



JAPANESE MODE OF DINING.

JAPANESE MODE OF DINING.

Dinner was served in Japanese style. Our host wore Japanese costume, and the room in which we dined was open on three sides, and looked out on the gardens. When you enter a Japanese house you are expected to take off your shoes. This is not alone a mark of courtesy, but of cleanliness. The floors are spotless and covered with a fine matting, which would crack under the grinding edges of your European shoes. We took off our shoes and seated ourselves on the floor, and partook of our food from small tables a few inches high. The tables were of lacquer, and the dishes were mainly of lacquer. There is no plan, no form, in a Japanese dinner, simply to dine with comfort.

NED'S PEACH-STONE.

"This is a splendid peach," said Ned, "just as sweet and juicy." I'm going to plant the seed. Come out into the orchard with me."

"Oh, what's the good?" said Will.

"Papa says that if a peach grows well it will begin to bear—just begin, you know—only a very little at first, in about four years."

"Oh!" said Will again (this time in great scorn), "four years! Why, think how long a year is, think how long 'tis since last Thanksgiving, and four years to wait!"

"But the time goes by anyway. That's what papa says. You might as well have something growing. You'd better plant your seed."

"I shan't bother to, come on."

He waited impatiently while Ned brought a spade to dig; and finally, after also bringing water, smoothed the earth over his peach-stone.

"See me shy this at Rover."

Rover gave a little yelp as the stone hit him; and that was Will's last thought of the kernel in which was wrapped up so much of beauty and sweetness, ready to be brought out with a little care.

Later in the day Ned spied it, and picked it up. He carried it to where he had planted the other; then looked about with a thoughtfulness unusual in so small a boy, born of wise heed to what "papa says."

"I don't believe there will be quite room enough there when it's a tree. Those apple-trees'll shade it too much. I guess it had better go over in that corner."

Some years later Will followed Ned into the orchard and to a special spot, where the latter gave a little exclamation of delight.

"What is it?" asked Will.

"My peach-tree," said Ned; "I've been watching out for some blossoms this year, and here they are."

"And will the peaches be all your own?"

"Why, of course; I planted the seed. Don't you remember? You were here when I did it. You had a stone, too, that day, but you threw it away."

CURED OF BALKING.

Once I knew a little boy;

Was it you? Oh, my dear, no;

If this child were told to come,

He would almost always go.

They bought a donkey for him,

That was just as bad as he;

If you told that donkey "Haw!"

He would always straightway "Gee!"

When they went to ride together,

"Get up! get up!" John said.

Of course the donkey stopped quite short,

And John went o'er his head.

"I'm so thankful," said his mother;

"For I've talked and talked and talked,

But we never would have cured him

If his donkey hadn't balked.

"For Johnnie saw that balking

Was not best in boy or beast,

And from that day his ugly way
Has about entirely ceased."

A TOUCHING INCIDENT

We heard a story told the other day that made our eyes moisten. We have determined to tell it, just as we heard it, to our little ones:

A company of poor children who had been gathered out of the alleys and garrets of the city were preparing for their departure to new and distant homes in the West. Just before the time of starting the cars, one of the boys was noticed aside from the others, and apparently very busy with a cast-off garment. The superintendent stepped up to him, and found that he was cutting a small piece out of the patched linings. It proved to be his old jacket, which, having been replaced by a new one, had been thrown away.

There was no time to be lost, and the superintendent said: "Come, John, come; what are you going to do with that old piece of calico?"

"Please, sir, I'm cutting it to take with me. My dead mother put the lining in this old jacket for me. This was a piece of her dress and it is all that I have to remember her by."

And as the poor boy thought of that dead mother's love, and the sad death scene in the garret where she died, he covered his face with his hands, and sobbed as if his heart would break.

But the train was about leaving, and John thrust the little piece of calico into his bosom to remember his mother by, hurried into the car, and was soon far from the place where he had known so much sorrow.

We know that many an eye will moisten as this story is told and retold throughout the country, and many a prayer will go up to God for the fatherless and motherless in all the great cities and in all places.

Little readers, are your mothers spared to you? Will you not show your love by obedience? That little boy who loved so well, we are sure, obeyed. Bear this in mind: that if you should one day have to look upon the face of a dead mother, no thought would be so bitter as to remember that you had given her pain by your wilfulness or disobedience.

Christ has come to loose us all from the yoke of bondage which bows our faces to the ground, and makes us unfit to look up. He only can loose us; and his way of doing it is to assure us that we are free, and to give us power to fling off the oppression in the strength of faith in him.

Christ does not say: "Son, give me thy money, thy time, thy talents, thy energies, thy pen, thy tongue, thy head." All these are utterly unavailing, perfectly unsatisfying to him. What he says to you is: "My son, give me thine heart." Out of the heart come all the issues of life.