

which never fail to arouse the Japanese imagination.

Japanese, as well as Chinese children, have dolls, tops, shoe-shaped, and whipped with an eel skin lash, snorting devils made of wood, bouncing balls which their mothers have made for them with many colored woollen threads, dogs in pasteboard, keg-shaped drums, octopods with long ludicrous noses, paper masks used in their childish masquerades. They are allowed to set off fireworks, being cautioned of the danger of burning their hair arranged in curls around their temples. The little girls are taught to cut out and adorn paper hens. They think little of freezing their fingers in rolling enormous snowballs, and, as is the custom with boys in northern countries, pelt one another, and blackened eyes are often the result. Again, with snow they fashion rough casts of the statues of Dharma, and paint them with Indian ink, so as to represent a yawning mouth, and with vermilion to encircle the hollow eyes. Dharma is a great Buddhist saint, who, in the 7th century, introduced into the country the sacred teachings of Sakai-Muni; he had remained sitting in the wilderness during fourteen years, and, when he desired to rise, his legs were rotten. One night he fell asleep; on waking he was enraged at himself and cut off his eyebrows!

The kite is a classical toy in that country furrowed with valleys, intersected by hills that buttress the mountain chains, watered by rapid rivers and wild torrents. The kite constitutes the game *par excellence* even among the nobles, although the young nobleman contracts a serious turn of mind from his very childhood under the tutelage of his preceptors. The young fellows feverishly challenge one another; oftentimes the strings cross and become entangled, or again the kite falls upon a tree. Stormy times those! In former days artists were wont to cut the kites out of pasteboard, in the form of clawed monsters, of birds with flapping wings, of grotesque jumping-jacks, of flowers and fruits. Kites with them are not, as with us, ever heart-shaped, monotonous, meaningless, but, most part of the time, are quadrangular, and upon them as on panels, painters, in vivid colors, sketch dragons in a storm, snow-clad landscapes, volcanic

eruptions, Chinese characters expressive of good wishes for long life and happiness. So that in Yeddo, on all sides, and all the year round, one may behold a fantastic museum high up in the air.

The youthful mountebanks imitate the bounds of the Korean lion, having on a fanciful lion's head and covered with a canvas resembling the skin of that animal, for which game two players only are required.

All, boys and girls, are fond of sweetmeats deftly shaped and colored.

On New Year's eve, faithful to traditional customs, the child piously places a picture under the varnished block of wood which serves him for a pillow. While he sleeps a vessel sails by having on board the seven Genii, protectors of all classes, prince and peasant, trader and soldier, rich and poor.

On awaking, every one recalled his dream, from it to consider whether ill or good fortune would be his lot during the ensuing year. At all events, cakes, sweetmeats, a lobster or pieces of dried fish were offered to one another as a reminder of the diet of their ancestors.

On the boys' festal day they were presented with wooden swords.

On that of the girls (6th of May) the latter were given dolls representing the legendary old couple carrying a rake and a broom, and corresponding to the Western Baucis and Philemon. They also chose for themselves from the gifts displayed before their eyes screens, fans, tender shrubs requiring their fostering care, as well as bouquets of green boughs and culled flowers. As a return for these they offered to their parents their needlework, dolls' dresses made of rich and rare silken stuffs.

When they grow to be young ladies they learn the game of "The Hundred Poets," which consists in placing in a box one hundred cards, representing the hundred most illustrious poets or poetesses. On one hundred other cards are written poetic extracts from those writers. The box is then emptied upon a mat and the assembled guests are requested to select one of the poems, and, then, the card bearing its author's name.

As a proof of our above assertion that the Japanese—whether old or young—are a gay, merry, genial, easily-satisfied people