



SNOW BIRDS.

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Flowers and birds we think of when we think of bright, warm summer days. But when the sharp frosts come and the ground is covered with snow the brave little snow birds and our hardy little sparrows hop about as merrily as if they were holding a first of July festival. Sometimes, poor little birds, they have a hard time seeking for crumbs or grain for food. They are as brave as the little red blossoms that grow on the snow away up near the North Pole, and should make lazy little boys and girls who cry because they have to go to school through the snow ashamed of their cowardice.

## HOW THE CHILDREN KEEP NEW YEAR'S IN JAPAN.

Before the New Year's Festival comes there is a delightful rush and bustle, for though the Japanese are a very clean people, the houses must all be put in apple-pie order.

There is no Christmas in Japan, so this New Year's Festival goes on for three days. The Mochi-man is the national Santa-Claus: he always appears very mysteriously some time the day before the

first of January. As there are no chimneys in Japanese houses, he is obliged to slip through the door, and right where the almond-shaped eyes of the little ones can watch him. He boils, mixes and makes the delightful mochi that is formed into sticky cakes, after being worked about with a bamboo rod in a wooden bowl until as glossy as strained honey.

Night comes at last and the children gladly scramble off to bed, though many of them do not sleep a wink. At midnight some of the grown folks make it a point of duty to throw a handful of beans and rice in the face of the sleeping children: then begins the frolic. The beans and rice fly about in lively fashion, because in this way the thrower is supposed to wish that through the coming year good health, luck and happiness may follow the receiver and that Satan may not trouble him.

On New Year's Day the tiny maidens have new dresses, just as fine and bright colored as their parents can afford. The girls play battledore and shuttlecock through the streets, and so wild does the excitement rage that one has to dodge balls flying on every side, and be very careful not to tumble headlong over the

children who are skipping about like so many grasshoppers.

The boys, dressed in their best, fly gaudily decorated kites: the fathers and mothers get up on the house roofs and send their big kites skimming through the air.

The young folks are taken around to different houses to make friendly visits. You might really call this the children's festival, for any games that suit their fancy are immediately arranged and played, the parents entering into the fun quite heartily.

It is really a wonder that the children are not sick after three days of continual stuffing, as the shops are lined with curious-looking and tasting candies, and fathers and mothers are only too ready to buy these sweets.—Good Cheer.

## GUIDE ME SAVIOUR, DEAR.

Help me dear Saviour to be good;  
To read thy Word each day,  
And walk according to the light  
It sheds upon my way.

If I am tempted to do wrong  
By Satan's wicked charm,  
O come at once and make me strong  
That I may do no harm.

Teach me, dear Jesus, how to pray,  
And love with all my heart;  
And make me willing every day  
To do my humble part.

Thus through each day for all the year,  
Help me thy will to do.  
O may I always feel thee near  
To keep me ever true.

## LITTLE NEW YEAR.

I am the little New Year, ho, ho!  
Here I come tripping it over the snow,  
Shaking my bells with a merry din,  
So open your doors and let me in.

Blessing I bring for each and all,  
Big folk and little folk, short and tall;  
But each one from me a blessing may win,  
So open your doors and let me in.

Some shall have silver and some shall have gold,  
Some shall have new clothes and some shall have old;  
Some shall have brass and some shall have tin,  
So open your doors and let me in.

Some shall have satin and some shall have silk,  
Some shall have water and some shall have milk;  
But each one from me a blessing may win,  
So open your doors and let me in.

## WHY MOTHER WAS HAPPY.

"I feel very happy to-day," said mother, "because my little boy has really tried to be good all day. Once, when his sister teased him, and he spoke quickly and crossly to her, he turned round to her a moment after of his own accord and said he was wrong, and asked her to forgive him.

"I believe I should grow young, and never look tired or unhappy again, if every day my little boy and girl were as thoughtful, unselfish and loving as they have been to-day."

Character is made up of small duties faithfully performed, of self-denial, of self-sacrifice, of kindly acts of love and duty.