

such a hurry as grievously to rend the sheet which represented his marble proportions.

"U-ugh! one of my best Hollands," gasped Aunt Debby, in a half-smothered shriek. "Don't come near my nice alpaca, Susie Pickman, with your floury face and wig!"

The Cardiff giant retreated.

"You don't mind *very* much, though, do you, auntie?" wheedled Mrs. Jarley, pushing away the golden tangles of hair from her two beseeching eyes.

Rigid Aunt Debby softened visibly under the glances of this her beloved grand-niece, and she said, much more mildly:

"If you had only asked me, Fanny, before I went out, I would have brought you all you wanted for your play. But to go marauding round, the minute my back was turned, upsetting the attic and the house generally, is not what I expected of *you*, Fanny, at any rate."

"I know we ought not to have been so thoughtless and naughty, Aunt Debby; but if we never will do so again, wont you forgive us this time?" pleaded Fanny.

Aunt Debby's glance just then fell on little Pell.

"What *have* you been doing, Pell?" She twirls him round for inspection. "Oh, it's a mercy to you I'm not your mother just now! Oh, it is!" Twirls him again. "I would put you through a course of spankings you would remember."

"No, you would n't darester," retorted irreverent Pell, whose blood was up at being thus publicly shamed. "You'd better go up ga-wit and thee what thumbbody eltheth been doing up there."

Pell shrugged his turkey-wings as Aunt Debby darted off at his suggestion, and the children, sadder if not wiser for this hour of mischief, brought their wax-works to a sudden close.

## THE FEAST OF FLAGS.

BY W. E. GRIFFIS.

If you were in Japan during the first week in May, you would see huge fishes made of paper flying in the air. Every Japanese family, in which there are boys, plants a tall bamboo pole in the ground. To the top of the pole is hung a large paper representation of a carp. The fish is held to the pole by a piece of cord fastened in its gills. It is made hollow, so that the breeze will fill it out full and oval like a real carp. There it swims in the air from morning till night for a week or more. To-day, while I am writing this in Yeddo, all over the city you can see these carp, some of them twenty feet long, tugging at their lines like fish with baited hooks in their mouth. There must be thousands of them.

What are they for? They are put up in honor of the boys. If a boy-baby has been born in a Japanese house during the year, the *nobori*, as the paper fish is called, is sure to be hoisted. Even if there are boys in the house several years old, the *nobori* is usually raised.

How curious! Why do the Japanese hoist the *nobori*? The reason is this: The carp, or *koi*, as the Japanese call it, is a strong fish that lives in rivers and can leap high out of the water. It can jump over rocks; it can swim against a strong

current; it can snap up flies in the air; it can leap up high enough to mount over waterfalls. So you see it can overcome most of the difficulties that lie in a carp's way.

Now the Japanese father thinks this is what a boy ought to be able to do—to mount over all difficulties, and to face every danger. Hence, the carp is the symbol of a boy's youth and manhood. Every proud father who has a boy-baby hoists the *nobori*. When the boy-baby is old enough, he raises it himself.

You see much more than these big paper fishes at the Feast of Flags in May. If you look in the shops of Yeddo or Fukui during the first week in May, you will see ever so many nice toys such as Japanese boys play with. There are hundreds of big paper fishes, and thousands of flags. Japanese flags are long and narrow, and not like ours. You will not see any dolls such as the girls play with. Instead of these are thousands of splendidly dressed images of Japanese generals, captains and heroes, all in armor, with spears in their hands and swords in their belts, and bows and arrows at their backs. They have helmets on their heads, and sandals on their feet. Some are on foot, others are on horseback. Then there are all kinds of toy animals,

made of silk, such as monkeys, cows and oxen, wild boars which the hunters kill, together with tents, houses, banner-stands, and racks for spears and arrows made of wood. Such toys as these are sold only in the months of April and May, just as the girls' toys for the Feast of Dolls are sold only in February and March. When we see these boys' toys for sale, we know that the Feast of Flags is near at hand.

Now, when I told you about Komme and Lugi and the Feast of Dolls, I said they had two brothers. My story is about these two boys.

The older one was nine years old at the time of my story. His name was Fukutaro. That means "Happy first-born son." He was not the oldest child of his father, but he was his first son. The younger of the sons, and the youngest of the family, was named Rokuni, which means "six-two," because the little fellow was born on the second day of the sixth month, as the Japanese count—or on the second of June, as we reckon.

Ever since Fukutaro was born, the *nobori* had been hoisted, and the Feast of Flags celebrated in his house. Now, this year, father and mother had two sons, and Fukutaro would have a companion to play with, though he was still very little.

"Wife," said the Japanese papa one evening at supper-time when eating his rice, "we must buy a new *nobori* and flags for little Rokuni to-morrow, and get a new spear and an image of Yoritomo for Fukutaro. Will you attend to it?"

"I will do so to-morrow. Mr. Tanaka, who keeps the toy-shop, sent me word that he had just received a lot of new toys and *nobori* from Yeddo."

"And Fukutaro, can you hoist the *nobori* yourself, if Ginzo puts up the pole for you?"

"O yes! May I, father? And let baby see it, too, please! And you said you would buy me a new spear, and Yoritomo on horseback for me. I am so glad. Now my set will be as complete as my Cousin Yonosuke's. Thank you, thank you."

So, when the evening of the fourth of May came, all the toys and images used in former years were taken out of the fire-proof storehouse, and were ranged in the same room in which the girls' Feast of Dolls had been celebrated. Outside of the house in the garden the man-servant Ginzo had planted a strong bamboo pole, thirty feet high, with a pulley and rope.

The fifth of May was a lovely day. When Fukutaro woke up, he rushed into the room to see his new spear and his image of Yoritomo, the famous general, on horseback. And when little Rokuni, with his face washed and head shaved, and in a new dress, was brought in, he crowed with

delight at the banner-stand and helmet, and the little *nobori* his father had bought for him. He wanted to crawl up to the helmet to put it on, and to wave one of the flags.

"Wait, Rokuni," said Fukutaro; "let us hoist the *nobori*. Come all and see it."

All—father and mother, Komme and Lugi—went out into the garden. Little Rokuni climbed up on nurse's back, and was carried out pick-a-back to be present with the rest.

"There is a good breeze to-day, and the *nobori* will hang out stiffly, just as prettily as if it were swimming in the Ashiwa River. Here, Rokuni, look!"

With this, Fukutaro caught hold of the free end of the rope. The other was attached to opposite sides of a round hoop that held the paper fish's mouth open.

The big black paper fish was fifteen feet long, and had a mouth large enough to swallow Jonah, with a body wide enough to board and lodge him for a week. As it rose in the air, the breeze caught the fish, and it floated out beautifully and flapped its tail as if alive.

"There, it's up!" cried Fukutaro, while Rokuni crowed and almost danced himself off his nurse's back, making a complete wreck of her nicely balanced head-dress.

Komme and Lugi, one on each side, had to hug him to keep him in order.

"I am going up on the fire look-out to see the other *nobori*," said Fukutaro; and up he climbed into the tower which stood near the house, and which was used for watching fires. "Splendid!" said he, as he looked from the top over the city. "I can count one, two—ten—twenty—fifty—a hundred— Well, I cannot finish counting the big fishes. Many of them are new, too."

In every direction the big paper fishes were flying in the wind, tugging at their lines as if alive. Some were old, and the lively breeze had blown the fins and tails to tatters, and rent many a hole in their bodies; but most of them were whole, and wriggled their fins and tails like real fishes.

I have not yet told you anything about the toys. When Fukutaro got tired of looking at the *nobori*, he came down to play. I shall tell you first about Rokuni's banner-stand and helmet. In Japan, every Japanese gentleman buys his son a toy helmet, to remind him that he may be a soldier some time, and therefore he must always be brave. Japanese helmets have a curious vizor, like a mask, and a long fringe of hair around the sides, and horns in front—I suppose to frighten enemies. On the banner-stand in the picture, the first pole has a round and gilded ball of plaited bamboo. The *nobori* hangs to it. On the second and sixth

poles are large round plumes of silvery horse-hair, like those carried in Japanese parades and processions.

Next, is a picture of Shoki. Shoki was a famous fellow, very rough and stout, with a big sword, with which he is supposed to kill all the wild beasts, wicked men, and whatever will hurt good little boys. He is a sort of "Jack, the Giant-killer," only he is a giant himself.

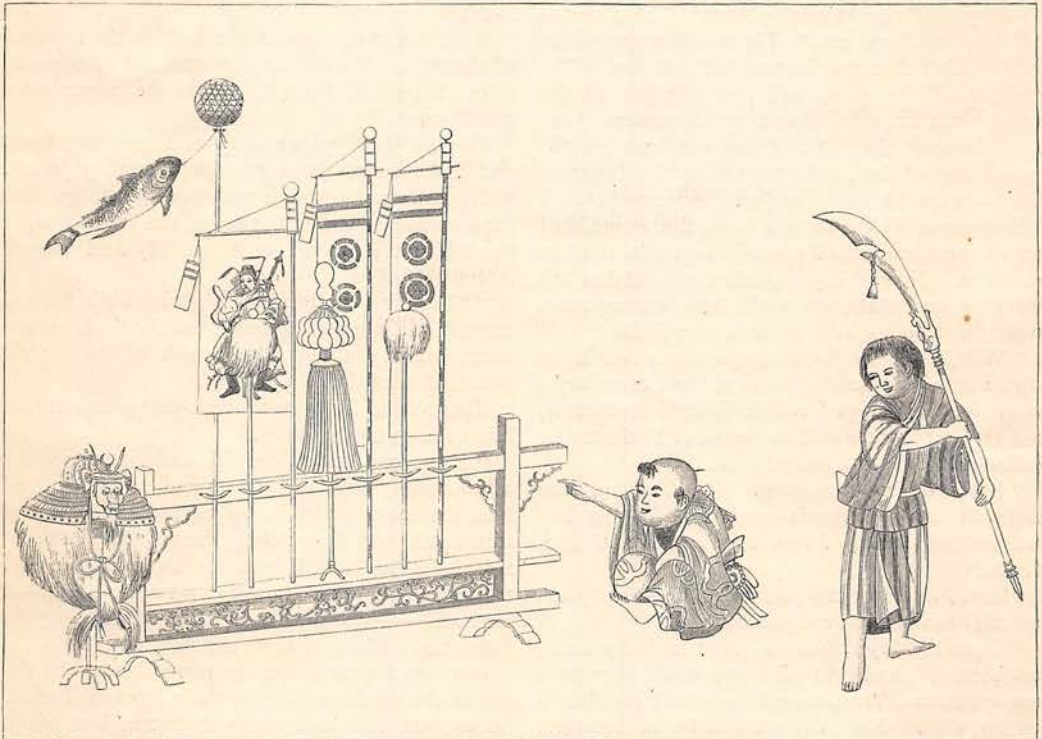
On the fourth pole is Taiko's banner. Taiko was the greatest general Japan ever had. In his first battle, he stuck a gourd (a kind of double mock-

pretty toys set out for Fukutaro. There was a fine image of Jigo Kogo, in armor—the brave queen who wore a sword like a man, led an army, and conquered Corea.

Next came her great son, Hachiman, who was also a famous warrior.

The old men in gray beards were the wise men who gave counsel to the war-queen Kogo. There was an image of Shoki, a foot high; and that of Taiko on horseback, with his armor and spear, was nearly two feet high.

Then there was a hunting-ground among the



ROKUNI'S BANNER-STAND. (FROM A DRAWING BY A JAPANESE ARTIST.)

orange) on the top of a pole. Every time he won a victory he added another gourd beneath it, till his pole was full. All his enemies were afraid, but his friends were cheered, whenever Taiko's banner of gourds was seen. Beneath the gourds, which are gilt, are long strips of shining white paper. Every Japanese boy likes to have Taiko's banner of golden gourds.

The fifth and seventh banners are like those of the prince whom Fukutaro's ancestors served. The two round figures on the banners are the crests or family coat-of-arms of the prince.

But this one banner-stand, bought expressly for little Rokuni, was scarcely a tenth part of all the

mountains, where Yoritomo and his warriors hunted the wild boar. There were other splendid toys representing Yoshitsune Kintaro, and the great men and famous boys, of whom all Japanese story-books tell, and of whom every boy in Japan knows well. Some time I shall tell you some pleasant stories about them; but now their names are too strange for you to be interested in them.

It was a good long day for Fukutaro. When he had played with his flags and banners and images, he went out in the garden and shot arrows at a target. He had a splendid silver-tipped bow, and long steel-headed arrows made of cherry wood, with red and white feathers. He was such a good

shot that he could easily hit a fern-leaf at twenty feet.

In the afternoon, Fukutaro went over to see his two cousins who lived on the south side of the river. There the three boys played "Yoritomo hunting the wild boar," and the "Battle of Genji and Heiki," using soldiers made of straw to shoot at with their arrows, which had real iron heads on them.

When Fukutaro fell asleep that night, what do you think he dreamed about! Well, he was walking along a brook, near a waterfall, and he saw a carp leap clear up out of the water, and over the falls. Happy as a lark, he told his dream the next day to his father, who said:

"Good, my son! So may you mount over all difficulties."

## A LIVE METEOR.

BY MARY E. C. WYETH.

WE sat up one night last summer to watch the fall of the meteors. It paid, although we were all rather drowsy the next afternoon. I sat at the library window which opened upon the veranda, where the children were grouped, each with special occupation, trying to while the languid hours away. Lucy was embroidering a startling initial in bright zephyr upon German canvas; Ned was whistling jack-straws; and Bert was tinkering away at a wonderful dissecting-map of his own invention. Uncle Beverly, who had been swinging in the hammock, after a lazy habit acquired in the Malay-Asian Archipelago or the Antilles (for Uncle Bev was a restless traveler), laughed as Bert yawned fearfully for the twentieth time since luncheon.

"Poor little chicks," he said, teasingly. "Would they sit up all night star-gazing, and are they so sleepy?"

Bert answered in aggrieved tones:

"Can't a person stretch himself without being sleepy, I wonder?"

Uncle Bev suddenly became very grave, and made reply:

"I suppose a person can; and I hope all persons will pardon my too hasty inferences. I was only intending to propose, in case anybody owned to feeling sleepy, you know, to waken such a one with the story of the splendid streaming meteor I once saw in New Guinea. But of course if there's no need——"

"Oh," cried Lucy eagerly, "tell us, please; I'm as sleepy as can be."

"So am I," Ned chimed in; for Uncle Bev was a story-teller not to be despised. Moreover, in his roamings through many lands, he observed the things that he saw. It is not every one who travels,

or who bides at home, that does this. Bert flung away his map, flipped a peanut at Poll, who, hopping on one foot, eyed it in disgust, and croaked in melancholy tones: "Take it away! take it away!" and then, yawning again, our oldest owned that sitting up nights for shooting-stars was not a bit jolly next day, adding cutely:

"Did *you* find it so, Uncle Bev?"

"I did n't sit up for them," Uncle Bev replied. "I saw mine while sleeping in the daytime, or rather when just awaking from a morning nap, after an unsuccessful night hunt."

"Oh now," cried Lucy incredulously, "a meteor by daylight!"

"Yes; and a live one at that," persisted Uncle Bev, "and cawed like a crow,—a refined, etherealized crow,—and summoned a dozen or so of its kind, who all bathed in a pool close by, and then fluttered up to the low-spreading branches of a neighboring teak-tree, where they disported themselves in a most bewitching manner as they made their toilets."

"Uncle Bev!" exclaimed Lucy, "is that all a riddle?"

"Yes," laughed the story-teller. "Give it up? *Paradisea Apoda.*"

"Oh, now I know all about it," cried Bert, brightening up. "Bird-o'-paradise! has n't any feet; lives on the wing, and feeds on dew; raises its young on the shoulders of the male bird, and comes from the Garden of Eden. When it wants to rest it hangs itself to a tree-limb by its tail feathers."

How Uncle Bev laughed!

"Bless my life! what a surprising quantity of knowledge, and of what surprising quality. A