



SPINNING TOPS IN JAPAN.

JAPANESE CHILDREN.

JAPANESE children look very funny with their heads shaved, and they think our children look very funny with their hair on! They say, "Why don't the little barbarians go to the barber and be neatly shaved?" But the Japanese children keep a little of their hair on their heads. There is one little tuft on the crown of the head which is gummed into a tail and tied with white paper string. There are also two little locks near the ears. If a girl sees any curl in her hair, she never rests till it is oiled and smoothed away. They don't think curls pretty. But they think a large nose very beautiful.

On New Year's Day the little girls play battledore and shuttlecock. A number play together in circles, singing to the wind to be still. The boys sing to the wind to blow. The shuttlecocks are made of a black seed, with the feathers stuck in like the petals of a flower. The bat is wooden, and has a picture of a pretty Japanese dancing-girl, or a man, on one side; the other side is plain. They play ball, too, and sing. When they put their dolls to bed, they put a green net round the little bed to keep the mosquitoes from biting them.

They are also fond of spinning tops. Some can pick up the top and make it run up and down a bit of string. They have all kinds of games and take great fun out of them. They are bright and intelligent children, but they don't know anything about our religion except in a few cases where some good men and women from England or Canada or the United States gather them together and teach them.

Everybody is making mistakes. Everybody is finding out afterwards that he has made a mistake. But there can be no greater mistake than the stopping to worry over a mistake already made.

GOD'S LITTLE GIRL.

WHEN John and Melissa Martyn learned that their little Ruth would remain all her life a cripple, they were sorely grieved. Mrs. Martyn cried, and said, "She is so sweet and good. Her smile is so pretty. How hard it is that she will never walk, but must always be one of the weak ones!"

The big, strong blacksmith held his little girl close to his heart. His voice trembled as he said, "She is God's little girl. We have given her to Him. He will help us and her, too. Perhaps Ruthie's smile will help us over the hard places, wife. It's a rare sweet smile anyway; she's a sunshiny lassie."

When Ruthie was able to sit in the wheelchair, beside a window overlooking the much-travelled street, she smiled at the passers-by. The grandfathers and grandmothers began to watch for the little yellow-haired cripple who looked so happy. Busy fathers and mothers turned to nod a greeting to "little bright eyes." Light-hearted young people frequently left something at the door "for the little girl at the window."

"I never saw the like, John," said Mrs. Martyn, one stormy evening, as she displayed Ruthie's treasures—beautiful books, papers, cards, pictures—gifts which brought into the small shut-in's monotonous life exquisite pleasure, and cost the givers little.

"That child's pretty smile wins friends for her. Folks keep a stoppin' 'n leavin' her pretty things, 'n she keeps every paper 'n trinket in her treasure-chest, clean and neat. If we should die, John, I do believe there's kind folks that would give our little cripple a home, though she can't do much but smile."

"Melissa, we've given Ruthie into our Heavenly Father's keeping. Mebbe our little girl has something to do before He takes her, or you an' me, to the better home. I am perfectly easy about her, for I am trusting in God's promises, dear," replied Mr. Martyn, reaching for the Bible which opened easily at the thirty-first Psalm: "In Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust."

When Ruthie was able to read, the Martyns removed from the cosy Plainview cottage to a prairie home in the far west, and not long afterwards the big blacksmith fell sick. During the autumn and early winter Mrs. Martyn and Ruthie spent anxious and lonely days in waiting, hoping, and praying for a return of the splendid health so long enjoyed by the dear invalid, who was often a "bit fretty" when rheumatic pains were unusually severe.

One dreary Sunday morning even Ruthie was so lonely that her smile was a pathetic,