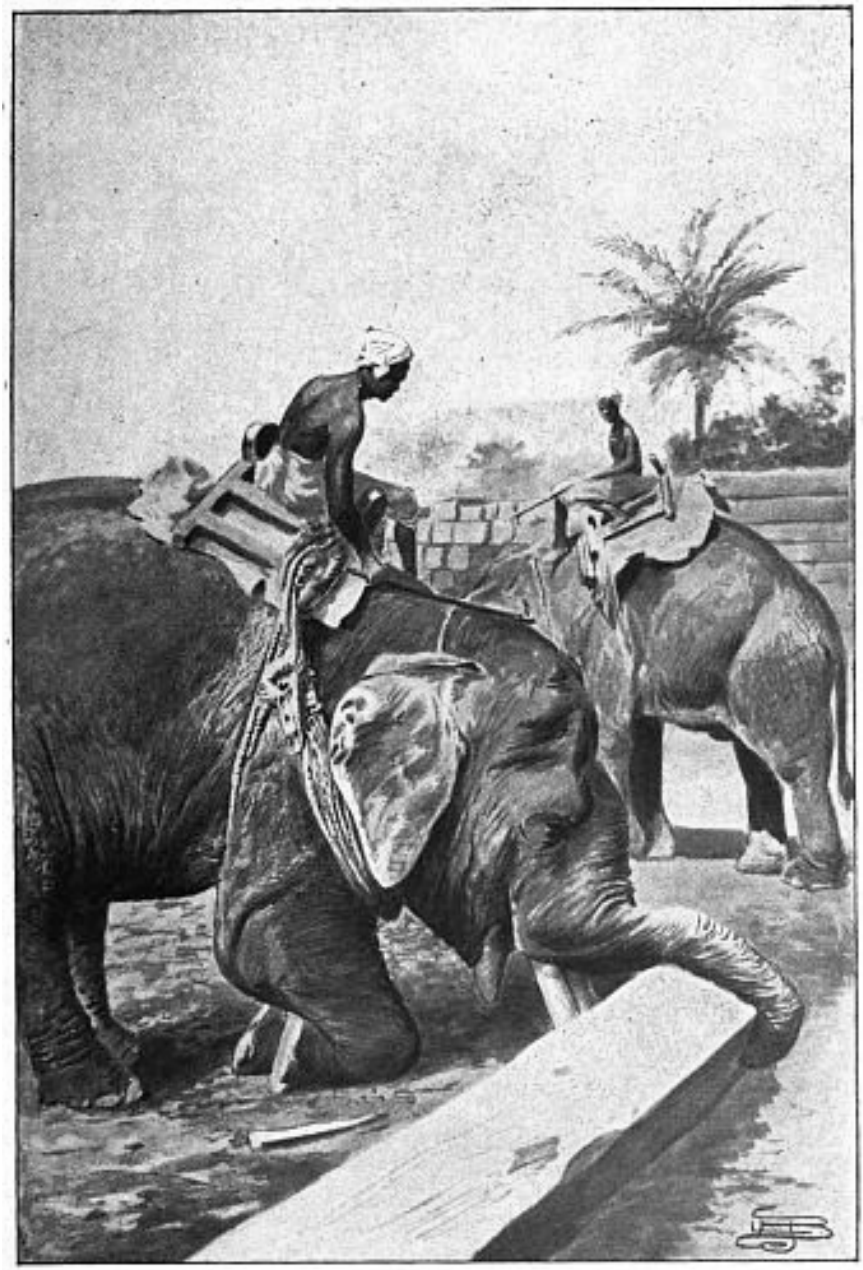
rattan passed around the neck. So it is perfectly safe."

"Elephants are very wise animals, and I love them. Mother told me that a long time ago there was an elephant in the city that used to ladle out rice to the priests as they came out of the temple. He did it every morning, and was as careful about it as any person could be. He made no mistakes, for he never gave the rice to any people unless they were priests. Wasn't that wonderful, Chin?"

"It was very wise, at any rate, Chie Lo. But, of course, he could tell the priests because of their long yellow robes. I've heard more wonderful stories than that, though.

"I've watched elephants at work in a lumber yard, myself. They would pick up the logs with their trunks, and carry them to the place where they were to be piled up. Then they would lay them down, one on top of another, and each time they would place them in such good order that the ends of the pile would be kept perfectly even. They are very careful workers; men couldn't do any better."

"Weren't you afraid when you crossed the river on the elephant's back, Chin? I heard you speaking about it to father when you got home."



“They would pick up the logs with their

"Not the least bit. The water grew deeper until at last only my howdah and the animal's head were above the surface. But he went on slowly and surely, and as he felt safe, I did, too. In a few minutes we were on dry land again, and climbed up the steep bank without stopping to rest.

"It was great fun whenever we went down hill. The big clumsy fellow knelt on his fore legs, and actually slid down, with his hind legs dragging behind him."

"What good times you have, Chin. I wish I were a boy!" and Chie Lo sighed again.

"They say that the white elephants are going to march through the streets to-day. Let's go up in the city to see them," said Chin.

He was always glad to have his sister go about with him.

The home of our Siamese cousins is a strange country. It is often spoken of as the "Land of the White Elephant." You shall hear the reason.

Whenever a white elephant is seen in the forests, word is at once sent to the king, and parties of hunters go forth to secure him. He is looked upon as a sacred animal, for many of the people believe that the soul of some great and

wise person has come back to dwell for a while in his body.

In the olden times there was a great celebration after a white elephant had been caught and was brought into the city. The king and his nobles, as well as hundreds of priests, went out to meet him with bands of music. He was led to the royal stables, and large pictures of the forests were hung around him, so he should not grow lonesome and long for his home in the jungle.

It is even said that he was fed from golden dishes, and that only the sweetest sugar-cane, the ripest bananas, and the tenderest grasses were given him as food. He was loaded with gifts.

The ways of the people are changing now, however, and both the king and his people are wiser than they used to be. Yet the white elephants are still treated with honour, and kept in the royal stables, while on great days they march in state through the streets of the city.

It is hardly right, however, to speak of them as white. Some of them are of a pale, pinkish gray colour. Others are ashy gray. Their eyes look washed-out and dull. They are not nearly as grand and noble-looking as their brothers, for

it seems as though Mother Nature were tired and had not finished her work, when one looks at them.

CHAPTER VII

In the Temple

After the children had watched the procession of white elephants, Chin said:

"Let us go to the temple, Chie Lo. It will be a pleasant walk. And, besides, father said we ought to go to-day. He gave me these coins to carry there." Chin held up two pieces of silver. "One of them is for you, Chie Lo, and the other is for me."

The place where the temple stood had been set apart from the rest of the city. It was divided up into large fields surrounded by walls. In each of these fields there was at least one large temple, and several small ones, besides the buildings where the priests lived with their pupils. Such a place is called a wat.

As Chin and his sister drew near one of these wats, they found many little stands from which men were busily selling gold-leaf to those who were on their way to the temples.

What would the people do with this gold-leaf, you

wonder.

They would use it to cover any bare spots on their favourite images. It would "make merit" for them, as they would say; or, in other words, they would at some time be rewarded for the act of goodness.

It is in this way that the images are kept richly gilded, and many of them are fairly loaded with the precious stuff.

"We can't buy any to-day," said Chin, "we haven't money enough. But I wish I could get one of those rings that man is selling. They are made of hairs out of the manes and tails of the sacred horses. It would bring good fortune, I'm sure."

Poor ignorant Chin! As though anything but his own honest little heart and good deeds would bring him happiness and success.

And now the children passed through the gateway and into the beautiful grounds. Stately trees grew on every side, and flowering plants were to be seen in every direction. Here and there stood large stone statues.

They were ugly-looking figures, but were supposed to be the guardians of this holy place.

"After we come out, let's have a game of hide-and-seek with those children," said Chin.

He pointed to some boys and girls playing among the trees and statues, and having a merry time.

As the children turned toward the buildings, they passed under some trees from whose branches hung pieces of wood, stone, and porcelain.

"People hung those offerings there because they are going to build a home," said Chin. "Or perhaps they are just married, and are beginning house-keeping."

"I know that, of course," answered Chie Lo.

As the boy and girl entered the temple, they stopped at the cistern of water near the door. Wooden dippers were handed to them, which they were to fill. They must wash their hands and rinse their mouths before they dared to draw near the statue of the holy Buddha or knelt in prayer. They must do it as a symbol that their tongues were pure.

After this was done, they threw their coins into a large money-box, and passed into the main part of the temple. There were no seats, but the worshippers sat together on the floor in little circles.

The altar was beautifully carved, and built up in the shape of a pyramid. Many offerings could be seen lying upon it. There were lovely flowers, luscious fruits, and piles of snow-white rice. These had all been brought here to-day by those who had come to worship and to pray. Behind the altar were high panels on which the life of Buddha was pictured.

Chin and his sister loved to study these pictures and dream of the Holy One in whom they believed.

Their mother had taught them that long ago a great being lived in this world. He was born in a palace, and was the son of a king. He knew only joy and comfort until one day, when he met a poor old man. His heart went out in pity to him, and he said to himself:

"I will not live in comfort any longer if others in the world suffer and are poor."

He went out from the palace and spent the rest of his life teaching and giving help.

Chin and his sister did not stop to look at the pictures now. They joined one of the groups sitting cross-legged upon the floor. A moment afterward their heads were bent,

and their small hands were pressed together in prayer.

From time to time, one of the worshippers rose and stepped over to a big bronze bell, and rung it violently. This was because he felt that his prayers were not heard, and he wished to call attention.

Listen! A priest is reading from a palm-leaf book; and now he chants a prayer with his face hidden behind a big fan. He keeps time by striking a bell, or beating on a block of wood. The people rise upon their knees and bow to the ground as he chants. There is no music in the strange service.

As Chin got up to go away, he turned to Chie Lo and whispered:

"I love to look at the bronze elephants carved on the walls. They look very wise and strong. They are the symbols of the Buddha, who taught men to be patient and faithful."

"I always love to look at the flag of our country, too," answered Chie Lo. "The great white elephant pictured on the red cloth makes me think of the same thing."

"I believe I shall like it when I am old enough to come here to study with the priests," her brother went on. "I shall

like to serve them, and they will teach me many good things. But I don't believe I shall ever be a priest myself."

It is the custom of Chin's country for all the boys to live awhile in the wats, as soon as they are old enough to have their heads shaved. They help the priests in the temples, and serve them in different ways. They are also taught to write and cipher. After they have stayed a certain time, they may choose for themselves what they will do. They may study to become priests themselves, or they may go back to their homes and choose some kind of work.

As for Chie Lo, what would she do when Chin went away from home? Her parents were too poor to send her to a school for girls. She would sell fruits and vegetables in her little boat until she was old enough to get married.

Poor little child! She turned to her brother as they left the temple, and said:

"I wish, Chin, that I could go to school and be able to recite poems and stories."

For in that strange country of Siam, few girls learn either to read or write, even if they are able to go to school.

Their teacher recites some lines and the pupils repeat

them after him until the whole piece is learned. Then another is taken up in the same way, and still another. But every child must be sure of one thing: she must know an *odd number* of pieces when she has finished.

You remember the Siamese seem to be afraid of even numbers in anything whatsoever.

As for geography, or history, or any other pleasant study, such as you have, very few of the children of that country have even heard of them. I doubt if Chin and his sister know anything about the great, beautiful country on the other side of the world, where their American cousins are living.

But Siam is slowly changing, and, as I have already said, the king who now rules is wiser than those before him. He will help his people to become wiser, too.

As the children went on their way home, they fell to talking about their ruler. They spoke of him as "The Lord of the Celestial Elephant," and other queer titles.

"He worships in the temple of the Emerald Buddha," Chin told his sister. He had heard others describe the beautiful place.

"It seems as though I could almost see it," the boy declared. "It must be wonderful. Just think, Chie Lo, the floor is paved with bricks of brass, and the walls are covered with paintings. The altar is several times as high as our house. It is loaded with images from the bottom to the very top. They are covered with gold, except the Emerald Buddha itself, which is above all the rest.

"Its hair is made of solid gold, in which are diamonds and rubies and many other kinds of precious gems. I wish I could look at it just once, although it is so high up, a person can hardly see it as he stands on the floor."

"Mother said nobody made that statue," said Chie Lo when her brother had finished. "It was a miracle, and suddenly appeared in the world after a visit of Buddha."

"Mother and father know a great deal," replied Chin. "When we get home to-night, let's ask them to tell us the story of how gold and silver came to be in the world."

CHAPTER VIII

The Legend of the Peace-Offering

It was a beautiful moonlight night. The stars shone faintly in the clear sky.

"They do not look as though they felt as happy as usual," said Chin to Chie Lo, who sat beside him on the platform of the house. "They are jealous because the moon is hiding them by her brightness. Here comes father; now we can ask him."

"Father, will you tell us the story of Rosy Dawn?" said his son, as the boat drew up beside the platform and the man jumped out.

"As soon as I fill my betel-box, Chin," was the answer.

Five minutes afterward, the family gathered around the story-teller by the side of the quiet river.

"Once upon a time," he began, "Father Sun was much nearer the earth than he is now. He was ever ready to advise his younger brother, the king of our country, and would even order his officers, the stars, to do anything

which might help this blessed land.

"It was long, long ago that all this happened. Everything was so different then from what it is now, that there was no sickness nor sorrow in the land. People lived to be hundreds of years old. Why, my children, the King of Siam himself was looked upon as a very young man, although he was at least one hundred and sixty years old.

"His father, the old king, was still alive, but had grown tired of ruling after two hundred years of such work. He had given it into his son's hands, and now took his ease.

"His only daughter, a beautiful maiden named Rosy Dawn, spent most of her time in cheering him and making his life happy. No one had ever looked upon her sweet face except her own family. She was as good and simple as she was beautiful. Her days must have passed very quietly, for her only amusements were singing her old father to sleep and wandering alone through the fields and woods.

"A sad thing happened about this time. The naughty stars grew jealous of their lord, the Sun. They did not like it because he chose to keep awake all the time, and was having such pleasure with the earth and its people that he

never thought of sleeping.

"Day and night, summer and winter, he gave his bright light to the world; he seemed afraid that something ill might happen to his young brother the king, if he left him for a moment. Of course, the stars had no chance of showing their own beauty, and this was what put them out of temper. They said to each other:

"'Our lord has some reason for not sleeping which we do not understand. We will watch him, and set a snare for him.'

"So, when they themselves should have been sound asleep, for it was now bright noonday, they set to watch the jolly, laughing Sun.

"It happened at this very time that Rosy Dawn left her sleeping father's side and went out for a frolic in the woods. She picked the wild flowers and made them into wreaths; she softly sang sweet songs to herself, and she watched the squirrels and lizards as they played about among the trees.

"All at once she spied a beautiful butterfly move past her. It was larger and more brilliant than any she had ever seen before. She said to herself:

"'I must have the lovely creature,' and ran after it.

"On flitted the butterfly, faster and faster; on sped Rosy Dawn after it. But it was in vain. For after a long chase, and just as she thought she was about to succeed, the butterfly rose up into the air, higher and higher above her head.

"Now the fair maiden turned back toward home, and for the first time she thought of how tired she was. Her dainty feet fairly ached from the long chase, and she stopped at a refreshing brook to bathe.

"Just at this moment, the Sun's glorious chariot appeared over the hilltop. The warm light fell upon Rosy Dawn and made her feel quiet and restful. At the same time the Sun himself looked down upon the beautiful maiden and he fell in love with her then and there.

"When she had finished her bath, Rosy Dawn left the stream and entered a shady cavern near by, where she might rest.

"The Sun's great chariot flew through the heavens as his noble steeds were spurred onward. It seemed as though he could not wait a moment longer before he should come to the charming girl he had just seen.

"You ask me if he won Rosy Dawn's love in return. Ah, yes! And, sad to say, trouble followed after.

"You remember that the jealous stars were watching their lord's movements. After a while they discovered that he was making love to Rosy Dawn. They followed him one day when the two were fondly talking together in their favourite resting-place, the cavern.

"Alas! the chariot was outside. The wicked stars seized it and carried it off, and the frightened steeds ran away. They did not turn their heads until they had reached home.

"The angry stars did not stop here. They raised a great shout against their ruler, and declared they would be his subjects no longer. The poor old Sun began to tremble, and shed tears of gold.

"The mountains were truly sorry for him. They opened up a passageway through which he might return home. They promised him that he might drive through this cavern every day and be perfectly safe. Again he wept, and more plentifully still.

"At last he started on his way homeward, and, as he journeyed along, his tears fell and formed pools of gold.

Those pools are now the gold mines of Siam.

"It took twelve hours for Old Sol to reach home, after which he went out every day; but he came back regularly at night-time by way of the cavern that the mountains had given him.

"After this poor Rosy Dawn wandered sadly about through the caves and mountains. She, too, wept, and her tears were very plentiful. Wherever they fell you will now find the silver mines of our country.

"But you must not think her joy was at an end. The wicked stars at last made an agreement with their lord, the Sun. They said he might live with Rosy Dawn for one-half the month, if they were allowed to look at her beautiful face for the other half.

"Ever since that time the Sun meets Rosy Dawn at the mouth of the cave where he first saw her, and carries her home to stay with him for two weeks out of each month."

"You didn't mention one important thing," said Chin, as his father ended the story. "You forgot to say that the stars insisted on the Sun's never kissing Rosy Dawn when any one can see him. We know hers is another name for

the Moon; and the Sun breaks his agreement with the stars once in a great while, whenever there is an eclipse."

"Yes, that is why the people beat drums and fire off guns at such times," said the children's mother. "It is to shame the Sun, and to make him stop such conduct at once. Of course it takes some time for the sounds to reach him, but as soon as he hears, he seems to be ashamed, for the eclipse soon passes by."

"When I was a boy, I went on a pilgrimage to the very cavern where the Sun first met Rosy Dawn," said the father. "I was careful to carry both a silver coin and a gold one. When we reached the place, I threw the money into the cavern. Every one else did likewise. We offered these coins in hopes of making merit for ourselves."

CHAPTER IX

Queer Sights

"I am going to the city to-day to buy a new waist-cloth," said Chin's father one morning. "Chin, you may go with me, if you like."

A few moments afterward the two were paddling down the river past the temples and palaces which lined the shore.

Besides the homes of the rich, surrounded by stately palm-trees and beautiful gardens, there were other houses belonging to poorer people. These last were built close to the river's edge, but were raised high up above the water, on posts.

This was a wise thing to do for several reasons. In the first place, the river would rise after the fall rains began, and the houses might float away—or, at least, the people inside would be flooded, unless they had been careful to build high enough to prepare for such times.

The fine houses were of brick or wood, but the poorer

ones were much like Chin's house-boat, woven of bamboo and thatched with leaves.

The boy and his father soon left the main part of the river and turned into one of the canals. They were now in a part of the city where a good deal of business was going on. They left the boat, after fastening it to the bank, and walked along through the narrow street.

The fronts of the houses here were all open and everything within could be plainly seen. In this one was a big counter, almost filling the room, and the merchant himself sat cross-legged upon it with his goods around him.

There was a bakery where the cakes and bread were made and baked in sight of everyone who passed. Chin liked to stop and look at the various workmen. There was much to see and learn. The metal-workers were pounding and hammering away, and, as the boy watched them, he could see bracelets and anklets shaped, and sheets of copper formed into various dishes.

In many places the families of the storekeepers lived in the one room that was both store and dwelling, but they did not seem to be troubled when they noticed Chin's black

eyes following them.

In one store a hammock hung from the ceiling and a baby was swinging there. What did he care if he was brought up on the street, as one might say? Care! He seemed to think the coming and going of so many people was meant all for him, and he laughed and crowed at each new face.

"Do look, father," said Chin, as they passed a barber's shop. "There is a Chinaman having his head and eyebrows shaved. He won't be satisfied until his eyelashes have been pulled out. Other people have strange fashions, don't they?"

His father smiled. "Yes, Chin, we are all different from each other in this world. But I know one thing in which we are like the Chinese. We love kites, don't we?"

Chin's eyes sparkled. "Yes, indeed, father. There is a kite store, now. Let us go in and look around. The kites there are beautiful."

It is no wonder Chin longed to stop. All sorts of kites were there to tempt the passer-by. They were in the shapes of flowers and boats, dragons and elephants, and I can't tell

how many other odd or lovely patterns. Chin's father was as much interested as his son, and a half-hour was spent before they finally decided on buying a kite in the form of a butterfly.

"We will have great sport in flying it this afternoon," said Chin. "Chie Lo must enjoy it with us."

He had finished speaking when he caught sight of a procession coming in that direction. A moment before there had been so many children, dogs, and cats in the street they seemed to block the way of everything else; but now the children quickly turned aside and ran into the doorways.

As the procession drew near, a great shouting and beating of drums could be heard.

"Father, look quickly," said Chin. "The men are carrying a statue of Buddha on a litter. Isn't it beautiful? It is all covered with gilt. I wonder where they will carry it. Oh, now I see; they have stopped at that open place and are going to have a play. There are the actors themselves."

"Some rich man is doing this," said Chin's father. "He has probably hired the actors, and the show will be free to

all. He is making merit for himself, without doubt. We will join the crowd."

By this time the gilded statue had been set up on a sort of throne, and sticks of incense were lighted and placed on the rough altar in front of it.

The strangest part came now, for the actors began to put on their queer costumes right before the people who had gathered around the show. Then came the play.

There was neither stage nor curtain; nor was there any scenery, except that of the place itself. But Chin and his father enjoyed it as well as the other onlookers. They laughed and looked sad, in turn, and seemed to forget that it was only a play, and not real life, that was pictured before them.

When the play was over, Chin's father said:

"We must go back to the stores, for I have not bought my waist-cloth yet."

The place they soon entered was different from any dry-goods store you ever saw. The room was fitted with pigeonholes, in each of which was folded a strip of cloth one yard wide, and three yards long. Some of these pa-nungs, or



Siamese Actors

waist-cloths, were of silk, and others of cotton. Some were striped, and others figured. They form, as you know, the principal part of the dress of both men and women in Siam.

After Chin's father had looked at a number of the cotton waist-cloths, he finally decided on one that was gaily striped. It was of no use for him to examine anything made of silk. It would cost more than the poor man could afford.

"Now, for the tailor's," he said. "I must buy thread and needles."

A few steps brought them to the tiny shop where the tailor sat, working busily, but on the watch for customers at the same time. He held the cloth on which he was sewing between his toes! That did not seem strange to Chin. He had often watched carpenters use their toes to hold boards in place. As to himself, his own toes were put to every possible use, so that you would almost call him four-handed.

As his feet were always bare, why shouldn't he make them useful in other ways than walking and running, swimming and playing games? There was no reason at all.

"I'm getting hungry, and we are a good ways from home,

father. I wish we could buy some cakes."

Chin looked longingly at a stand under a stone archway where two men stood in front of a movable furnace. Square griddles were on the furnace, and the men were busily baking cakes. Each one was made in the shape of the figure 8. Curlicue cakes, they were called.

A crowd of boys was standing as near to the furnace as possible, watching the men. Some were buying the cakes as they came from the hot griddle; others had no money and could only look on.

Each of the bakers held in his hand a terra-cotta bottle with a small hole in the end. He kept the bottle horizontal while he filled it with the batter. When the griddle was hot enough, he held the bottle upright for a moment with his finger over the hole, then, taking his finger away, he passed it quickly over the griddle with the motion you would use in making the figure 8. A minute afterward, a delicious curlicue cake was ready for a customer.

"You may treat yourself here, Chin," said his father, "while I go to the betel stand yonder, to get my box filled."

It was now noon-time, and the sun was very hot. The

street, which had been crowded all the morning, was nearly empty. Almost every one in the city, except the poorer people, was now taking a midday nap in the shadow of some tree or veranda.

"We must go home, Chin, for I am warm and tired," said his father, but he smiled pleasantly, for he had enjoyed the morning as much as his son.

On their way to the boat they passed some jugglers treading fire and climbing a ladder of sharp knives with their bare feet. At most times, a large crowd would have been gathered around them, but there were few people now. It was too hot, and even Chin was glad to leave the city street and get into his little boat once more.

Perhaps you wonder if there are no carriages in this strange city of the East. There are not many, since, as you remember, most of the travelling is done on the water. But once in a while one sees a queer sort of vehicle called a jinrikisha.

It is much like an open buggy on two wheels and is drawn by men. It is more common in the land of Chin's Japanese cousins, however, than in his country.

Then, again, if any of Chin's people are in a great hurry (but that very seldom happens), they may hire gharries, which are very light and have canvas tops. These are drawn by small horses brought from China.

"The gharries are strange things," thinks Chin's father; "the idea of using them must have been given by those queer white people, who do not seem to enjoy life as we Siamese do. They move so much faster, and are not satisfied to do things in the quiet, happy way of my countrymen."

CHAPTER X

The Queen's City

"I have had a lovely time to-day, too," said Chie Lo, when Chin had told her of his walk through the city.

"I sold my fruit in an hour or two, and then Pome Yik and I went off in my canoe to have a good time by ourselves."

Chin laughed when his sister mentioned Pome Yik. She was a curly-headed playmate of Chie Lo's. The Siamese think that straight, wiry hair is the only beautiful kind in the world, and make fun of any one whose hair is even wavy. So the little girl spoken of came to have the nickname Pome Yik, which means curly-head.

Her real name was almost forgotten, but, poor child, she didn't enjoy hearing herself called Pome Yik any more than if it had been "double-toe" or "hunchback," or the name given to any kind of deformed person by the people of her country.

"We went several miles before we stopped," Chie Lo

went on. "We passed that big rice plantation, Chin, where you often go on errands for father. Then we came to a field flooded with water and covered with lotus blossoms. They had been raised for market and the people were busy gathering them.

"See, Chin, they gave me these to bring home. Aren't they beautiful?"

Chie Lo held up a bunch of the great, delicate lilies for her brother to admire. Their hearts were golden; the petals, which were of a faint pink near the centre, were of a deep, bright red toward the tips.

The flower had a great meaning to these children of Siam. It told the story of life, and was sacred to the Buddha, who was often pictured sitting on the lotus. Why should it mean so much? Let us see.

The root of the plant lies embedded in the mud. That represents our weak human nature. As the long stems grow, they reach up through the deep water toward the sunlight. That is what we all do, is it not? For we long to do right and seek the light of love and wisdom.

At length a wondrous blossom appears on the surface of

the water. It is perfect in shape, and beautiful in colour, while its heart is golden, we remember. That is the blossoming of a whole life. The lotus is a fine symbol, we have to admit.

But Chie Lo spoke of the people gathering the lotus for market. Of course the flowers could be readily sold, but that was not all. The Chinese in the city would be glad to buy the seeds, which they grind and make into cakes. The stems could be cooked and served as a delicious vegetable; the fibres of the leaf-stalks would furnish lamp-wicks. The plant has many uses in the country where it is raised.

"Father says the king has beautiful lotus ponds in the grounds near the palace," said Chin, as he smelled the flowers. "He has seen them, as well as the fountains and statues and lovely gardens."

"It must be a grand thing to be a king," replied Chie Lo, thoughtfully. "They say that the palace is even more wonderful than the grounds around it.

"Just think of it! the floors are paved with marble and the tables are also of marble. There are all sorts of couches to lie and sit on. These are covered with silks and satins of

beautiful colours, and there are pictures on the walls that have been painted to look just like people the king has known. Ah! what a sight it must be!"

Chie Lo shut her eyes, as though she might then be able to see what she had been describing.

"The city of the royal women is inside all the rest of the king's grounds," said Chin. "You know that one must pass through three walls before one can enter it. No man can go there except the king and the priests."

"Yes, mother has told me about it," answered Chie Lo. "It is a real city, too, for it contains stores and temples, theatres and markets. There are all sorts of lovely trees and plants, ponds and summer houses. The children must have a fine time in such a lovely place. It must be a grand thing to be born in a king's family." Chie Lo sighed.

"Tell me what else you saw beside the lily-fields this morning," said Chin, who was quite satisfied to be a free, careless, happy boy, and envied nobody.

"When we were still quite a distance from home, we saw some men fishing in the river. They were filling their boats very fast, for they had a wheel set up near the bank. As one

of them turned the wheel, their nets were spread out and sunk in the water. The other men darted right and left in their boats, shouting and beating drums, and making a great noise. The frightened fishes must have been driven into the nets in great numbers, for the men were obliged to pull hard to lift them into the boats."

"That is an easy way," said Chin. "There is a good deal of sport in it, too, for father and I fished with a wheel once, and I liked it for a change. But see, there's father now. Let's go to meet him."

CHAPTER XI

The Monsoon

"It's coming! it's coming!" cried Chin, as he sat on the floating platform of his home. As soon as he said these words, he jumped up and followed Chie Lo and the rest of the family into the house.

They all moved faster than usual, for it was a time to hurry, if there ever was such a time in Siam. The sky had been black and overcast with clouds for two or three days, giving warning to the people that the monsoon was drawing near, but now the wind began to blow, which told its arrival.

Did they fear? Surely not. They were only too glad there was a rest from the burning sunshine and the clouds of dust.

Unless rain should come soon, the sugar-cane would dry up and immense crops would be lost. The fruits would shrivel and many people would become poor.

But now all could take refreshing sleep after they had prepared for the yearly storm.

Chin had helped his father mend the roof of the little home. The clusters of loose leaves were pulled out, and fresh ones fastened securely in their places. Heavy stones were laid here and there on the roof to make it safe when the gusts of wind should strike it. The doors and window-casings must also be fastened tightly.

As for Chie Lo and her mother, they had been very busy carrying all the jars and baskets inside the house. The mats, on which spices had been drying, must also be put in a safe place. In fact, everything that was loose must be made tight.

The canoes were lifted from the water, and placed on that side of the platform which would be protected from the rising wind.

Now it was coming, as Chin said. The cocoanut and mango-trees on the shore began to rustle; leaves were flying in the air; the crows were hastening to safe resting-places.

Then, all of a sudden, the rain fell in sheets, the thunder rolled through the heavens, lightning flashed right and left, and the wind roared as though in fierce anger.

But Chin and Chie Lo sat in a snug corner of the kitchen and felt little fear.

"They say that a giant lives far up in the air, and when he gets angry with his wife and chases her, we hear the thunder in the sky," whispered Chie Lo.

"He isn't angry with us, anyway," said Chin. "Listen, Chie Lo. How our house rocks! but it is fastened tightly, so we are all right, and the wind won't keep up this way very long."

After an hour or two the storm passed by, and the blackness departed from the sky. This was only the beginning of the fall rains, however. Before the night was over, Chin waked up to hear the downpour on the roof. He went to sleep in a few moments, saying to himself, "Rain, rain, rain, for a week at least. I will make up now for the nights I couldn't rest."

If Chin had been kept from sleeping, you may well believe it had been very hot and uncomfortable.

The next day there was little to do. Chin's father did not care to venture out in the heavy rain, and spent a good deal of the time in taking refreshing naps. But when he was awake the children got him to tell stories of the wonderful country in which they lived.

He had never been in the jungle himself, but several of his friends were hunters who had met the wild elephant and the tiger in the deep forests. They had chased the wildcat, and had had narrow escapes from the rhinoceros and the deadly cobra.

"Did you ever see a cobra yourself, father?" asked Chin, as he listened to the stories with wide-open eyes.

"Yes, indeed. It was only the other day that I watched a snake-charmer, who wound a cobra around his arm."

"Please tell us about it," cried his son. "I wish I could have seen him. Wasn't he the least bit afraid?"

"If he had been, he would probably have lost his life," was the answer. "He charmed the creature with music, while he swayed his body back and forth as he played. The serpent followed his motions as it listened to the strange sounds. Of course the man played with only one hand. He seized the cobra's neck with the other, after which he took out its teeth and venom-bag. When this was done the cobra was no more harmful than your kitten."

"How did he do it, father?"

"It was not very hard work, for he used a pair of pincers.

Coolness is the most important thing. We should remember to be calm in all things, my son."

"Yes, I must remember that, for I will soon be old enough to have my hair cut, and you will call me a man."

"I hope I can afford to have a fine celebration. Chin, you will go to the temple, of course. The seven steps of the altar will be covered with fresh banana leaves, and figures of angels and animals will be placed there."

"Do I have to walk around the altar three times, holding a wax candle in my hand?"

"Yes, Chin, and then your friends will take the other candles and blow the lights out directly over your head.

"After that you will be given a fresh cocoanut and a cup containing pieces of money. Music will come next."

"It will be the great time of my life, father. I must think about it and get ready for it."

"There are many kinds of people in our city, Chin. There are the Chinese, who live here in great numbers; there are Hindus with pride in themselves; there are the white people who come here on business, or to teach their religion to those who will listen. But Chin, we are Siamese,

and we like the ways of our own country. We hear of different fashions, but ours are still the best to us."

THE END.