The Dream Gown of the Japanese Ambassador.

By BRANDER MATTHEWS.

Author of "Vignettes of Manhattan."

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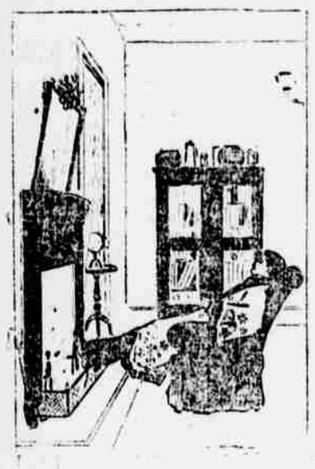
PART I.

After arranging the Egyptian and Mexican pottery so as to contrast agreeably with the Dutch and the German beer mugs on the top of the bookcase that ran along one wall of the sitting room, Cosmo Wayntlete went back into the bedroom and took from a half-empty trunk the little cardboard boxes in which he kept the collection of playing cards, and of all manner of outlandish equivalents for these simple instrument of fortune, picked up here and there during his two or three years of dilettante traveling in strange countries. At the same time he brought out a Japanese crystal ball, placing it on a little table in one of the windows on each side of the fireplace; and there the rays of the western sun lighted it up at once into translucent loveliness.

The returned wandered looked out of the window and saw on one side the graceful and vigorous tower of the Madison Square garden, with its Diana turning in the December wind, while in the other direction he could look down on the frozen paths of Union Square, only a block distant, but as far below him almost as though he was gazing down from a balloon. Then he stepped back into the sitting room itself and noted the comfortable furniture and wood-fire crackling in friendly fashion on the hearth, and his own personal belongings scattered here and there as though they were settling themselves for a stay. Having arrived from Europe only that morning, he could not but hold himself lucky to have found these rooms taken for him by the old friend to whom he had announced his return, and with whom he was to eat his Christmas dinner that evening. He had not been on shore more than six or seven hours, and yet the most of his odds and ends were unpacked and already in place as though they belonged in this new abode. It was true that he had toiled unceasingly to accomplish this; and as he stood there in his shirt sleeves, admiring the results of his labors, he was conscious also that his muscles were fatigued and that the easy chair before the fire opened its arms temptingly.

He went again into the bedroom and took from one of his many trunks a long, loose garment of pale gray silk. Apparently this beautiful robe was intended to serve as a dressing-gown, and



WAYNFLETE LAY BACK IN HIS EASY CHAIR.

as such Cosmo Wayntlete utilized it immediately. The ample folds fell softly about him, and the rich silk itself seemed to be soothing to his limbs, so delicate was its fiber and so carefully had it been woven. Around the full skirt there was embroidery of threads of gold, and again on the open and flowing sleeves. With the skillful freedom of Japanese art the pattern of this decoration seemed to suggest the shrubbery about a suring, for there were strange plants with huge leaves broadly outlined by the golden threads, and in the midst of them water was seen bubbling from the earth and lapping gently over the edge of the fountain. As the returned wanderer thrust his arms into the dressing-gown with its symbolic embroidery on the skirt and sleeves, he remembered distinctly the dismal day when he had bought it in a little curiosity-shop in Nuremberg; and as he fastened across his chest one of one the loops of silken cord to the three coins which served as buttons down the front of the robe, he recalled also the time and the place where he had picked up each of these pieces of gold and silver, one after another. The first of them was a Persian daric, which he had purchased from a dealer on the Grand Canal in Venice; and the second was a Spanish peso struck under Phillip II. at Potosi, which he had found in a stall on the embankment of the Quay Voltaire in Paris; and the third was a York shilling, which he had bought from the man who had turned it up in plowing a field that sloped to the Hudson near Sleepy Hollow.

Having thus wrapped himself in this unusual dressing-grown with its unexpected buttons of gold and silver, Cosmo Wayntlete went back into the front room. He dropped into the arm-chair before the fire. It was with a smile of physical satisfaction that he stretched out his feet to the hickory blaze.

The afternoon was drawing on, and in New York the sun sets early on Christmas day. The red rays shot into the window almost horizontally, and they filled the crystal globe with a curious light. Cosmo Wayntlete lay back in his easy chair, with his Japanese robe about him, and gazed intently at the beautiful ball which seemed like a bubble of air and water. His mind went back to the afternoon in April, two years before, when he had found that crystal sphere in a Japanese shop within sight of the incomparable Fugiyama.

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As he peered into its transparent depths, which his vision focused upon the spot of light where the rays of the setting sun touched it into flame, he was but little surprised to discover that he could make out tiny figures in the crystal. For the moment this strange thing seemed to him perfectly natural. And the movements of these little men and women interested him so much that the fixity of his gaze was intensified. And so it was that in a few minutes he saw with no astonishment that he was one of the group himself, he himself in the rich and stately attire of a samurai. From the instant that Cosmo Wayntlete discovered himself among the people whom he saw moving before him, as his eyes were fastened on the illuminated dot in the transparent ball, he ceased to see them as little figures and he accepted them as of the full stature of man. This increase in their size was no more a source of wonderment to him than it had been to discern himself in the midst of them. He accepted both of these marvelous things without question, indeed, with no thought at all that they were in any way peculiar or abnormal. Not only this, but thereafter he seemed to have transferred his personality to the Cosmo Wayntlete who was a Japanese samurai and to have abandoned entirely the Cosmo Wayntlete who was an American traveler, and who had just returned to New York that Christmas morning. So completely did the Japanese identity dominate that the existence of the American identity was wholly unknown to him. It was as though the American had gone to asleep in New York at the end of the nineteenth century and had waked a Japanese in Nippon in the beginning of the eighteenth century.

With his sword by his side—a Murimasa blade, likely to bring bad luck to the wearer sooner or later—he had walked from his own house in the quarter of Kioto which is called Yamashina to the quarter which is called Yoshiwara, a place of ill repute, where dwell women of evil life and where roysterers and drunkards come by night. He knew that the sacred duty of avenging his master's death had led him to cast off his faithful wife so that he might pretend to riot in debauchery at the Three SeaShores. The fame of his shameful doings had spread abroad and it must soon come to the ears of the man whom he wished to take unawares. Now he was lying prone in the street, seemingly sunk in a drunken slumber so that men might see him and carry the news to the treacherous assassin of his beloved master. As he lay there that afternoon he revolved in his mind the devices he should use to make away with his enemy when the hour might be right at last for the accomplishment of his holy revenge. To himself he called the roll of his fellow ronins, now biding their time, as he was, and ready always to obey his orders and to follow his lead to the death, when at last the sun should rise on the day of vengeance.

So he gave no heed to the scoffs and the jeers of those who passed along the street, laughing him to scorn as they beheld him lying there in a stupor from excessive drink at that inordinate hour of the day. And among those who came by at last was a man from Satsuma who was moved to voice the reproaches of all that saw this sorry sight.

"Is not this Oishi Kuranosuke—" said the man from Satsuma, "who was a councilor of Asano Takumi no Kami, and who, not having the heart to avenge his lord, gives himself up to women and wine? See how he lies drunk in the public street! Faithless beast! Fool and craven! Unworthy of the name of a samurai!"

And with that the man from Satsuma trod on him as he lay there and spat upon him and went away indignant. The spies of Kotsuke no Suke heard what the man from Satsuma had said and they saw how he had spurned the prostrate samarai with his foot; and they went their way to report to their master that he need no longer have any fear of councilors of Asano Takumi no Kami. All this the man, lying prone in the dust of the street, noted; and it made his heart glad, for then he made sure that the day was soon coming when he could do his duty at last and take vengeance for the death of his master.

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He lay there longer than he knew, and the twilight settled down at last, and the evening stars came out. And then, after awhile, and by imperceptible degrees, Cosmo Wayntlete became conscious that the scene had changed and that he had changed with it. He was no longer in Japan, but in Persia.

THE SCALY MONSTER CAME FULL AT HIM.

He was no longer lying like a drunkard in the street of a city, but slumbering like a weary soldier in a little oasis by the side of a spring in the midst of a sandy desert. He was asleep, and his faithful horse was unbridled that it might crop the grass at will.

The air was hot and thick; and the leaves of the slim tree above him were never stirred by a wandering wind. Yet now and again there came from the darkness a faintly fetid odor. The evening wore on and still he slept, until at length in the silence of the night a strange huge creature wormed its way steadily out of its lair amid the trees, and drew near the sleeping man to devour him fiercely. But the horse neighed vehemently and beat the ground with his hoofs and waked his master. Then the hideous monster vanished; and the man, aroused from his sleep, saw nothing, although the evil smell lingered in the sultry atmosphere. He lay down again once more, thinking that for once his steed had given a false alarm. Again the grisly dragon drew nigh, and again the courser notified its rider, and again the man could make out nothing in the darkness of the night; and again he was well-nigh stifled by the foul emanation that trailed in the wake of the misbegotten creature. He rebuked his horse and laid him down once more.

A third time the dreadful beast approached and a third time the faithful charger awoke its angry master. But there came the breath of a gentle breeze, so that the man did not fear to fill his lungs; and there was a vague light in the heavens now, so that he could dimly discern his mighty enemy; and at once he girded himself for the fight. The scaly monster came full at him with dripping fangs, its mighty body thrusting forward its huge and hideous head. The man met the attack without fear and smote the beast full on the crest, but the blow rebounded from its coat of mail.

Then the faithful horse sprang forward and bit the dreadful creature full upon the neck and tore away the scales, so that its master's sword could pierce the armored hide. So the man was able to dissever the ghastly neck and thus slay the monstrous dragon. The blackness of night wrapped him about once more as he fell on his knees and gave thanks for his victory; and the wind died away again.

(To Be Continued.)

BUSINESS BREVITIES.

GOLD MOVEMENTS.—It is announced that $500,000 and probably more gold will be exported. The net exports or imports of gold in the three spring months in recent years have been as follows, according to the Evening Post's table:

	March.	April.	May.
1894	.....$2,929,241	$9,465,985	$23,221,054
1893	 1,501,999	18,344,979	15,205,766
1892	 2,625,550	7,024,782	2,267,758
1891	 4,541,566	13,929,798	30,368,112
1890	...Imp 874,392	574,002	7,718
1889	 3,712,225	2,370,261	12,691,139
1888	...Imp 1,787,350	209,923	7,557,495
1887	 1,886,961	1,164,968	Imp. 607,670
1886	 9,060,424	4,461,505	7,272,497
1885	...Imp 923,515	375,462	829,240

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TRADE DECREASES.—The takings of cotton for the first quarter of the present year have been 618,721 bales against 696,233 bales last year, a decrease of 77,512 bales, or 11 per cent. The sales of wool have been for the same period 57,147,780 pounds in 1896, against 69,081,315 pounds, a decrease of 11,933,635 pounds, or 17 per cent. The shipments of boots and shoes from the east have been for the quarter 841,478 cases now, and 1,030,216 a year ago, a decrease of 187,738 cases, a loss of 18 per cent.

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A REMARKABLE PREDICTION.—The Denver Rocky Mountain News makes the remarkable prediction that $20,000,000 in gold will be produced in the state of Colorado in 1896.

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ELECTRIC LOCOS MORE EXPENSIVE.—The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad company finds its electric engines "more expensive than steam locomotives, the former costing 38 cents per engine mile, while the cost of the latter is but 23 cents. In other respects, however, the use of electric motors in the tunnel has been found so much more satisfactory than steam that they will be continued."

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TRESTLE WORK AND TIMBER DESTRUCTION.—According to a late bulletin of the Forestry division, "there are in the United States 2,000 miles of trestle structure, representing an expenditure of $60,000,000. This trestle work has to be replaced every nine years, on an average, causing an annual expenditure of $7,000,000. This, capitalized at 4 per cent., involves a capital of $175,000,000 necessary to maintain these structures. For the purpose 260,000,000 feet, board measure, of timber is annually consumed, nearly all of which is cut from fine, large trees."

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GRAIN SHIPMENTS.—Reports of the grain shipments for the first three months of the year are very favorable. The receipts of corn at Chicago for this period were 20,585,483 bushels, compared with 10,021,225 in 1895, 24,011,383 in 1894, and 11,837,241 in 1893. The receipts of oats were 24,515,647 bushels, compared with 11,713,805 in 1895, 15,434,518 in 1894, and 13,451,915 in 1893. The total shipments of grain at Chicago were 26,547,025 bushels more than in 1895. Flour decreased 132,846 bushels, and the number of hogs decreased 539,722.

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STEEL POOL A SUCCESS.—As a result of the pool steel rails have advanced to $29 a ton and Bessemer pig iron has advanced $1.25 a ton within two days. Two weeks ago the mills would not buy at $12 a ton, while now there is brisk bidding at $13.75. The capital involved in the new organization is upward of $500,000,000.

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BANK EXCHANGES.—The aggregate of bank exchanges at the thirteen leading commercial centers in the United States outside of New York was $346,913,708, a loss of 5.5 per cent. compared with last year, and of 16.7 per cent. compared with the corresponding week of 1893. The week of this year included only two of the first days of the month, against four last year, and five business days in 1893. Payments through the banks are always larger on the first three or four days of the month, and in part the losses reported this week are due to that fact. Nearly every city reporting shows a large loss compared with 1893, and most of the leading cities compared with last year.

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THE COINAGE.—The mints of the United States in March coined $1,540,555 gold and $1,683,531 silver. The total coinage was 5,638,784 pieces, valued at $3,272,903.

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NEW BILLS NOT NEEDED.—The new directory of the iron and steel works of the United States shows an enormous capacity for the production of steel in this country, says the Cleveland Iron Trade Review. From being 7,740,900 gross tons in January, 1894, our converting capacity is now 9,472,350 gross tons, an increase in two years of 22 per cent. But a more surprising increase has taken place in open-hearth capacity, built or building—namely, from 1,740,000 gross tons to 2,430,450 tons, or 40 per cent. It would appear that no immediate necessity exists for the erection of steel works in this country.

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NOT EATING SO MUCH BREAD.—Beerbohm, the English foodstuffs authority says the consumption of flour in England is abnormally small. From inquiries made the writer concluded that this falling off in consumption was the explanation of the dullness in trade. In all the big markets the complaint was the same. Large London flour sellers and buyers alleged that the winter consumption instead of being larger by 20 to 25 per cent. than the summer consumption was actually smaller. A leading London miller expressed the conviction that the consumption was 30 per cent. short. One explanation was the ability of the laboring class to buy other things and another was the extraordinary cheapness of potatoes and green vegetables.

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STEEL RAILS FOR CANADA.—An English technical paper is concerned over the iron trade in Canada. It says "The Grand Trunk Railway company has purchased 15,000 tons of 80-pound rails from the Illinois Steel company, of Chicago, at a less price than that quoted by English firms. Hitherto the Grand Trunk has purchased practically the whole of its rails from England, but firms in the United States are now running us so hard that we cannot secure Canadian contracts at syndicated prices."

KEYSTONE.

The final examinations for the third quarter were held last Thursday and Friday and most of the students left for their different homes to spend the Easter vacation, which lasts till April 13.

Rev. Button, of Mexico, N. Y., has been the guest of Professor Loomis during the past week.

The students turned out in a body last Wednesday afternoon and had their picture taken by Mr. Manchester.

E. W. Kemerer is home on his vacation from Wesleyan university at Middletown, Conn.

Professor Hulley and family are spending the Easter vacation in Chester, Pa.

The Young Men's Christian association had a special meeting last Thursday afternoon and elected the following officers to act for the coming year: President, L. E. Ayres; vice president, Thomas W. Evans; secretary, Stanley Newton; treasurer, C. E. Cook. The newly elected president will represent the academy at convention of college Young Men's Christian association presidents, which will be held at Carlisle, Pa., the latter part of April.

Miss Clark, who has been visiting Professor Whitford for the last few weeks departed for her home last week.

Several of the students attended the party given by R. P. Henwood last Friday.

The members of the Athletic association are talking of holding a tennis tournament this year and of inviting several of the sister schools in the neighborhood to participate. Last year the tournament was not finished on account of inclement weather and lack of time during the latter part of the fourth quarter, but this year we hope to have everything arranged in due time and have a first-class tournament.

The recital given in main chapel was not very well attended on account of the bad weather, but a very creditable programme of seventeen pieces was given and much credit is to be given to Professor Southworth and Miss Dixson. One of the special features of the entertainment was the scarf drill given by Misses Bronson, Wilcox, Hall, Brundage, Olney, Sickler, Bailey and Bunnell.

WAVERLY.

J. K. George, of Chicago, is the guest of his father-in-law, A. J. Smith.

The Misses Edith and Mary Carpenter, of Cochesset, Mass., are the guests of their brother, Earl Carpenter.

George E. Stevenson has engaged an office in Scranton for civil engineering and surveying purposes.

At the regular meeting of the board of school directors, last Friday evening, Dr. N. C. Mackey in the chair, it was decided to erect the new school building on the present site.

Rev. Floyd Leach, of Chinchilla, filled the pulpit at the Methodist Episcopal church last Sunday and delivered an excellent Easter sermon.

A very large congregation attended the services at the Baptist church last Sunday. A very fine musical programme had been arranged for the day. Rev. A. Bergen Browe, the pastor, preached an excellent sermon, taking for his text: "Go quickly and tell His decipies that He is risen from the dead."

The funeral of the late Mrs. Ida Covey, wife of Parton Covey, will take place this (Tuesday) afternoon at 2 o'clock at the Baptist church, Rev. A. Bergen Browe officiating. Mrs. Covey is survived by her husband and three children, Bertha, Verney and Willie. Interment will be made in Hickory Grove cemetery.

MOTHERS

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CAUTION

TO OUR PATRONS:

Washburn-Crosby Co. wish to assure their many patrons that they will this year hold to their usual custom of milling STRICTLY OLD WHEAT until the new crop is fully cured. New wheat is now upon the market, and owing to the excessively dry weather many millers are of the opinion that it is already cured, and in proper condition for milling. Washburn-Crosby Co. will take no risks, and will allow the new wheat fully three months to mature before grinding.

This careful attention to every detail of milling has placed Washburn-Crosby Co.'s flour far above other brands.

MEGARGEL & CONNELL

Wholesale Agents.

THE DICKSON MANUFACTURING CO

SCRANTON AND WILKES-BARRE, PA., Manufacturers of

Locomotives, Stationary Engines, Boilers,

HOISTING AND PUMPING MACHINERY.

General Office: SCRANTON, PA.

EVERY WOMAN

Sometimes needs a reliable, monthly, regulating medicine. Only harmless and the purest drugs should be used. If you want the best, get

Dr. Peal's Pennyroyal Pills

They are prompt, safe and certain in result. The genuine (Dr. Peal's) never disappoint. Sent anywhere, $1.00. Address PEAL MEDICINE CO., Cleveland, O.

For sale by JOHN H. PHELPS, Pharmacist cor. Wyoming Avenue and Spruce Street, Scranton Pa.

Women and Women only

Are most competent to fully appreciate the purity, sweetness, and delicacy of CUTICURA SOAP, and to discover new uses for it daily.

In the form of washes, solutions, etc., for distressing inflammations, irritations, and weaknesses of the mucous membrane, it has proved most grateful.

CUTICURA SOAP appeals to the refined and cultivated everywhere, as the most effective skin purifying and beautifying soap, as well as purest and sweetest for toilet and bath.

Sold throughout the world. British depot: F. Newbery & Sons, 1, King Edward-st., London. POTTER DRUG & CHEM. CORP., Sole Props., Boston, U. S. A.