



AFTERNOON TEA.

## JAPANESE GIRLS.

By DARLEY DALE, Author of "Noah's Ark," etc.

DURING the last fifteen years such enormous and at the same time such rapid advance has been made in the state of civilisation in Japan, and still continues to be made, that even as we write many of the habits and customs mentioned in this paper are dying out, to be replaced by European fashions and uses. In the year 1873 some very important reforms were introduced by the Mikado, several of which greatly affected the daughters of "the land of the rising sun," as the Japanese poetically name their beautiful islands. One reform was an imperial decree giving permission to Japanese wives and daughters to travel to foreign countries, a permission the fathers and husbands were at first very slow to avail themselves of, not caring for the expense, although it was known to be the Emperor's wish for the fairer half of his subjects to be brought into contact with civilised nations, especially the English and American. In that year five Japanese girls of the highest position, all of different families, and varying in age from eight to fifteen, were sent by the Government to America to be educated under the care of the Japanese Minister at Washington.

Another decree was issued altering toilets and coiffures, recommending all who could afford it to adopt European costumes, and ordering the ladies to dress their hair themselves, and dispense with the services of female hairdressers. This last edict must have caused some heart-burnings among the gentle daughters of Japan, for their fashion of dressing their hair, which is generally very long, dark, and luxuriant, is very elaborate. It is raised very high in front and spread out in bows, not unlike the way in which we dressed our hair in the days of powder and patches; long stiff loops droop on the nape of the neck; they then run large pins or arrows of gold, silver, or tortoiseshell through it, using a great deal of pomade to stiffen and keep the puffs of hair well spread out. On festivals they wear flowers and ribbons in addition to these ornamental pins.

In this same year the European calendar was introduced instead of the Japanese one, though the date of the year is still reckoned from the accession of the first Mikado, so that a Japanese girl, writing a letter on the 1st of May, A.D. 1885, would date it the 1st of May, 2345. Another peculiarity of her letter would be, that instead of writing in horizontal lines from left to right as we do, she would write in perpendicular lines, of irregular characters, many of which represent entire words. All her books are printed on this same system. Her watch would, like ours, be divided into twelve portions, but each portion would represent two hours instead of one, and the hours are not numbered, but each is represented by the sign of some animal; the rat, ox, tiger, hare, dragon, snake, horse, ram, ape, cock, hog, and the fox are the twelve Japanese hours. The names of Japanese girls are very fanciful and sometimes really poetical; for instance, Wave of the Sea, Chrysanthemum, Twilight, Snow, Waterfall, Little Butterfly, though inconveniently long, are not unmeaning.

As soon as a Japanese baby girl or boy is born its head is shaved, and the hair is not allowed to grow at all until it is three years old, and then only in three patches. If the parents are rich a little daughter is by no means a welcome addition to the family, and very often they will adopt an heir to inherit their property; for adoption is very common in Japan, and heiresses in consequence very rare; but the position of women—always much better than that of their Chinese sisters—is daily

improving, so that this unjust custom will probably soon die a natural death. Women are now allowed to appear unveiled in the streets, though if married they may not speak to men except in the presence of their husbands. But among the higher classes, especially at Court, the Japanese women and girls have always been treated with proper respect and courtesy; and out of a hundred and twenty-four sovereigns, eight have been empresses. Although many Japanese girls of the higher classes now adopt the European style of dress, the national costume is still very common. The dress itself consists of a long, loose kind of dressing-gown, confined at the waist by a wide sash, called an *olei*, with broad ends, which hang down behind; the sleeves are very wide, and sewed up inside to make pockets. These garments may be made of cotton, silk, or more costly material, such as rich brocade, according to the rank of the wearer. They are sometimes wadded, and the girls wear five or six at a time, one on top of the other; sometimes they will wear as many as twenty, from vanity, when they look like a moving bale of silk and brocaded goods. In paying a visit, if they feel warm they take off one or two of their dresses.

Stockings are only worn while travelling, and are made with a place for the great toe. Their shoes are more like clogs, and are little more than soles of straw, wood, or leather with two straps; one across the instep, and the other attached to it, goes between the great toe, and is fastened to the sole. Outer high wooden clogs are worn for walking, particularly among the lower classes, but are removed directly the wearer enters the house, a point of etiquette on which the Japanese are very strict, and our European fashion of entering hotels, buildings, and houses in our outdoor boots annoys them exceedingly. There is no bandaging of the feet among the Japanese women as with the Chinese; they wear no gloves, but they always carry one or two fans, and the fan is considered one of the most important parts of the dress; the girls carry fans from five years of age. There is a favourite Japanese proverb, which says that "a fog cannot be dispelled with a fan," which is often quoted.

Their pocket handkerchiefs are of paper; they carry a little packet of them in their sleeve pockets, and throw them away after using them. Their umbrellas are not at all like the paper ones sold in England as Japanese parasols. They are made of oiled paper, very large and very heavy, and generally have the owner's name printed on the inside in Chinese characters. A good one costs about a franc or thirty sen; they are used indiscriminately as sunshades or umbrellas. Lastly, a Japanese girl always carries a miniature pipe; for every woman and child smokes. She puts in a pinch of native tobacco, lights her pipe at a charcoal brazier, gives about half a dozen puffs, and raps out the ashes; but she will repeat this ceremony at every spare moment during the day, apparently thoroughly enjoying it.

Japanese girls are often pretty, but they disfigure themselves terribly by painting their faces, an art in which they utterly fail, for they use coarse paints, and put the colours on very inartistically; they cover their faces with a dead white, rouge their cheeks, and colour their lips a brilliant red or violet. When they marry they shave off their eyebrows, and blacken their teeth, but as the Empress has wisely discarded this hideous custom it will probably soon die out. It originated in the jealousy of the husbands in the upper classes;

where the custom still prevails, the girls blacken their teeth before the marriage ceremony, and shave off their eyebrows immediately after.

The marriage ceremonies are very numerous and various; in the first place, there is a "middle man," who arranges the preliminaries, and carries presents from the bridegroom to the bride, which vary according to the position of the parties; if the lady accepts the presents she must go on with the marriage. For a bride in good circumstances the presents would be a white silk robe, and some gold-embroidered brocade for the sash, which, by the way, is the prettiest part of the dress; another piece of white silk with a lozenge pattern worked on it, some barrels of wine, and some condiments. On the wedding night the bride is fetched on a litter to her husband's house, dressed in the presented robes and a veil of white silk; the relations are all assembled in a room, and here is held the wedding feast, which is inaugurated with a repast consisting of dried fish and seaweed, dried chestnuts, a soup made of fishes' fins, wine and condiments, and the inevitable rice, which is a standing dish at every meal. Then follow tea and sweetmeats, of which, by the way, Japanese girls are very fond, though they are remarkably small eaters as a rule. After all these preliminaries follows a dinner of three courses, after which the guests retire and the bride remains in her new home.

During her marriage feast, as at all other meals, the Japanese bride has to feed herself with chopsticks; and it is considered a great breach of etiquette to eat fast at first; but a Japanese girl is not likely to be guilty of this breach of etiquette, partly because, as we said above, she eats very little—a little chicken, rice, fungi, herbs, shell-fish, roots, condiments, and sweetmeats being the staple of her food; and also because she has been schooled and drilled in all points of etiquette from her youth up, for though an exceedingly polite people, the Japanese are also most punctilious on all such little matters.

The girls marry early, generally at fifteen, though they are considered marriageable some years earlier; they are allowed by the laws and religion of their country to marry anyone except their brother or father.

They do not appear to have very many amusements, though as children they are supplied with very sensible toys, which are instructive as well as amusing, and can be used to teach them the rudiments of science. When they are older they play cards and draughts; they are very fond of music, singing, and dancing. They play the guitar, and a peculiar sort of violin, but their favourite musical instrument is a kind of recumbent harp, not unlike a zither in appearance, though the sounds emitted by it, to our ears, at least, are far from musical. When they read, and they are fond of reading, their favourite topic seems to be their own country, though education in Japan is now advancing so rapidly that this will soon cease to be true. A favourite amusement of little girls is fancy papers; these papers they cut and fold into figures representing dogs or any common animals, flowers, plants, or household objects.

Although some of the girls belonging to noble families are now often sent to Europe or America to be educated, there are some first-rate girls' schools in Japan, particularly at Tokio, where there are industrial schools, art schools, elementary schools, and higher schools for girls. In all these schools, desks and chairs have now been introduced, for formerly

the girls all sat on their heels on mats at low tables; changes have also taken place in the matter as well in the manner of teaching; formerly morals, which include etiquette and writing, were all that was taught in elementary schools, but now they learn in addition to these arithmetic, reading, geography, natural history, and elementary science.

Writing is a far more difficult accomplishment to a Japanese girl than it is to an English child, for besides the forty-eight Japanese letters, she has to learn difficult Chinese characters as well, consequently far more time is spent on writing than with us; their copy books require no ink, water only is used; but this is a very modern invention.

Great attention is paid to domestic economy in the education of girls in all the higher schools; sewing, embroidery, dressmaking, painting, weaving, and rearing of silkworms are taught, for an ordinary housewife in Japan has to make almost all the clothes required by her family, as there are very few tailors or dressmakers, but until quite lately these domestic arts were taught at home, as they are still among the better classes. In boarding schools the girls are taught cookery and housekeeping in addition to their other studies.

The sewing is all done by hand, machines are not used, and for this and for etiquette the girls have to sit on mats on the floor, in true Japanese fashion. That beautiful gold embroidery we see on Japanese articles is taught in the female schools at Kujoto-Fu, where the girls have quite a course of study on the art of embroidery to go through, but these girls would be able to make their living by it afterwards; ladies would not consider it a necessary part of their education, though there is a special kind of embroidery or preparation for the more elaborate art, which all girls, rich and poor alike, learn. Patchwork is another art which every Japanese girl is taught, for it is very useful in mending tears or holes in rich brocaded dresses; in this art, and really it is an art, figures of animals or flowers are first of all cut out in thick paper, then, to fit these various silks or stuffs are cut and sewn together so neatly that they look as if woven, for not a stitch must show. Another kind of patchwork is made by pasting the designs together, or rather the pieces of silk which form the design, so that they look absolutely like one piece; this is taught to those who wish to learn it in the schools, but the other patchwork is an indispensable feature of a Japanese girl's education.

Painting in water colours and drawing in Indian ink from nature are taught in all higher and private schools, and, indeed, a certain knowledge of drawing is necessary for the embroiderers, as all the designs have first of all to be drawn on the cloth. Japanese girls are very fond of painting on silk and

muslin, and in the art schools they learn to paint on lacquer-ware and porcelain, or earthenware.

In the education of a Japanese girl, either at home or at school, a great deal of time is taken up in learning etiquette, which is not only recognised as a branch of study, but is considered by far the most important element in her education; and in a country where such an elaborate system of etiquette prevails, breaches of which are looked upon almost, and in some cases quite, as crimes, initiation into some of its mysteries is certainly necessary. Etiquette includes morals, and particularly the virtues of patience and modesty, as well as mere politeness; in this last grace the Japanese certainly exceed all European nations.

The girls are taught to show great respect to their elders, particularly to the aged; their ordinary form of salutation in the streets is to curtsy, bending the knees; but indoors, in saluting their superiors or elders, they bow down to the ground, and if to a person of high rank, they bow till they can touch the ground with their fingers.

In character Japanese girls are remarkable for their gentleness and modesty; they are very timid, exceedingly patient, good-humoured, and cheerful, fond of a joke, easily moved either to tears or laughter, very neat in all their ways, fond of order and cleanliness, and, of course, very polite. They are not beautiful, though some of them are pretty; but their great charm lies in their manner, which is soft and fascinating. Their greatest vice is their intense curiosity, a vice which in Japan is not peculiar to the feminine portion of the nation, for the men there are as curious as the women.

They are passionately fond of the theatre, though girls of noble birth are only allowed to go to wrestling matches. Those of the lower and middle classes get up in the middle of the night to adorn themselves for a theatre. The plays begin at six o'clock in the morning and last till the evening. The actors are all men, but the scenery is very good; every play contains a sermon, and the audience, chiefly women and children, weep and laugh immoderately.

They spend a great deal of time on their toilet, for their hair takes a very long while to dress, and they dawdle over their bath, boiling themselves in water never less than 120° of Fahrenheit; they use no soap, but sit and steep themselves in this hot water, which is kept at the same temperature by means of a stove at the bottom of the bath. Another peculiarity of a Japanese bath is, they don't consider it necessary to change the water for each person, so in a large family perhaps a dozen people all go into the same water, and the bath-room is near the entrance hall, privacy not being thought essential to the occasion.

A Japanese girl gives her tea-parties to her friends like an English girl, except no gentlemen would be admitted, and sweetmeats would form a conspicuous part of the feast and the tea would be very weak, of a pale straw colour, poured out a minute after the boiling water is put into the teapot, and drank in little cups without handles, and of course without sugar or cream; the teapot is filled up again and again until every particle of flavour has been extracted from the leaves.

This same tea has previously been prepared by girls of the poorer classes, who have to stand bare to the waist at coppers stirring the tea-leaves until they are curled up by the heat. In the busy season these poor girls work for twelve or fifteen hours a day, and as the copper boilers are all heated by charcoal, the air is very unhealthy, nor does the smell of the burning tea improve it, and after their long tiring day's work is over many of these girls have a long walk of five or six miles to their home.

If a Japanese girl loses a parent, her mourning consists of a *kirinon* of coarse hempen cloth, as white as the coarseness of the fabric admits, for white is the ordinary colour for mourning; black is worn for joy. This coarse garment is worn day and night while the mourning lasts.

But the sad side of the life of a Japanese girl is her religion. Shintoism is the established religion of the country, but Buddhism prevails very largely also; in one of these creeds the Japanese girl is sure to be educated. When she goes to the service in a Buddhist or Shinto temple, she kneels with her head bowed down and her hands folded while the priest is performing his part of the ceremony; when she prays she presses her hands together, raises them to her forehead, and inclines her body several times. She will then offer paper flowers or strips of ribbon to Buddha or some of their heathen gods, and throw some money into the bowl which stands by the priest before she leaves the temple. If she was walking she will have left her outer clogs outside the temple; if not, she will return home in a *jinricksha*, a kind of perambulator with a hood and shafts, drawn by a coolie, unless she belong to the nobility, when she probably would return in a carriage drawn by horses, but horses are scarce in Japanese streets.

With this one great exception, Japanese girls are brought up in a very wise and sensible manner, and being by nature soft and gentle, and possessed of many excellent feminine qualities mentioned above, they make good, faithful wives and excellent mothers, and, heathen though they unfortunately are, these daughters of the land of the setting sun set an excellent example to Christian girls by their industry, their usefulness, and, above all, by their patience and gentleness.

## CORRESPONDENCE: A DISAPPOINTING STORY.

### CHAPTER IV.

I HAD been home three months and was "out."

The new life and the multitude of fresh interests were delightful to me, after the monotony of the past few months. I had lessons in music and painting, went about with my father, who did his best to spoil me, and altogether had my time and mind so fully occupied that I did not think nearly so much as formerly of my shadowy friend. Our intercourse gradually assumed, in my eyes, a less exaggerated importance, and I had only written to him once since my return.

I had plenty of books at my disposal too,

but I never enjoyed any mere novel so much as the one I had read under such difficulties. Neither had I, by any means, forgotten its author. In crowds at concerts and elsewhere I never failed to look for the form which I always associated with him, and I had been to see the house in Regent's Park. But none of this was very satisfactory.

I told my father the outline of the story. He laughed a good deal at my account of Aunt Rebecca's confiscation of the book. I gave him the story to read, and he liked it very well, but not nearly so much as I had expected and hoped. He thought it bore the touch of the amateur.

"It is the man's first book, evidently," said he, looking at the title-page, "and not at all a bad one, considering; but when you've read a few better ones, you won't think so much of it. It is enthusiastic, sad, and emotional, which is what you young things like because you are happy." And he pinched my cheek, adding: "When you've seen the world a bit, and known what suffering is, you'll like something more cheerful."

"You think he's a young man, then," said I, with undisguised interest.

"Not a doubt of it," said papa; and I was glad to hear it.

I thought he would consider it silly, so I