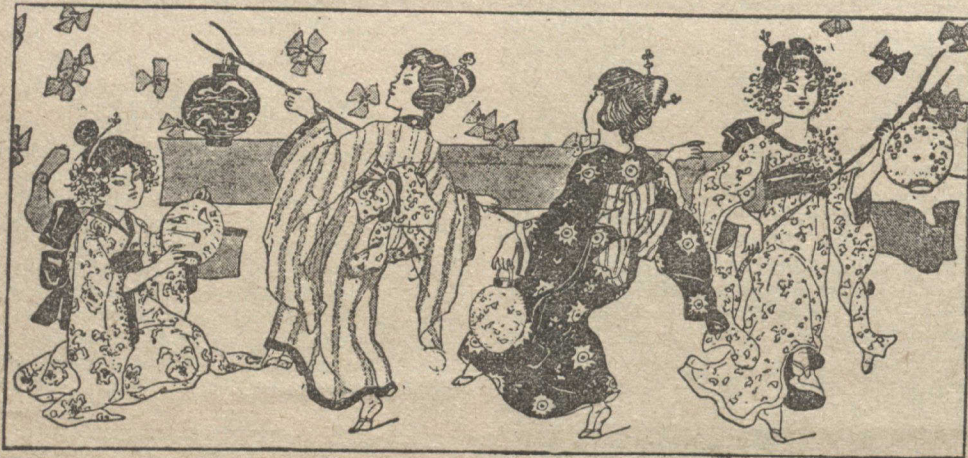


LITTLE FOLKS

Little Maids of Japan.

Travellers in Japan say that the Japanese children are the happiest in the world. It is difficult for us to understand how that can be, because American children are accustomed to a great deal of freedom, and of that, judged by our standard, the Japanese child has very little. Especially is this true of the girls, who are brought up from babyhood

always she is generally taught to read and write, as well as to paint and embroider, and be polite. The Japanese mode of writing is very different from ours. It is done with a bluntpointed stick of wood instead of a pen, and Indian ink is used in the place of the writing fluid familiar to us. The Japanese, like the Chinese and most other Oriental people, begin to write at



to yield their will to their elders in a way that, while very sweet and beautiful to see, is always a source of astonishment to visitors from abroad.

The Japanese girl of good family spends a great deal of her time playing out of doors, and it is this open-air life which gives her the strong, active little body, rosy cheeks and sparkling eyes for which the Japanese women are famous the world over. She is not, as a rule, troubled with many lessons, for much 'book learning' is not considered either necessary or becoming in a woman; but now-

the bottom of the page instead of at the top, and write up the page instead of across it.

The little Japanese girl is very fond of playing ball, but instead of using only one ball, as an American child would do, she plays with several at a time, tossing them as they fall. Even small children become very expert at this difficult game, and it is very interesting to watch a group of the quaint little people, in their picturesque dresses, as they try to outdo each other in keeping the brightly colored balls flying, laughing and chattering all the while.—'SS. Messenger.'

Neighbors.

It was such a convenient knot-hole—just the right height for Meg. She often went there on sunny days and looked into the big shady garden, with its little flower-beds and neat paths winding in and out among them. And The Curly One and Dimples—Meg named them herself—were almost always there, too.

To-day they were playing hide-and-seek, and the game was growing exciting. All the easy places had been hidden in and the hard ones were not a bit easy to find. Meg's little bare toes dug tiny grooves in the soft earth. It was quite a cold day, and the little bare toes looked blue and shivery. Every

now and then they crept up, five at a time, under Meg's scanty petticoats, but they came back almost as blue as ever. Meg did not care, though. She kept one brown eye at the knot-hole. The Curly One was counting fifty, and Dimples was scurrying about, looking anxiously for a place to hide. Meg watched her little black-stockinged legs, and thought how warm they looked; but she could not stop long for that. The Curly One was saying 'thirty-two, thirty-three,' and still no hiding-place. Dimples was quite close to the knot-hole.

'Quick!' Meg whispered, shrilly, wiggling the cold toes excitedly. 'Scooch down an' pull the grapevines over you—quick!'

'Forty-two, forty-three, forty-four!' The Curly One called, now very slowly.

There was no time to lose. Dimples 'scooched,' and the dry vines crackled and snapped.

She peered out between them, trying to discover who had whispered, but she did not see the brown eye shining through the knot-hole. What a time The Curly One had, trying to find Dimples! Round and round she flew, and Meg had plenty of time to admire her warm-looking black stockings and nimble little boots. When, after a while, they went twinkling past the knot-hole, she felt a sudden wish to help The Curly One, too. 'Under the vines! Under the vines!' she shouted.

The Curly One stopped short at the knot-hole. A blue eye and a brown one looked into each other for a little minute. Then The Curly One said politely, 'Won't you walk in?' Then they both laughed. How could Meg walk in through a knot-hole?

'Go round to the gate,' Dimples said, over The Curly One's shoulder. And that was how Meg got into the beautiful garden at last. Before many minutes a pair of bare blue legs were twinkling in and out among the beds as swiftly and merrily as the warm black ones. By and by, when Meg went away, the little cold toes felt cozy and comfortable in stockings and shoes, and her little heart felt warm and happy, too.—Annie Hamilton Donnell, in 'Youth's Companion.'

The Leopard With Horns.

Once there was a little boy named Jimmy. And he had always lived in the city, and the only animals he had ever seen were horses, dogs, and cats. But he had heard of leopards, because one of his boy friends told him all about them, and how they had spots on them and they could climb trees and eat people.

Well, one day he went to the country, and in course of time his cousin, who was older than he, helped him into an apple-tree, and then went into the house to get something—maybe it was an apple.

Jimmy was rather alarmed at being alone in the tree, but he managed to stay there. Suddenly he saw a beast come prowling up the road. It was about the size of a leopard, as he imagined, and it was covered with spots even larger than a leopard would have, so it must be