

## Near Foreign Chancelleries

Spain. Spain traditionally difficult diplomatically even in the days of John Jay; Spain disrupted with revolutions and ministerial changes; Spain almost hostile in its relations with the United States. To reside near the court of Queen Isabella as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States came Augustus Caesar Dodge in 1855 — the first Iowan to head an American legation. Unfortunate in having to succeed the tactless and hot-headed Pierre Soulé, who had done little to aid and much to irritate the Spanish government, the new American Minister was nevertheless greeted cordially upon his arrival at Madrid.

During the four years of his ministry in Spain, Dodge's crowning ambition was to negotiate the purchase of Cuba. All his efforts in this connection proved futile, however, for Spain was determined not to sell Cuba at any price. Nevertheless he did succeed in winning the friendship and esteem of the Queen, who, as proof of her regard, took from the palace walls with her own hands a portrait of the royal pair and presented it to Mrs. Dodge.

Another United States Senator who turned to diplomacy after the decline of the Democratic party in Iowa was George W. Jones who received an appointment as Minister Resident to Bogotá, New

Granada, in 1859. As Mr. Jones was not very proficient in the use of foreign languages, he inquired of one of the wealthy citizens of the republic, soon after his arrival, where he could find a teacher of Spanish.

“Come to see my daughters,” was the response. “They speak French and Spanish equally well and will take pleasure in instructing you, as all the ladies will; but do not go to the gentlemen.”

As the ladies of Bogotá were among the most “charming, beautiful, and accomplished in the world, fair-complexioned, and modest mannered”, it is not difficult to understand why Mr. Jones became so fluent in his use of Spanish. During the two years he was in Bogotá, the country was continually seething with revolution; but he succeeded in keeping on good terms with all factions until he left on November 4, 1861.

Later the name of New Granada was changed to the United States of Colombia, and in 1907 Thomas C. Dawson, another Iowan, was appointed as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Colombia. Minister Dawson had the distinction of having been in the diplomatic service fifteen consecutive years. Previous to his Colombia appointment he had been stationed in Brazil as Secretary of Legation and from 1904 to 1907 he served as Minister Resident and Consul General in the Dominican Republic — just at the time when the Dominican government was practically bankrupt and European creditors were insisting on payment of their claims.

From Colombia he was transferred to Chile in 1909. A year later he was sent as Envoy to Panama where he had scarcely begun his duties when he was ordered to Managua as Special Agent to negotiate with the Provisional Government of Nicaragua. In June, 1911, he was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary on the part of the United States to attend the Venezuelan Centennial Celebration. Thereafter until his death in 1912, he held the office of Resident Diplomatic Officer in the Department of State. His many missions "gave him an experience and knowledge which were of great usefulness in promoting friendship, good understanding, and commerce among all the American nations."

The American legation in Guatemala claimed two Iowans — Fitz Henry Warren in 1866 and Silas A. Hudson in 1869. Both served as Minister Resident and their terms of office seem to have been undisturbed by any extraordinary events. At any rate very few dispatches from either Warren or Hudson were deemed sufficiently important to be published. By the same token American relations with Ecuador were particularly quiet in 1875, only three dispatches from Christian Wullweber of Dubuque, Iowa, the Minister Resident, being printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States*.

One of the most successful Iowa diplomats was John A. Kasson. In 1863 he represented the United States in the International Postal Conference at

Paris. After several terms in Congress, he refused to be a candidate for reëlection in 1876 and within a few weeks was offered his choice of accepting the post of Minister to Spain or Austria-Hungary. He chose the latter and was appointed on June 11, 1877. For more than three and a half years Kasson occupied that important post. But it was while he was Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Germany, that his ability was most fully shown.

At the Congo Conference held in Berlin during the winter of 1884-1885 at which delegates of fourteen governments were assembled, he was one of the central figures. In fact a German review of the conference credited him, next after Bismarck, as having done most to help form the final settlement. It was he who was chiefly responsible for the agreement between the several powerful nations represented at this conference to adjust future disputes over the Congo country by mediation and arbitration.

Although diplomatic relations between Bismarck and the former American minister had been rather strained, Kasson succeeded in completely restoring friendly relations. This is indicated by the request of the German government that he be retained as the United States diplomat in Berlin, and also by the following letter:

Berlin, June 4th, 1888.

Dear Sir,

The last mail brought me your essay on "The Hohenzollern Kaiser", published in the April number of the

“North American Review”, and which you kindly had sent to me through Baron von Ledtowitz. — I read it at once and was much pleased by it, not only because the warm and sympathetic tone in which an eminent American Statesman spoke of our late Emperor gratified my patriotic feelings, but also because your message to me showed me that you have kept a friendly recollection of our former personal relations.

I beg to thank you for the double gratification you have thus given me and to assure you, that your friendly sentiments for my country and for myself are fully reciprocated by my feelings for your nation and especially for your own person.

Believe me, dear Mr. Kasson,

Yours sincerely

H. BISMARCK

Although negroes have played only a minor part in Iowa politics, Alexander Clark of Muscatine gained some prominence in this field. He was a leader in a colored convention held at Des Moines in 1868; in 1873 he was appointed Consul at Aux-Cayes, Haiti, but declined; in 1890 he became the Minister Resident and Consul General to Liberia.

During the final decade of the nineteenth century occurred the diplomatic service of three other Iowans — John N. Irwin, William I. Buchanan, and Edwin H. Conger. Irwin's only diplomatic position was that of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Portugal in 1899. On the other hand, no Iowan ever occupied more diplomatic positions than did William I. Buchanan. He retained

his first post, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Argentine Republic, for more than five years. Next he was sent to Panama on a special mission and appointed head of the first American legation in that new republic in 1903. As chairman of the American delegation to the Third International American Conference in Brazil in 1906, he played an important part, which doubtless led to his selection in 1907 as one of the delegates plenipotentiary to the Second Hague Conference. No sooner had he returned than he was appointed as Representative of the United States to the Central American Peace Conference held in Washington in November and December, 1907. Buchanan's final work in the foreign service was concerned with settling five claims of American citizens and companies against Venezuela. His response to the appointment — "Am already on my way" — was characteristic.

Edwin H. Conger had the honor of being the only Iowan to head an American Embassy. Earlier in his diplomatic career he accepted the position of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Brazil. This was in 1890 and during the three years of his residence in Brazil, the newly-established republican government there was in the formative stage. Conger, however, maintained cordial relations with the government and it was only when he was leaving that an unpleasant incident occurred. An insurgent fleet had captured the harbor and or-

dered all boats to keep out of the way. Major Conger ordered a launch and, standing in the bow and holding an American flag over his head, was conveyed to an American ship in the bay. In admiration of his courage the insurgent ships dipped their colors to the American flag he held.

But it was in the Orient that the mettle of this courageous Iowan was most severely tested. Re-appointed Envoy to Brazil in 1897, he had served less than a year when an unexpected cablegram transferred him from the beautiful gardens and delightful climate of Petropolis to the mysterious, walled capital of China. He arrived in Peking in the early summer of 1898. Within a few months reports came to the legation of various Boxer uprisings — missions attacked and foreigners killed.

During the following year conditions grew steadily worse. The American legation was deluged with telegrams and letters appealing for aid. The crisis came in June, 1900, when the Boxers besieged the foreign legations. All protection from the Chinese government was withdrawn, the German minister was shot, and the foreigners with a few native Christians and a small guard of troops barricaded themselves in the British legation. Communication with the outside world was cut off. A fortnight passed. Only the daily hope of rescue sustained the fortitude of the besieged.

On the seventh of July the rumble of distant cannon was reported. Could it be that the long awaited

relief was really coming at last? But a week passed and still no word, although over twenty couriers had been sent out to communicate with the troops. The yells and howls of the Chinese insurgents, the blowing of horns and the firing of guns, mingled with the sound of flying bullets, made a never-ceasing din.

At last came a message in State Department code: "Communicate tidings, bearer."

"For one month we have been besieged in British Legation under continued shot and shell from Chinese troops", replied Conger. "Quick relief only can prevent general massacre."

Two days later, on July 18th, a messenger sent to Tientsin returned with the following message: "The forts near Tientsin at Ta Ku were taken July 14. Troops start for Peking about July 20. Waiting for arrival of more troops."

When would they reach Peking? Another week — and still no sign of help. Something had to be done: the hospitals were filling rapidly and many men had fallen. Flies, fleas, and mosquitos swarmed all over and rations were down to horse meat. If the troops did not come soon, they would be too late.

But on August 10th came a messenger. The troops were on their way, "*fifty thousand strong*". They would arrive in three or four days. The night of August 13th was the noisiest of all, but on August 14th the allied forces entered the city walls and the frightful siege was ended.

Through it all Mr. Conger never lost his unfailing



courage and cheerfulness. And he it was, when the siege was over, who refused to recognize spoils of war, claiming that we were not warring against China but merely protecting foreigners.

Granted a three months leave of absence in February, 1901, he returned to the United States for a much-needed rest. After spending a few days in Iowa, he went on to Washington where the President prevailed upon him to return to Peking and negotiate the terms of settlement.

In 1905 he was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Mexico and on April 1, 1905, he had his last audience with the Empress Dowager. She decorated him with a special Order of the Double Dragon and assured him that at the court of China he was respected, trusted, and honored. When he left Peking, his railway car was a bower of flowers and at every station Chinese officials boarded the train to pay their respects. As an evidence of official esteem of Mr. Conger's diplomacy, Theodore Roosevelt wrote:

"I desire to express to you my cordial appreciation of the work that you have performed in China as previously in Brazil. In zeal, efficiency and single minded devotion to public duty you have been the kind of official of whom Americans have the right to feel proud, and I congratulate the country on having had your services."

DOROTHY WAGNER