



A JAPANESE JUNK.

JAPANESE JUNK-LIFE.

"One of the most interesting features of Japanese life to me," said a recent traveller, "was the manner of living in the boats and junks, thousands of which frequent every bay along the coast. The junks always belong to the members of one family; and usually every branch of the family, old and young, live on board. The smaller sail-boats are made like a narrow flat-boat; and the sail (they never have but one) extends from the mast about the same distance in either direction—that is, the mast runs up the middle of the sail when it is spread. In these little boats men are born and die without ever having an abiding-place on shore. Women and all wear little clothing, except in rainy weather, when they put on layers of ringy straw mats, which give them the appearance of being thatched. At night, if in harbour, they bend poles over the boat from side to side in the shape of a bow, and cover them with this watertight straw fringe, and go to sleep all together like a lot of pigs. A child three years old can swim like a fish, and often children who will not learn of their own accord are repeatedly thrown overboard until they become expert swimmers. In the harbours children seem to be perpetually tumbling overboard; but the mothers deliberately pick them out of the water, and cuffing them a little, go on with their work. It is astonishing at what age these boys and girls learn to scull a boat. I have seen a boat twenty feet long most adroitly managed by three children, all under seven years of age. I am told that, notwithstanding their aptness at swimming, many boatmen get drowned, for no boat ever goes to another's aid; nor will

any boatman save another from drowning, because, he says, it is all fate, and he who interferes with fate will be severely punished in some way. Besides this, the saving of a boatman's life keeps a chafing soul only so much longer in purgatory, when it ought to be released by the death of the sailor, whom the gods, by fate, seem to have selected for the purpose."

YOUR NICHE.

There's a niche for you in the world, my boy,

A corner for you to fill,
And it waits to-day
Along life's way
For the boy with a frank "I will."
So, lad, be true;
The world wants you
In the corner that you may fill.

There's a niche for you in the world, my girl,

A corner for you to fill;
For a girl that is kind,
With a pure, sweet mind,
A place that is waiting still.
So, lass, be true;
The world wants you
In the corner that you may fill.

There's a niche for you both in the world, my dears,

A corner for you to fill,
And a work to do
Which no one but you
In God's great plan can fulfil.
So, dears, be true;
The world wants you,
And your place is waiting still.

A KING WHO WAS A SHOE-MAKER.

Humbert, king of Italy, was a good king, and loved his people. His queen, Margherita, is a widow, because a wicked man killed her husband not long ago, but she is tenderly loved by all the people of Italy, and her son is now the king.

Humbert belonged to one of those royal families who have a rule that every son born to them shall choose a trade and learn it. They do this to teach all the fathers and mothers in the kingdom that it is right to give their children a trade by which they can earn a living for themselves and their families. Humbert chose to make shoes, and he could make very good ones.

It is said that the shoes that Humbert made—and they were few, because he had to take care of his kingdom—were made so well that they would last longer than other shoes. He wanted his people to learn to do well whatever they had to do, and so he did his best.

It is a royal thing to do one's best, and

in the sight of God the poor cobbler is as good as the royal shoemaker, if he does his work well.—*Picture Lesson Paper.*

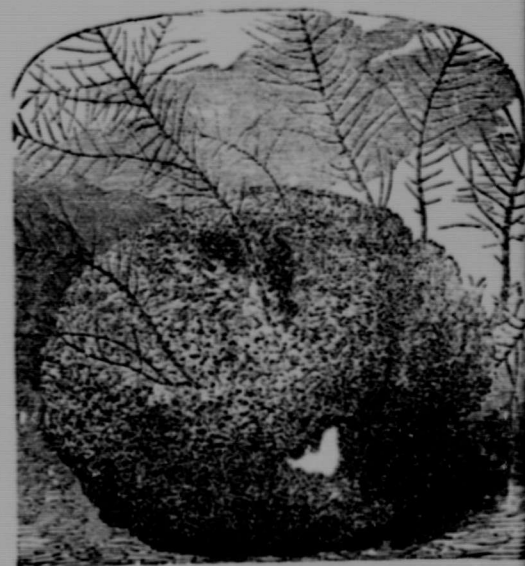
SPONGES.

When you use your sponge, do you ever ask yourself where it came from, whether it grew or was made? The sponge is a collection of animals, really, who lay eggs which hatch and increase the size of the sponges. The best sponges are found in the Mediterranean. They used to be caught by native divers, and even with harpoons; but they have grown scarcer, and are now caught in deep waters that require expert divers in divers' suits. Sponges are found in the Pacific Ocean, the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean.

The Greeks are said to be the best divers in the world. A glass is placed at the end of a large tube. The boat engaged in sponge-fishing passes slowly over the ground while an expert watches the bottom through the large tube, the glass of which is beneath the surface. The water is so clear that the bottom can be seen at a great depth. When the sponges are discovered, the divers put on their suits and go to the bottom, and the sponges are brought to the surface.

In the waters of the West Indies the sponges are secured in comparatively shallow water. A box or bucket is used, with a pane of glass inserted in the bottom. The sponge-fisher puts his face into this, and when he discovers sponges brings them to the surface with a hook. The large woolly sponge, as you would imagine, is called a sheep sponge.

All sponges have to be prepared for market. As taken from the water they are unfit for use, and must be cleansed, and bleached to some extent. The very white, hard sponges are over-treated, and not as good as those cleansed without so free a use of acid. The best sponges are found in the deepest waters.



A LIVING SPONGE.