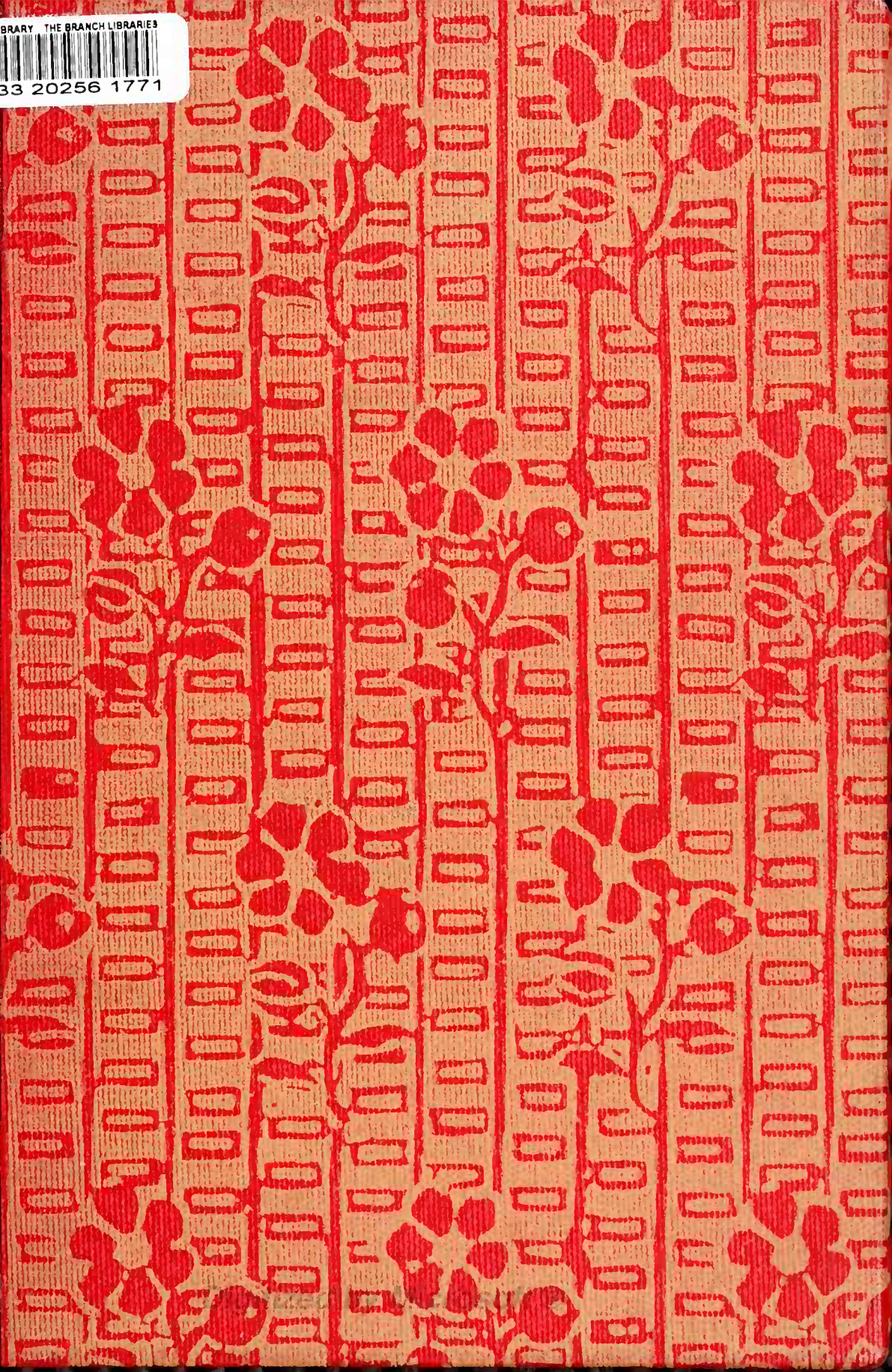


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Japanese children ✓

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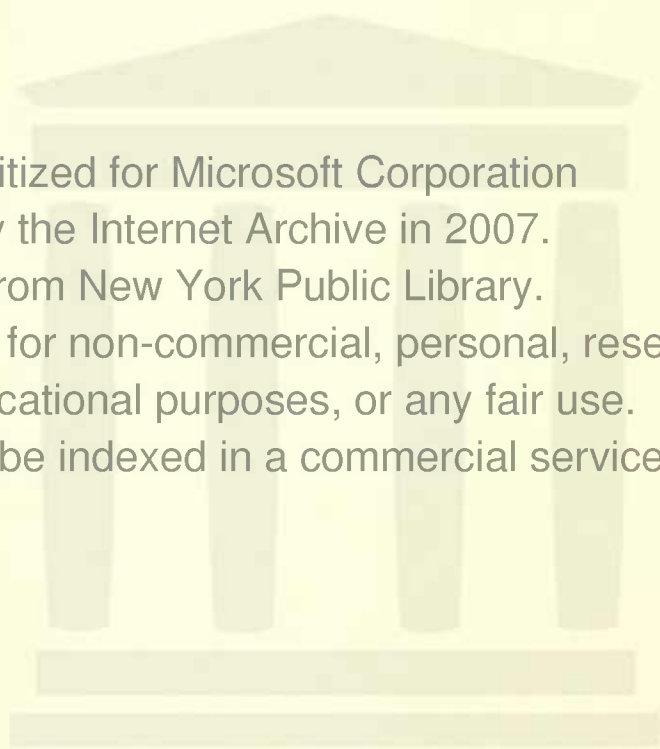
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The background of the cover is a traditional Japanese ink wash painting (suiboku-ga). It features a white crane in flight, its wings spread wide, flying across the upper half of the page. A red banner is attached to the crane's tail, extending downwards and to the right. The banner contains the title 'Japanese Children.' in a red, cursive font. The painting also includes a dark, gnarled tree branch in the lower left, and various cherry blossoms and leaves in shades of pink, red, and green scattered throughout the scene. The overall style is delicate and artistic, typical of traditional Japanese book illustrations.

*Japanese
Children.*

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THIS picture takes us back to the days when education in Japan was, for the mass of the people, a matter of private effort, the present extensive system of government schools, subordinate to an Education Department, dating only from 1871. The young lady who is puzzling out Chinese characters in a book, and the boy who is preparing to write some of those same characters in place of those which have been smeared out in his exercise-book, are being taught in a teacher's private dwelling. When a father brought his child, for the first time, to such a house, he took with him a barrel of *sake* (rice-spirit), and a couple of fishes, which were presented to the teacher, and a large box of *kowameshi*—a compound of rice and beans—for distribution amongst the new-comer's fellow pupils. Each scholar had to provide a small table, and writing materials. Black-boards, slates, and pencils were not yet known, and writing was done, as at present, with a little brush, or hair pencil, called *fude*. The cake of ink, called *sumi*, which the boy is rubbing on an inkstone with a little water, is made of lamp-black, or of soot from burning pine branches, kneaded up with glue and water, and then pressed in a mould and dried. When this ink is of good quality, it gives out a rather pleasant odour. Even in elementary government schools, boys are required to learn how to write about three thousand Chinese characters.

—:~::~~::~~:—

HERE we see some girls, dressed in their best clothes for the New Year holidays, amusing themselves with battledoor and shuttlecock, and playing with balls. The battledoor is made of wood, and the reverse side is ornamented with gay figures and flowers made of silk, and padded to make them stand out from the surface in a realistic way. The body of the tiny shuttlecock consists of a small, heavy nut, called *muku*, into which a few feathers are inserted, and a continuous “click” “click” is heard as it is knocked from one player to another. The “forfeit” for missing a stroke is having to sing or dance, and the maiden too shy to exhibit her skill in either way, must have her face smeared with ink. The bright-looking balls used by girls are made of a piece of sponge, wrapped round with cotton, and the more sponge there is, the higher the ball bounces.

—:~::~~::~~:—

BOYS in Japan sometimes amuse themselves with peg-tops, but kite-flying is a more popular form of amusement. The kites are made of paper stretched on a light bamboo frame, and gaily painted; most of them being of very flimsy construction, they are apt soon to come to grief on the telegraph and telephone wires which are found in large cities. The tattered relics adhering to

the strong wires, remind one of some poor dragonfly, careering proudly through the air, only to be doubled up and held fast in a spider's web. Where there is an open field, as in the picture, for the amusement, large kites, made in the shape of men, or birds, or animals, can be sent up without fear, of disaster, and some kites are as much as 15 or 20 feet long, and 10 or 15 feet broad. Such kites have long tails of straw rope, and have attached to them a device for making a loud humming noise. Triangular kites, without any tail, can be made, in skilful hands, to dart and dive through the air in a surprising manner, and these kites are often made to attack their larger and less nimble fellows.

— — — — — No. 4 — — — — —



WITH the arrival of the third day of March comes that festival of Dolls, called *Hina-no-matsuri*, which is perhaps as dear to the hearts of little girls in Japan as Christmas is to children in England. On a tiered platform covered with red cloth is set out a brave show of dolls and dolls' furniture; the Emperor and Empress are seated at the top, and look down serenely on court ladies and court musicians, and an array of cakes and sweetmeats. The children in the picture are having a dolls' tea-party, in which, as is proper, everything is on a Lilliputian scale. The little girl who is attending to the tea has, in a measure, forestalled matronly cares by fastening a doll to her

back ; but she will not be obliged, like the children of poorer families, when the feast is over, to have a living baby slung behind her, to hamper her movements when she goes out to play. Children sometimes like to play at "shop" with cut-up vegetables for merchandise, and evergreen leaves or pieces of paper for money.

— No 5 —



UENO Park in Tokyo, when the cherry-trees are in full blossom, presents many a cheerful scene. In the foreground of our picture we have a swaying line of youngsters, whose leader endeavours always to confront the boy whose aim it is to seize the hindmost of the party, the whole tail striving to keep in line with the head. A stout boy is always chosen as leader, who is supposed to be the father of the little fellow at the end, whom he has to protect from the *oni* or demon. This game is called *kotoro-kotoro*. Another group of children are playing at Blindman's Buff, called *mekakushi*. Hide-and-seek, called *kakurembo*, is often played ; those who hide may do so separately, or they may go in parties of two or three ; but in the latter case irrepressible bursts of laughter are apt to betray their hiding-place. On moonlight nights, boys and girls play at *kageboshi-onigo*, in which they try to tread on each others' shadow. *Digitized by Microsoft*®





THE bamboo, which in some countries might call up memories of castigation, has no such association for Japanese boys who make use of it in their games. It makes light and strong stilts, upon which races are run, and various antics are performed, by the more skilful users of these aids to progress, which remind people of the legs of a heron, and are accordingly called *sugi-ashi* (heron legs). Bamboo also forms the body of the toy horses on which two youngsters in the picture are disporting themselves, and which are called *take-uma* (bamboo horse). In country districts, the head of the horse is made of rice-straw, and the ears are made of the leaves of the orange tree. The fishes, made of cloth or paper, that are seen floating in the air, on the bank of the river, shew that it is early in May, when figures of carp are suspended from tall poles, in honour of the boys who have been born during the preceding twelve months, and when a festival is held called *Tango-no-sekku*.



THE religious processions which occasionally take place in cities during the summer are times of excitement for children as well as for their elders. Not satisfied with staring at the ornamental cars

which perambulate the streets bearing gaily-dressed figures, and girls who go through pantomimic performances, they organize processions of their own, one of which is represented in the picture. In place of the *mikoshi*, a kind of car taken at such times from a temple and borne on men's shoulders, they have an empty wine-cask, which they carry in like fashion, some of the party holding aloft oblong paper lanterns, from which flutter the white strips of paper called *gohei*, used in Shinto religious ceremonies. In this lively and noisy scene, the children of the upper classes do not condescend to take any part.

—  No. 8.  —



WHEN summer has come, children delight to play about in the water, even if that water is far less inviting in appearance than the stream represented in the picture. Sometimes one boy holds a net or basket in one part of a stream, while others drive the fish towards him, and we see a little girl holding a vessel into which any fish that may be caught are to be put. Gold fish, in glass globes, are a great delight to Japanese children, but boys sometimes insist on handling them, or transferring them too often from one vessel to another, and the unhappy fishes die of exhaustion. Boys and girls are sometimes scolded by their parents for wetting their long sleeves. Boys like to dam up a

stream, leaving one narrow passage where they place a mill-wheel, made of an unripe orange stuck round with shells, which goes round merrily with the current. Boys in Japan sometimes sail little boats, but this is not so common as with English boys.

— No. 9. —



WRESTLING has long been a favourite amusement in Japan; in fact, a thousand years ago, when two sons of an Emperor each claimed the throne, the question was decided by a wrestling-match between two champions, appointed by the princes, and that prince whose champion was successful became the Emperor Seiwa. In this, as in other matters, boys copy their elders, and, in imitation of the wrestling matches held by men, they make up an eastern and a western party, and furnish the umpire with a fan, by the movements of which the contest is regulated. The picture represents an informal wrestling-match, but the regular matches held in the rural districts, generally in the autumn, are preceded by wrestling matches for boys, at which the victors are rewarded with fruit and sweetmeats. One of the youngsters running towards the scene of the combat has a dragon-fly attached by a thread to a stick, it being a cruel custom of boys to go out with a bamboo tipped with bird-line to capture these insects.

WHEN the war between Japan and China was at its height, playing at soldiers was all the rage with boys. A discordant tin trumpet, a flag, and some bamboo sticks being all that was needed to equip a party of youthful warriors, warlike bands on the march, or at drill, were very common in the quieter streets of the capital. A passer-by was amused to see the captain of such a band command his men to halt and stack their bamboos, and then himself draw out and smoke a cigarette with that air of *sang froid* which he considered was a characteristic of military commanders. When it came to a question of a sham-fight, so much difficulty was experienced in getting any boys to personate the hated Chinamen, and thus expose themselves, perhaps for ever after, to derisive cries of *Chan-chan* the nickname for natives of the Celestial Empire from their fellows, that lots had to be drawn, and often a warrior, to whom fate was unkind on such occasion, would go home dissolved in tears, rather than figure as the enemy of his country. Before the war, toy-shops displayed halberds, and wooden swords, and warriors' caps, of the old style; but now the modern implements of warfare abound in such places, and young soldiers may be equipped for quite a small sum of money.

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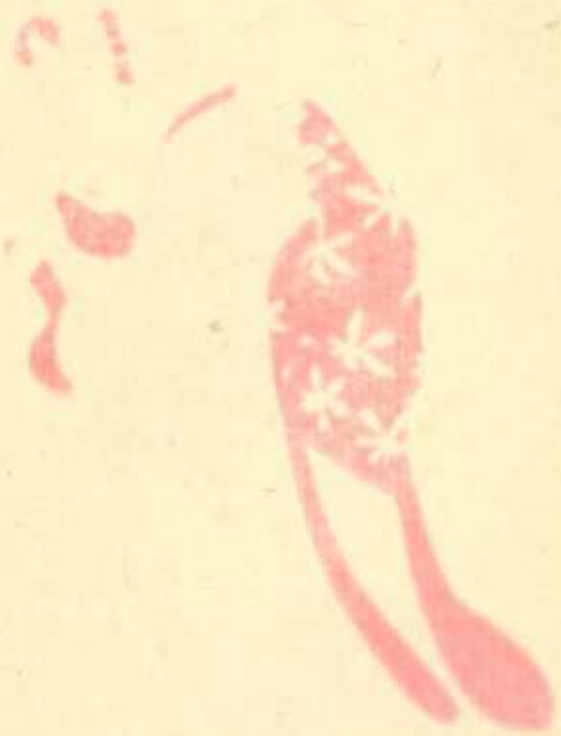


















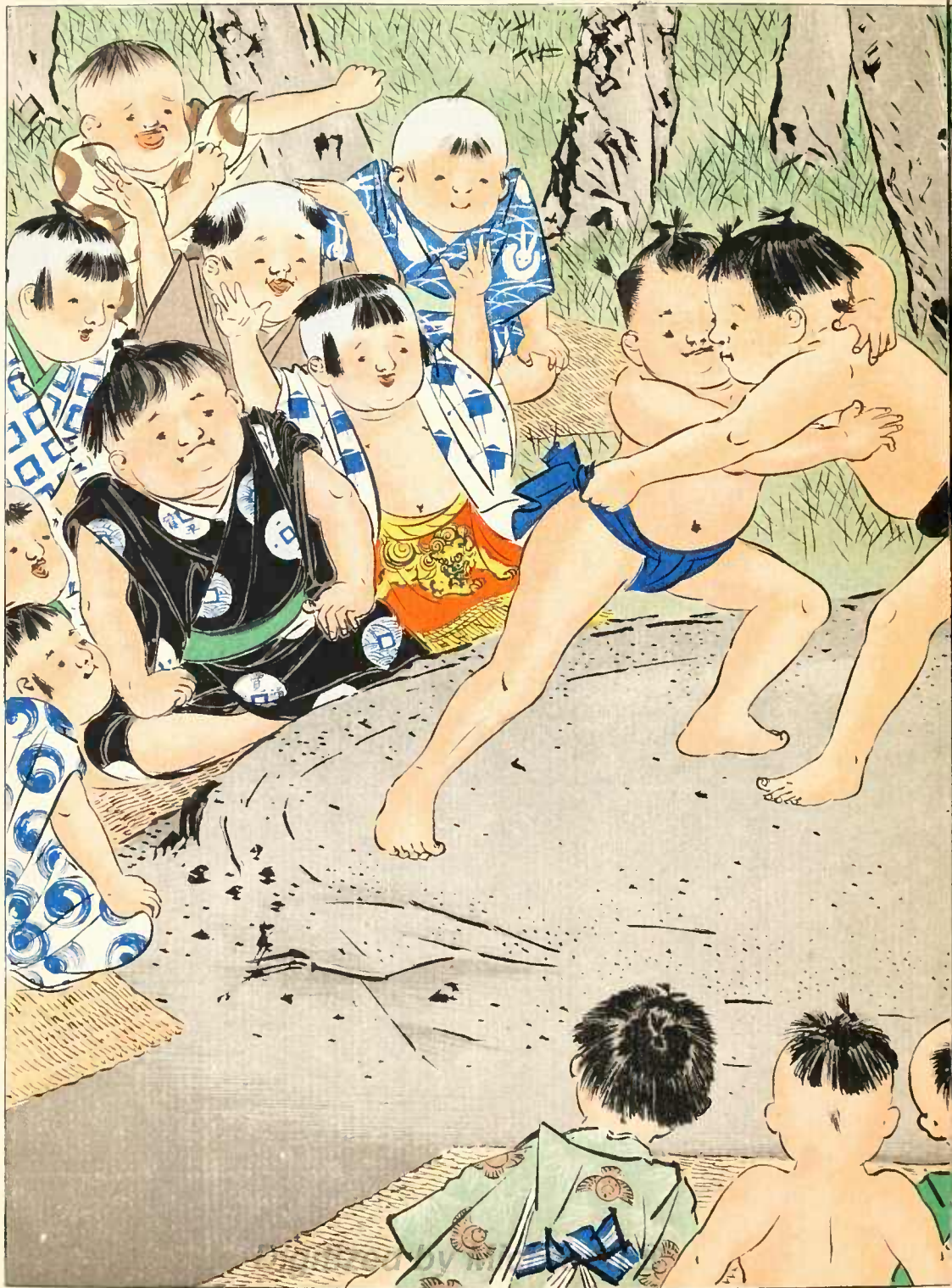




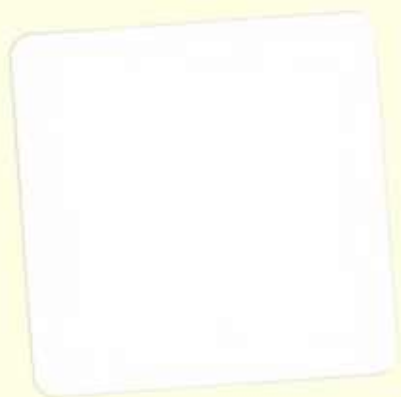


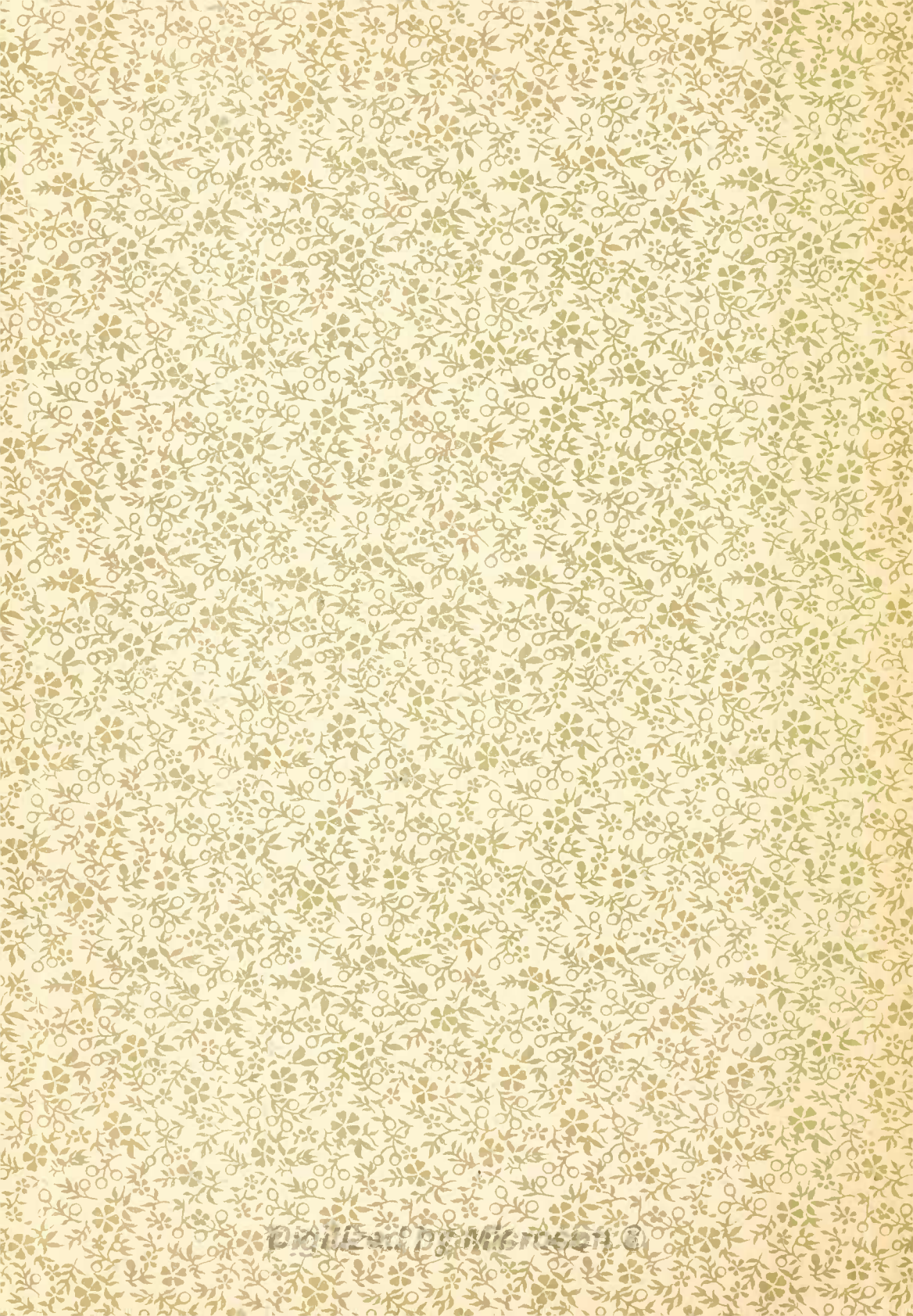












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