

A RAILWAY IN THE CLOUDS.



THE picture on the preceding page gives a view of the most remarkable railway in the world. It runs from Callao, the chief seaport of Peru, right over the Andes, which it crosses at the height of 15,645 feet. This is only 136 feet below the summit of Mont Blanc, the highest mountain in Europe. At Callao all the fruits of the tropics abound. As the road climbs the mountains, they disappear, and are succeeded by those of the temperate zone. These in turn give place to arctic desolation and eternal ice and snow. It is like making a voyage in a few hours from the equator to the frigid zone.

The difficulty of making the road was enormous. Under its hardships, ten thousand of the workmen died. Even in traversing it in the cars, the rarified air causes extreme difficulty in breathing and congestion of the lungs. What must it have been to work at it? It has sixty-one tunnels—making about four miles of solid mountain bored through—and bridges innumerable. The powder alone used for blasting the rock was over 5,000,000 pounds. A thousand horses and mules were employed at one time. Some of the bridges leap from cliff to cliff at a dizzy height above the valley. In places a cord had to be carried across by a kite. A rope was then drawn over, and on this the engineer was drawn across, seated in a sling hanging from the rope. The condors of the Andes would rush at him in mid-air for thus invading their lone domain.

Last summer we went up the railway to the top of Mount Washington, and much of the time were completely enveloped in the clouds. But this road is nearly three times the height of that, and well deserves the title of a Railway in the Clouds. The mountains are so steep that the road had to zigzag backwards and forwards up the sides of the valley to gain the top. It is indeed an extraordinary example of the ability of man to overcome the greatest difficulties. It was built by Mr. Meiggs, a gentleman from near Rochester, in New York State. We venture to say that when he was a boy he was not easily discouraged by the difficulties of his lessons.

Boys, if you want to grow up to be men of energy and of unconquerable will, you must learn

to do so now. Let there be no such word as fail in your dictionary. If there be difficulties in your Latin, or algebra, or arithmetic, grapple with them and overcome them, and you will learn a lesson far more valuable than that in the book. So it is also in the Christian life. It is a warfare against sin, a conflict with evil, and to him that overcometh, says the Great Captain of our salvation, will I give a crown of life.

W. H. W.

JAPANESE FEAST OF DOLLS.

"JAPAN," says an American traveller, "is the paradise of babies. Nowhere else are toys and games for children so numerous and diverting. In these games, children of a larger growth, even adult men and women, take an active part. The toy shops of the cities look like a perpetual Christmas fair. Gaily carved and painted battle-dores, tops, stilts, hobby-horses, hoops, and above all, huge dragon-shaped kites, are in great request on the numerous holidays—old men and little children being alike engaged in these sports. The Feast of Dolls is a high day with the girls. For many days before, the toy-shops are gay with elaborately constructed dolls from four to twelve inches high—made of wood or enameled clay. They represent the Mikado, and the nobles with their families, court persons, and elegant furniture, and the like, with which the girls mimic the whole round of Japanese life.

The great day for the boys is the Feast of Flags. Their toys are of figures of heroes, warriors, flags, banners, and warlike implements and weapons. In old families the collection of these toys are very large; but since the advent of the foreigners, the adults take a less active part in these sports. "In general," says the author before quoted, "their games seem to be natural, sensible, and in every way beneficial. Their immediate or remote effect, next to that of amusement, is either educational or hygienic. Some teach history, some geography, some excellent sentiments or good language, or inculcate reverence to parents, or stimulate the manly virtues of courage and contempt for pain. The study of the subject leads one to respect more highly the Japanese people for being such affectionate fathers and mothers and for having such docile children."

"But," he adds, "nothing can ever renovate the individual heart, purify society, and give pure blood-growth to the body politic in Japan, but the religion of Jesus Christ. The religion of the home-maker can alone purify and exalt a Japanese home."