

Happy Days

VOLUME I.]

TORONTO, MARCH 20, 1886.

[No. 6.]

HOW THE CHILDREN PLAY IN JAPAN.

BY E. WARREN CLARKE.

THE most interesting sights are the games and sports of the children. The Japanese believe in enjoying themselves, and the young folks are as bright and merry as the children of other climes. The girls play battledore and shuttlecock, and the boys fly kites and spin tops. The girls enjoy their game very much, and are usually dressed in their prettiest robes and bright-coloured girdles; their faces are powdered with a little rice flour, their lips are tinted crimson, and their hair is done up in a most extraordinary fashion.

They play in the street, sometimes forming a circle of half a dozen or more, and sending the flying shuttlecock from one to the other. They are very skillful, and rarely miss a stroke. The boys like a strong wind, that their kites may scar high; but the girls sing a song that



HOW THE CHILDREN PLAY IN JAPAN.

it [may be calm, so that their shuttlecocks may go right.

The girls have their "Feast of Dolls" on the third day of the third month. During the week preceding this holiday, the shops of Tokio are filled with dolls and richly dressed figures. This "Feast of Dolls" is a great gala-day for the girls. They bring out all their dolls and gorgeously dressed images, which are quite numerous in respectable families, having been kept from one generation to another. The images range from a few inches to a foot in height, and represent court nobles and ladies, with the Mikado and his household, in full costume. They are all arranged on shelves, with many other beautiful toys, and the girls present offerings of rice, fruit, and "saki" wine, and mimic all the routine of court life. The shops display large numbers of these images at this special season; after the holidays they suddenly disappear.