

## HOW THE BOYS AND GIRLS PLAY IN JAPAN.

BY E. WARREN CLARKE.

THE most interesting sights are the games and sports of the children. The girls play battledore and shuttlecock, and the boys fly kites and spin tops. The

girls enjoy their game very much, and are usually dressed in their prettiest robes and bright-coloured girdles; their faces are powdered with a little rice flour, their lips are tinted crimson, and their hair is done up in a most extraordinary fashion. The boys have wonderful kites, made of tough paper pasted on light bamboo frames, and decorated with dragons, warriors, and storm hobgoblins. Across the top of the kites is stretched a thin ribbon of whalebone, which vibrates in the wind, making a peculiar humming sound. When I first walked the streets of Tokio, I could not imagine what the strange noises meant that seemed to proceed from the sky above me, the sound at times was shrill and sharp, and then low and musical. At last I discovered several kites in the air, and when the breeze freshened, the sounds were greatly increased.

Sometimes the boys put glue on their kite-strings, near the top, and dip the strings into pounded glass. Then they fight with their kites, which they place in proper positions, and attempt to saw each

other's strings with the pounded glass. When a string is severed, a kite falls, and is claimed by the victor. The boys also have play-fights with their tops.

Sometimes I met boys running a race on long stilts; at other times they would have wrestling matches, in which little six-year-old youngsters would toss and tumble one another to the ground. Their bodies were stout and chubby, and their rosy cheeks showed signs of health and

happiness. They were always good-natured, and never allowed themselves to get angry.

On the fifth day of the fifth month the boys have their "Feast of Flags." They celebrate the day very peaceably, with games and toys. They have sets of figures with flags and processions. Out-

on the third day of the third month. During the week preceding this holiday, the shops of Tokio are filled with dolls and richly dressed figures. This "Feast of Dolls" is a great gala-day for the girls. They bring out all their dolls and gorgeously dressed images, which are quite numerous in respectable families. The

images range from a few inches to a foot in height. They are all arranged on shelves, with many other beautiful toys, and the girls present offerings of rice, fruit, and "saki" wine, and mimic all the routine of court life. The shops display large numbers of these images at this special season, after the holiday they suddenly disappear.

I once bought a large doll-baby at one of the shops to send home to my little sister; the doll was dressed in the ordinary way, having its head shaved in the style of most Japanese babies. It was so life-like, that when propped up on a chair a person would easily suppose it to be a live baby.

In going along, I would often see a group of children gathered around a street story-teller, listening with wide, enquiring eyes and breathless attention to the ghost story or startling romance which he was narrating. Many of the folks also gathered around, and the story-teller shouted and stamped on his elevated platform, attracting great attention, until just as the most thrilling part of the story was reached, he sud-

denly stopped and took up a collection! He refused to go on unless the number of pennies received was sufficient to encourage the continuation of the thrilling story.

The boys delight in fishing, and will be for hours holding the line by the most and canals, waiting for a bite. I have seen a dozen people watch a single person fish when there would not be a bite once in half-hour.



JAPANESE LADY AND CHILD.

side the house a bamboo pole is erected by the gate, from the top of which a large paper fish is suspended. This fish is sometimes six feet long, and is hollow. When there is a breeze it fills with wind, and its tail and fins flap in the air, as though it were trying to swim away. When hundreds of these huge fishes are seen swimming in the breeze, it presents a very curious appearance.

The girls have their "Feast of Dolls"