

ASSIGNMENT TO LEGATION

AT

CARACAS, VENEZUELA

I took the diplomatic examinations in early January, 1911; and was appointed Secretary of the Legation to Venezuela on February 28, 1911.

John Garrett was our Minister at Caracas, but he and his attractive wife didn't tarry long in Venezuela; a few months after my arrival they moved on to The Argentine; and then to Italy. John Garrett was a good first chief: very kindly. I have often in later years been to their house on Charles Street Avenue in Baltimore. They ^{had} have a private theater where the quartet to which Mrs. Garrett played fairy godmother sang; and their garden is enchanting in springtime.

I went to Caracas in April. The famous Juan Vicente Gomez was ~~already~~ President but he had not yet ~~acquired the dictatorial manners he is said~~

later

~~later to have acquired.~~ In fact, ~~according to~~
popular rumor he had been pushed into his revolution against his predecessor, Castro, much against his will by one of his very forceful sisters. He was not married, but one heard that he had a good many children about. No one seemed to know just how many, but reports varied from twenty-five to a hundred. ~~The Nuncio tried to persuade the~~ *It was said that without success*
~~General to get married, but there seemed to be some doubt in his mind as to which lady he should marry and he married none.~~

He was cordial and asked me several times to his later well-known country place at Maracay which, in those days, was a simple place with a number of barracks-like buildings, where his numerous guests were put up. We went to cockfights in the morning;

races

races in the early afternoon, and bullfights in the late afternoon. After dinner we saw zarzuelas given by a company brought out from Caracas. We took boat rides on the beautiful Lake of Valencia. I enjoyed riding the General's horses.

 In those days there was no oil in Venezuela; no roads worthy of the name; and no motor cars.

 Our chief diversions aside from daily tennis and riding in Caracas were bridge playing and occasional afternoon drives up and down the Paraiso in old-fashioned Victorias. All of the fair sex was out on parade and it was a pleasant sight for the hour before the sun went down.

 I climbed all of the mountains thereabouts, including Naiguatá, about twelve thousand feet high (it looked very different when I flew past it last year). Then also Santa Ana, about ten thousand;

thousand; the chief thing that I remember about Santa Ana was stopping for a drink at the house of an Italian Count who lived about half way up; the Count had formerly been in the Royal Guard at Rome but for some reason or other had gone out to Venezuela to live. Also, I once went with friends on horseback over the coastal range to Macuto; passed the night at a small hotel there. I can still remember the sound of the waves that night; and then the next day we went along the picturesque coastal road to the Hacienda de Naiguatá (where we stayed several days), which belonged to General Tomaso Ybarra, whose wife was an American lady named Russell from Boston, and whose son, ^{became} Thomas Ybarra, ~~is now~~ well-known in the journalistic world.

Upon several occasions I stayed at the famous

Hacienda

Hacienda de Guayabita, which belonged to the family of former President Guzman Blanco. Guayabita was a principality in itself, far from everything, with extensive plantations of coffee and cocoa; a splendid property. The famous crème de cacao came from a nearby Hacienda (another principality) also belonging to the Guzman Blanco family. The Guzman Blanco family was an interesting one. The sons, Antonio, Simón, Diego, Roberto and Bernardo, had all been, I believe, to Oxford. Simón's wife, Dolaritas, was the local beauty. Simón died a few years ago and I believe that she is now married to a Spanish Baron. Her sister, Eleanora, married Lewis Proctor, who was then with an asphalt company, and ^{later} ~~the last I heard of him~~ ^{at one time} ~~was that he~~ was head of the recently much-publicized American

American-owned Spanish telephone enterprize. One of General Blanco's daughters was the Duchess of Morny, whose husband was a descendant of the well-known half-brother of Napoleon III. I lived in Caracas in a charming house belonging to Bernardo.

Shortly after I arrived, Venezuela celebrated the Centenario of her Independence and we had great doings. The Count de Cartagena, a descendant of one of the most famous Spanish Generals who opposed the Venezuelan revolution, came to represent Spain and was widely feted. The American representative, Thomas Dawson, father of Allan Dawson of our Foreign Service, came down on the cruiser NORTH CAROLINA. We visited, with due ceremony the tomb of the great Liberator, Bolivar, in the Venezuelan Pantheon. We had speeches and
banquets

banquets and parades and dedications and balls and bullfights. The zarzuela company, of the well-known Esperanza Iris, entertained us night after night with The Merry Widow, The Chocolate Soldier, The Count of Luxemburg.

The next year we had a visit from Secretary of State Knox on the Cruiser MARYLAND and again went through a heavy round of festivities.

In 1912 also a Boliviano Congress was held at Caracas and an unsuccessful effort was made by some to form some sort of a Boliviano League. Maúrtua, the well-known Peruvian diplomat, played an important part in those proceedings.

My Brazilian colleague was Lucillo Bueno, whom I was not to see again until twenty-five years later when I came to Brazil and found that he was

then

then Brazilian Ambassador to Uruguay. I met his attractive daughter, who is now Mrs. Edward Lynch, shortly after my arrival, and when she said to me that she had not seen me for a very long time since she knew me at Caracas, I asked her how old she then was. She said "Three months."

I saw a lot of my British colleagues, the Harfords: Mrs. Harford, a cousin of the Duchess of Norfolk. We played tennis almost every day at Cherry's and bridge very often in the evening. Cherry was the manager of a British-owned railroad, at whose house we gathered most afternoons for tennis and tea.

All of this sounds as if Caracas was all play and no work. As a matter of fact, during a good part of the time I was there, I was in charge of the

Legation

Legation as Chargé d'Affaires ad interim, and for several months I had no clerk or stenographer; did my own typing; closed my own diplomatic pouches; kept the archives, etc., etc.

Sheldon Whitehouse, later Minister to Guatemala and Colombia, was Secretary there when I arrived, but stayed only a few weeks. Arthur Schoenfeld, ^{later} ~~now~~ Minister to Finland, was Vice Consul, but he left me within a month or two. After the Garretts left I was alone at the Legation for several months until Northcott, who had been previously Minister at Bogotá, arrived.

President Gomez was very fond of cockfights and went often to them in Caracas, as well as in Maracay. I went occasionally too.

Just outside of the limits of Caracas there lived a delightful old lady in a typical Venezuelan country

country mansion, surrounded by a big garden full of flowers and fruit trees. The lady was Sra. de Guillermo Eraso, English-born and related to the Van Cortlands of New York (I once made a week-end visit with her and her nephew Eduardo Eraso on old Mr. Robert Van Cortland at his country-place in Westchester County), the daughter of a British diplomat who had been Minister in Colombia and Venezuela and who, during our Civil War, when Consul at Charleston, was charged by the Federal Government with permitting the use of the British consular pouch to forward Confederate messages to England. I went very often to Sra. Eraso's finca; walked in the garden; played bridge with her evenings; and also borrowed books from her library.

On my way to and from Caracas I stopped several times at Puerto Rico, saw the sights, the Palace,

etc.,

etc., and also at busy Curaçao with its little Dutch houses and windmills and black population and Portuguese-Jewish-descended-English-speaking local upper class and Dutch officials and the miniature garrison; exchanged calls with the Dutch Governor, etc.

I left Caracas early in 1913 and went to the Department of State to the Division of Latin American Affairs in the late spring. Former Governor Osborne of Wyoming was First Assistant Secretary of State; old Mr. Adee, Second Assistant; Dudley Field Malone, Third Assistant. Edward Bell, later to die in China, worked alongside me. It was a hot summer. I stayed in the Department only that summer; whenever I could get off I went canoeing around Great Falls (then in the woods), or riding

riding with Jack MacMurray, ^{later} ~~who is now~~ Ambassador
^
to Turkey.

Bryan had just come in as Secretary of State.

It was his custom at the beginning of his term
to receive everyone in a long reception room; his
desk was at one end. While he was talking to

one man at the desk, other callers waited in the
^{A malicious bystander pretended}
middle or at the other end of the room. ^{that} One day

he received a visiting delegation from Central
America and delighted listeners by remarking: "I
have long wished, Gentlemen, to visit your beautiful
isle!"