

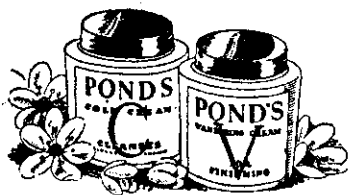
Distinguished American Beauty

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Do Women Make Good Diplomats?



NO DOUBT ABOUT HER: Madame Chiang Kai-Shek shakes hands with Senator Tom Connally, of Texas, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the U.S. Senate, on her recent mission to Washington

ACCORDING to Harold Nicolson, M.P., a former member of the Diplomatic Service, who is now one of the Governors of the BBC, the opening of the Diplomatic Service to others than Public School boys does not mean opening it to women. "Women," he said in a statement cabled recently from London, "are entirely unsuited for diplomacy."

BUT surely that is a rash pronouncement even of the diplomatic service of Britain. How many women are suited for diplomacy is a question that can hardly be answered until more have been tried; but it is certainly not true that none has proved suitable in the past.

Gertrude Bell, for example, was for a long time a political agent in Bagdad, and no one has ever questioned the ability with which she carried out her mission; the ability or the discretion. And how can we overlook the position at the present moment of Madame Chiang Kai-Shek, who has not only been one of the voices of China since Japan first attacked that country, but has recently been on a most important diplomatic mission to Washington, and has broken all precedents by addressing both houses of Congress?

And what about Mrs. Roosevelt? If it was not a diplomatic mission in the technical sense that took her to London, she was certainly an "envoy extraordinary" there, whether she was visiting Buckingham Palace or meeting the representatives of the newspapers.

To Denmark And Norway

America has had at least two women ministers accredited to foreign courts. The first, Mrs. Ruth Bryant Owen, was sent as accredited minister to Denmark, but her career as diplomat stopped short when she married an officer of the Palace Guard. Mrs. Florence Jaffray Harriman was nearing 70 when she was appointed minister to Norway, in 1937, and in spite of her years she showed amazing energy. "Daisy" as she calls herself, talked out the German Minister to Norway over the City of Fiint affair—the U.S. freighter that the Germans threat-

ened to take over in October, 1939, and Mrs. Harriman won.

Both Republican Spain and the U.S.S.R. have produced women diplomats—notably Madame Kolontay, the Russian Ambassador to Sweden.

There is, of course, no bar to the entry of women in the Diplomatic Service in the United States. Several women occupy senior positions at the present time. Among these are Frances Willis, second secretary in the Council in Madrid, and Viola Smith in charge of the Commercial Office in Shanghai. The only objection raised against their employment is that they marry.

British Arguments Against

Marriage is, however, only one of the arguments against the admission of women to the British Diplomatic Service. All sorts of arguments have been advanced to prove that diplomatic work is unsuited to women. Women might be sent to hot climates; they might not be acceptable in many countries where the position of native women is not equal to that of men; they might, in consular positions, have to deal with drunken sailors (as if women through the ages have not had to deal with drunken husbands?). Again, it is said, a great deal of diplomatic work is done over tete-a-tete meals and in clubs on occasions when women would not be included. A further argument against the official employment of women is that the wives of diplomats can play a very large and important role, and will do so whether they are officially employed or not, and in that capacity they work for nothing!

We have spoken already of Madame Chiang Kai-shek. She has not only been on a diplomatic mission on her own account. She has accompanied her husband on his State missions, and has taken part in day and night conferences with the government and army leaders in China. Madame is Secretary-General of the Air Force, chief of the women's division of the New Life Movement in China, and a leader in the Red Cross.

—Feminist