

# A JAPANESE REGIMENT AT HOME<sup>1</sup>

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**A**FTER me came the Colonel Commandant, then the major commanding the battalion, then the Captain and subaltern of the day, they being followed in turn by the adjutant, quarter-master and regimental Sergeant Major. As we arrived at the Barrack rooms of each company in succession I was received by the Captain and subalterns of the company; the Captain calling his men to attention and, with his subalterns, saluting me. The men were all standing at attention at the foot of their cots as in an English regiment. I only wish that some of my old comrades could have seen me strutting along in such a ridiculously inappropriate get up round those barrack rooms. I felt very ridiculous myself, but, oddly enough, the Japanese officers for once did not seem to take in the humour of the situation. As I took off my high hat with a wide sweep to each captain in succession not one of them so much as smiled. I have mentioned the men's bedcots; and perhaps some of those knowing the universal Japanese custom of sleeping on the floor, on mats and woolen quilts called "futons", will think me mistaken, but there is no mistake. In those airy barrack-rooms every man had his own wooden bedstead, with his bedding neatly rolled up upon it at its head. Above the beds there ran shelves all round the rooms, upon which were placed each man's knapsack and kit directly over his own bed. At the direction of their Commanding officer several of the men took down their valises and showed me the contents. They had two good suits of uniform, also a fatigue or working suit, a liberal supply of underclothing and good boots. Everything was faultlessly clean and tidy. The rifles, which were stored in arm-racks in the barrack rooms, were in perfect condition.

The steadiness and discipline of the men during this inspection of the rooms was remarkable. Despite a probable curiosity to glance at the tall

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