

The AMBASSADRESSES America

Sends Abroad



Mrs. M.T. Egerton, who gives news of American life to the Danes

Women Who Represent in Foreign Lands Their Sisters Here

EVERY week or so the cables bring over fresh tales of triumph, romance and social adventure incident to the career of the American woman abroad, until the women at home have come to believe, and the chroniclers abroad have come to openly declare, that the American woman in European society has developed into the most conspicuous factor whose influence is anywhere and everywhere discernible.

But there is one type of American womanhood, definitely set apart as a class, regarding whom little or nothing is ever said, and even less is popularly known. Yet those women, few in numbers as they are above all others formally distinguished in position, constitute the one group of Americans who most representatively display to European eyes the true character of the American home and the real abilities of the American helpmate.

They are the women of the American embassies, wives, daughters and sisters of the nation's official representatives in foreign courts, whose influence is growing more and more important as the interests of this country become more important, and the shrewdness and tactfulness of the national diplomacy are constrained to assume graver responsibilities and to advance to the exercise of increased powers.

More than ever the womankind of the American embassies are coming to be essential aids to the diplomatic achievements of their husbands and fathers; and their constant presence, little chronicled as their activities are when compared with those of the newly made duchesses of our now notorious export trade, creates opportunities for influence and usefulness as important as they are usually unheralded.

IT MAY very truly be said that, in Europe, every woman from the United States is of necessity a missionary. Scarcely a dozen years have elapsed since the astounding consequences of the Spanish war pitched into the garish arena of the world's most momentous affairs a nation at once as provincial as it was mighty. We didn't realize it ourselves, either as to our insularity of breeding or our plethora of power. Europe hastened to educate us as to both aspects of our involuntary debut.

There was, however, another, and most important, factor in our American life as to which we were completely ignorant. It has taken Europe much longer to learn that one lesson about us than it has taken us to understand either our political strength or our provincial weakness.

EVER AN ENIGMA

That one factor, which Europe as yet only half comprehends and may never learn to fully appreciate, is the American girl and woman. Her home environment has, in European eyes, so incomprehensibly changed and modified her femininity that the average man abroad still finds himself compelled to take her as a post-graduate course in his worldly education, with continual, grave perturbations in his mind as to whether he is studying a modified Messalina, an apocryphal peasant, an irresponsible butterfly or a fascinating yet icy Diana.

The infinite variety of character and temperament which could not fail to be the outcome of the American woman's untrammelled evolution before marriage has been, and still remains, utterly confusing to peoples and races whose several social orders are so many national machines for turning out young ladies all modeled after a single approved pattern, the salient feature of which is that the product must have an idea in its more or less pretty little noddle,

while it must mind its manners as automatically as if it were a manikin.

To all these millions of puzzled men, and the millions of their puzzled women, the ladies of the American embassies have been so many rays of light illuminating an otherwise well-nigh stygian obscurity. For, to the splendid credit of these women be it recorded, there has never been an incident that brought the frequent foulness of European intrigue within soiling distance of the ambassadorial skirts. Errors in social strategy have, at rare intervals, been imputed to the ambitious wives of American diplomats; but in all else they have remained magnificently typical of whatever is best and most lovable in the American woman.

Some, like the wife of Whitelaw Reid in the British court, have proved brilliant examples of the dignified yet hospitable chateleine, exemplifying the most refined social graces belonging to their sex at home. Others, like Mrs. David J. Hill, whose paths were maliciously made so thorny before Germany could quite realize that an American administration was satisfied that it knew its own business, have demonstrated their intellectual endowment as true consorts of their learned husbands. Still others, like the wife of Maurice Francis Egan and his two charming daughters, Patricia and Carmel, have shown, in courts as homely and unpretentious as Denmark, how the American girl and woman can be at once dignified, accomplished and exceptionally well bred, and domestic, filial and all of the ideal cherished by the most punctilious of foreign conservatives.

There, in fact, is the solution, all alive and lovely, of the eternal problem of the American woman as Europe has half reluctantly beheld the meddling sphinx of providence presenting it for guesses.

Time out of mind the older civilizations have been averring that women can't have brains and liberty without acquiring frivolousness and license. And, time and again, some indiscreet American girl or woman living abroad has furnished evidence that the libel wasn't entirely at odds with the truth.

But always there have been in evidence also the women of the American ambassador's family, so many living refutations of any such sweeping generalization, charming, gracious, loyal, admirably living proofs that it is sometimes with women as it is with men, only the women generally are a little bit better.

SHARE HUSBANDS' FAME

Then, too, there are among the women we can be proud of abroad some whose whole married lives have been passed in diplomatic circles, their brains and their fortunes having done much to win the distinction attained by their husbands. Such a woman is Mrs. Henry White, the wife of the ambassador at Paris, whose daughter was recently so impressively married to her dearly beloved German nobleman in spite of all that French spitefulness could think of to say regarding the affront to Gallic pride.

Mrs. White knew perfectly well beforehand all that would be said, but she was an old campaigner, having won her social experience in the courts of England, Italy and wherever her husband's long career had led him since, as Miss Margaret Stuyvesant Rutherford, of New York, she married him in 1879 and brought him the fortune she owned in her own right.

His diplomatic career began, modestly enough, at Vienna as secretary of legation. But his own wealth and his wife's fortune, not to mention the trivial salary the government paid him, enabled him to rise

steadily until ambassadorships were awarded him by right of expert ability and his wife's eminently successful management of his social interests.

In a far less conspicuous fashion, yet no less effectively, Miss J. B. Bryan, the sister of Charles Page Bryan, now a veteran of American diplomacy and our minister to Belgium, has for years been her capable brother's hostess and social adviser. It was only recently that he relinquished the post of minister to Portugal, where Miss Bryan was especially persona grata to the beautiful and accomplished Queen Amelia.

The appalling murder of King Carlos, one of those tragedies which the women concerned with American diplomatic life may at any time be shocked with, came upon the American friend of his widow so horrifyingly that she has welcomed the change. Yet that fearful drama, in surroundings measurably familiar, is one that might be paralleled in the experience of those women whose husbands' careers lead them further afield than Europe.

Those women, missionaries displaying the homely yet brilliant American training of women when they are domiciled in Europe, become objects of the most serious curiosity when they accompany our ambassadors to so strange an environment as Siam, Persia and the more distant semi-barbarisms where the weaker sex remains permanently doomed to its subservience. The last terrible Boxer outbreak in China, when the allies had to march to the relief of the legations, was one example of risk run in its extremes of danger—and a notable instance of the

determined to devote her life to uplifting them.

With other self-sacrificing students she went into the villages and by teaching and example tried to raise the peasants to a higher social level. Although the revolutionists were not at that time terrorists, it was considered a crime even to educate the peasantry, and the workers were harshly treated by the government. Thousands of Russia's noblest young men and women were exiled to Siberia on the flimsiest pretext. Since no immediate change in the attitude of the government could be brought about by gentle methods, the revolutionaries had recourse to violence.

Vera Figner soon became the leader of the Nihilist party, which was organized to bring about the assassination of the czar and many minor officials. Always at the head of some conspiracy, she showed stupendous gifts for organization. With a reward of \$5000 offered for her capture, she was hunted high and low, night and day, by the police. The manner in which she outwitted them was marvelous.

She accomplished her end when the czar Alexander II fell a victim to her bomb plot. Her triumph was short-lived, however, for the police worked with relentless vigor, and one by one the members of the nihilistic circle disappeared into the oblivion of Siberia, or fled, until Mme. Figner alone remained.

This beautiful young girl continued at her post despite everything. At last she was sold into the hands of the authorities by the traitor Degaleff and brought before a court-martial. Even then her dignified and courageous manner, in the face of the terrible fate which awaited her, made a powerful impression upon the court. As an act of "mercy" they commuted the customary sentence of death to one of perpetual penal servitude.

Then began her awful atonement. Weighted down with heavy chains attached to her wrists and ankles, she had to walk the whole of the 5000 miles from St. Petersburg to Kara, in eastern Siberia, where she was to work in the mines.

LONG WINTER JOURNEYS

By the time she had arrived there, however, the Russian government had conceived a more diabolical form of punishment than work in the mines. In the middle of the Neva river, near Lake Ladoga, they had erected a fortress, and they decided that Vera Figner should end her days in one of its cells, almost entirely below the level of the water.

In the midst of a severe Siberian winter she had to journey all the way back again on foot. The hardships of the journey and the brutality of her escort were beyond belief. At last, after months and months of walking, tired and footsore, the party arrived at the fortress. The prisoners were ferried to it in the

heroine the American woman is when emergency calls.

Of such a travel-loving type is Mrs. W. W. Rockhill, whose husband is our new ambassador to Russia, now of all countries pretty nearly the least assured of the peace which diplomacy is generally believed to love.

Ambassador Rockhill has always been a man of the nature that seeks the strange, the distant and the odd. Incidentally, he has made a specialty of caring particularly for those strange places where he believed the United States could garner advantages previously neglected. Result: he has been assigned to many and various posts and duties few other public servants thought or cared anything about; and his wife went with him.

She went with him through South America, which she knows as well as she knows her North America. She has been mistress of legations at cities so widely apart in their character as Athens, Bucharest and Peking. She has learned her Japan at her husband's side, and is an authority on the Philippines equalled only by a few of the most hard-worked officials who have spent years in the islands.

Mr. Rockhill's rise has been one that has attracted wide attention as being one of unusual progression, apparently with no special influence to urge him onward. Whatever the consideration that advanced him previously, it is interesting to note, in connection with his appointment to the Russian embassy, that Mrs. Rockhill is one of those friends of Mrs. Taft whose acquaintance is of long standing and with likes and preferences that are very close to hers.

There have been, in the past, some one or two occasions which demonstrated that the American minister or ambassador whose wife was not, in her own special sphere, fully his equal in culture, tact and shrewdness had far better been without any wife at all, so far as the diplomatic value was concerned. The remarkable thing about the American woman in diplomacy is that, with only the one or two exceptions, she invariably proves equal to every demand that the most exacting courts of the world can make upon her.

A Terrier's Find

MOTHER instinct in the brute creation was illustrated the other day at Williamsburg, N. Y., when "Jim," a black-and-tan terrier owned by Mrs. Mary Theodore, saved an abandoned baby from death through exposure.

About 8 o'clock "Jim" made a beeline for an alley that leads to the street. He paid no attention to the calls of the children, and they went around to see what had become of him.

"Jim" was smelling at a white bundle in the middle of the alley. The girls brushed aside the cloth, and found a 2-month-old boy baby. His little face was blue from cold and his breathing was very faint.

dark, and for twenty-three years after the prison gates closed upon her Vera Figner never saw the light of day. When she was brought before the director of the fortress, he said to her: "Nobody has yet walked out of this fortress; they have all been carried out." She was then conveyed to her cell.

"It measured eight feet by ten feet," said Mme. Figner in telling of her ordeal, "was low, dark, damp, and its walls were painted black, so as to cast a deeper gloom in our hearts. The stillness was awful and many prisoners were driven mad. Their shrieks made the night hideous for us."

MANY DRIVEN TO SUICIDE

"Sometimes we heard a door open. It was the signal that a comrade had died. Some committed suicide, the most horrible death being preferable to their present torture. One, a former friend, poured the paraffine oil of his lamp over the bed and clothes, set fire to the lot, and burned to death. Another disemboweled herself with a broken lamp globe."

"Then the governor tried to rob us of the few privileges we possessed. This I would not stand, and prepared to sacrifice myself. Upon a petition from me the governor came into my cell. Suddenly I jumped upon him and tore his epaulettes from his shoulders. The penalty for this was death; but I knew that before execution I would be brought to trial, when I could let the world know of our sufferings. The authorities saw through my plans and I was not tried."

"At last we received word, even in this living tomb, that a new revolution was on foot, and again we began to hope. The year 1905 came, with its great strikes and the constitution. "After twenty-three years of a living death I was once more able to set eyes upon the sky, to greet the shore of which I had taken leave under such melancholy circumstances."

"Yet I was not to be free, for I was at once called to the arctic zone of northern Russia. "Ahl how happy I was at the news of the great struggle between the people and the czar, and how I longed to take part in it!"

"I had no rest, day or night, until I had managed to flee, but then—oh irony of fate!—when I returned the revolution was crushed and the czar was master once more. "The executions, the outrages and the overfilled prisons nearly broke my heart, and more than once I had a secret longing to return to my grave in the Schlusselburg, where at least I was ignorant of such horrors."

"But now I am hopeful again, for I know that a new revolution will and must break out, and I trust to hear the tidings of new and happier days in Russia. Then I shall know that I have not suffered in vain."

Her 23 Years in a Russian Dungeon



Mrs. Vera Figner, who spent 23 years in a Russian dungeon

came the leader of the Nihilists, brought about the death of Czar Alexander II and was betrayed into the hands of the authorities.

After almost incredible sufferings she was transferred from the river prison into arctic Russia, whence she escaped to London.

Tolstoi never conceived anything more wonderful than this woman's life. Strong men by hundreds went down under less terrible hardships than she survived. Scarcely another of those she plotted with remains.

Yet her spirit remains unbroken. She is still heart and soul with the revolutionaries. She would brave another such living death as she escaped to aid their cause.

FOURTY years ago Mme. Figner was one of the most beautiful women in Russian society and a most active revolutionary. While she was still a student the condition of the ignorant, impoverished and downtrodden Russian peasants aroused in her such a deep feeling of pity that she

"NOBODY has yet walked out of this prison; they have all been carried out."

This was Vera Figner's greeting from the commandant of a Russian prison built in the River Neva. There she spent twenty-three years practically under water.

Once a beautiful, high-minded girl, she be-