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## Boys and Girls.

My Life.—By a Dreadnought.

Japan's Wondrous Garden.

Ere a single stroke was made in my actual construction, vast numbers of men had been busy for many months. Plans of all shapes and sizes were prepared by skilful draughtsmen. These men knew nothing except the small portion of the plans upon which they were engaged. By these means there could be no possible leakage of secrets.

After the plans had been prepared, various drawings were made, from which a paraffin-wax model about 14 ft. long was constructed. This model was towed through a special experimental tank, and its behavior carefully noted.

When everything was in order, the plans were taken into a big room called the "mould-loft," on the floor of which they were drawn full size. Very flexible wood was cut and bent exactly to the plans—shaped in such a way that if all the pieces of wood had been fitted together, a full-sized model of the battleship would have resulted. The moulds were then taken to pieces and sent to the various workshops so that the steel-work could be constructed.

The costly portions were my plating and guns. The armor-plates cost something like £2,500 each. In fact, a large ship will require quite 4,500 tons of the plating, which is valued at £120 a ton. Then quite a fifth of the cost of a big ship when in commission will be absorbed by the gun machinery.

Before work was begun on me all this plating had to be collected, and the work had to be begun on the gun machinery. As soon as the work did start, however, it seemed to progress fast.

Born Amid Thunder.

First my keel was laid, and then, as if by magic, the sides sprang up, until, in a few months, I might have struck the observer as being nearly finished, though a vast amount of work had yet to be done. There were thousands of men at work all around me, hammering and clattering, as I grew in size and weight.

Surrounding me were a hundred great workshops, filled with masses of whirling machinery, engaged in making all manner of things to enter into my composition. Huge mangles pressed thick steel plates between their rollers. Machines were drilling holes through steel at the rate of nearly five inches a minute.

Here were gangs of men punching the rivet holes in the steel; there were others bending the heavy metal into all manner of shapes. About me were lines of rails on which travelled locomotives dragging ponderous masses of metal.

On my sides there clustered hundreds of men driving the metal home, while dotted all about were little furnaces. While there was so much noise and ceaseless activity, there was no confusion, and thus it was that I grew so rapidly, towering far above the yard on the slips over which I was to pass when my shell was finished.

Then came the great day when I was ready for launching.

Amidst a thousand hurrahs, I slowly went down the incline, after the props that held me in position had been knocked aside. Faster and faster I rushed to the water which was to be my home, my speed being checked as I entered it by means of heavy chains and what not. I was afloat at last.

A vast amount of work had still to be done. My engines and boilers had to be shipped and fitted, and so had all manner of machinery, including that to work the guns—a pair of which, with their mountings, etc., alone weighed some 500 tons.

There came a day at last when the work was finished, and I went on my trial runs. These being successful, I was handed over to the naval authorities, and commissioned as a Dreadnought.

The spring and summer in Japan is full of picturesque beauty, and yields an atmosphere of delicious comfort. The skies drop gladness and the earth teems with loveliness. Its garden pictures are changing as a kaleidoscope. The terraced hillsides rank with verdure, vie with wheat-fields bending beneath their load of grain; some just cut and supplanted by rice, in fields flooded with water, while others, green with tender shoots, are ready for transplanting. When the seasons are unusually dry nothing is left to suffer. The reservoirs are so large, and the irrigating system so complete, that Japan's wondrous garden smiles on beneath scorching rays.

The trees of Japan are a wonder. Here is the "mockungi," with its purple bell-shaped flowers; also the magnolia, with its rich white and purple clusters. Queen among the trees towers the camellia. Some of these are sixty feet high, and are covered with blossoms from January to May, of many varieties, from the large pure white, resembling a double rose, to the various shades of pink and red. The cherry and plum trees are cultivated solely for their blossoms, and are trees of rare beauty. The former grows thirty feet high and as many broad, its branches are covered with red and white flowers, two inches in diameter, and perfuming the air at a great distance. Its petals of snow and cream falling in showers, spread many a carpet for the feet on the stone-paths leading to the temples, verifying the native poet when he says, "There are snow showers which do not descend from the skies." The plum-tree is par excellence the poet's tree. Often it is seen standing leafless in the snow, yet adorned with blossoms like a bride. The tree bursts into soft clouds of bloom and fragrance in February, but without leaves.

Along the hill-sides maples and pines are covered with vines of exquisite loveliness, trailing and intertwining with bewildering intricacy; among these are the wisteria and thumbergia, with their purple stars and tufts. From the verdant valleys to the tops of the mountains are seen lilies, pinks, and roses of endless variety. The grass is studded, and flowers spring even from the quaint, artistic, thatched roofs of the tea-houses, asking leave only to grow and bless the light. These tea-houses seem idyllic. They are a national institution, for they are everywhere, as the people are everywhere; along the city streets, by the roadside, in the groves, woods, parks, valleys and, up the mountain-side.

The Kite Over the Steeple.

By James Buckham

The wind was strong on the common, and after school Sidney Barnes took his four-foot kite out there to fly it. The kite went up with that steady, soaring and strong, even pull that a boy loves. It was none of your fickle, gusty winds that was blowing, a wind that will sweep a kite up with a rush, and then drop it as if in sport and let it pitch headlong to the ground. This was a strong, even northwest wind that you could depend on—a bit chilly, but splendid for kite-flying; and Sidney's heart glowed, as he watched his four-footer climb up over the trees and the tops of the highest blocks, until it finally hung like a great poising eagle in the deep blue of the sky.

As the boy watched it, he became aware of another interesting sight, up there in the blue depths of air—a steeplejack sitting on a tiny necklace of scaffolding just below the gilt ball and weather-vane of the steeple of the First Presbyterian Church—the tallest steeple in the city by fifty feet. The man was repair-