

# PLEASANT HOURS

PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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## The Five Loaves.

What if the little Jewish lad  
That summer day had failed to go  
Down to the lake, because he had  
So small a store of loaves to show ?

"The dress is great," he might have said.  
"For food the thronging people call.  
I only have five loaves of bread,  
And what are they among them all ?"

And back the mother's word might come,  
Her coaxing hand upon his hair  
"Yet go ; for they might comfort some,  
Among the hungry children there."

Lo, to the lakeside forth he went,  
Bearing the scant supply he had  
And Jesus with an eye intent,  
Through all the crowds, beheld the lad,  
And saw the loaves and blessed them  
Then  
Beneath his hand the marvel grew ;  
He brake and blessed, and brake up in  
The loaves were neither small nor few.

For, as we know, it came to pass  
That hungry thousands there were fed  
While sitting on the fresh green grass,  
From that one basketful of bread

If from his home the lad that day  
His five small loaves had failed to take,  
Would Christ have wrought can any  
say ?—  
That miracle beside the lake ?

## PROGRESS IN JAPAN

The Japanese are among the brightest and most intelligent people of the Orient. Of them it may almost be said in the words of Scripture, "That a nation is born in a day." A few years ago it was almost utterly insignificant. Now, it is one of the great war powers of the world. It huddled in a few weeks the most populous nation on the face of the earth, one ten times its size. It has adopted in a marvellous manner, Western institutions and Western civilization. It has an admirable public school system, with first-class colleges and a great imperial university. It is the only one of Eastern nations which has adopted representative institutions and has its regularly elected Parliament, a considerable number of whose members are converts to Christianity. Its postal, telegraph, and railway systems will compare favourably with those of any country in the world. The people are of very kindly disposition, and are very polite and courteous to each other, and exceedingly fond of their children. Japan has been called the paradise of boys and girls, so many ingenious toys are made for their amusement, and so heartily do their elders enter into the fun.

To the waking up of the spirit to the advantages of Western civilization, the Christian Churches have largely contributed. In this our own Church has taken a prominent part. Our mission to Japan was our first foreign missionary enterprise, begun by those veteran missionaries, Dr. Cochran and Dr. Macdonald. Twenty years ago, at the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia, I said to one of the Japanese Commissioners, "Do you know Dr. Cochran or Dr. Macdonald ?" The man brightened up and said, "Why, Dr. Macdonald baptized me." He also told me that another of the commissioners was a member of our Church in Japan. I asked him why it was that the Japanese adopted the Western costume while the Chinese still wore their pig-tails and long gowns. He laughed and replied that he supposed that the Japanese were more receptive of Western ideas and institutions. The circumstance illustrates the policy of the nation and explains their remarkable progress.

We have now about thirty-six missionaries, including native preachers, in Japan, with a separate Conference. Besides the missionaries of the Woman's Missionary Society, who have several educational and industrial schools, an orphanage, and other operations. We have in all 65 preaching appointments, 70 Sunday-schools, and 2,800 scholars. There are 19 ministers, 44 preachers and local preachers, 20 exhorters, and 96 class leaders.

The Japanese are very fond of music, and although much of it is very discordant to Western ears, yet the natives

## A MISSIONARY TEA.

BY J. C. WARE.

Ruth's face was flushed and her eyes were fairly sparkling from excitement as she rushed into the sitting room upon her return from Sabbath-school.

"O, mother," she exclaimed, "do put on a great big thinking cap and help me." "Why, my dear," said her mother, "what is the matter ? Why do-s my daughter want so much thinking done this lovely Sabbath day ?"

"O, mother, the superintendent told us that there would be a missionary from

mind my having them come to our house—and decide what to do."

"Well, my dear, we will say no more about it to-day, but I will be at your meeting as hear what the others have thought of, and try and help you out."

Seven more earnest little girls could not be found than were grouped about Mrs. Thornton, on the pleasant piazza, next afternoon. They were quite anxious that she should immediately take charge of the meeting and suggest what should be done to raise the money. But very wisely she first heard each girl give her plans, and when all had expressed themselves, she said :

"Well, my dears, Nellie has, I believe, thought out the very thing for you to do, and that is to give a missionary tea, and I will help you by offering you the use of our lawn, house, and myself."

"O, my dear mother," cried Ruth, throwing her arms about her mother's neck.

Such chattering you never heard. Even Polly in her cage took it up, and her cries of "Polly wants a cracker, Polly wants some tea," rang out shrilly above the voices of the girls, and greatly amused them.

After a great deal of talking and appeals to Mrs. Thornton's judgment it was decided to have the tea on Friday evening, and that it should be kept a profound secret. Ruth's father, who was editor of one of the local papers, very kindly offered to do their printing for

So on Thursday evening everybody was astonished and filled with curiosity when Mr. Thornton's office boy threw in to their yards a handbill reading as follows :

Seven young maidens will be pleased to receive you at seven o'clock Friday evening, and make you sevenfold happy, for the small sum of seven cents. Mrs. R. Thornton's, Chestnut Street.

To say the girls' unique entertainment met with success but feebly expressed it, for the lawn and house were filled. Scattered about under the trees were seven small tables at each of which stood one of the little maidens, who upon the payment of seven cents dispensed sandwiches and coffee, also giving to each purchaser a ticket, which admitted him, so it read, to the art gallery.

This feature of the entertainment had been the suggestion of Ruth's oldest brother, and was in his charge. The large reception hall had been used for his exhibit. Here, in various forms, was made prominent the figure seven. "The Seven Sleepers" were represented by seven youths, who made sorry work of keeping still. Then off to one side stood "The Seven Wise Men," looking as grave and decorous as such noted people should. Still in another corner "The Seven Wonders of the World" were cleverly represented, and caused the visitors to remark upon Arthur's ingenuity. So on, through all the legends of that mystical number, had the representation been carried out as perfectly as possible. Nor did the wonders of this entertainment cease here, for Mary Jones' sister, Florence, had organized a choir of seven misses, who discoursed sweet music during the evening.

It is needless to say which class made the best showing the next Sunday and not only was the banner given this enterprising class, but the missionary was so pleased when he heard from the superintendent how the money had been raised that he told them he would make a special contribution of it toward the education of a girl now in a missionary school fitting herself for a teacher, that she might some day go back and tell her own people of Jesus and the wonders his love works in the hearts of men.—Herald and Presbyter.

Read the Sunday-school lesson at least once a day.



JAPANESE SINGING GIRLS.

seem to like it, which speaks much for their fortitude. The Japanese have very rare taste in art. Their painting, embroidery, bronze modelling, and tapestry are of surpassing excellence and beauty. The native costume, as shown in our cut, is singularly graceful. The Japanese lanterns are also quite artistic.

Broken friendships may be mended, but it is usually a poorly done job that will soon need to be done over again.

India at our school next Sunday, and that he would give us a talk on that country, and a collection would be taken for him by classes, and to the class that, without the help of their teacher, gave the most money, he would present a banner made by native workmen." By this time Ruth's breath was well-nigh gone, but, hurriedly gathering a fresh supply, she continued : "And you know, mother, our class is so small—only seven of us. Each of us is going to think as hard as can be, and to-morrow afternoon we have a meeting here I knew you wouldn't