

Why The Baroness May Regret Being So Snippy

Unpleasant Mess the Belgian Ambassador's Wife Stirred Up by Refusing to Sit Beside a German



Dr. Otto Ludwig Wiedfeldt, German Ambassador to the United States, with his wife and their son, Hermann

THE dinner given at the White House the other evening to the members of the diplomatic corps was not the completely harmonious affair it might have been. It was marred by acrimonious feelings that rankled in the breasts of a number of those present, and if spiteful looks and comments could have killed it is believed that this important function would have ended in several fatalities.

The trouble was all due to the fact that Baroness de Cartier de Marchienne, the wife of the Belgian Ambassador to the United States, seems unable to forget or forgive the enmities brought by the late war. In spite of the fact that a treaty of peace was signed some years ago, the baroness is, as it were, still in the trenches—ready and eager to take a shot at anything resembling a German.

Baroness de Cartier is an American born and bred and she feels she can best show her loyalty to the country she adopted when she married the Belgian diplomat by regarding all Germans as her personal enemies. She scorns to rub shoulders with them, to take them by the arm or even to sit beside one of them through the courses of a formal dinner.

Some time in advance of the recent White House dinner the Baroness managed to find out that it had been planned for her to have for an escort into the dining room and for a table companion Dr. Otto Wiedfeldt, the German Ambassador. This information brought from her an outburst which seems to make it plain that diplomats' wives can be quite as temperamental as any grand opera prima donna.

"I will never walk into the White House dining room on the arm of Dr. Wiedfeldt—or any other German," is said to have been the substance of the Baroness's protest. "I refuse even to sit beside him. If I cannot have some other escort then I cannot be present at the diplomatic dinner."

Through the same mysterious channels which had brought the Baroness her advance information was carried the news that the White House would have to get along without her distinguished presence unless it could rearrange its plans as to her escort and her place at the table.

This ultimatum brought perplexity and dismay to the officials of the State Department, who had been charged with the always perplexing duty of arranging the diplomatic dinner. These faithful servants of the Republic, whose salaries are very largely paid by men who sometimes dine in their shirtsleeves and who are never worried how the guests range themselves about the dining table, so long as they get there, were faced with a new and grave problem.

Until they heard the Baroness de Cartier's protest they had supposed that their worries concerning this first diplomatic dinner given since President and Mrs. Coolidge entered the White House, were over.

For weeks they had been arranging and rearranging the names of the distinguished guests who were to sit down to dinner with President and Mrs. Coolidge. They thought they had everything arranged in strict accordance with the time-honored traditions that govern functions of this kind.

According to these traditions, the German Ambassador must take his place in the grand entry into the dining room just where they had him placed and he must escort just the woman who had been assigned to him, the wife of the Belgian Ambassador.

There were to be seventy-nine guests at the dinner. They were to be seated

at a great oblong table, with the President and his wife facing each other in the middle. The seating of the distinguished guests had been planned according to precedents which never before had been questioned. And so the officials of the State Department who had worked so hard and conscientiously to have everything strictly according to the best international etiquette were greatly upset to hear that the Baroness did not care at all for the plan and just would not come unless it was altered.

Probably the public will never know exactly what wires were pulled to bring about a change in the seating arrangements for the White House dinner. But that they were changed there is no doubt.

The haughty Baroness de Cartier who had caused all the trouble was among those present, but she did not walk into the dining room on the arm of Dr. Wiedfeldt, nor did she sit at his side during the dinner.

No, the German Ambassador escorted and had for a dinner companion Mme. Hanihara, the wife of the Japanese Ambassador. And the curious thing about this is that Mme. Hanihara's nation was as firmly linked with the cause of England, France and the other allies as Belgium.

According to the gossip of some of those who were at the dinner, the lady from Japan seemed to enjoy herself very much, indeed. To judge from the smiles that wreathed her face, she found Dr. Wiedfeldt a very acceptable escort and an exceedingly pleasant dinner companion.

According to the gossip which Washington has been humming ever since, that diplomatic dinner was not a particularly pleasant affair for most of the guests.

Nearly everybody present knew what Baroness de Cartier had done and much doubt was expressed as to whether the stand she had taken was either ladylike or diplomatic or respectful to the country to which her husband is accredited. Some cast looks of sympathy at the German Ambassador and others shot at the wife of the Belgian Ambassador glances which made it seem as if the disarmament conference had been very unfruitful of results.

To judge from the proud glint in her eye, Baroness de Cartier felt extremely proud of the way she had forced the hard-working employees of the American State Department to alter the dinner arrangements to suit her whims. But many are wondering if perhaps this pride of hers was not the sort that goes before a fall.

It is suspected that she may be, and very probably already is, extremely sorry for having been so snippy to the German Ambassador and turned the hospitality of President and Mrs. Coolidge into a means for opening up the ugly old wounds of the war. And there is every likelihood that she may be still more regretful.

Her husband is said to have been



The Japanese Ambassador's wife and children. Although her country also has been at war with Germany, Mme. Hanihara took the place beside Dr. Wiedfeldt which Baroness Cartier scorned

strongly opposed to the attitude she took. If he had known how much publicity was to be given the incident it is believed that he would have insisted on her going in to dinner on the arm of the German Ambassador—or else remaining at home.

He knows too well how carefully an incident of this kind will be weighed by the Belgian Foreign Office. The Baron is experienced enough in diplomacy to understand that a diplomat's wife must be as tactful and discreet as he himself if he is to achieve the greatest success.

Whatever one's personal feelings regarding the Germans may be, the fact remains that a state of war no longer exists. The United States has resumed diplomatic relations with Germany and has duly welcomed Dr. Wiedfeldt as the representative of that country. He is therefore entitled to at least formal courtesy—particularly on the occasion when the President of the United States is his host.

But the Baroness de Cartier seems to have been heedless alike of her husband's diplomatic future and of her courteous duty to Dr. Wiedfeldt and to President and Mrs. Coolidge. Also, she was heedless of her own social future, which, as almost everybody thinks, is seriously jeopardized by her dictation of the arrangement of the seats at the White House dinner table.

This is the Baroness's third marriage, but never before has she achieved anything like the social distinction which she enjoys as the wife of the Belgian



Baroness de Cartier de Marchienne, the once divorced and once widowed wife of Belgium's Ambassador, who upset the plans for the recent White House dinner by refusing to accept the German Ambassador as her escort

wife into the position in the smart set which she coveted. So Mrs. Frost, after a few disappointing years of struggling for social recognition, went to Reno and got a divorce.

Her next husband was Hamilton Wilkes Cary, and everybody thought that through him she at last had found a sure and speedy way to the innermost circles of New York and Newport society. For Mr. Cary was none other than a nephew of the powerful Mrs. William Astor and himself a man of the best social status.

But, alas for Mrs. Cary's ambitions, this husband of hers died before society could get its lorgnettes focussed on her long enough to decide whether or not she had any right to "belong."

Then came the war. Like so many other high-spirited American women, the once divorced and once widowed Mrs. Cary went abroad to nurse the sick and wounded soldiers and to cheer up the disgracefully healthy statesmen and diplomats who crowded Paris almost as much as an invading German army would have done.

Mrs. Cary found her war work not too arduous to prevent her playing about a bit with the rather stern-looking but very jovial Baron de Cartier. Almost before anybody realized that it was anything more than a pleasant wartime flirtation they were married.

When the Baron was appointed ambassador to Washington his wife saw a glorious opportunity to achieve the social distinction in her native land which had been denied her with her first two husbands.

But now even some of her warmest friends and admirers are fearful that she herself has ruined her chances of any such thing.

Some of the gossips have hinted that the Baroness thought, by showing her utter contempt for Germany, she would make herself a great popular heroine.

As far as America is concerned, she already must have experienced a rude awakening from any such dream. The



Perhaps Baron de Cartier can explain why his charming wife refuses to understand that the war is over

people of the United States are quite agreed that the war is over and they are ready and eager to let it remain so.



Mrs. Calvin Coolidge, the hostess at the dinner which was marked by a revival of the war's hatreds on the part of some of the guests

Ambassador. And now it seems likely that she has kicked the fat of her social aspirations into the fire by her foolish determination to snub Dr. Wiedfeldt.

Not so many years ago the woman who now holds her head so high as the Baroness de Cartier was called Miss Marie Dow—a name quite as unknown to the Social Register as that of Jack Dempsey.

Her first husband was Elihu B. Frost. He was a multi-millionaire, but all his millions were unable to push his young