

## MISCELLANEOUS.

## TALK WITH COUNT ITO.

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HE new Japanese parliament is now sitting at Hiroshima, and Count Ito, the Japanese premier, again has things all his own way. A year

ago the members of both houses were more or less against the government, and the emperor had to peremptorily dissolve the parliament last spring. The whole country was in an unsettled state. Riots had broken out in many of the election precincts, and had it not been for the fact that the constitution of Japan provides that when a parliament is dissolved the budget of appropriations for the year before shall be continued in force without the act of parliament, the emperor would not have had the means to run his governments. This was the condition when the war was declared. This solidified the people, and today they are, to a man, in favor of almost everything that the administration proposes. All this was largely brought about by Count Ito, who is, perhaps, the brainiest man in the whole Japanese empire, and whose master mind is directing the war against China. He is the Li Hung Chang of Japan, and he is the power behind the throne which passes upon measures of state policy, and which, it is whispered, is, to a large extent, the cause of the present war. Still, the world knows but little about him. He is modest and retiring by nature, and he prefers to do rather than to bluster or talk. It is by no means easy for a foreigner to get access to him, and during my stay in Tokyo, when the war clouds were gathering over Asia, the doors to his palace were closed even more tightly than usual. Still, my letters from the cabinet ministers at Washington, and a special introduction from the Japanese minister at our national capital, gave me an appointment, and I had a chance to see something of him and to chat with him about the condition of the Japanese people.

## COUNT ITO'S ROMANTIC CAREER.

But first, let me tell you something about Count Ito. His history reads like a romance, and it is closely associated with that of Count Inouye, who has just gone to Corea to preside over the introduction of western civilization into that land. The most of the story of Count Ito's life I got from himself, and other parts were told me by an English officer connected with the Japanese government, as we sat together one night in the Roku Meikwan Club in Tokyo. It is wrapped up in the history of modern Japan, in which Ito and Inouye have been the chief actors. They came of good families, and their fathers were soldiers, and they expected to serve in the army of the Shoguns themselves. This was in the days when the Tycoon or Shogun governed the coun-

try. He had a swell establishment at Tokyo, and the Daimios and Samurai made up his army. They swelled about the country with big swords at their sides, acting very much like the "bad man of Bitter Creek," and they considered other people as having no rights which they were bound to respect. In the meantime, the mikado was kept inside the walls of his palace at Kioto, a sort of a sacred puppet, surrounded by his wives and his servants. Commodore Perry had made his treaty, with gunboats to back him, and there were foreign and anti-foreign parties in Japan. Among the anti-foreigners were Ito and Inouye. They thought that these pale-faced barbarians would ruin the country. They did not know much about them, but they understood they were at Yokohama, and they conspired to get up a party and go there and clean the foreigners from the face of Japan. Without letting their superiors and parents know it about 100 of them sneaked out one dark night and left Tokyo to go to Yokohama. They had gotten half way when they found themselves surrounded by soldiers. They fought their way out and returned to Tokyo. They soon learned, however, that the killing of the foreigners at Yokohama would only be the beginning of a great war with them. They went to the seacoast and saw our warships, as they floated in the harbor beside their Japanese junks, and they saw that Japan could not successfully fight such things on the sea. Ito and Inouye were in the service of the Prince of Choshu, who was the chief of the anti-foreign faction, and the question of how to get rid of the foreigners was discussed everywhere. At last, the two boys concluded that the only safety for the country was in her having good ships and good guns, and they went to their prince and told him that they wanted to go to England with three other picked youths of their band. They said that they would there study English customs, would go into the gun works, and would master the great secret of naval supremacy, and bring it back to Japan. The Japanese could then build ships of their own, and they could put these guns over the country so that they could drive the hated foreigners away from their coasts. The prince was pleased with the idea, and he gave them \$8,000 and arranged with the British consul to ship them to Shanghai, from whence they were to go on to England.

## A MIDNIGHT ESCAPE.

Now, it was contrary to the commands of the Shogun for any Japanese to leave the country without permission, and they feared they would be detained, so they took a small boat one dark, rainy night, and were taken on a ship just about to depart for China. It took them some days to get to Shanghai, their money having been sent on, in the meantime, to one of the big English trading houses there, with orders to ship them to England. The orders were not very definite, and as Ito and Inouye could not speak English, the merchants misunderstood them, and when they said over and over again the only two English words that they knew, "Navigation" and "London," the merchants

thought they wanted to become sailors and go off to London, and instead of sending them to London as passengers, with instructions that they be sent to a good naval school, they were shipped as common sailors on a sailing ship which went around the Cape of Good Hope. They had only a small amount of money with them, the rest having been sent on by draft, and this they spent during their voyage.

## COUNT ITO'S ADVENTURES IN LONDON.

The English officer told me of their troubles in London.

"The most of them," said he, "occurred on the day that they landed. And I venture the darkest day of Count Ito's life was when he found himself wandering through the slums of the city without a cent in his pocket. The way it happened was this: The moment the vessel reached the docks, the officers and crew departed and left the two Japanese boys to take care of themselves. They were dazed with the din and the sights and the confusion of the great city. In the center of millions of people, they knew not which way to turn, nor whither to go. The cook was gone, and the locker was shut, and there was not a bit of food to be had. They waited some time, expecting that the merchants might send for them, but after a while they grew so hungry that they decided to go out and buy something to eat. They had three dollars left, but they did not know the value of money in England. They thought, however, that this would buy them some boiled rice and a good meal of raw fish. Taking a paper with them, Count Inouye marked on it a diagram of the route as they went in order that they might find their way back to the ship, and after devious wanderings they came at last to a bakery. There were loaves of bread on the counter, and Ito, who was carrying the money, not knowing the price, laid down his three dollars and picked up a loaf. He had no idea how much it was worth, and he supposed that the baker would give him some change. The baker saw he was a foreigner and swept the whole of the three dollars into the till. The boys then started to go back to the ship, but Count Inouye found that he had lost the diagram. They walked the streets of London for hours, and it was dusk before they got to the wharves. They ate their bread, however, and the next day a messenger from the merchant to whom this money was consigned came for them and took them in charge. They used their time well. They spent some time in studying English matters and customs. They looked into the army and navy, and their bright minds soon grasped the fact that Japan could never make a successful struggle against such wealth, and such a mighty nation as that about them. They considered it their duty to go back and tell the prince what they had learned.

## ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION OF COUNT INOUE.

"The two boys had some trouble in getting back to Japan, and they finally made their way into the presence of their prince and told him their story. It was by no means well received, for he was fighting the foreigners at the time, and his hatred of them was great. The soldiers were exceedingly angry at the suggestion that the foreigners were stronger than they and equally brave