

JOHN BARRETT AT PANAMA.

(Special Correspondence of the Desert News by Frank G. Carpenter.)

PANAMA.—By the time this letter is published John Barrett will be steaming up the Magdalena river, on his way to Bogota, to take charge of his new post as minister of Colombia. This appointment is an excellent one. Minister Barrett understands all the ins and outs of Panama politics and Panama politicians. He realizes the feelings of the Colombians and he can do more than any other man to bring the two republics together and at the same time keep them both in harmony with the United States. He is a diplomat from the fuzzy hair on his semi-bald head to the leather soles of his white canvas shoes, and he has been wonderfully successful in dealing with the Spanish-American republics. This has been especially so here at Panama. This little republic is to a large extent Uncle Sam's baby, and the minister has had to take the place of foster mother and nurse. Not only in its relations to Colombia, Costa Rica, and other foreign countries, but in dealing with the government of our zone, Panama has relied upon our minister for counsel and advice. Such assistance had to be delicately rendered in order to not patronize or offend the officials of the Panama government, and in this respect Minister Barrett has admirably succeeded. He has done much to develop a cordial feeling here for the United States and to bring the two nations together. The Panamanians look upon him as their friend. His receptions are attended by as many natives as by Americans, and the American legation has been made a rendezvous for high Colombian officials. John Barrett seems to understand the Latin character. The Panamanians say he is sympathetic, which means that he is in sympathy with them, and he has, I find, the close friendship of the president and the officials, who, although they may distrust each other, seem to have faith in him.

A REVOLUTION WHICH FAILED.

In this connection I want to tell you how the American minister prevented a revolution here last winter. Panama, as you know, is a Spanish-American republic. Its citizens have sucked in the revolutionary spirit with their mother's milk. They have had, it is said, something like 47 revolutions in 100 years, and the common opinion is that there would be revolutions now, were it not for the fear of Uncle Sam's big stick. Panama has its political parties, and the outa want to get in just as they do in the United States. Early last winter the opposition party conspired with Gen. Estaban Huertas, the head of the army, and planned a revolution, intending to overthrow the government. The general was little more than a boy, and his army was only 300 men, but the two were strong enough to have wiped out the government, and to have caused an enormous amount of trouble, not to say bloodshed, had they been permitted to work in the ordinary South American way.

In accordance with the plot, the general told President Amador that he must dismiss his minister of foreign affairs. This was done. Gen. Huertas then made more demands, which led to the belief that he intended to take control of the government and compel the president to make appointments and issue orders as he should dictate. At this time the American minister was called

in for advice and co-operation. Mr. Barrett took the position that the constitution of Panama and our treaty give the United States the right to interfere to maintain order, and I understand he told the president that Uncle Sam would certainly interfere if occasion demanded. He advised President Amador to order the army to disband, and to ask the commander-in-chief to resign his office. He told the president that the army would always be at least a dangerous element, and that it was of no particular value to the state, as our government would protect Panama from foreign invasions, and the local police, strengthened by our marines, could always keep order.

HOW PANAMA LOST ITS ARMY.

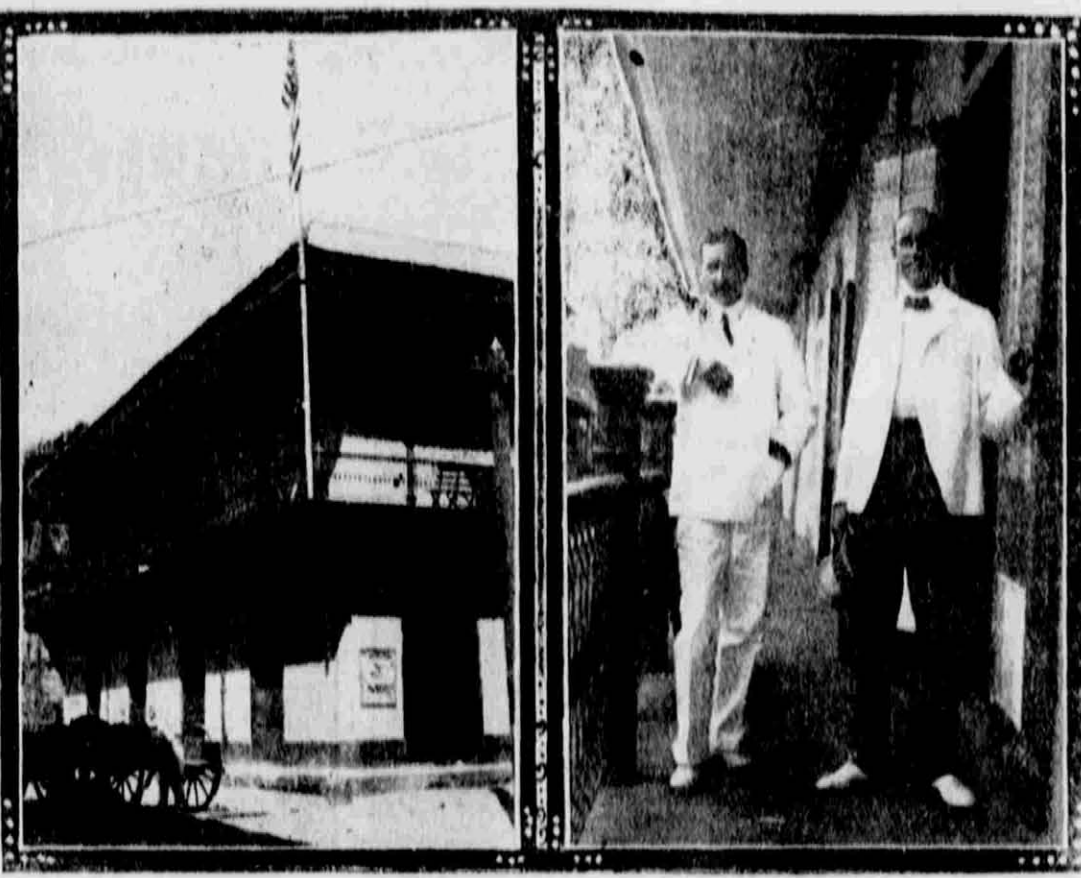
Upon that President Amador decided to disband the army and there was great excitement in consequence. Rumors of resistance by the soldiers were rife, and a company of American marines was brought in from Empire to Ancon, on the outskirts of Panama, to be ready for any emergency. Certain of the hot-heads wanted the marines brought right into the city and stationed around the president's house for his protection, but Minister Barrett objected. He said it was best to prevent the actual interference by the American forces if possible, and that it would be better to let the Panama government control the situation itself as a matter of international credit. He also wished to avoid the charge which might be made by South America and by the opposition party in the United States that President Roosevelt, now that he was re-elected, was using the big stick without regard to consequences.

It was at Barrett's suggestion that President Amador then sent word to the soldiers that if they disbanded without trouble they would have 60 days' pay in addition to the amount due them, and also that half of this would be given when they disbanded and the remainder a week later if there were no further disturbances. The hour for disbanding was fixed, but the soldiers failed to come. They sent word that they wanted the 60 days' pay in a lump, and that as soon as they gave up their arms. With this the president was inclined to comply, but our minister objected, saying it would give no assurance of peace.

UNCLE SAM'S BIG STICK.

A little later the soldiers came to the palace of the president and demanded their pay. The president asked Mr. Barrett to go out and address them. He did so. The scene was a sensational one. In company with Gen. Guardia, who made a speech, saying that while the United States wished to protect the rights of every individual Panamanian, whether he was a citizen or a soldier, it was determined that law and order should be kept. He said that the soldiers must accept the terms offered them by the government or take the consequences. He gave them to understand that the United States, with all its forces, stood behind President Amador, and would support him. This speech did the business. At its close the soldiers said they would accept the terms offered, and the army was disbanded. The guns and other weapons were given up, and are now stored in our warehouse at Ancon. A police force has taken the place of the soldiers, and the chief element of possible

The American Minister as Mother and Nurse to the Baby Republic—A Revolution Which Failed, and How Uncle Sam Prevented It—The Big Stick—The Health of the Isthmus—What the Canal Will Do For Our Asiatic Trade—A Wonderful Development For South America—Barrett Says the Canal Will Pay For Itself in Five Years.



OUR LEGATION AT PANAMA.

Minister Barrett at Right; Joseph Lee, Consul General to Panama, at Left.

revolution on the isthmus has been done away with.

JOHN BARRETT, PREACHER.

I have seen much of the American minister during my stay here. He is one of the most strenuous officials of our strenuous administration. He has kept two typewriters clicking away at the legation day in and day out, and at night the work went on far into the night. Barrett has a stenographer whom he pays out of his own pocket, and also several clerks to help him with his work. He is systematic in everything, and in addition to his official duties he has been making regular visits to the hospitals, giving dinners, calling upon Americans and Panamanians, and last but not least, has had his share in the church movement on the isthmus. He is one of the chief elements of the Y. M. C. A. work here, and every week you may find him at the several American churches. I attended church with him one

Sunday. We first went to the Catholic Church at Ancon, where Father Russell of Panama and Father Boyle, formerly of Washington, officiated. Later on we attended the Protestant Episcopal church, held in one of the hospital wards and presided over by Col. Gorgas. At the end of the first or second lesson, I am not sure which, Col. Gorgas said that inasmuch as there was no person present he would ask the American minister to read him a sermon from some famous divine. He thereupon handed the minister a book, and Mr. Barrett, in stentorian tones, gave us an excellent discourse.

HEALTH ON THE ISTHMUS.

John Barrett is sanguine as to the future health conditions of the isthmus. He knows the tropics well, and during his long stay in Spain had to deal with many of the conditions which prevail here. He says that the present arrangements are such that yellow fever

and malaria will soon be so controlled that those who are careful will be as free from danger to their health here as they are in the United States. He thinks gripe and pneumonia quite as bad as yellow fever and malaria, but at the same time urges all to take precautions against the latter diseases. He says one should take quinine every night, and if possible, keep out of the sun in the middle of the day. One should drink only filtered water, and indulge in stimulants in the most limited way. Barrett believes in plenty of exercise for the tropics. He has a good saddle pony and takes a ride every evening.

He believes in going to bed early, and in using citronella oil on those parts of the body exposed to mosquitoes that the smell may scare them away.

THE CANAL AND OUR ASIATIC TRADE.

In a talk with the American minister the other night I asked him what he

thought about the canal, as far as Asia is concerned, as a paying investment for Uncle Sam. Mr. Barrett has, you know, a thorough knowledge of Asiatic commercial conditions, having been minister to Spain, having lived long in the Philippines, and having traveled throughout Japan, China, India and other eastern countries as commissioner general for the St. Louis fair. He replied:

"I have no doubt but that the canal will pay in time, and that our trade with the Pacific will form a large part of its profits. The United States is just beginning to develop that trade. We are sending goods to Japan, China, Korea, Siam, the Philippine Islands, the East Indies and Australasia, and also to the west coast of South America, Central America and Mexico; but our trade of today with those countries is nothing compared with what it will be when the canal is finished. The total amount of that trade is now about \$2,500,000,000, of which we get less than one-eighth, or about \$300,000,000. Within 15 years after the canal is done we ought to have 45 per cent of the trade of those countries, and I believe it will then amount to a billion dollars a year. The canal will increase that trade enormously. At the end of 15 years it ought to amount altogether to at least \$5,000,000,000 per annum. If we get 45 per cent of it that alone will be \$2,250,000,000 per annum. The construction of the canal in 10 times over."

WILL PAY FOR ITSELF IN FIVE YEARS.

"Indeed I believe that the canal will repay the cost of its construction in benefits received within five years after it is completed," continued Mr. Barrett. "At the outset it will not cost more than \$500,000,000, and it may cost a million dollars a year to operate it. These sums will be bagatelles compared with the advantage we shall receive from it."

"Do you not overestimate the possibilities of our oriental trade, Mr. Minister?" I asked.

"I think not. The average American has no conception of the opportunities there. Almost half of the world's people live in or near the countries reached by the waters of the Pacific ocean. In the Yangtze valley alone there are more than in the United States; Japan has more inhabitants than Canada, Mexico, Central America and the West Indies, and Siam, Korea, Java, and Australasia have more than all South America. These people have their wants, and as they come in contact with foreign nations whose wants will increase. The commercial possibilities of the orient cannot be overestimated."

OUR COMMERCE WITH CHINA.

"Indeed," continued the American minister, "I see no reason why we should not have a commerce with China within the next 25 years that will be worth a billion dollars per annum. That country has now a population of 350,000,000, and its foreign trade is valued at \$325,000,000, or at an average of \$1 per head. Considering the fact that Japan's foreign trade has, within thirty years, grown from \$1 to \$7 per head and that our foreign commerce is valued at \$30 or more per head, it is reasonable to estimate that the trade of China within 25 years will be worth \$6 per head, or as a whole, at least \$2,000,000,000 per annum."

SOUTH AMERICAN TRADE.

"How about South America?" "Our trade with the west coast will be greatly increased by the canal," said the American minister. "The Pacific states of Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Chile, which are backed by sections of Argentina, Bolivia and Brazil,

are yet in their infancy. When the canal is finished they will grow as new or before. Capital from the United States and Europe will flow there and they will have close connections with the markets of the world. I believe it will make those countries good fields for profitable investments on the part of Americans."

"The Pacific coast countries of Central America will also grow. Our eastern states will have water communication with the Pacific shores of Costa Rica, Nicaragua, San Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, where material development has just begun. This will lead to the American exploitation of those countries about 100 miles in a large part of their trade. That trade is now worth about \$50,000,000 per annum. It will increase to \$500,000,000 shortly after the canal is done."

NEW STEAMSHIP LINES.

"Have you thought of the new steamship lines which will spring into existence through the Panama canal?" Continued Minister Barrett. "The enormous trade will demand new ships and new trading companies. At present our manufacturing and producing sections cannot reach the 700,000,000 people who live on or near the Pacific ocean, unless they go about Cape Horn or through the Suez canal. When the canal is done the ships will all go that way and there will be lines from New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Charleston, Mobile, Savannah, New Orleans and Galveston, connecting the canal with various points in South America, or our Pacific coast states. There will be steamers on the way to all these countries from those ports, and other steamers from those countries to us. There will also be direct lines from our ports to Australia, and, in fact, to all parts of the Pacific. Such lines will not begin operation immediately, but within a reasonable period after the canal is completed. I know you will hear statements to the contrary. It was said that the Suez canal would not develop trade between Asia and Europe as was claimed. It did develop such trade, however, beyond the wildest dreams of its builders, and I am willing to risk my reputation on the prophecy that this canal will do more to revolutionize international commerce than any other such undertaking in the history of the world." FRANK G. CARPENTER.

A POISON-PROOF MAN.

At present there is in Glasgow one Capt. Verrill, who styles himself the "poison-proof man," giving exhibitions in one of the places of entertainment in the city of the swiftness of his ability to swallow lethal doses of certain poisons, such as strychnine, phosphorus and so on, with apparent impunity. With these we are told he varies his menu by eating glass and flower pots. Before he made his first public appearance, a number of medical men responded to his invitation to meet him in the Windsor Hotel, where he swallowed half a grain of strychnine in their presence, and also, we are told, partook in quick succession of considerable doses of Paris green, blue indigo, verdigris, and so on, without evil effects. This demonstration, we are further told, concluded by Capt. Verrill's eating a considerable portion of a stick of phosphorus. He invites medical men to bring their own poison. A letter appeared in the Glasgow Herald pointing out the responsibility resting with any medical man, from a medical-legal standpoint, who should, in the event of this man's death have supplied him with poison.—Medical Press.

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