

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Vol. XVII.]

TORONTO, JANUARY 23, 1897.

No. 4.

Languages.

Greek's a harp we love to hear,
Latin is a trumpet clear;
Spanish like an organ swells;
Italian rings its bridal bells;
France, with many a frolic mien,
Tunes her sprightly violin;
Loud the German rolls his drum,
When Russia's clashing cymbals come;
But Britain's sons may well rejoice,
For English is the human voice.
These, with eastern basses far,
Form the world's great orchestra.

Japanese children love also the sport of kite-flying. They make kites with strips of bamboo on which is fastened the paper of very tough texture, common in Japan. Some kites are of huge size and can be raised many hundred yards. Veritable swarms of them may often be seen flying above villages. The children attach to them little devices that under the influence of the wind give out a most curious musical humming sound.

The Japanese child is neither rough nor brutal. He is full of life and spirits, nothing more. He spends his money for fruit and candy like other children and takes his pleasure in a more rational way than the American child, being both less strong and less combative.

offices a certain number of Japanese children as clerks or errand-boys. It is said that all little Japanese, especially these messenger boys, have a special talent for whistling. They even whistle European tunes!

We should say, in closing, that in Japan people love children so much that when they have none of their own, they adopt one, and if a Japanese thinks he is too poor to support his child, he hastens to get it adopted by some rich family, which he always succeeds in doing.

ABOUT FOREIGN SCHOOLS.

Germany sends more of her children to school than any other nation. Par-

one o'clock. The pupils return in the afternoon, and are taught singing, sewing, drawing, etc. The school year begins in October, and lasts until September, there being one month of summer vacation.

The rules governing school children in Russia are applied not only when they are at school, but when on the street or even at home. It is a serious violation of the law for a child to appear on the street without all his buttons buttoned. Schoolboys must salute teachers and officials of the State with a white bow, at the same time removing their hats.

Switzerland has many strange customs regarding public schools. Great care is taken in that country to teach the laws of health and cleanliness. In some places bath-rooms are built in connection with the schools, and in these pupils are taught the chemical effects of soap and water. Some cities have introduced instruction in swimming, skating and open air games as parts of the school courses. In many places the Government furnishes warm dinners and clothes to poor school children. Oftentimes, when they come from long distances in the rain, dry garments are kept in the schools, in order that they may have a change.

It is said that illiteracy is almost unknown in Sweden. All children are expected to be in school between the ages of 7 and 14, which rule is strictly enforced after the ninth year. Women in that country are allowed to belong to the school boards. Swedish boys and girls have to attend school only thirty-six weeks in each year, leaving almost four months of holiday. School is held every day in the week, but Saturday is reserved for manual training. An original manual training system now gaining headway in the Swedish schools promises to become popular in many progressive countries. This is known as "Slojd," which is a combination of manual training and Delsarte. It is for the most part modelling in wood, sewing and doing other practical work, the positions of the body assumed while thus employed uniting in a measure with gymnastics. Girls are taught knitting, sewing, darning, pattern drawing and cutting and dressmaking, all the movements of which work are so arranged as to develop certain necessary muscles.

The excellent public school system of far-off Japan to a great extent tells the tale of the recent rapid rise of that nation to a high plane of enlightenment. The pupils of this Empire are taught according to the combined principles of the French and American systems, with some original additions. In the higher schools girls are taught such subjects as "mode of preserving flowers, mode of burning incense, mode of folding papers, sitting etiquette, etiquette in tea party, standing etiquette," and, in addition, under the heading, "household management," they get "hygienic training of children, nursing of patients, attention to furniture, garments, washing, hair dressing, income and expenditure and employing servants." Where is there to be found a better course for "the new woman?"

For vacations, the young Britisher, like the German youngster, gets only his week at Christmas, Easter and Whitsuntide, and three weeks only in summer, commencing with the first Monday in

JAPAN THE CHILDREN'S PARADISE.

Truly Japan is a children's paradise! Nowhere are there more of them; nowhere are they better loved. The sweetest sentiment of Japan is filial love, and parents who love their children passionately are amply recompensed for this affection by the care and respect with which they are surrounded later in life, when they have reached old age.

It is a charming spectacle to see the children in Yokohama, when they go, at the beginning of springtime, to look for shells at low tide. They come in groups from all parts of the city, carrying with them baskets and boxes hanging from their backs.

Having disrobed, they run joyously over the beach, prattling and crying out with glee, devoting all their energies to the search, while the heads of sleeping babies are balanced, funnily on the hips of older brothers or sisters.

Japanese children are never bashful or sullen. They look you straight in the face, never draw back if you call them to you, and although intimidated by the familiarity of strangers, they smile at you if you show them a friendly face. And curiously enough you can draw a crowd of them immediately if you seem interested in some invisible object. Thus a passer-by in Europe who looks into the air will soon see a crowd gather about him. In Japan this crowd is one of children.

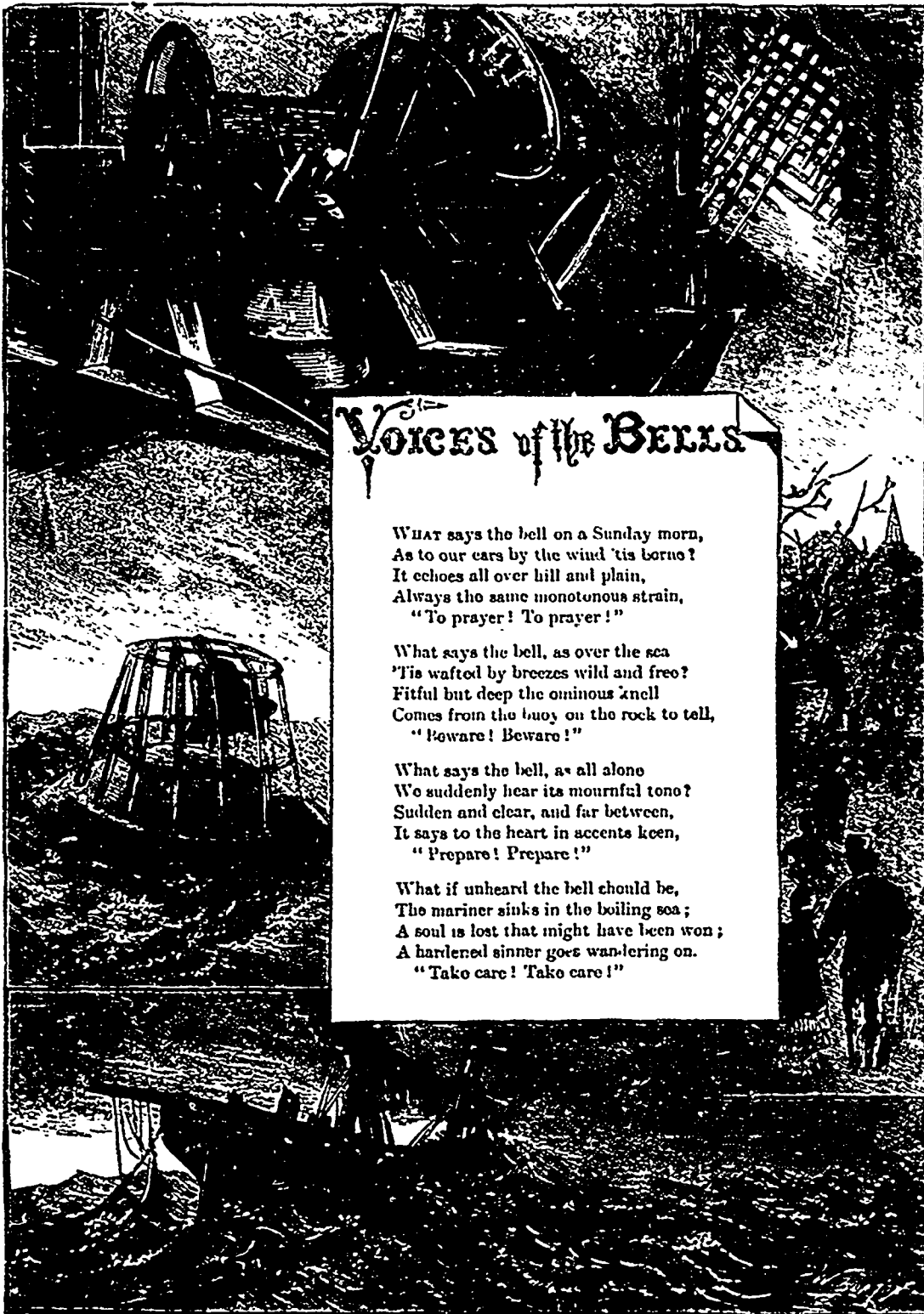
The custom of shaving their heads is disappearing. You know in what manner this is done. Only a little lock of hair is left just at the top of the head, and sometimes also a tuft at the neck.

Two days in the year are exclusively devoted to children. At Tokyo, Kyoto, Yokohama, and in all the cities of Japan there is a day when the shops are full of toys, little models of persons or things, or even figures of the entire Japanese court in miniature. This is on the great holiday for little girls.

At this time, large and small are dressed in garments of all colours and affect the most extraordinary head-dresses. The mothers are very proud of these toilets.

The corresponding boys' holiday falls on May 5. Then they are seen scattered everywhere about the country. At each house is raised a bamboo mast from which hang, blown about by the wind, strings of paper fishes. These represent carp, and are symbols of energy and constancy. For as the carp can ascend streams against the strongest currents, just so a studious child can, in following the difficult current of life, acquire fortune and renown.

There are as many of these paper fish at each house as there are children in it, so that at some houses as many as a dozen fish may be counted on the masts.



VOICES of the BELLS

What says the bell on a Sunday morn,
As to our ears by the wind 'tis borne?
It echoes all over hill and plain,
Always the same monotonous strain,
"To prayer! To prayer!"

What says the bell, as over the sea
'Tis wafted by breezes wild and free?
Fitful but deep the ominous knell
Comes from the buoy on the rock to tell,
"Beware! Beware!"

What says the bell, as all alone
We suddenly hear its mournful tone?
Sudden and clear, and far between,
It says to the heart in accents keen,
"Prepare! Prepare!"

What if unheard the bell should be,
The mariner sinks in the boiling sea;
A soul is lost that might have been won;
A hardened sinner goes wandering on,
"Take care! Take care!"

But the child that attracts most attention is the child of the sampans (boats). Each sampan is generally navigated with the aid of two heavy sweeps, managed by two children, of whom the youngest is often not more than eight or ten years old. Under the eyes of parent or patron the young boatmen give proof of incomparable address and agility. They live on board the boat, eating and sleeping there, and so are trained to be excellent sailors for the Japanese navy. Foreign firms also employ in their

ents are required to send to school every boy or girl between the ages of 6 and 14. A peculiarity of the system is that the parent, on sending his son to primary school, must decide whether he is to go through the classical, scientific, or business high school. There are ten times as many men as women teaching school in Germany.

In France public schools are provided for babies two years old. In this Republic, as in Germany, school begins daily at eight o'clock, and lets out about

addition, under the heading, "household management," they get "hygienic training of children, nursing of patients, attention to furniture, garments, washing, hair dressing, income and expenditure and employing servants." Where is there to be found a better course for "the new woman?"

For vacations, the young Britisher, like the German youngster, gets only his week at Christmas, Easter and Whitsuntide, and three weeks only in summer, commencing with the first Monday in