

# American Tourists have their troubles in Paris



Special Correspondence to The Inquirer.

PARIS, July 17. THE FIRST SECRETARY OF THE American Embassy was beginning his official day. Outside, in the large salon three Americans and one French woman were waiting to consult their troubles and prefer their requests.

"While waiting they disarranged the neat pile of American newspapers, then the dignified and gentlemanly colored waiter tries to keep in order on the centre table; or they studied the portraits of government worthies executed in steel or copper plate by the Bureau of Printing and Engraving and framed together for the education of the nations; or they calculated the amount of money represented by the official days. Outside, in the large salon three Americans and one French woman were waiting to consult their troubles and prefer their requests.

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HENRY VIGNAUD, FIRST SECRETARY OF THE AMERICAN EMBASSY

have his favorite brand of cigars, but why should he bring in a stock of matches.

Getting Him Out of it. "I will rely on you to get me out of it," said the American business man and tourist. The tourist had evidently got the better of the business man already, for he exhibited no diffidence in putting such a burden on the diplomatic representative of his country. The Consul clerk sent me up here, he added.

The Consul can do nothing in such a case," admitted the man of the Embassy. "Small as it may look to you, it is a government matter, requiring intervention with French officials, while the Consul is a commercial representative. I can communicate with the proper officials for you."

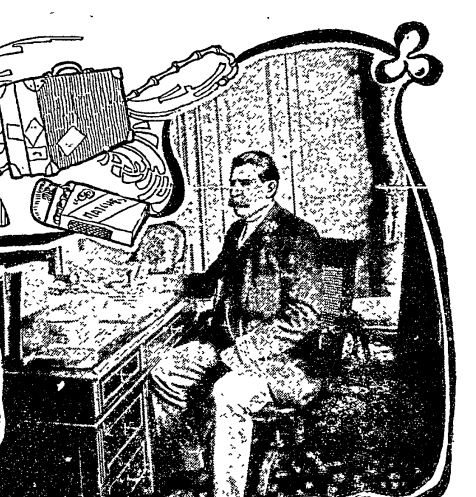
"Oh, I don't care which of you does it!" exclaimed the tourist, with fine impartiality. "The First Secretary began talking notes, as if he had no other business than to save tourist smugglers from the consequence of getting caught. "We will represent your case to the proper people," he said, "and will try to get you off as lightly as possible. There will be a contravention. You will have a fine to pay; but I think I can promise you there will be nothing more serious."

"When will they come for the fine?" inquired the tourist. "Perhaps in a month, perhaps in two." The tourist was also a business man. Reflecting that he must be due in Berlin within a week, and home in America within the month, he exhibited no more interest about the fine, shook hands, and departed. "Had a pleasant chat with the Ambassador," he said that evening at the hotel.

The landlord says that I rented the apartment for six months," replied the lady. "But I certainly never agreed to stay so long, because how could I know whether I would like it? And my sister had not yet decided that she would not remain in Italy, in which case—"

A society woman well known in the East came next. She had lost a sapphire and diamond ring. Living in a small little boarding house, she now and

again had missed objects, but this was the first serious disappearance, and she felt well the last week, two different waiters had brought me meals to my private sitting room, but I do not think either of them as far as the bedroom. It was a large sapphire, with four pure-water blue-white diamonds of about a half carat each, all set in the old-fashioned cutting. It belonged to my husband's first wife, and I valued it particularly because—"



GENERAL HORACE PORTER, UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE

your rooms? Have you made your declaration of strangers, you know; and they are always ready to respond with secret denunciations."

Two or Three Strapped Citizens a Day. "Do dead broke citizens appear often?" I asked.

"We have one or two or three a day right through the year," he answered, sorrowfully. "During the exhibition the number was incredible. Americans came over here without funds, taking it for granted that they could make money. We have got most of that batch back home by this time, but a fair number still hang on, and the new ones come according to the old average of one or two a day."

"And you are obliged to send them away without help?" I asked.

"No, we do nothing of the kind. We refuse them."

"But I thought there was no fund?"

"We do it out of our pockets, just as they do at the Consul General's office. When a man or woman tells you he has eaten nothing for two days you cannot refuse to provide for him. You cannot send him out hungry. You cannot risk letting him walk the streets that night."

"I look as if there could be a fund."

"There never will be one. At home in America there seems to be a prejudice against Americans living abroad, or even traveling abroad. The answer is: 'Stay at home and you will not find yourself dead in Paris.'"

"But how about students? How about men trying to introduce American inventions and products abroad? How about those who have come for a good reason and met with unexpected losses?"

"Well, I suppose the good people do not think about them. The idea seems to be 'I don't travel. Why should you?'"

Passports and Other Papers. "Now, with regard to simple passports, it is different," I said. "Has one a right to a passport? Are you obliged to issue a passport to any citizen who makes affidavit of his identity and presents evidence of it?"

"Yes, unless we have reason to doubt his statements. The issuing of passports," continued Mr. Vignaud, "is the most serious matter which this Embassy makes any charge, and that is by government rule, not money given to the applicant. All other papers are issued free of charge. It is a rule I made twenty-five years ago. This Embassy has had a great deal of trouble about birth certificates, for example. An American living in Paris wants a passport. The French Government requires three papers of him—his birth certificate, a certificate that the publication States Department has been issuing such his particular State, and the written consent of both his and his bride's father and mother."

"The Embassy used to issue papers in lieu of these originals, which many Americans can find themselves almost powerless to obtain. It was a gratuitous service. Then an American citizen began issuing such papers. It was not a service gratis, and after a time there came word from the States Department that these papers were not to be issued. It is not the function of a diplomatic or consular officer of the United States Government to state, over his official signature, what is the law in any of the States of the Union in regard to any particular point. That is the business of a lawyer. Stop issuing these papers."

"We replied that they were really necessary for the convenience of the colony, and that the French authorities would not accept any certificate issued by an American lawyer if it had not the seal of the Embassy. It was then agreed that these papers could be obtained from lawyers and that the Embassy would certify not that the statements of law or fact contained in them are true, but that the lawyers issuing them are competent to declare what is the law and custom of this or that particular State."

Matters of Etiquette. "Many want to see high people, want to be presented to the President of the Republic, to the Ministers, to be asked to receptions, dinners and balls. These entertainments are official; yes, but they are official only for the officials. According to French taste and habit it is a singular request to make of a Minister to issue a ticket of invitation to some private party he does not know. Mme. Carnot made it very stiff, and would not issue an invitation to any one she did not know; and the tradition still has force in government circles. It is a delicate matter."

"I assure you it is a delicate question in the American colony," I replied. "It takes this form: The American Ambassador is in the habit of giving great and splendid public receptions on New Year's Eve, the Fourth of July and Thanksgiving Day. The notices published in the Paris papers, printed in English. Everyone goes to everybody's house to keep. Get for many women it is not happiness enough. Later on, say after New Year's or at the beginning of the autumn, they will read in the society columns of those papers the simple mention in two lines that Mrs. Porter has resumed her Monday's. Then the newcomers especially began asking: 'Does it mean that we are to go to a party on Monday or on Tuesday? Interpret it. Does that mean that we may call?' Mr. Vignaud, simple as the question may seem, has an answer will relieve many a troubled breast."

"Oh, Mrs. Porter's Monday afternoons." "Why, any one whom Mrs. Porter knows." "Oh." "You are speaking of women, are you not? The Ambassador does not expect to see any man who has not previously called on him at the Embassy. Let him register in the visitors' Book and leave a card, at least." "And ladies?" "There is a woman with her husband both should first leave cards on Mrs. Porter. Women alone should do so positively. I think the question remains almost as delicate as before." "Perhaps so," smiled the First Secretary.

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