

He advises the White House in times of grave crises, while his wife decorates

their home one moment and entertains premiers the next **By JACK RYAN**

diplomat. In background and family life, he is contrary to the image. A career diplomat, he won ambassadorial rank by achievement, unlike the more familiar American ambassador whose appointment is a reward for contributions.

Son of a pioneer rancher, Thompson worked his way through the University of Colorado, a long way in tuition and geography from the elite Eastern schools which once provided most of our diplomats. His wife, the former Jane Monroe Goelet, is an elegantly gowned hostess at a formal reception for hundreds—but she also paints the walls in their new home on an elm-lined street in the Kalorama section of Washington.

This house is the first the Thompsons have owned, their previous ones being government residences. It was purchased partly with a \$5,000 Rockefeller Public Service Award, administered by Princeton University, which Thompson recently won for his work in foreign affairs and international operations. The award was very timely—just as he was caught between Washington property prices and State Department salaries.

In setting up housekeeping, Mrs. Thompson, copper-haired and cream-complexioned, has had her own crises to underlie the global ones her husband helps shoulder. Since last summer, her household has been scattered between Moscow and a four-story Georgian house in Washington's ambassador row. Such upheavals are nothing new to a diplomat's wife and, according to the Thompsons' eldest daughter, Jenny, 13, Mother had a perfect plan: a vacation in Colorado, then to their new home in Washington, and, "when Daddy comes in the door, we'll hand him overalls and stick a paintbrush in his hand."

#### The Versatile Mrs. Thompson

Thompson's illness changed that, and Mrs. Thompson spent most of the autumn splattering the walls and herself with paint. Yet with perfect aplomb she climbed off her ladder one day to hold a luncheon for six—including Anastas Mikoyan, first-deputy premier of the Soviet Union.

By his mid-40s, Thompson's peripatetic career had left him a "retiring bachelor, charming but perhaps aloof with women." Then in June, 1948, he sailed on the *S. S. Saturnia* for a conference in Rome. Aboard, he met a young divorcee sailing for a European holiday. Daughter of a research chemist in Winchester, Mass., Mrs. Goelet had the well-spoken poise of a properly educated Boston suburbanite and a very individual vivaciousness that induced Thompson to follow up their shipboard friendship with rendezvous throughout Europe. That fall the couple returned to the United States to be married Oct. 2.

Mrs. Thompson has managed households in

Rome, Vienna, Moscow, and Washington, and about the only drawback she and her husband found was in raising Jenny and their youngest daughter, Sherry, 8. An ambassador's residence, they explain, is also a semi-office; parties, receptions, and talks disrupted the steady life the Thompsons tried to give their girls.

Then, too, there were long separations. Thompson recalls that the day after Sherry was born he left Vienna for a "personal" trip to London. Newspapers were told he was buying clothes and gifts. Actually, his assignment was to help bring together the Yugoslav and Italian governments, then in a territorial dispute over Trieste. Secret negotiations, expected to last a few weeks, dragged out eight months while Thompson "wondered what our girl looked like." When an agreement was finally reached, Thompson had his first headlined achievement, but he didn't stay around for the celebrations.

#### The Girls Find Life Exciting

But the girls recognize no drawbacks in the life they have known. "It's exciting with people always coming and going," Jenny says. Both children are affectionate toward their reserved father, draping themselves around his slim shoulder and waist; it is characteristic of Thompson that he carries them about neither rumpling his neatly knotted tie nor his gracious manners.

The Thompson home reflects a collector's taste, not wealth. Antique Venetian coffee tables, French provincial chairs, Italian tables, and "some good old American stuff" manage to blend warmly beneath old Russian icons and a dominating portrait of Mrs. Thompson.

Mrs. Thompson's friends had advised her to find a home outside Washington, "but that would have added commuting to Tommy's long schedule," she says. "This way he's only 10 minutes from his office and, as often as not, is home for that important six-o'clock time—for children that seems to be crisis time—dinner, homework, television, critiques of the day, and plans for tomorrow. Their father should be around then, even if he has a dinner engagement later."

The ambassador's wife is properly noncommittal about whether her husband brings home his office problems. Not so Jenny: "Daddy brings all his problems to me, and I help him make decisions." She pauses until she is sure her audience is properly startled by a 13-year-old influencing international relations. Then, impishly, she continues: "When he goes to a conference, he always asks me what tie he should wear and what shaving lotions smell best."

As for Thompson himself, 34 years of diplomatic service have not diminished his enthusiasm

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Ambassador Thompson, wife Jane, and daughters Jenny and Sherry (seated) live in an elegant Washington house. The furnishings, like the valued Russian icon above the mantel, have been gathered from around the world.