

Kenneth Wimmel

WILLIAM WOODVILLE ROCKHILL

*Scholar-Diplomat  
of the Tibetan Highlands*



William Woodville Rockhill  
Scholar-diplomat of the Tibetan highlands

ASIAN  
PORTRAITS



VISAGE  
D'ASIE

# William Woodville Rockhill

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Kenneth Wimmel

edited with an introduction by

Braham Norwick



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WILLIAM WOODVILLE ROCKHILL:  
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Cover illustration: Rockhill at age 30, entering the diplomatic service in China in 1884;  
The Rockhill Collection

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I leave you facing an open door.  
—Matteo Ricci





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## A Pre-preface and Memoir by Braham Norwick

William Woodville Rockhill's renown is experiencing a revival among members of a growing group. Tibetan Buddhism, its art and philosophy, now attracts more students and a wider general audience beyond that still small circle of Tibetan scholars. Rockhill's name, once almost forgotten except in connection with the Open Door Policy for China, comes up for reasons closer to his own heart. Rockhill was the first American to learn to read, write and speak Tibetan fluently, and one of the first Westerners to be invited by the Dalai Lama. Scholars in most fields are usually pictured in a cloistered existence, but this was and still is often untrue for those studying Tibet and its culture. They, and Rockhill as well, have often been happiest when on a difficult and dangerous pilgrimage. Rockhill's background in the French Foreign Legion and as a rancher in the far west of the United States served him well for his travels into Tibet.

Rockhill's writings and pictures are still used in recent publications relating to Tibet. But Rockhill was also a diplomat, correctly given much credit for the Open Door Policy. My own studies of Rockhill had involved reading all his publications and available letters, acquisition of a large collection of his personal photographs, and the preparation of a paper for a convocation of Tibetan scholars. Just then, the existence of a proposed book by Ken Wimmell on Rockhill was brought to my attention at a lecture by Karl E. Meyer and Shareen Blair Brysac. They were discussing European imperialism of the nineteenth century, where the anti-imperialist American diplomat Rockhill was especially noted. After considerable e-mail and information exchange with Ken Wimmell, his manuscript arrived.

The reason for this memoir is that Wimmel passed away before he was able to make the changes and additions to which he had agreed on principle, based on our numerous conversations and mailings. We had independently worked for years, amassing information from differing vantages and for different purposes. Wimmel worked for the American State Department, as did Rockhill, while my interests were focussed on Tibet, as were Rockhill's. So though we saw much of the same material, we often easily understood things the other had not. So this book, still largely the work of its author, now bears many small additions.

My studies of Buddhism, Tibet, its mapping and the personal lives of a few who had published in those fields in the past, often indicated the existence of much printed nonsense. There was none in Rockhill. Tibet, the country, its culture and version of Buddhism are sufficiently different from all others to be interesting without falsities. Fiction, films and propaganda relating to Tibet tend to give romanticized or otherwise unreal impressions. Fiction, films and propaganda do the same for other places also. Most of us take that for granted, and enjoy a job well done, even when it depicts a dream world. What is odd, however, is that so many who published supposedly serious Tibetan studies expressed and quoted wishes and guesses as though they were facts. One must admit that certain facts permit a variety of interpretations. All this has led to recent books, with titles like *Virtual Tibet*, *Traumwelt Tibet*, and *Demystifying Tibet*. There

is surely a reality. Tibet does exist, its inhabitants have nationalistic feelings, and its culture has enchanted and continues to fascinate many thoughtful and brilliant people of other countries, not only in the west but in Asia as well.

Extended research had already disclosed unexpected misinformation and quandaries about Rockhill as well. Rockhill himself gave variant reasons for certain reported actions, and supplied different dates of birth. A biography by Paul Varg, begun as his PhD thesis, had been found surprisingly unreliable. Even the *New York Times* obituary contained several errors of fact. So it was a special pleasure to read Wimmel's text. In it, Wimmel constantly noted even his most plausible conjectures as such, cited sources and reasons for the dubious information, and gave accurate references for his numerous citations.

Wimmel often clarified the information from his sources. He indicated the contradictory statements by Rockhill, the unanswered questions and the questionable answers found in the records. We communicated frequently, but though Wimmel was eager to use suggestions and facts offered, his health did not permit him to make those additions and changes prior to his untimely death. He had not collected nor originally planned to add pictures of Rockhill, nor those of his colleagues, nor of any of the many items that Rockhill had obtained. But after our communications, he became enthused by that idea, as rounding out his own and a reader's understanding of the era and the person. He began to realize the importance of Tibet in Rockhill's career decisions. And a week before he passed away, I could tell him that his book would be printed.

Much published material about Rockhill is so far off from the facts as to be amusing to those preferring laughter, and sad for those who find error depressing. In one egregious example, a printed auction catalogue described a large collection of photographs. These included many of Rockhill and the men he knew. It managed to misidentify all it specifically noted as of Rockhill himself. In two cases, Captain, later Sir Frederick, O'Connor, was identified as Rockhill. (O'Connor was the official interpreter for the British during the 1904 invasion of Tibet.) Anatolian Turks were identified as Tibetans. A person the catalogue identified as 'an Indian official' was actually the Panchen Lama. Though the collection of pictures surely had belonged to Rockhill, there are no pictures of his two wives or his two daughters. The only photo of a lady is inscribed to Mrs Rockhill by Edith Kermit Roosevelt. That photo has a copyright stamp! Clearly, the catalogue collection is a mere fraction a much larger one. But the larger one has disappeared.

This auctioned set of photographs did add elements missing in both Varg and in Wimmel's original manuscript. There are pictures of Rockhill as a boy and at later stages in his life. There are numerous *cartes de visite*, with Rockhill's notations on the back, giving names and comments. These are of his classmates and teachers from St Cyr and College Chaptal. Rockhill noted one of his fellow students had later been involved with *l'Affaire Dreyfus*. Another classmate, who gave a large and inscribed photograph of himself, achieved high rank in the French Army. There are pictures of those he dealt with while working in Asia. These include a young man, Thomas Haskins, chosen to accompany him on the first visit with the thirteenth Dalai Lama, then at Wu T'ai Shan. There are numerous other pictures taken in Peking. One is of Liang Tun Yen, the Chinese diplomat with whom Rockhill worked in the post Boxer rebellion negotiations. There is one of G. A. Robertson, of the British and Chinese Corporation, involved with the building of railroads. The pictures include the Germans with whom he worked

in China, the Minister A. M. von Swartzenstein and Field Marshal A. von Wardersee. Reinhold Rost, Secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society is also present. One young man, who signs Kao Chia Jui, and writes on the back Karuizawa, Japan, dating his pictures as 22nd July 1909, has not yet been found in another record. But he was surely one of the young Chinese revolutionaries who helped establish the Chinese Republic, and is probably remembered and recorded under another name.

The *New York Times* is a source for reliable datings, pictures of Rockhill, his wife, daughter, and the embassy in Peking. The previous biography by Varg has, among its other shortcomings, Rockhill's year of birth incorrect. Wimmel politely suggested the date given by his predecessor might have been a typo, not caught by the book's editor. But it was not, since Rockhill's father died prior to his son's birth, and Varg had him die later. Wimmel did use Varg information on Rockhill when it consisted of quotations or was confirmed from other sources.

Ken Wimmel was well placed to write this biography. In retirement, he had earlier published *The Alluring Target, In Search of the Secrets of Central Asia* and *Theodore Roosevelt and the Great White Fleet: American Superpower Comes of Age*. In the latter, he had engaged in biographical research on Rockhill's important supporters. Wimmel was, like Rockhill, a Foreign Service Officer, beginning in 1961, and active for thirty years almost wholly in Asia. Wimmel served in Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Taiwan. He married in New Delhi, and his wife Arati helped with his work. He wrote a book-length account of the Great Indian Land Survey, and its use of large iron chains to measure distance. The Calcutta Book Fair owed much to his ideas and efforts. As a scholarly American diplomat, Wimmel was familiar with what a continuing education service in Asia could supply, as well as the traumas diplomats there endure. Wimmel knew where to unearth voluminous State Department and other special government documentation, and it was more immediately available for him than for outsiders.

Wimmel's own preface and notes indicate only a fraction of his efforts to track down material on Rockhill—those that were successful. He followed many unmentioned blind alleys. While, at least partly thanks to Rockhill, the type of personnel in the American diplomatic service has improved since his time, there are arguable limits to improvements possible for any politicized organization. Policies, goals, administrations often change, and sometimes suddenly. Political appointees still obtain important posts. Career diplomats must follow current orders, regardless of personal preferences, or resign. And Rockhill did resign more than once.

Rockhill initially chose diplomatic service so as to continue his pursuit of Tibetan studies, yet still manage to earn a living. Unlike some of his precursors who concentrated in such studies, such as Ippolito Desideri and Csoma de Koros, or Alexandra David Neel, he was concerned with keeping a family. Like many later Tibetanists, in order to earn a living, he found it necessary to engage in Chinese studies and work in and with China. But the story of Rockhill belongs in the text, which Ken Wimmel put together. The text and notes have been slightly extended, based on our discussions and agreements. Certain topics are still mysteries, such as the vanished memoir of Rockhill's daughter Dorothy. This was a major source for the Varg biography. Or what has become of the rest of the picture collection which Rockhill's wife or her heirs did not discard.

## Preface

This book is based mainly on primary sources. The most important is, of course, William Rockhill's own papers in the Houghton Library at Harvard University. Important, too, in revealing both the public official and the private man are the papers of John Hay and Theodore Roosevelt, both in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress. A great many official despatches, cables, letters and memoranda that Rockhill wrote during his years of diplomatic service can be found in the Department of State Records in the National Archives. Many have been published in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series.

Aspects of the private man are revealed in several collections of private correspondence. Most notable among unpublished collections are the Alfred Hippisley papers at the Bodleian Library, Oxford; the Willard Straight papers at Cornell; and the John Otway Percy Bland papers at the University of Toronto. Two important published sources are the six-volume collection of the letters of Henry Adams edited by J.C. Levenson and the two-volume collection of the letters of George Morrison edited by Lo Hui-min. The eight-volume collection of Theodore Roosevelt's letters edited by Elting Morison is a valuable adjunct to the Roosevelt Papers in the Library of Congress. Among Rockhill's own rather extensive published works, only two books and a few magazine articles recounting his Tibetan explorations offer any information about the man himself.

When Rockhill died in 1914, his papers remained in the possession of his widow, Edith. In the 1930s, she placed them on loan at Yale University, apparently at the request of Professor A. Whitney Griswold who used them for his classic study, *The Far Eastern Policy of the United States*. When Edith died in 1946, the papers passed into the possession of Rockhill's grandson, Courtland Hoppin. He placed them on permanent deposit at the Houghton Library in two batches, in 1947 and 1951.

Rockhill's papers are fairly voluminous. He apparently began systematically to keep private documents after about age thirty when he entered public service. Later, he also began to keep copies of official papers he apparently considered important. But his papers provide very little information about his early life. The most important source of information about his childhood and youth is—or was—a manuscript written by his older daughter, Dorothy, apparently in the 1920s when her married name was Dorothy Larkin. It may have been an effort to write a biography, or it may have been intended as information for use by another biographer. It was never published.

In the 1940s, Courtland Hoppin granted access to the papers to Paul Varg, whose biography of Rockhill was published in 1952. Apparently, they then included the manuscript by Dorothy Larkin, but it is not among the papers Courtland Hoppin deposited in the Houghton Library. Courtland Hoppin died in Sarasota, Florida, in 1974, and I have been unable to locate this memoir by Dorothy about her father. Accordingly, I have depended upon Varg, who depended upon that manuscript and quoted from it, for much of the rather meager information I have been able to gather about Rockhill's early years.

To romanize Chinese names, I have used the older Wade-Giles system (omitting

apostrophes) rather than the pinyin system now more generally favored by scholars and journalists. I have used the older English spellings of geographic place-names, e.g., Peking and Canton, rather than the pinyin spellings now more widely used, Beijing and Guangjou. Where names have been changed, (e.g., the capital of Mongolia is now Ulan Bator rather than Uрга) I have used the older name. The older usages were employed by Rockhill and his contemporaries, so they seem more appropriate for an account of that era. Using them also means that the same spellings appear throughout, in both quotations from documents of the period and in the narrative.

## Prologue

The late autumn New England sunlight is a pale, misty gold that softens the sharp edges of the bare, black tree branches outlined against a milky blue sky. Only a few weeks ago, they were ablaze with the scarlets and russets of October. The grave site lies just a few feet from a rutted, partially graveled lane that winds through the cemetery past groves of trees interspersed among clusters of family burial plots. Some contain gravestones dating from the eighteenth century.

The grave is marked by a horizontal slab of granite, perhaps seven feet by three feet, rising two feet above the ground at the head and sloping slightly toward the foot. The surface is smooth and gives no sign of age except for a few small patches of lichen and moss. Beneath a large cross chiseled into the surface is the simple inscription, still sharp and easily read:

WILLIAM WOODVILLE ROCKHILL  
1854 – 1914  
EDITH HOWELL PERKINS  
HIS WIFE  
1870 – 1946

Perhaps fifteen feet from the grave marker stands a gnarled dwarf pine tree, its bark a mottled white, its branches not quite overhanging the grave. It is a *pinus bungeana*, native to China. According to one account, it grew from a seed of one of ten trees brought to the United States from China in 1908 by an American botanist. It was said to have been planted near the grave by a friend of William Rockhill to whom he once expressed a fondness for that particular variety of tree.<sup>1</sup> Another account says that the tree was sent as a gift from the President of the Republic of China to adorn the grave as a mark of China's respect and affection.<sup>2</sup> Whichever account is accurate, it is certain that the tree was planted to honor the man whose grave it shades; it is the only one of its kind in the Litchfield East Cemetery and perhaps in all of Connecticut.

Litchfield is a picture postcard New England village in the southern Berkshires of northwestern Connecticut. Stately homes, mostly of the Colonial and Federal periods, occupy large treed lots that display the beautiful buildings to best advantage, as pieces of antique silver or china are carefully and tastefully displayed in the windows of an expensive shop. It is the sort of place worth a special visit by anyone interested in early American history or who loves New England villages and appreciates fine colonial architecture.

William Rockhill spent no more than twenty-odd of his sixty years in the United States, and the amount of time he spent in Litchfield must be calculated in months rather than years. He came from Pennsylvania Quaker stock, not New England Yankee. Yet he chose to be buried in Litchfield and to establish there the only true, permanent home he ever possessed. One reason was that it had been the home of his second wife whose family had been prominent there for generations. Another reason, perhaps less obvious, was that the charming, peaceful village offered the surroundings of repose and



privacy he sought in which to continue his scholarly pursuits. When his long diplomatic career was obviously approaching its end, he wrote to a friend: 'I want to go to Litchfield and raise poultry and flowers and live exclusively in an oriental atmosphere of the Southern Sung and Yuan periods.'<sup>3</sup>

Chinese artistic and intellectual achievement reached its apogee, many scholars affirm, during the Sung Dynasty, and the Yuan Dynasty which immediately followed was the brilliant era of Kublai Khan and Marco Polo.

In his youth, Rockhill did not seem to seek the quiet repose of a scholar, although he began early to make scholarly investigations. He lived his early years on the edge, choosing pursuits that involved risks and dangers few are willing to undertake voluntarily. He later denied that he had lived daringly. In middle age, when he had become a senior official in the Department of State, he replied to an interviewer who asked about his adventurous early years:

*Some men can have adventures going from New York to Brooklyn, but I am not one of them. I have never had an adventure in my life ... adventures come to those who look for them. If a man minds his own business, he doesn't have them.*<sup>4</sup>

He was a complex personality who masked a fundamental shyness behind a posture of irascibility and aloofness penetrated by only a handful of people who could claim to know him intimately. Impatient with mediocrity and half-hearted effort, he was a perfectionist who drove himself unceasingly and demanded the same effort from his subordinates. He became brusque and short-tempered with those whom he believed gave less than their all. He was capable of focussing with laser-like intensity on the task at hand and of sustaining long periods of incredibly hard labor, both physical and mental. He sometimes suffered bouts of severe depression.

He was never rich nor very famous, but he counted as close personal friends some of the rich and famous Americans of his day. Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Adams and John Hay are among those who wrote admiringly and affectionately of William Rockhill, in letters both to him and to others. He was disliked by many people, usually those who knew him only superficially because they could not penetrate the wall of gruff reserve he erected around himself. But even they respected him for his ability and accomplishments.

Rockhill's life was dominated by one obsession: oriental studies. These began with Tibet and later China. He studied them, mastered their languages, gained encyclopedic knowledge of their history and culture, lived in China and traveled into Tibet. He wrote about his travels and came to understand the Orient as few Westerners have, then or since. He influenced American policy toward China for a decade or more—one of the most important decades for American foreign policy, when the United States emerged from its traditional continental isolation to become a world power. His influence continued to be felt for a half-century.

Rockhill's family background and early life gave no hint of the direction his life would take. Probably no one who knew young William Rockhill would have predicted that he would become one of his country's first professional diplomats. Nor would they have foreseen that he would one day achieve a commanding position of special respect among that small band of dedicated individuals who only grudgingly and after long initiation welcome a newcomer to their ranks: the China Hands.



**Apprenticeship  
1854-1899**

## Childhood and Education of an American Expatriate: Philadelphia and France, 1854-1873

When William Rockhill was born on April 1, 1854, the families of both his parents had been in America for more than 150 years. The first Rockhill to arrive was Edward Rockhill of Addingleete in Yorkshire. He left England in 1686 and settled near Mansfield Square in Chesterfield Township, New Jersey. He was a prominent member of the Quakers, and he prospered. He held several elected or appointed offices in the community until his death in 1720. Edward and his descendents tended to produce good-sized families, and the Rockhills multiplied and spread. One branch of the family later claimed a distant relationship to President Theodore Roosevelt.<sup>1</sup>

William's grandfather, Thomas C. Rockhill, was born in 1790 and became a successful businessman in Philadelphia. He served in the State General Assembly and the Philadelphia Select Council and was for many years treasurer of the city's Board of Trade. William's father, Thomas C. Rockhill, Jr, was born in 1819 and studied at St Mary's College in Baltimore. He quickly became a rising young lawyer in Philadelphia. In 1849, he married Anna Dorothea Woodville whom he had met while a student in Baltimore.<sup>2</sup>

Anna Woodville was a vivacious red-haired beauty active in the upper reaches of Baltimore society. Her father was an immigrant from England who had become a wealthy stockbroker, while her mother was a member of the Ogle family that had been prominent in Maryland for several generations. Two of her forebears had served as governors of Maryland, both as a colony and a state. Her grandfather, Benjamin Ogle, had been a close friend of George Washington. The 3,600-acre Ogle family estate, Bel Air, just west of Annapolis, boasted a race track, kennels, a bowling green, a mile-long carriage entranceway, and a manor house built in the eighteenth century of materials imported from England.<sup>3</sup> For young Anna, there were summers spent in Newport and visits to Bel Air. There were balls at the recently-established Naval Academy in Annapolis and nearby Washington, D.C. The young lawyer from Philadelphia must have appeared to be a man with excellent prospects to woo and win a girl with a pedigree and background like Anna Woodville's.

The couple settled in Philadelphia near Thomas's family. Anna gave birth to her first child, a boy, in 1852. He was christened Thomas after his father and grandfather. Their second son was named William Woodville after his maternal grandfather.

Young William was born into a family in comfortable though not wealthy circumstances. His grandfather had been prospering for several years, however, and the prospects of his father's budding law practice appeared excellent. If the family had not been jolted by two tragic losses within a little more than a year, the baby William's life might have taken a course rather different from the one it actually took. Even before his birth, tragedy struck. His father died on February 18, 1854, a victim of tuberculosis. The

pregnant widow with her young son Thomas moved to her in-laws in their spacious house on Pine Street, and William was born shortly after.

Less than a year after William's birth, tragedy struck again when his grandfather died. The family was reduced to two widows and two toddlers, so an uncle, Edward Rockhill, moved in to become the man of the house. Despite the two deaths within less than a year, the family did not suffer from financial hardship. Edward apparently enjoyed a substantial income, and Grandfather Rockhill had left his entire estate to his wife. Anna received an annuity of \$1,200 from her husband's estate, and Grandfather Rockhill in a letter written a few months before his death had recommended that his daughter-in-law receive \$1,000 a year from his estate. However, even with those bequests, the dollar having easily twenty times its current value, Anna was financially dependent upon her mother-in-law.

Anna and her two boys continued living with grandmother Rockhill on Pine Street until William was nine years old. Those early years apparently were not happy. The two strong-willed women clashed, especially over how the two little boys should be raised. Old Mrs Rockhill, who owned the house they lived in and controlled the family's purse strings, dominated. She could be tyrannical, while her daughter-in-law asserted her independence and rebelled against the older woman's dictatorial ways. The younger woman accused the older of interfering in her raising of her sons by giving them sweets whenever they wanted them, encouraging them to rebel against their mother, and preventing them from receiving a normal education. Why the two boys should be denied an education is unclear, but at the age of ten, William Rockhill reportedly could not read or write.<sup>4</sup>

One of the unanswered questions about William Rockhill's early life is: why did his mother not seek help from her family when life with her mother-in-law in Philadelphia proved to be so unpleasant? In 1860, her father, mother and brother were living in Baltimore in circumstances affluent enough to permit them to keep five full-time servants.<sup>5</sup> Anna presumably could have taken her children and moved to Maryland. Perhaps she had become estranged from her family after her marriage. For whatever the reason, she chose to stick out life on Pine Street for nine years.

In 1863, with the Civil War raging, Anna and her sons moved to France. It is not difficult to surmise why she decided to leave Pine Street, but there is another unanswered question in why she chose to move to Paris. There is no record that she had friends or relatives there or any previous connection with France. The family moved into a small flat near the Place Pereire, and the two boys were enrolled in the Lycée Bonaparte, later Lycée Condorcet. Anna's income was sufficient only for the barest necessities, and the family lived a frugal life.

The two Rockhill boys were suddenly deposited in a new school in a foreign country to be educated in a language completely foreign to them. Presumably, neither of them knew any French when they arrived to live in Paris. Nevertheless, with their remarkable mother driving them, they excelled despite such formidable obstacles. In 1869, William was admitted to the École Imperiale Centrale des Arts et Manufactures. He ranked ninth among two hundred candidates. He studied calculus, mechanics, geometry, physics, chemistry, geology and architecture. After a year of study, he ranked thirty-eighth in a

class of 177 students.<sup>6</sup>

William was growing up in the Paris of the Second Empire of the Emperor Napoleon III and his glamorous Empress, Eugénie. It was *la ville lumière*, the most beautiful city in Europe. Under Napoleon III, the old medieval Paris of meandering lanes and ramshackle buildings had been transformed into today's familiar city of straight, broad tree-lined boulevards and grand public buildings. There were numerous colorful parades and processions along the wide avenues that no doubt were objects of fascination to a growing boy like William. Wild-looking Algerian horsemen and hussars sporting shiny helmets, waving plumes and flashing sabers often clattered through the cobblestone streets, escorting the Emperor or Empress or the young Prince Imperial in their satin-lined carriages. Religious processions of black-robed priests holding aloft statues of the Virgin and other saints were often seen. Almost every day, a cavalcade of one kind or another, often accompanied by a military band, made its colorful, noisy way through the chestnut-lined streets.

The city in which Rockhill spent his formative years was also the most cosmopolitan, most sophisticated European capital, especially when compared with Victorian London or Prussian Berlin. For most Europeans, it was the center of the civilized world. In its theaters, restaurants, and cafés, one might rub elbows with Flaubert, Offenbach, Dumas, Georges Bizet or Baudelaire until his death in 1867. A strange new school of painting called impressionism was beginning to attract attention. Every afternoon, a cavalcade of victorias, barouches, phaétons and landaus of the wealthy haut-monde and the sometimes notorious ladies of the demi-monde passed through the Bois de Boulogne to the Place de la Concorde in front of the Tuileries to take the air. The Rockhill family's financial condition no doubt prevented Anna and her sons from sampling much of the life of the Second Empire's glittering higher society. Nevertheless, young William's developing character and personality must have been affected by the heady, animated atmosphere of Napoleon III's Paris.

When William was thirteen, the Rockhills were visited by friends of his mother from Maryland, a widow named Marie Louise Tyson and her daughter, Caroline, aged twelve. They may have remained in Paris for an extended stay, and perhaps young William saw a good deal of them. In any event, he fell in love with the young girl, but it was not just adolescent puppy love. He determined not to lose contact with her.

In 1871, Anna took the two boys to live for a while in southern France near Bordeaux. One reason for the move was to improve Thomas's health, which had never been robust. An even more compelling reason may have been the disruptions to Parisian life caused by the Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune, which was proclaimed in March 1871. Within a period of only a few months, Napoleon III was toppled and his Second Empire swept away. Paris under the Commune was experiencing horrors of many descriptions, and it is not surprising that a foreign family like the Rockhills would flee the city until conditions returned to normal. One notable event during the brief stay in the south occurred when Anna met a Monsieur Greppin, a Swiss whom she would marry. Perhaps because of her association with M. Greppin, she became a convert to Roman Catholicism. Her adoption of the religion may have been a reason why her younger son in later years was thought by many to be Catholic.

In late 1871, when Thomas's health had improved and conditions in Paris had returned to normal with the proclamation of the Third Republic, the family returned to the capital. The adolescent William's life took another abrupt, surprising turn. He was admitted to study at the *École Spéciale Militaire* at St Cyr, the military academy that is the French equivalent of West Point. Later in life, he gave no indication of having the slightest interest in military matters, so it is not readily apparent why he chose to enter St Cyr. He may have done so for any or all of several reasons. The French Army had just suffered a traumatic defeat at the hands of Germany, and the military academy may have been having difficulty filling its classes. New cadets were being especially recruited. For William Rockhill it may have been the only means by which a young man living in rather straitened circumstances could gain a top-level higher education. He must have made a particular effort to be admitted, because he obtained the support of the American Minister to France to gain admittance. Perhaps for that reason, he was not required to take the usual competitive entrance examination required of young Frenchmen. On his application, he or his mother made him a year older than he really was, giving his birth date as April 1, 1853, because he was actually too young for admission to the school. This is the date shown on all his later French military records. Rockhill began his studies at St Cyr on January 1, 1872.

Rockhill's interest in Asia and Asian languages was first awakened while he was a student at St Cyr, although it did not happen as a result of his studies at the school. He somehow became acquainted with Ernest Renan, a professor of Hebrew at the *Collège de France*. Renan was a famous philologist and religious historian who is credited today with creating the academic discipline of comparative religion. Renan had taken part in several archeological expeditions to the Near East, and by 1872 he was a famous scholar. Under the influence of Renan, Rockhill became interested in Asia and the study of non-European languages.

Renan was known as an 'Orientalist', a rather new title in the scholarly world. For most Europeans, the Orient was a huge, exotic, somewhat hazily defined area that stretched from the Arab, Turkish and Hebrew world of North Africa and the Levant through Persia and Central Asia to India, China and Japan. Until the early nineteenth century, most of what Europeans knew about the fabulous East was derived from travellers' tales that emphasized the strange and exotic, and from a few Catholic missionaries. Only in the early nineteenth century did European scholars begin to examine in any systematic manner the civilizations of the Orient, in particular their languages and religions. Not until 1874 did the first International Congress of Orientalists convene in London. Renan was in the forefront of a comparatively new scholarly discipline.

In France, orientalist scholarship tended to focus on the Arab world, Egypt and the Holy Land. In Britain and Germany, Orientalists were preoccupied with ancient India and the Hindu and Buddhist scriptures. The German scholar, Max Mueller, at Oxford University in 1872 was just completing the fifth volume of his monumental translation of the Hindu holy book, the *Rig Veda*. Serious scholarship on China was less developed, because European penetration of that country had only begun to occur by the middle of the century. Even less was known about Japan, and least known of all was mysterious Tibet.

There was one book about Tibet, so popular in France it was hardly considered a work

of serious scholarship, that intrigued young William Rockhill with his newly-awakened interest in Oriental studies. Entitled *Souvenirs d'un Voyage Dans La Tartarie*, it was written by a French Catholic priest named Régis-Évariste Huc who had served for many years as a missionary in China. Between 1844 and 1846, he made a journey into Tibet accompanied by another priest, Joseph Gabet. Huc and Gabet reached Lhasa, and in 1872 they were famous as the last foreigners known to have reached the Tibetan capital.

Huc's account of his journey with Gabet into Tibet was popular because it is very readable and full of anecdotes about wondrous experiences. It was a big hit in France at a time when accounts of exploration into far-off corners of the world were becoming popular fare in Europe and the United States. It fired young William Rockhill's imagination. He resolved to learn about Tibet and master its language. In addition to his regular studies at St Cyr, he began to study Tibetan at the Bibliothèque Nationale under the tutelage of Léon Feer, a student of Asian languages and civilization. Between Rockhill's military studies and the time he spent at the Bibliothèque, he regularly put in fourteen hours a day of study. He was forming the scholarly habits of intensely focussed, extended study that he would follow throughout his life.

In 1872, Anna Rockhill married Monsieur Greppin, despite opposition from her son, William. The Greppins settled in Paris at Number 122, Avenue de Wagram. Thomas was a student at the École Polytechnique, and Anna saw little of her two sons. Thomas had seldom been strong or in robust health. He died in 1874 of tuberculosis, the same disease that had killed his father.

William Rockhill graduated from St Cyr in 1873, ranked thirty-fifth in a class of 159 students.<sup>6</sup> He must have been an impressive figure at his graduation ceremony. He stood 6' 4" and had inherited his mother's red hair. He also possessed the quick temper that traditionally, if unscientifically, is associated with redheads.

Around the time of his graduation, Anna wrote a letter to the Minister of War to submit a special request on behalf of her son.<sup>7</sup> Presumably at William's instigation, she requested that her son after graduation be assigned to the Zouaves. Created to be part of France's Armée de Afrique, the Zouaves were regarded as an élite unit. Originally recruited from a tribe of Berbers in North Africa whose name they adopted, they were famous for their rapid marching pace and, especially, their colorful uniform of baggy pantaloons, a short jacket, and a fez. Several units on both sides in the American Civil War had adopted Zouave uniforms.

Rockhill, still in his teens when he graduated from St Cyr, was no doubt attracted by the Zouaves' uniform and the exotic, romantic aura that surrounded the unit. Service with the Zouaves would mean a chance to go to North Africa, the gateway to Ernest Renan's Orient. Another reason for his choice may have been less romantic and more practical. Rockhill was not a French citizen. His military record mentions that he was *au titre étranger*, a foreigner in French service. For that reason, he may have been ineligible for, or at least unlikely to receive, assignment to a regular French unit in the army. In her letter to the Minister of War, his mother promised that if her request were granted, her son would apply for French citizenship.

A Chef du Bureau in the Ministry of War minuted Anna's letter for the information of the Minister. He explained her request, including her promise that her son would



immediately obtain French citizenship. But the Chef du Bureau also pointed out that Rockhill had been admitted to St Cyr without passing the usual competitive examination, so 'He should not enjoy the benefits of all the advantages offered to young Frenchmen who undergo the tests and trials required for admission to the school.'<sup>8</sup> Since the 1840s, the Zouaves' ranks had been filled by French rather than North African soldiers; perhaps for that reason the Chef du Bureau did not endorse Anna's request. As an alternative, the bureaucrat suggested that, in view of Rockhill's high class ranking upon graduation from St Cyr, he could be appointed to fill one of three current vacancies as sub-lieutenant in the Régiment Étranger. If M. le Minister approved his suggestion, this recommendation would be forwarded to the President of the Republic for his approval.

The recommendation was forwarded, and the President made the appointment. Rockhill at the age of nineteen became an officer in the Régiment Étranger, as the Foreign Legion was then called because it consisted of a single regiment in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War. He received his formal appointment on October 1. Soon after, he left Paris for Marseilles where he may have spent several weeks at Fort Saint-Jean, the Foreign Legion depot there. Whether he made the short voyage across the Mediterranean with a consignment of new recruits, or whether, as an officer, he travelled in solitary splendor, is not recorded. He arrived in Algeria, probably at Oran, on December 18. From Oran, he proceeded on to his destination, the headquarters of the Régiment Étranger at Mascara.<sup>9</sup>

## From Man of Action to Scholar: Algeria, New Mexico and Switzerland 1873-1884

When Rockhill reported for duty with the Foreign Legion in 1873, it had been in existence for forty years. Like the Zouaves, it was created to be part of the *Armée d'Afrique* to carve out a French colonial empire in North Africa. The Legion fought with valor in the bloody battles needed to subdue the fierce tribes of Algeria, and it acquitted itself with distinction in the Crimea, in Spain, and for three years during Napoleon III's ill-starred attempt to establish an empire in Mexico. In 1870, it was brought to France to fight alongside the regular French army units resisting the Prussian invasion. It was reduced to single regiment when it returned to its home in Algeria in 1871.

In 1873, the Legion's future seemed uncertain. Many Frenchmen considered a force of foreign mercenaries fighting as a unit of the French army to be a national embarrassment. But in the early 1870s, the Legion was entering what has in retrospect been called its golden age, when its *Beau Geste* atmosphere was established as tradition. France was about to embark on a series of colonial conquests that would soon send an expanded Legion to battlegrounds in such-far-flung places as Dahomey, Madagascar, and Indo-China.<sup>1</sup>

Rockhill spent almost two years as a French army officer with the Foreign Legion in Algeria. Unfortunately, only the sketchiest information still exists about his life during that period. He was a modest man who rarely talked about himself or his accomplishments, even if questioned about them. If he ever wrote anything about his experiences with the Foreign Legion, it has not survived, and if he ever described them in any detail to anyone, no record of such a conversation has survived. His army record consists of only a few pages, and most of what they contain is concerned with his entrance into, and his exit from, the French army. It does record that he took part in two campaigns but was not wounded, so he may have seen some combat action. If he did, it was probably against nomadic tribesman in the Sahara Desert. By 1873, the Tell, the arable highlands between the Mediterranean and the northern edge of the Sahara, was under France's control, but the French had only begun to penetrate into the arid wastes south of the Atlas Mountains. If there was any significant combat by then, it was in the desert wastes to the south. However, Rockhill's record makes no mention that he was awarded any decorations.

In July 1874, the Régiment Étranger was inspected as part of the general inspection of the infantry that year. As an officer, Rockhill was given an individual inspection report. It is routine and unremarkable. Under such headings as behavior, bearing and steadiness, he is rated 'good'. He is described as 'learning to ride' and 'rather intelligent'. Under 'overall worth of the officer' is written:

*Young officer, well-behaved, obedient and disciplined, full of zeal and good will.  
He daily learns more and more about his job.*

The brigade commander wrote that he 'had not yet had an opportunity to judge this officer', but he had heard 'good information' about him. The inspector-general wrote simply, 'young officer, obedient, intelligent, well-behaved'.<sup>2</sup>

On September 25, 1875, Rockhill submitted his resignation from the army, explaining that his reason for doing so was 'related to family matters' and that he wished to retire to Paris. Apparently, the resignation was a routine matter, because it moved quickly through official channels. His colonel forwarded it, with his endorsement, to the Commanding General in Algiers on the day after Rockhill submitted it. It was sent on to the Minister of War, with a recommendation for approval, on October 7. The resignation was accepted on October 13, and six days later, Rockhill was formally separated from the French army.<sup>3</sup>

He may have decided to resign from the army because he came into an inheritance in 1875. His uncle, Edward A. Rockhill, with whom he had lived on Pine Street in Philadelphia, died in that year and left his entire estate to his nephew.<sup>4</sup> It must have been large enough to make Rockhill feel he could strike out on his own. If he went to Paris, as he had told the army he intended to do, he did not stay long. He returned to the United States for the first time since his departure as a nine-year-old in 1863, and probably because his inheritance was there.

He was twenty-one years old, a product of formative years spent in the France of the Second Empire and the Third Republic. He had witnessed the siege of Paris during the Franco-Prussian War and, perhaps, the Commune. He had spent three years and nine months in the French army as a cadet or officer. He arrived back in his mother country a sophisticated man of the world, at home in both French and English and graced with polished continental manners. He had also become a dandified fop, a typical example of an officer in a continental European army in the nineteenth century. When he arrived in the United States, he wore a monocle and kissed ladies' hands, to the amusement or the disgust, no doubt, of many Americans he met. He is said to have cursed bootblacks who failed to polish the soles, as well as the uppers, of his shoes. Family members later recalled that he spoke English with a foreign accent and wrote English that was a literal translation from French.<sup>5</sup>

A great deal of Rockhill's writings in English have survived, so there is no dearth of material from which to judge his literary style. There are books, magazine articles, monographs and other published works. There is a large body of official despatches, letters and memoranda from his years as a diplomat. Many of his personal letters are preserved in several manuscript collections. Rockhill's writing is often marked by what seems a certain clumsiness of style. His sentences often run on at length and sometimes contain surprising word sequences. Whether his unusual style can be accounted for by the fact that he received all his formal education in French would be difficult to prove, but it seems likely that his unusual childhood and education affected his mastery of his mother tongue. As late as 1908, when describing the thirteenth Dalai Lama to President Theodore Roosevelt, in a single sentence Rockhill uses the French terms *narquois* and *mouche*. These terms describe the subtle air of the Dalai, and the tuft of hair just below the lower lip. Rockhill, in his search for *le mot juste*, often had recourse to unfamiliar

gallicisms

During his years in Algeria, he had written regularly to Caroline Tyson, the girl with whom he became so smitten in Paris when he was a teenager, but she had given him little encouragement. She had returned to the United States with her mother from France in 1870, perhaps because of the Franco-Prussian War. Caroline's father, Joseph W. Tyson, had served as Assistant Postmaster-General under President John Tyler. He had amassed a small fortune before the Civil War and created an elegant estate, Glenelg, in Maryland not far from Baltimore. When he died in 1860, however, his finances were precarious and Glenelg was heavily mortgaged. In 1866, his widow lost control of it, and she and her daughter moved to France. In 1873, the new owner defaulted in his payments, perhaps because of the financial panic that year, and Mrs Tyson regained the estate. She and Caroline were living there when Rockhill returned from France.<sup>6</sup>

As soon as possible after his return, he set about finding Caroline, and he learned she was staying at White Sulphur Springs, a resort in West Virginia. He went there and found, to his consternation, that she was all but engaged to someone else. Whether because of Rockhill's continental manners and polished sophistication, or simply his persistence, Caroline finally accepted his proposal of marriage, and they became formally engaged in August 1876. Only four months later, on December 14, they were married in Baltimore. After a honeymoon spent in France and Switzerland, they returned early in 1877 to live at Glenelg. On the last day of the year, a daughter was born. She was named Dorothy, but she came usually to be called by a nickname, Dolly.

By late 1877, financial difficulties forced Mrs Tyson to put her beautiful estate up for sale. The family was faced with the necessity of finding a new home, and Rockhill had to find a source of support for his growing family. He made a choice that was surprising, even amazing. It gave his life another sharp, unexpected change of direction.

A cousin of Caroline named Leh Cooper had returned from a visit to the western territories of the United States. He was full of tales of the fabulous opportunities offered by the booming cattle business in the southwest. These were the middle years of the 'wild seventies' when great annual cattle drives moved north from Texas along the Chisholm Trail to railheads in such boom towns as Abilene and Dodge City. Fortunes were being made on cattle ranches in Texas and points west, Leh Cooper reported. It is certain that Rockhill knew absolutely nothing about raising cattle, and whether Leh Cooper's knowledge was any greater is unlikely. Nevertheless, the returned traveler's enthusiasm must have been infectious. He and Rockhill decided to become partners in the cattle business, and they arranged to purchase land to establish a cattle ranch in Colfax County, New Mexico.

In January 1878, Cooper and Rockhill set out from Maryland to seek their fortune in the wild west. Their families—Mrs Tyson, Caroline, the baby Dorothy, and Cooper's six-year-old daughter—stayed in Maryland with the understanding that they would join the two men later when they were settled in New Mexico. The women followed three months later. Rockhill met them at Trinidad, Colorado, the nearest railhead, and brought them the rest of the way to their new home by wagon. The 'ranch' turned out to be a small wooden shanty, a chicken coop, and a couple of tiny shacks. Caroline dubbed it 'Poverty Flat'. After only a short stay, Mrs Tyson and Cooper's daughter returned to Maryland. The Rockhill family and Cooper stayed on to build their cattle empire on

the frontier.

Rockhill threw himself in cattle ranching with the same intensity and drive that marked everything he did in life. He learned to rope and throw steers for branding at roundup time. He no doubt improved the horseback riding skill that he had used in Algeria. The continental dandy who had returned from France so recently was turning himself into a tough cowboy. He and Cooper were often away from the ranch house for long periods, and a servant girl named Minnie was hired to stay with Caroline and Dorothy and help with the chores.<sup>7</sup>

During the winter months, when the press of ranch work eased, Rockhill resumed the scholarly pursuits he had begun while at St Cyr and continued during his stay in Algeria. His contact with Ernest Renan, Léon Feer and Édouard Foucaux had apparently left a permanent mark, and his fascination with Asian languages and religions continued unabated. He set about teaching himself Sanskrit, presumably to enable him to study earlier Buddhism, and also Chinese. He would shut himself away from the family and pore over books for hours on end. During those periods, he hardly spoke to the others for weeks at a time. How much anyone could learn about such abstruse subjects under such conditions is a good question, but apparently he made progress. In 1880, the *Journal of the American Orientalist Society* published his *The Sûtra in Forty-two Chapters, translated from the Tibetan*, and his work continued to appear in their Journal.

The ranchers persevered for three years, but they finally decided to call it quits. Raising cattle on the frontier was not producing the financial rewards that Leh Cooper had predicted so optimistically back in Maryland. They sold out in 1881, if not for a profit at least not for a loss. What happened to Cooper is not recorded. The Rockhill family made another abrupt change. They moved to Montreux, Switzerland, where Rockhill's mother lived.

The former Foreign Legionnaire and cattleman, the man of action, had reverted to the full-time life of a scholar. He devoted all his time and attention to the study of Tibet, its language, and the Tibetan form of Buddhism. Three years of ranching had not produced the expected financial rewards, and the family had to live frugally in a small apartment. Rockhill focussed intently on his studies, and his insistence on absolute silence in the cramped flat made life difficult for the other two members of the family, a young woman and the five-year-old she was looking after.

Dorothy was old enough to form memories and impressions that could be recalled later in life. Her earliest recollection, she wrote years later, was admonitions from her father to keep quiet in the little apartment in Montreux. She recalled that when he was disturbed and his attention distracted from his books, which was not an unusual occurrence, his red mustache would droop 'until he could (and did) bite the ends while he stared off into space, wrapped in gloom and silence'. Long after her father's death, Dorothy recalled that

*These were the moments in which to disappear or, when that was impossible, to make oneself as small, silent and inconspicuous as one could; not, indeed, that one was ever encouraged as a child to be anything else. Army discipline had made of him something of a drill sergeant. We seldom met, in those days, except at lunch, and communion between us was limited on his part to 'sit up', 'take your elbows off the table', 'stop playing with the salt'. And yet there were times*

*when he would emerge from weeks of moodiness into a riot of gay spirits, when he was boyish, delightful and absurd.*<sup>8</sup>

She remembered that he might on those occasions attempt to sing, although he knew only one song—'Voici le sabre de mon père'—which always caused tears to stream down his cheeks.

Rockhill was beginning to write and to establish contact with other scholars of Asian studies. As early as 1881, he had written to Peking, to Dr Samuel Wells Williams, perhaps the foremost American scholar of Chinese, who served in the American Legation there. He sought Williams's help to obtain Tibetan books. Williams replied that there were no Tibetan books available in Peking, and he suggested Rockhill write to Presbyterian missions in Ludhiana and Ambala, India.<sup>9</sup> Rockhill followed his advice and received a shipment of Tibetan books from a missionary named Edwin Morris Wherry in Ludhiana. He continued a wide correspondence, often writing in French, with scholars in the academic world in both Europe and the United States until the end of his life.

Perhaps the most important among the American scholars with whom he established an exchange of correspondence during his three years in Montreux was Dr William D. Whitney, a professor of philology at Yale. His specialty was Sanskrit and the study of Hindu and Buddhist scriptures. He had studied in Berlin under three German professors who were regarded as Europe's foremost experts on the literature of Sanskrit. In 1854, he was appointed a professor of Sanskrit at Yale. By the early 1880s, Whitney was a famous scholar, respected in both Europe and the United States, with a great many published monographs and translations of Hindu and Buddhist holy writings to his credit. He was elected the first president of the American Philological Society, and he served for twenty-seven years as secretary of the American Orientalist Society, the country's leading professional organization for scholars of oriental cultures. Whitney became intrigued by Rockhill's several works on the Tibetan versions of the Buddhist scriptures, a field hardly anyone in Europe or America knew anything about. He put Rockhill in contact with other scholars who helped the budding Tibetan scholar, living on a small income in Switzerland, to obtain the books and documents he needed for his work.

In November 1882, Rockhill completed the translation of a Tibetan manuscript entitled *Udanavarga*. The subtitle of the work as it was finally published gives some idea of the abstruse nature of Rockhill's labors in Montreux and in New Mexico: *A Collection of Verses from the Buddhist Canon, compiled by Dharmastrata, being the northern Buddhist version of Dhammapada, translated from the Tibetan of the Bkah-hgyur, with notes and extracts from commentary of Pradjnavarman*. The verses are a collection of moral and ethical teachings. He found a publisher in London, Trubner and Company in Ludgate Hill, which published an Oriental Series of scholarly studies. Rockhill had to pay Trubner fifty pounds sterling to have the book published.

In September 1882, he had written to William Whitney to ask permission to dedicate the book to him. When it appeared early in 1883, the dedication read, 'To William D. Whitney, Ph.D., Professor of Sanskrit in Yale College, New Haven, this work is respectfully inscribed as a slight recognition of his great kindness, by the translator.' On April 1, 1883, he sent a copy to Whitney with a letter that thanked the Yale professor effusively for his help.<sup>10</sup>

*Udanavarga* was a book then likely to be read by only a handful of people in a handful of universities in Europe and the United States, as both the author and the publisher must have realized from the beginning. But that handful of people populated the particular corner of the scholarly world to which Rockhill was working to gain admittance. He was succeeding. His reputation was growing as he sent monographs to be read aloud at gatherings of scholars in such organizations as the American Oriental Society, and as he exchanged correspondence with their members. His reputation as an Orientalist was becoming solidly established.

A logical move for Rockhill to make in 1882 or 1883 would have been to seek an appointment in a university. He was bilingual in English and French and knew German well. He could already read Tibetan, Sanskrit and Chinese. Like other polyglot scholars, he had little problem reading any of the European language publications in the fields of his interest. In 1884, the *Révue de l'Histoire des Religions* published his translation from Tibetan to French of the *Prātiméksha Sūtra, ou Le traité d'émancipation*. His work had gained wide respect among the leading scholars. If he had tried, he probably could have landed a position in any of a number of universities in Europe or the United States with departments of philology, comparative religion or Asian studies. But there is no record that he tried. In fact, apparently at no point in his life did he ever apply for an academic position, despite his obvious aptitude for scholarly pursuits and his attraction to them. He was always attracted both to a life of the mind, and a life of action in the world of affairs, and he was torn between the two, as well as by his need to support his family. When forced to decide, he chose the world of action and one where he could be assured an income. But his choices were basically affected, even at times dominated, by his wish to continue his secondary endeavor, his activities in the world of learning.

The fact that he made no attempt to gain a post in a university did not mean he felt content to scribble away among his manuscripts and dictionaries in the ranch or the little flat in Montreux. His goal was to travel to Asia, to visit China and Tibet and master their spoken languages as he was mastering their literatures. But he did not possess the financial resources even to travel within Europe to visit the libraries and consult the collections of manuscripts so vital to his work. An extended journey to the other side of the world was out of the question.

In the summer of 1883, however, a bit of good fortune descended upon the Rockhill family that opened new vistas of opportunity. A cousin of Caroline died and bequeathed to her a legacy of between \$60,000 and \$70,000. In 1883, that sum of money amounted to a small fortune, in today's value worth over a million dollars. It seemed especially large to a family like the Rockhill, which had been living in penury for years. Suddenly, there was freedom of action. Dorothy later recalled: 'We moved from our little flat to the Hotel National. I remember it as a palace. We got new clothes, and my father set about realizing his dream of getting to China.'

On August 17, Rockhill wrote to Professor Whitney at Yale. He was seeking advice, and help:

*I have for many years felt that I could only prosecute adequately my orientalist studies if I could reside in that part of Asia in which I would be in contact with the peoples speaking the languages and professing the religions in which I take such an interest. What I want to try to obtain is to be attached to the U.S.*

*legation at Peking, but not having resided much in America, I am not acquainted with the best means to employ to reach this end. I would deem it a great favor if you would advise me. Of course, I would rather have a position to which some salary was attached, but even that is not absolutely necessary, as some family events have put me in very independent circumstances, of late.*<sup>12</sup>

As Rockhill may have known, Whitney was not only a famous academician. He also enjoyed high-level connections in Washington. His wife, Elizabeth, was the daughter of Roger Sherman Baldwin who had served as Governor of Connecticut and U.S. Senator. She was the cousin of George F. Hoar, a very influential Senator from Massachusetts.

Whitney replied on September 24. He had discussed the matter with Samuel Wells Williams who had returned from Peking. He and Williams agreed that Rockhill must see the President personally to gain a diplomatic appointment.<sup>13</sup> If Whitney took any other action on Rockhill's behalf, it did not produce any results. Rockhill tried to get an appointment as a military attaché but without success. By the beginning of the new year, he decided he must go to Washington to present his request in person. In February, he sailed for the United States, while Caroline and Dorothy presumably remained in Montreux. He planned to seek the aid of William Whitney and Samuel Wells Williams to open doors for him in Washington, but when he arrived in the United States he learned that Williams had just died. He had one string left for his bow. He wrote to Professor Whitney in New Haven to request an appointment.<sup>14</sup> Whitney immediately replied, 'I shall be at home constantly and glad to see you.'<sup>15</sup>

Whitney was not only glad to see Rockhill but evinced an eagerness to help him. On March 5, he wrote two letters to Senator Hoar. One was a short letter of introduction apparently given to Rockhill to carry with him to Washington and present personally to the Senator. The other letter was much longer. It was either sent by mail or given to Rockhill, perhaps in a sealed envelope, to hand over to Hoar.

Whitney wrote to the Senator, 'the case is a peculiar one'. He praised Rockhill as 'a scholar of very decided merit and reputation ... so far as I know, he is the only worker in Tibetan that our glorious republic has ever produced'. He explained that Rockhill sought an opportunity to live in China and continue his research, and he therefore sought an appointment as an unsalaried attaché in the Legation in Peking. 'A more modest and unselfish request, you will see, could not well be made,' Whitney wrote. As a clincher he mentioned that he had discussed the matter with Samuel Wells Williams before his death, and Williams enthusiastically supported the request. Williams had pointed out that there was plenty of room in the Legation compound for Rockhill and his family.<sup>16</sup>

Whitney's letter was persuasive, and Senator Hoar possessed the required amount of influence in Washington. On April 9, Rockhill was appointed Second Secretary of Legation in Peking. It was an honorary position, unsalaried, in addition to the regular Second Secretary position filled by an officer of the diplomatic service. On April 13, the elated neophyte diplomat wrote to Whitney to tell him the good news, 'thanks to your kind letter and to Senator Hoar's assistance'.<sup>17</sup>

Rockhill sailed in early May to re-cross the Atlantic to wind up his affairs in Switzerland and bring his family back to the United States in preparation for their journey to China. He had another task to perform. Throughout his quest for a diplomatic appointment, he had been working on another book, a biography of Buddha and the early



history of Buddhism derived from Tibetan sources. He finished the manuscript in early June in Lausanne. Trubner and Company in London published the book later in the year with the title, *The Life of the Buddha*. As with *Udanavarga*, the subtitle suggests the unusual nature of Rockhill's studies: *The Early History of His Order Derived From Tibetan Works in the Bkah-hgyur and Bstan-hgyur*. On the title page, the author was identified as 'Second Secretary U.S. Legation in China'.

The Rockhills returned to the United States at the end of June to prepare for their great journey. While visiting her family in Baltimore, Caroline persuaded a close friend named Nina Howard to accompany them to Peking and stay with them until Caroline could become accustomed to living in the strange land. Miss Howard's mother agreed to the idea, so long as her daughter returned to the United States after six months. This was agreed to, and in September, the three Rockhills, accompanied by Miss Howard, departed the United States for China.

## Second Secretary, American Legation: Peking and Seoul, 1884-1888

Travel to the Orient in the 1880s meant a leisurely voyage by steamer from somewhere on the west coast, usually San Francisco or Vancouver, with calls at a few places en route. The Rockhills probably stopped in Honolulu and in Yokohama. If they followed the practice of others who travelled to Peking in the 1880s, their first stop in China was at Tientsin, the port for Peking fifty miles inland up the Peiho river.

Travellers usually made a stopover in Tientsin. It had a large expatriate foreign population, and they enjoyed extending a warm welcome to anyone travelling to an assignment at a legation in Peking. Although it was one of the leading treaty ports, Tientsin struck many new arrivals on their first visit to China as drab and dusty. Like most of the other treaty ports, it consisted of two separate and distinct cities.<sup>1</sup> The European city was the aggregate of the concessions leased by foreign powers from the Chinese government. Eight foreign countries controlled concessions, including Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and Japan. There was no American concession. The United States possessed only a consulate located in the British concession. Abutting the foreign concessions was the Chinese city, completely separate and quite different in character—more crowded, less clean, more lively. As was true in the other treaty ports, the foreign population and the Chinese population had almost no social contact. The segregation was maintained, to a large extent, by mutual official consent and desire. Most of the foreigners were either merchants or missionaries, and the mandarin class of Chinese considered them to hold no social standing, while most of the foreigners considered themselves superior to any Chinese, no matter what his station.<sup>2</sup>

For the next leg of the journey, travellers often hired a houseboat that belonged to the Imperial Maritime Customs Service for a trip 120 miles farther upriver to Tungchow, which lay fourteen miles from Peking. The boat was spacious, about thirty feet long, with a house amidships to shelter the passengers. It was pulled by gangs of men who made slow progress against the current of the winding river. Passengers often went ashore to walk and were able to beat the creeping vessel by hours. The river was full of all kinds of traffic plying between the capital and Tientsin, including great rafts of logs. The banks were dotted by villages surrounded by cultivated fields. Passengers enjoyed an excellent cuisine served on board the boat, and the trip was a leisurely, pleasant introduction to the countryside of northern China.<sup>3</sup> Within a few years of the Rockhills' arrival, a railroad was built to connect the capital city with its port, cutting significantly the travel time between the two cities.

At Tungchow, travellers were met by ponies and chairs, each carried by four men, to complete their journey to Peking. The road connecting the two cities was crowded with picturesque traffic of all descriptions—heavy, springless carts; wagons pulled by horses or mules or bullocks; men carrying incredibly large loads on their backs, and groups of

men moving together to carry one large object; and wheelbarrows which were usually piled high with nicely-balanced freight. Manchu officers wearing red-bordered straw hats trotted by on horses. Buddhist monks in yellow robes jiggled along, astride small donkeys. Files of camels linked by a thin rope that passed through each beast's nostrils plodded along, a driver asleep on the back of the hindmost camel. There were elaborate sedan chairs carried by four or even eight men, their passengers inside screened by curtains which were often of imperial yellow silk. The unseen passengers were probably royal Manchu princes or princesses or other grandees of the Celestial Empire. It was altogether a crowded, colorful, exotic scene that all but overwhelmed the senses of a traveller newly arrived from the west.<sup>4</sup>

When the Rockhills arrived in China, Peking consisted of four distinct cities enclosed by two walls. When the city was still far off, a traveler's first glimpse of it was of the long, dim line of the city walls. The Tartar City, in which lay the Imperial City and the Forbidden City of the Manchu Emperor as well as the Legation Quarter, was surrounded by a wall 16 miles long, 50 feet high, 40 feet wide at its top and 60 feet thick at its base. The Chinese City, which abutted the Tartar City to the south, was enclosed by a wall 11 miles long, 30 feet high, 15 feet wide at its top and 25 feet thick at its base. As the towering walls, punctuated at regular intervals by massive towers, loomed ever closer, the first-time visitor was usually overcome by feelings of mystery and awe akin to those a traveller might feel upon first encountering the Egyptian pyramids or great works of nature like the snow peaks of the Himalayas. One American visitor wrote that the great walls were 'an impressive and astounding apparition of strength and permanence'.<sup>5</sup> There were no suburbs or even trees outside the city. Within the walls teemed a population of perhaps one million people, although no one could be sure of the exact number. Outside, the walls were surrounded by cultivated fields. The traveller passed abruptly from open countryside through a city gate into the crowded metropolis.

An arriving traveller whose destination was a foreign legation entered the Tartar City from the Chinese City by passing through the Hattamen, one of eight city gates which opened on to Hatta Street. One of the principal thoroughfares of the city, Hatta Street was lined on both sides by shops housed in old wooden one-story buildings. Their red and black fronts were dulled by age and grime, but the signs above the doors were brightly enameled in vivid, deep golds and blacks. The street was thronged with people, vehicles and animals. There were shoppers in rickshaws or sedan chairs or on foot. Farmers plodded along, bent over by heavy loads suspended from both ends of long poles slung across their shoulders. Servants scurried by, intent on the day's grocery shopping. Black-gowned mandarins made their sedate way through the throngs. Half-clad and naked children with swollen bellies darted to and fro. Everywhere mongrel dogs dodged in and out of the traffic, cringing and snarling as they scavenged among piles of refuse. One American visitor described Hatta Street as 'a mass of riotous color and dust, and mixed smells of burnt camel dung, coconut oil, strange foods, sweating bodies and animal and human refuse'.<sup>6</sup>

A few steps up Hatta Street, Legation Street led off to the left. Like all the streets in Peking, it was unpaved and muddy when it rained, at other times dusty, and at all times an open drain. The traveller passed successively the Italian, French, Japanese and Spanish

Legations on the right with the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation building and the German Legation on the left. He then crossed a bridge spanning a large open sewer to find, on the right, the Russian Legation, and on the left, the Rockhills' destination, the American Legation. Behind the Russian compound, across a narrow street, lay the British Legation, which was by far the largest of the legation compounds. All legations were surrounded by high brick walls.

An American who visited Peking while Rockhill was serving in the Legation described the Chinese capital as 'the most unspeakably filthy place in the world ... Dirt and dilapidation reign supreme, and, what is worse, the people seem to live almost in a state of nature, and have no sense of shame or decency.'<sup>7</sup> Another American a few years later wrote of Legation Street:

For nearly forty years, the fine flowers of European diplomacy ... have been content to wallow along this filthy Legation Street, breathing its dust, sickened with its mud and stench, the highway before their doors a general sewer and dumping ground for offensive refuse of all kinds.<sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless, the foreign population led a 'gay and happy life'. Behind the walls of the legation compounds was a different world:

*Official European residences are maintained on a scale of considerable splendor, and the sudden transfers from the noisome streets to the beautiful parks and garden compounds, the drawing-rooms and ball rooms, with their brilliant companies living and amusing themselves exactly as in Europe, are among the greatest contrasts and surprises of Peking.*

The American Legation in Peking in 1884 was a far cry from the huge American diplomatic missions in major capitals of the world a century later, and it could not compare in elegance with the legations of the major European powers. The Legation compound encompassed an acre of ground, but it held not only the chancery, which housed the offices, but also the residences of all the officers of the Legation. There were five officers: the Minister, a First Secretary, a Second Secretary, an Interpreter, and a Chinese Secretary. The latter two were both Americans able to read and write Chinese. The buildings were all one story high and quite old. The compound had been the property of Dr Samuel Wells Williams, and it was leased from his heirs.<sup>10</sup>

The Rockhill family was welcomed by the Minister and his tiny official American community, and they took possession of the house reserved for the Second Secretary. The new arrival was pleasantly surprised to learn that the regular diplomatic officer assigned as Second Secretary was reluctant to leave his current post in Berlin, so Rockhill got the position which carried with it a salary of \$1,800 a year.

The American Minister to China was John Russell Young who had arrived in China only two years earlier. Young was a forty-two-year-old journalist who was a friend of former president Ulysses S. Grant. In 1882, Grant had prevailed upon President Chester Alan Arthur to appoint Young as Minister to China.

Rockhill found Young a congenial superior. Young had no background in Chinese affairs, but he was not jealous of his junior colleague's already extensive knowledge. The two men got along well. In fact, they formed a friendship that continued long after their association in Peking ended. Not long before Young's death, Rockhill described him in a letter as 'such a good-hearted, soft fellow'.<sup>11</sup>



Plate 1 Rockhill at age 15, attending the Ecole Imperiale Centrale des Artes et Manufactures



Plate 2 Rockhill at age 30, entering the diplomatic service in China in 1884

As American Minister to China, Young was accredited to the court of the Manchu Emperor, Kuang-hsu. The Manchus had ridden out of Manchuria in 1644 to overthrow the feeble Ming Dynasty and establish the Ching Dynasty, which would prove to be the last imperial dynasty to rule China. The Manchus were related to the Mongols, whose Yuan Dynasty had been overthrown by the Mings in 1368. The Manchus, like the Mongols, were therefore alien rulers who spoke a language different from their Han Chinese subjects. After overthrowing the indigenous Mings and establishing their rule in Peking, the Manchus had trouble gaining firm control of southern China, and their rule was never completely accepted there. Nevertheless, the Ching Dynasty of the Manchus expanded its dominions to encompass the greatest empire any Chinese dynasty had ever ruled. Under two great emperors, Kang-hsi and Chien-lung in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it also attained a level of cultural achievement to compare with the greatest of the earlier dynasties.

When the Rockhills arrived in Peking in 1884, the Manchus had ruled for more than three hundred years, and they had become as weak, corrupt and dissolute as the Mings they had overthrown. The country was enjoying a comparatively peaceful respite after several decades of upheaval in mid-century caused by war, famine and revolt brought on, in part, by the Manchus' decline. In less than fifty years, China's relations with the rest of the world had been totally transformed. China's centuries-long insulation from the West, except for the ribbon of trade along the Silk Road across Central Asia, and the country's serene aloofness as the Middle Kingdom had been shattered by swift, brutal inroads by the Great Powers of Europe.

The Europeans became established on the coast of China even before the Manchus assumed power in Peking when the Portuguese in 1557 established an outpost on the island of Macau. Portuguese traders were followed by the Dutch in the seventeenth century and the British in the eighteenth century. British trade on the China coast was a monopoly of the East India Company which had established trading 'factories' in India as early as the beginning of the seventeenth century. During the latter half of the eighteenth century, the East India Company ceased being simply traders in India and became rulers as it moved into the power vacuum left by the disintegrating Moghul Empire. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the East India Company sought to expand into the interior of China as it was rapidly expanding its control into the interior of India.

Between 1787 and 1816, the British sent three embassies to seek expanded trade opportunities from China's rulers, but all failed. The Chinese reply to British pleas for wider trade was that the barbarians from the West simply had nothing the Chinese wanted to buy.

European traders in China in the early nineteenth century were confined to an island in the river at Canton, and their operations were strictly limited and controlled by the Chinese. Called the 'Canton Trade', business could be conducted only during a few months of a 'trading season', after which the foreigners had to retreat to Macau or some other location outside of China. The Europeans nevertheless flourished, but they complained that the Chinese officials with whom they were forced to deal were corrupt. Demands for more freedom of action in China began. In 1833, the East India Company's

monopoly of British trade with China ended, and thereafter any British merchant who chose to do so could conduct trade at Canton. The clamor for less control of trade increased.

The British traders seeking expansion of their operations in China were fixated by a vision that had dazzled them a century earlier in India and has continued to draw Western merchants to China: the prospect of millions upon millions of customers for Western goods. The population of China had doubled in the eighteenth century, and the Chinese Empire had become the most populous in the world. Those millions of potential buyers of the flood of English products being released by the Industrial Revolution became an overwhelming attraction.

British pressure to expand commercial opportunities increased until it came to a head in the first Anglo-Chinese War in 1839-42, usually called the Opium War because a mainstay of the British trade was opium produced in India. The Chinese army proved to be no match for a modern European armed force, and it was humiliated. The outcome was the Treaty of Nanking, signed in 1842, which gave the British the island of Hong Kong—a barren, uninhabited rock, but one that controlled a magnificent harbor—opened five ports to trade, and granted other concessions. It was the first of what the Chinese later called the ‘unequal treaties’, which extracted various concessions and advantages for the Europeans in China that were not reciprocated for Chinese in Europe or America. Other treaties were concluded in the next few years, and the penetration of China by the West began.

The concessions extracted from the Chinese after the Opium War did not satisfy the Europeans. The consuls and trade commissioners were still confined to Canton. Of the five treaty ports opened to trade, three proved to be ill suited to carrying on foreign trade. Pressure grew for more concessions, which the Chinese continued to refuse, and a second armed clash became inevitable. It erupted in 1856 on the pretext of a dispute over a coastal vessel, the *Arrow*, at Canton, so it was called ‘the Arrow War’. This time, the British were joined by the French.

In December 1857, Canton was bombarded and captured by French and British forces. In the spring of 1858, as the Chinese still refused Western demands for treaty revisions, French and British forces under Lord Elgin stormed and captured the Taku forts which guarded the mouth of the Peiho River, the gateway to Tientsin and Peking. Thus threatened, the Chinese agreed to negotiations to end the fighting, and four treaties with, successively, Russia, the United States, Britain and France were signed in June. These treaties expanded the concessions granted in the first round of treaties, but hostilities broke out again. The European forces occupied Tientsin and Peking. The imperial court fled the capital, and the Europeans looted and burned the Summer Palace, an act of vandalism condemned ever since.

The war ended in 1860 with a Convention signed at Peking, which ratified the treaties signed in 1858. They affirmed, among other things, the right of European diplomats to reside in Peking. Another result was the creation of the Tsung-li Yamen, a special body under the Grand Council to deal with the European Powers. The Chinese in all their long history had never felt the need for a government body to serve as a ministry of foreign affairs. China had always been the Middle Kingdom, and Chinese dealings with



non-Chinese people had always been with what the Chinese considered either hostile barbarians or dependent states that sent tribute to the Chinese emperor. There was no tradition of dealing with foreigners or foreign states as equals, and the absence of that tradition among the Chinese had been one of the reasons for friction with the Europeans that had produced two disastrous wars. In 1861, Western diplomats settled in Peking, and in the Tsung-li Yamen they had an office with which they could deal as they were accustomed to dealing with foreign ministries.

The Americans, somewhat surprisingly, had been on the scene early in China, and they had been active participants in the events described above. They had not been formal belligerents in the wars, but they had taken part in some of the armed clashes. The first American ship to reach Canton, the *Empress of China*, arrived in 1784, and before the turn of the century, Americans were serious rivals of the British in the tea trade. But the American traders were not supported by their government as the British were, because the American government was preoccupied with expansion across the American continent. Nevertheless, only four months after the signing of the Treaty of Nanking, President John Tyler appointed a resident commissioner for China to look after commercial and diplomatic affairs. The first American envoy was Caleb Cushing, of Boston, who arrived in 1844, the year an Anglo-American Treaty was signed. But Cushing and several of his successors were confined to Canton like their European counterparts, and the Americans joined the Europeans in demanding treaty revisions.

The first American minister to reside in Peking was Anson Burlingame who arrived in 1861. When he retired in 1867, he had gained the confidence and respect of the Chinese to such a degree that they recruited him as a special ambassador to visit Europe and America on behalf of China. During his visit to the United States in 1868, a treaty was signed, later to be generally known as the Burlingame Treaty. Among its provisions was a clause guaranteeing the free immigration of Chinese into the United States. Burlingame died in St Petersburg before completing his journey as an ambassador for China.

Growing pressure from the Western Powers was not the only problem the leaders of China faced by the middle of the nineteenth century. They were also beset by rebellions from within. Early in the century, several small-scale uprisings had been easily suppressed. But in the late 1840s, just as pressure from the European Powers for revision of the early treaties was growing, a major revolt broke out and threatened to overthrow the Manchus completely. Called the Taiping Rebellion, it originated in southern China, always the area most resistant to Manchu rule. By the middle of the 1850s, when war with the Europeans loomed, the rebellion had spread across southern and central China, and the Taipings occupied Nanking. Thereafter, it lost momentum, but it continued until 1865. It was ended partly by its own internal problems and partly by European armed force. In the treaties signed in 1860, the Europeans had obtained from the Manchus the concessions they sought, and they decided to support the rulers in Peking against the rebels. The seventeen-year revolt caused widespread devastation to almost half of China and caused the death of an estimated twenty million Chinese.

Rockhill's years of study in Europe and the United States had focussed on languages and religions of Tibet and China, not on recent history nor on contemporary politics. When he arrived in Peking, he probably possessed only vague knowledge of these recent

occurrences that were producing such profound changes in China. His diplomatic colleagues, both American and European, with long residence in the Orient, became prime sources for a cram course on contemporary China. One such experienced China Hand with whom Rockhill became acquainted soon after his arrival is especially noteworthy. Alfred Hoppisley was an Englishman serving as Chinese Secretary to Sir Robert Hart, a legendary figure in China. He was the Inspector-General who headed the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs Service. Hart staffed his Service with young men recruited in Europe and the United States, men who became some of the most knowledgeable of the China Hands during the last decades of the nineteenth century.

Alfred Hoppisley was born in Bristol in 1848. He went to China in 1867 to join the Customs Service, so he was already a seasoned veteran of service in China when Rockhill met him. His position as Chinese Secretary to Sir Robert Hart is indicative of his command of the Chinese language, and he had gained a reputation as an expert on Chinese porcelain. At the time he became acquainted with Rockhill, his collection of porcelain was on loan for display at the Smithsonian in Washington. He served forty-four years with the Customs Service until he retired in 1911. He died in England in 1939.<sup>12</sup>

As a senior official in the British-controlled Customs Service, Hoppisley was well informed about the latest economic and political developments in China. He and Rockhill quickly became close friends, and Hoppisley no doubt was a rich fount of information for the newly-arrived American diplomat. Years later, Hoppisley wrote:

*In a small community such as that of Peking, acquaintance quickly ripens into intimacy between persons who have similar tastes, and both Rockhill and I were deeply interested in China and Chinese politics.*

Discussion of Chinese politics in the last quarter of the nineteenth century inevitably focussed on the shadowy, mysterious court of the Emperor. In 1884, Kuang-hsu was a lad of thirteen who had ascended the Dragon Throne in 1875 at the age of four under questionable circumstances. His accession had been engineered by the person who, as Regent, had already been the real ruler of China for years, a ruthless, strong-willed, unscrupulous woman whose clan name was Yehonala but who has become known to history as the Old Buddha, Tzu Hsi, the Empress Dowager.

Tzu Hsi is one of the most fascinating figures in the history of Asia of the past two centuries.<sup>14</sup> She was born in 1835 into one of the oldest Manchu clans. In 1852, she was among twenty-eight Manchu maidens selected to be concubines to the Emperor Hsien-feng who had ascended the throne in 1850. Tzu Hsi left her family's home in Pewter Lane in Peking, very near what later would be the Legation Quarter, to enter the Forbidden City which would be her home for the rest of her life.

The Manchu court that the young concubine entered was a hotbed of Byzantine intrigue to compare with the courts of medieval Europe or the city-states of Renaissance Italy. The scheming and machinations of eunuchs, concubines, courtiers, government officials, Manchu aristocrats, and members of the imperial family were carried on behind the towering walls of the Forbidden City, hidden from the outside world. The prizes for the winners in the never-ending game were power and the incredible wealth derived from the far-flung Celestial Empire. For the losers, the reward as often as not was death by decapitation or strangling. Before she reached the age of twenty-five, Tzu Hsi

demonstrated her mastery of this deadly competition.

The young concubine soon established herself in a position of power in the palace by gaining the favor of the Emperor's mother and by becoming the favorite concubine of her weak and dissolute lord. In April 1856, her position of power in the court was further strengthened when she gave birth to a child, the Emperor's only son who therefore became the Heir Apparent. In 1861, the Emperor's death elevated Tzu Hsi's four-year-old son to the throne as the Emperor Tung-shih, and she effectively assumed absolute power in Peking as one of two Regents. Her co-Regent was the Empress Tzu An, another favorite concubine of the dead Emperor Hsien-feng. But Tzu An suffered the misfortune of having failed to produce an heir. Tzu An was no match for Tzu Hsi in the struggle for domination in the Forbidden City, and she occupied a position obviously subordinate to the strong-willed, clever Tzu Hsi. She survived until 1881 when a serious quarrel erupted between the two Empresses. Shortly thereafter, Tzu An died in mysterious circumstances, leaving Tzu Hsi as sole Regent.

Tzu Hsi's son as Emperor proved to be as weak, dissolute and vicious as his father, and he died without issue in 1875. Tzu Hsi, as Regent, arranged for another child to be placed on the throne as the Emperor Kuang-hsu, in violation, it was generally felt, of the proper laws of succession. But the accession was not challenged, and with a child on the Dragon Throne, Tzu Hsi as Regent kept the reins of power firmly in her hands.

It is virtually certain that William Rockhill never once laid eyes on the Empress Dowager or the Emperor during his first four years in Peking. The Forbidden City and the Legation Quarter abutted one another, separated by a single stone wall. They might just as well have been half a world apart for all the contact the foreign diplomats had with members of the Imperial family. Discussion in the Legation Quarter about what occurred among China's rulers was mostly speculation based upon rumor. The Empress Dowager and the Emperor were mysterious figures, living in isolation behind the walls of the Forbidden City. Tzu Hsi was already an object of fascination to the foreigners, and the unflattering image she has been given in history was already being formed.

Exactly what kind of person the Old Buddha was remains in doubt. She lived for years as a mysterious figure in Peking, seen by few Chinese and unseen by any foreigner until near the end of her life. A few foreigners met her and got to know her during the last eight or so years of her life, and some of them wrote sympathetic accounts of her. She must have been an astute and ruthless master of Chinese court politics to seize and hold the reins of power for nearly half a century. But she must have remained woefully ignorant about the world outside the walls of the Forbidden City, as China continued to decline and fall victim to the imperialism of the Great Powers during her long period of rule. Whether the history of the last half-century of the Ching Dynasty would have been different if Tzu Hsi had not lived is, of course, impossible to say. But the fact that she wielded power throughout that period gives us some clues to certain traits she must have possessed, including an incapacity to deal effectively with the burgeoning woes afflicting China.

One of the woes affecting China in 1884 was a crisis with France over Annam, as Vietnam was then called. It was the one problem with potential to upset the relative stability and calm that had settled over China since the final gasp of the Taiping Rebellion

in the 1860s and to plunge China again into war with the Powers. When the Rockhills arrived in Peking, it was a major topic of conversation in the Legation Quarter; and they must have heard about it as soon as they settled in.

Annam had long been a tributary state of China. But in 1858, the French occupied the southern portion, Cochin China, when they were waging war against China with the British to gain revision of the treaties. In the 1860s and 1870s, they pushed steadily north until, in 1880, French troops occupied Hanoi and Haiphong. In 1883, hostilities broke out between French and Chinese forces on the China-Annam border. In January 1884, riots directed against foreigners broke out in Canton, provoked by the growing French threat to China from the south.

A few months before Rockhill's arrival, Minister John Young asked the American consuls around the country to assess public opinion toward foreigners as a result of the French crisis. The consuls reported seeing evidence of Chinese preparation for war, but everything otherwise appeared peaceful with no overt hostility being exhibited toward foreigners except in Canton. The consul at Foochow reported, 'The feeling of the people towards foreigners is what might be called courteous apathy, and as to war with France, ignorance and indifference.'<sup>15</sup> An agreement in the summer of 1884 brought a halt to hostilities, but they broke out again later in the year. The crisis was finally ended by a treaty signed in Tientsin on July 9 1885, which formalized French control of all of Indo-China.

As the junior officer in the American Legation, William Rockhill had little to do with these great movements of empires, nor was he in a position to affect in any significant way Sino-American relations. Within fifteen years, however, he would move center-stage to play a leading role in his country's relations with China, and the four years he was about to spend in Peking would be invaluable preparation. He learned about conditions in China from extended first-hand observation, and his years of study about Asia enhanced his understanding. He learned the routine of work and life in an American diplomatic mission. As a Secretary of Legation, he could absorb information from the official messages exchanged with Washington, and from conversations with officers from other legations and Chinese officials with whom he became acquainted both officially and socially. He became familiar with the important issues that arose between China and the United States as he maintained the files of all official communications, transcribed letters of the Minister, and prepared visas.<sup>16</sup> As the junior officer, he was also saddled with a responsibility that is still the lot of junior diplomats: looking after American visitors. In one letter he wrote, 'I have been busy for the last twenty-four hours with the young globe-trotters and their purchases.'<sup>17</sup>

Rockhill's official duties soon made him aware of two important issues that already in the 1880s bedeviled Sino-American relations and continued to bedevil the American Legation for decades to come: the presence of American missionaries in China, and the presence of Chinese immigrants in the United States. The officers of the Legation in Peking devoted a great deal of their time to dealing with the frictions, disagreements, misunderstandings and occasional riots fomented by these two intractable issues.

Christian missionaries arrived in China as early as the sixteenth century when Jesuits settled in Peking, but the first Protestant missionary, an Englishman named Robert

Morrison, arrived only in 1807. He was soon joined by others from Britain, and the first American Protestants arrived in 1830. Unlike the foreign merchants who remained for the most part in the treaty ports, missionaries penetrated into the interior, seeking to spread the gospel and make converts. They became highly visible when they opened missions in remote areas where they were the only outsiders in residence, and their activities aroused hostility among the Chinese peasants.

By 1870, there were perhaps 350 or more Protestant missionaries in the country administering to perhaps 6,000 Christian converts. The Roman Catholic Chinese population totaled nearly 400,000 people administered to by perhaps 250 foreign priests. The Catholics tended to wear Chinese clothes and blend into the local community much more than the Protestants who became the main objects of Chinese hostility. A notable feature of missionary activity was the appearance of 'rice Christians'. During times of famine, hordes of peasants would appear at foreign missions, professing conversion to Christianity in exchange for food. When the famine ended, they vanished as suddenly as they had appeared.

Being so visible and so often disliked, missionaries were often the targets of riots and other acts of violence. When they were attacked, they would petition their Legation in Peking for protection, but the Legation could usually do nothing more than lodge a protest with the Chinese government. Legation officers spent much time investigating incidents involving missionaries, which often required long, difficult trips into remote areas. Still more time was spent lodging protests with Chinese authorities and writing reports to Washington. Many diplomats, including Rockhill, were unsympathetic towards most missionaries, considering them people who brought trouble upon themselves by their ill-advised efforts to convert the Chinese to an alien religion.

Chinese emigration to America had taken on large proportions in the 1850s, stimulated by the upheavals of the Taiping Rebellion in China and the attraction of the gold rush in California. By 1880, the Chinese in California totaled about 75,000 people or 9 percent of the population, and they had become a contentious political issue. Those non-oriental Californians in favor of stopping Chinese immigration altogether—and their numbers grew every year—considered the Chinese clannish, dishonest, dirty, and absolutely incapable of being assimilated into American life. A resolution passed by the California state legislature in 1876 said in part:

*Impregnable to all the influences of our Anglo-Saxon life, they remain the same stolid Asiatics that have floated on the rivers and slaved in the fields of China for thirty centuries ... Among one hundred and twenty-five thousand<sup>18</sup> of them ... we have no evidence of a single genuine conversion to Christianity.*

But the Burlingame Treaty assured unrestricted immigration of Chinese into the United States.

Pressure from California upon Congress to do something to check Chinese immigration built in the 1870s. A commission was sent to China to investigate and recommend a legally and politically acceptable solution to the problem. The commission drafted a treaty, signed in 1880 by China and the United States, that gave the United States the right to 'regulate, limit or suspend' immigration but not to 'absolutely prohibit' it. In 1882, Congress passed a law, based on the treaty, to suspend immigration for ten years.

In 1884, another law that amended and further tightened the restrictions of the 1882 law was passed.

The same racial antagonisms that forced suspension of immigration provoked incidents of violence against Chinese in the United States, especially on the west coast. The Chinese Minister in Washington repeatedly submitted formal protests to the Department of State. By the middle of the 1880s, Chinese exclusion was rapidly becoming a fixed policy in the United States that threatened to poison relations between the two countries.

Rockhill dealt with these and other problems in his official duties. He decided he liked the work and life of a diplomat. The work was varied and challenging, and he became acquainted with interesting people in the diplomatic corps and among the Chinese. The Rockhill family and their house guest, Nina Howard, entered into the social life of the Legation Quarter, and they quickly became popular figures in the small diplomatic community. Alfred Hippisley in particular turned up regularly at the Rockhill residence. He was not attracted solely by the China scholar in the family or the prospect of discussion of Chinese politics. In an unpublished memoir, he wrote:

*The fact that Rockhill speedily became a general favorite [in the legation community], coupled with the bright and genial disposition of the ladies, their brilliant conversation and their readiness to promote or cooperate in social amusements of all kinds soon made the American Legation the center of society in Peking. I went there as often as the ties of office ... would allow.*<sup>19</sup>

1884 was a presidential election year in the United States, and the election took place within a few weeks of the Rockhills' arrival in Peking. Grover Cleveland was elected, bringing a Democrat into the White House for the first time since before the Civil War. Minister John Russell Young, appointed by a Republican president, submitted his resignation and prepared to return to the United States. The members of the Legation community awaited the arrival of a new American minister.

Rockhill was discovering that his official responsibilities were not so onerous or time-consuming that he was unable to pursue his private interests. He enjoyed his life as a diplomat, but he did not permit himself to forget that he had not come to Asia to pursue a career in the American diplomatic service. He had come to continue his studies of Tibet, in particular to learn the spoken language, to learn Chinese, and to investigate possibilities of travelling to Tibet.

When he set about finding someone to teach him Tibetan, he encountered difficulties. No one in the American Legation or any other foreign mission could help him, and the Chinese were afraid to help. The government of Tibet, with the support of its Chinese overlords, had closed the country's borders to most foreigners on pain of torture and death. Any Chinese or Tibetan who helped a foreigner travel to Tibet risked punishment or imprisonment. Only after a long search was Rockhill able to find a Tibetan lama from Lhasa, living in Peking, who agreed to become his teacher. The two men became friends as well as tutor and pupil.

Rockhill spent the next four years studying both Tibetan and Chinese, and he gained effective mastery of both languages. Several years later, in a review of a book entitled *Handbook of Colloquial Tibetan*, he explained his credentials for reviewing such a book:

*As for my own knowledge of Tibetan, it was gained during seven years of continuous intercourse with people from all classes of society, from high lamas and*

*officials, to shepherds and beggars. Moreover, for four years, I studied in Peking under a lama born within 15 miles<sup>20</sup> of Lhasa and who had come to Peking for the first time a year before I met him.*

In the spring of 1885, Rockhill was introduced, probably at a social function at the British Legation, to someone who had travelled in Tibet as he hoped to travel. Sarat Chandra Das was a Bengali who was accompanying a British official from India, Colman Macauley, on a visit to Peking. The Indian government was planning to send a mission to Tibet, and Macauley had come to Peking to seek the necessary authorization from the Chinese government. He brought Sarat Chandra Das with him, because Sarat Chandra was one of the few non-Tibetans with significant first-hand knowledge of Tibet. He had learned Tibetan from a lama while serving as headmaster of a British school in Darjeeling in the foothills of the Himalayas near the Tibetan border with India. In 1879 and again in 1882, he had made two journeys into Tibet, which included a visit to Lhasa. Rockhill, not surprisingly, was attracted to the Indian explorer, and the two became friends. After Sarat Chandra Das returned to India with Macauley, they exchanged correspondence.

In May, Alfred Hippisley received orders transferring him to Canton. He had by then become 'deeply attached' to Nina Howard, but she had told him she could never marry anyone but an American and she could never live anywhere except in the United States. Nevertheless, on May 15, Hippisley proposed, and Miss Howard accepted. There was no time to make any plans for a wedding, because Hippisley had to depart immediately for his new post, leaving Miss Howard with the Rockhills.<sup>21</sup>

On May 29, a new American Minister to China was appointed. He was Charles Denby, a lawyer from Indiana. He had served in the Union forces during the Civil War and had been wounded at the battle of Perryville. Invalided out of the service in 1863, he returned to his home in Evansville, Indiana, to practice law and dabble in politics. He served as a delegate from Indiana to the Democratic Party's national conventions in 1876 and 1884.

Denby had no credentials for appointment as Minister to China. He was chosen solely because of his political connections. Like other veterans of the Civil War, his wartime service was as politically advantageous after the war as service in World War II was for American politicians in the 1950s and 1960s. He knew nothing about China when he was appointed. Whether Denby had ever even set foot outside the United States before he arrived in Peking is questionable. According to the editor of his memoirs, he spent some years as a child in Marseilles, France, where his father served as a 'naval agent'. According to this account, Denby acquired 'fluent and idiomatic control [of French] which he never lost and which, in his later diplomatic career, was of inestimable advantage to him'.<sup>22</sup> Other accounts of his life make no mention of residence in France or command of French. Rockhill's daughter, Dorothy, who knew him in Peking, later wrote that Denby knew no French at all, which she probably noticed because of her father's total command of the language.<sup>23</sup> Denby and his family arrived in Peking in September 1885. He would remain Minister to China for thirteen years.

Rockhill's career was prospering. On July 1, he was promoted to First Secretary of Legation with a pay raise of \$825 a year. Denby's twenty-three-year-old son, who had

broken off his law studies in Evansville to accompany his parents to China, was appointed Second Secretary. One of Rockhill's first assignments as First Secretary was to write a report on the *likin*, an internal Chinese tax collected by local officials, sometimes as an internal tariff when goods passed between provinces, sometimes as a sales tax. It had long been a cause for annoyance to European and American merchants who sought its repeal. Rockhill wrote a detailed history and analysis of the *likin* which Denby forwarded to Washington in December. It was Rockhill's first official despatch to Washington.

On October 10, Sarat Chandra Das returned to Peking. It so happened that Rockhill was giving a talk about Tibet that evening at the British Legation, and Sarat Chandra hastened to attend the function. Whether the presence of such a seasoned Tibetan explorer in the audience disconcerted the speaker who had yet to set foot in the interior of the country that was the subject of his lecture is not recorded.<sup>24</sup>

Rockhill and Sarat Chandra apparently discussed the idea of making an expedition together to Tibet. Sarat Chandra had decided he did not wish to accompany Macauley's mission to Lhasa, because he feared that association with an official British activity might prejudice the Tibetans against him and prevent him from returning to the country on his own later. As matters turned out, the Macauley mission never took place, but while it was being planned, Sarat Chandra Das made clear his intention not to be a part of it. He and Rockhill must have made some preliminary plans of their own. After he returned to India, he wrote to Rockhill, 'as regards our grand project of travel, my views still remain unchanged. My hope to accomplish that grand and perilous work is still undiminished.'<sup>25</sup>

Rockhill was growing increasingly eager to visit the land he had been studying for so long, but had yet to see. He wrote out a request for an unpaid leave of absence of eight months and took it to Denby for his approval. The Minister read it over and said,

'I cannot give my approval for this. If you absent yourself from the Legation, I must have someone to take your place and do your work. But I tell you what I will do: since you so anxious to see Tibet, I will use all my influence in Washington to have you appointed minister resident and consul-general there.'

Rockhill was astonished to learn that the American Minister to China was not aware that Tibet was considered officially part of the empire of the court to which he was accredited. Rockhill's opinion of Denby had been sinking steadily, and this incident did nothing to improve it. Frustrated and angry, he had to postpone the journey indefinitely. Sarat Chandra wrote to India to express his disappointment.<sup>26</sup>

In the middle of October, Alfred Hippisley returned from Canton to marry Nina Howard. The couple discovered that getting married in Peking in 1885 was no easy matter. They ran into bureaucratic roadblocks by both church and state. Hippisley wanted to be certain that the marriage would be recognized under British law. He learned that a ceremony must be conducted by a British consul in addition to any religious ceremony. But there was no consul in Peking empowered to perform a marriage ceremony. He was able to obtain a legal ruling from Hong Kong that invoked an old law passed under King George III. It waived the requirement for a ceremony by a consul in places where extra-territoriality existed, provided the ceremony was conducted in the chapel of the British Legation.



The way then seemed clear, but Nina Howard was a Catholic, which meant that two religious ceremonies must be conducted, one Catholic and one Anglican. The French bishop refused to perform a Catholic ceremony if two were performed. He relented when the couple agreed to have the Catholic ceremony performed first and pointed out that the Anglican ceremony was really more legal than religious in nature. When the chaplain of the British Legation learned that his service would take place after the Catholic service, he balked because, he said, that would render the Anglican service 'a mere mockery'. The poor couple was able to persuade him to change his mind when they pointed out that since the Anglican service was a legal requirement, he could not refuse to perform it.

The wedding party gathered on October 21 in the chapel of the French Legation. Herr von Brandt, the German Minister who was the doyen of the diplomatic corps, claimed the honor of giving away the bride because, he explained, Miss Howard was 'a daughter of the legations'. Rockhill insisted that he should perform that function, because the ceremony was not official and he was her guardian. He performed the duty at two ceremonies, the second at the British Legation, which was, according to Hippisley, 'the usual long Anglican service'. When it ended, the British chaplain read out to the wedding party and guests a formal protest that he had been forced against his will to marry two people already married. Everyone then retreated to the Rockhill residence for a reception and luncheon, after which the wedding couple departed for Canton, no doubt relieved that the ordeal was over.<sup>27</sup>

In late 1885 or early 1886, Rockhill became acquainted with James H. Wilson, an American on an extended visit to China to investigate possibilities for construction of railroads. Wilson, who was customarily addressed as 'General', was a graduate of West Point who emerged from the Civil War with the rank of major-general and a reputation as a dashing cavalry commander. He maintained a heavy correspondence with a large group of politically important people and pursued a variety of business interests. Wilson's visit to China lasted almost a year. He travelled all over the country, including an excursion to what was considered then the remote island of Formosa. He wrote an account of his journey, which was published in 1887.

Rockhill and another officer from the Legation, Fleming Cheshire, accompanied Wilson on a camping trip to visit the Great Wall and the Ming Tombs. The little expedition lasted several days and gave the three Americans an opportunity to relax and become acquainted. Wilson was impressed by Rockhill's military background and wrote admiringly of him in his book.<sup>28</sup> Several years later, Rockhill called Wilson 'my best friend' and hosted the General and his family as house guests at his home in Washington. Wilson would command American troops in Cuba after the Spanish-American War and in China in the aftermath of the Boxer Rebellion.

Several other Orientalists were living in Peking, and Rockhill brought them together to organize an Oriental Society. The group read aloud from scholarly papers at their meetings and began publication of a journal. Rockhill did not always admire his fellow Society members or their work, even members senior to him in age and reputation. A monograph written by one and published in the first issue of the Society's journal he considered 'rubbish', and he said about another article the man was writing, 'It gives me

the shivers to think of what this article possibly contains, but I have not dared to read it.<sup>29</sup> He kept in touch with the American Oriental Society. He sent it books from time to time and, on one occasion, rubbings he had made of Sanskrit inscriptions incised on a stone pillar.

He continued his correspondence with Dr Whitney at Yale. In January, he wrote a long, newsy letter about his activities. 'I now speak Tibetan and Chinese quite well enough for practical purposes,' he reported. He wrote that 'The Diplomatic Service ... pleases me very much,' but he remained determined to travel to Mongolia and Tibet even if it meant resigning his diplomatic commission. He had investigated possibilities of travel to Tibet, he told Whitney, and he hoped to make the trip in the spring of 1887. He was able to outline a detailed itinerary:

*I will travel with three or four [Tibetans], dressed like them and living like them. I hope to go from here to the Koko Nor and stop at Kum Bum (Huc's old stopping place). From there, I will be able to visit all the northeastern part of Tibet which is by far the most interesting from a linguistic and ethnographic point of view. It is all a perfect blank as far as our knowledge of this country goes...*

*... I will try, in company of a lot of pilgrims from N.E. Tibet, to go to Lhasa and thence to India. Or, if this proves impossible, I will go from N. to S. and try to go through ... to Assam. If again I fail in these two schemes, I will either come back by the Yangtze or else make an exploration of the Yellow River down from its sources.<sup>30</sup>*

Although this was written three years before he actually embarked on his journey, it is a surprisingly accurate description of his first expedition. He added:

*From very careful inquiry among the native Tibetans whom I have met, and many of them were men of position, I do not think that an unassuming traveler without escort or great display of scientific and warlike weapons, and who has a moderate knowledge of the language and literature, would meet with any opposition from the lamas.<sup>31</sup>*

In November 1886, Rockhill was sent to Korea to manage the American Legation there temporarily as Chargé d'Affaires *ad interim*. The American Minister in Seoul, appointed only the previous summer, had suddenly resigned. A navy ensign on temporary assignment to the Department of State in Korea took charge of the Legation until another Minister could be appointed. However, he became ill and took emergency leave. Rockhill was given twenty-four hours' notice to pack his bags and leave for Seoul. He was reluctant to go, because Caroline was in a 'delicate condition' (she was pregnant with their second child). But he was not given a choice, and he arrived in Seoul in early December.

Korea had long been a tributary state of China, but by the middle of the nineteenth century, it had become a cause for tension between China and Japan. With the development of modern armies and navies, and the emergence of Japan in the 1850s from its long self-imposed isolation, control of the peninsula was regarded as increasingly important for national security in both countries. For Japan, a Korea dominated by another country was 'a dagger pointed at the heart of Japan'. For China, Japanese control of Korea represented a threatening foothold on the mainland of Asia right next door to China. It could become a springboard for Japanese aggression against China. As the

Great Powers of Europe became more and more involved in Asia, they began to take an interest in the status of Korea. Russia in particular looked covetously at Korea as a possible site for a Russian ice-free port on the Pacific.

In the 1870s, armed clashes involving Korean, Chinese and Japanese forces occurred in Korea with inconclusive results. In the early 1880s, the Chinese strengthened their hold on the peninsula by helping the Koreans expel a small Japanese force from the southern tip. A treaty signed at Tientsin in 1885 confirmed Chinese control, but it specified that if either China or Japan sent troops into the country for any reason, the other country must be notified. The United States and Korea signed a treaty in 1882 that provided for an exchange of diplomatic representation. Thus, when Rockhill arrived in 1886, the American Legation in Seoul had been open for only a few years.

Rockhill remained in Korea only a short time, but during his brief stay he made the acquaintance of two men with whom he would later have significant professional contact. Horace Allen was a doctor from Ohio who had arrived in Korea the same year Rockhill arrived in China.<sup>32</sup> He was the first foreign missionary in the country, and he was soon joined by other Western missionaries until he headed a sizeable group. Like the missionaries in China, they proselytized with such zeal that they sometimes aroused hostility among the Koreans. Rockhill, like many of his diplomatic colleagues in Asia, was often unsympathetic with the missionaries. He wrote to the Department of State of 'a restless disposition on the part of the missionaries in Corea to exceed the bounds of prudence in the prosecution of evangelical work'.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, he became friendly with Horace Allen and often helped missionaries in their contacts with the Korean government.

In late December, still worried about Caroline in Peking, he wrote to the Department of State to request that he be allowed to return to Peking no later than early spring. If a permanent Minister had not yet arrived by then, he wrote, he recommended that Horace Allen be appointed *Chargé d'Affaires*. He described Allen as 'the most respected of our countrymen here'.<sup>34</sup> Allen became a respected authority on Korea. In the 1890s, when Rockhill was a senior official in the Department of State, he was appointed American Minister to Korea.

The other acquaintance Rockhill made during his stay in Seoul was Yuan Shih-kai, the Chinese Resident. Yuan had commanded the 3,000 Chinese troops that had helped the Koreans expel the Japanese in 1885. He had been named Chinese Resident, which made him the virtual ruler of the country, by Li Hung-chang, a Chinese official in Tientsin who controlled Chinese foreign affairs. Li had long been a powerful figure in the Chinese government, an astute bureaucrat who expertly made his way unscathed through the labyrinth of Manchu politics although Li himself was not a Manchu.

Yuan was Li's protégé, and to be Li Hung-chang's protégé was to enjoy power and influence in China. Yuan was only twenty-six years old, surprisingly young to be in a position of such power, especially so in the service of a country and society that so revered age and experience. He was regarded as ruthless and arrogant by many who knew him. Some people claimed, erroneously, that he was anti-American. An American missionary who knew him wrote that Yuan was a 'typical Oriental with no special ability, but with an abnormal amount of cunning and duplicity'.<sup>35</sup> Yuan was to play an important role in Chinese history, especially during the years just before and after the 1911

revolution. Rockhill would come to know him well.

Rockhill spent only about four months in Korea, but those few months in charge of an American diplomatic mission, if only a tiny one, were a time for gaining priceless experience. Korea was a veritable cockpit of clashing imperialism and national rivalries involving both Asian and European powers. Less than ten years after Rockhill departed, those rivalries provoked a major war. When he attained a senior position in the Department of State, he advised a junior diplomat who was weighing whether to accept an assignment to Korea:

*Korea is the place. Nobody wants it; it is too insignificant—but it is there that you will see diplomacy in the raw; diplomacy without gloves, perfume, or phrases ... get out to Korea and watch. We need somebody to know what it is all about, and we ought not to take all our information from the chief conspirators.*<sup>36</sup>

Rockhill returned to Peking in April 1887, to face a family crisis. Caroline was expecting the birth of their second child momentarily, and Dorothy came down with smallpox.<sup>37</sup> She had to be placed in isolation in a hospital outside the city. Her father would have to accompany her despite his reluctance to leave Caroline with her baby expected to arrive at any time. He nursed Dorothy night and day until he, too, became ill. Meanwhile, Caroline's time for delivery arrived, but she had difficulty finding anyone to attend her because of fear of smallpox. A doctor from the British Legation, assisted by the wife of another British resident, finally agreed to attend the delivery. Rockhill's second daughter, christened Margaret but usually called Daisy, was born while her father and sister lay recovering in the hospital outside the city. A friend of the Rockhills in the German Legation, Baron von Ketteler, brought the news of the new addition to the family to Rockhill and his daughter at the remote hospital.

When he returned to his duties at the Legation, Rockhill redoubled his efforts to find a way to make his journey to Tibet, but Denby still refused to agree to a leave of absence. Rockhill wrote to General Wilson, the well-connected businessman whom he had escorted to the Great Wall a year earlier. Wilson agreed to contact the Secretary of State and an influential Senator of his acquaintance on Rockhill's behalf. The aspiring explorer eagerly awaited news, but nothing came of Wilson's efforts.

In late 1886 or early 1887, Rockhill wrote to Trubner in London to propose collaboration in writing and publishing another book about Tibet. The publisher's reply was not encouraging. He reported that Rockhill's first two books, *Udanavarga* and *The Life of the Buddha*, had yet to earn back their publishing expenses. They were still in the loss column by fifteen and twenty pounds, respectively, Trubner reported. He asked Rockhill for ideas to stimulate sales. He was distinctly cool to the idea of publishing another book by Rockhill until the first two began to show a profit.<sup>38</sup>

Rockhill's relations with Minister Denby, never close or cordial, deteriorated. The two men had very different, almost antithetical personalities. Rockhill was scholarly and bookish with tendencies toward being a recluse. His interests in such subjects as Oriental philology and religion were esoteric. He liked to shut himself away with his books and manuscripts. Although he had made many friends among the officers of other legations, he did not relish the official social life that is a necessary part of every diplomat's existence. He studied China intensely, and he was already regarded by officials

in other legations and by scholars as an accomplished Orientalist.

Minister Denby by contrast was a gregarious politician who enjoyed the social life of the Legation Quarter. When Rockhill was serving as Chargé in Korea and dealing with the turmoil there, Denby wrote to him, 'Peking is quite gay. There are dances and dinners ad infinitum.'<sup>39</sup> Outside the confines of the diplomatic corps, however, he never gained more than a superficial understanding of China, and he never learned to read or speak Chinese despite spending thirteen years in Peking as the American Minister to China. The Chinese recognized his deficiencies. William Pethick, an American Orientalist who served for years as private secretary to Li Hung-chang, once remarked to a friend, 'The Colonel has not been a success with the Chinese. They do not like his manner, which is too pompous, austere and unbending.'<sup>40</sup> Denby tended to be autocratic in running his legation. His youngest son once told Dorothy, 'Your father is like a kind of servant to my father. He has to obey him, no matter what he tells him to do.' Dorothy considered Denby surprisingly ignorant to hold the position of Minister. She later wrote that he talked of 'Hungaria' and thought that Cossacks came from Corsica.<sup>41</sup>

Clashes between the two men were almost inevitable, as Denby asserted his authority and Rockhill, never one to bow easily to overbearing authority, pursued his independent course of studying Tibetan and Chinese until Denby complained that he neglected his official duties. In August 1887, there occurred an incident, minor in itself, which provoked a confrontation which may have been more rancorous than most and may have been what drove Denby to take official retaliation against his stubbornly independent subordinate.

Space was sought in the Legation compound to house a stock of books on loan from a book club, which would be available to everyone in the Legation. Rockhill owned three rooms adjacent to the Minister's guesthouse, which he had built, at his own expense, during the tenure of John Russell Young as Minister. In a conversation with another member of the Legation staff, he offered to make his rooms available to house the books as a sort of temporary reading room. The day after this conversation, Denby's oldest son—the Second Secretary—confronted the First Secretary to tell him that his rooms could not be used as 'a clubhouse', because to do so 'would interfere with the privacy of Miss Denby's rooms' which were nearby. The following day, the Minister sent Rockhill a note forbidding him to allow his rooms to be used to house the books. 'Either I occupy those rooms,' Denby wrote, 'or they remain unoccupied.'<sup>42</sup>

The tempest in a teacup boiled over, and the First Secretary shot back a stiff reply asserting his ownership of the rooms. He offered to 'cede' them to Denby 'for whatever sum may be judged reasonable, otherwise they remain at my disposal while I dwell in this legation'.<sup>43</sup> The two men lived and worked in close proximity in the small compound, but they carried on their dispute by letter. Anyone who has lived and worked in a small diplomatic mission in an isolated location has experienced or witnessed small incidents blown out of proportion by personality differences magnified by close, unavoidable daily contact. Whether Denby sent all the correspondence on the incident to Washington, as Rockhill apparently suspected he planned to do, is uncertain. But the following February, he sent an official message to the Secretary of State about the matter, claiming that the rooms in question were the property of the Minister. He even included a drawing

of that portion of the Legation compound to buttress his claim.<sup>44</sup>

In September, Rockhill submitted a request for a leave of absence the following summer to take a vacation in the United States with his family. By the summer of 1888, he and his family would be in China for four years, and home leave was in order. Denby forwarded the request to Washington with his endorsement, adding that he regretted that he would be deprived 'even temporarily of [Rockhill's] valuable and efficient services'.<sup>45</sup>

In October, Rockhill made a month-long trip into the interior through western Shansi Province, which may have been a sort of early reconnaissance for the expedition he hoped to make some day into Mongolia and Tibet. He wrote to General Wilson about it, and in his letter to Wilson he made one of his earliest comments still on record which reveals something of how he felt about contemporary events in China. 'You know I am not a believer in China's awakening,' he told Wilson. 'The only eye-opener for China is a war in which she is badly worsted, and any step in advance will require a terribly hard push from the exterior.'<sup>46</sup>

The Rockhills departed Peking for home leave on April 2 1888. A few days later, they sailed from Shanghai. Back in the United States, Rockhill went to Washington to call on Thomas Bayard, the Secretary of State. Such a call was routine for a diplomat returning for leave from an overseas post, and the meeting was cordial and without incident. Rockhill then immediately left Washington to join his family for seaside holiday at a hotel in Sea Girt, New Jersey.

Soon after he arrived in Sea Girt, a letter from the Secretary of State was delivered. Rockhill no doubt read it with mixed feelings of surprise, anger and foreboding. Bayard wrote:

*In the short interview we had the other day, no reference whatever was made to the business of the Legation at Peking or to your continuance as Secretary of that Legation. It is but proper that I should say to you that Mr. Denby, our Minister, has given very positive intimation to the Department of the future absence of that cooperation between you and himself in the transaction of the business of the Legation which is essential to the public service.*<sup>47</sup>

He closed with an ominous-sounding suggestion:

*Would it not, therefore, be well for you to come to the Department at an early day in order to have a definite understanding in regard to the matter herein alluded to.*<sup>48</sup>

Rockhill hurried back to Washington and met with Bayard. The Secretary read aloud portions of Denby's letters. The Minister charged that Rockhill had neglected his official duties, absenting himself from the Chancery offices of the Legation during working hours. He accused his subordinate of alienating officers of other legations against the Minister. He complained that Rockhill's family had no social contact with his family. The upshot of the interview was that Bayard asked for Rockhill's resignation from the diplomatic service.

Rockhill was stunned. He and Denby had had differences and arguments, no doubt, but he had no idea that the Minister intended to submit a formal complaint against him to the Secretary. He returned to his family at Sea Girt, and on July 5, he wrote a long letter to Bayard. He submitted his resignation, to take effect at the end of his leave of absence, 'in compliance with the desire which you intimated to me in the interview



Plate 3 The American Embassy, Peking, c. 1884

Plate 4 Rockhill (left) and Charles Denby with unidentified third party in the center, Peking, 1887





Plate 5 Alvey Adee (see p. 69)



which you recently granted me'. He claimed that 'Most of the charges made against me in these letters are so trivial and show so clearly the writer's desire to prejudice you against me, that they are unworthy of comment.' Nevertheless, he went on to rebut some of them. He pointed out that as recently as the previous September, Denby had praised his performance of his duties when he endorsed Rockhill's request for leave. The letter closed:

*While I am very sorry to be obliged to give up work in which I took deep interest, I fully perceive that it would be impossible for me, under the circumstances, to discharge the duties to which I had been called under a chief prejudiced against me and for whom, on my part, I could no longer feel any respect.*<sup>49</sup>

Bayard promptly sent a reply on July 7 accepting the resignation. He refused to take sides in the quarrel, saying that there appeared to be 'personal incompatibility and very evident misunderstandings between you [and Denby]'. That situation would affect the public business, Bayard concluded, so it was better that Rockhill did not return to Peking.<sup>50\*</sup>

Rockhill was thirty-five years old, suddenly and unexpectedly unemployed, with a family to support. But there was one bright spot in his otherwise gloomy situation. He was now free to pursue his long-delayed dream, to travel to Tibet. He scraped up all the money he could find and made arrangements for his family to stay in the United States while he was gone.<sup>52</sup> He wrote a letter to Dr Samuel Langley, the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, offering to collect documents and artifacts for the Smithsonian. Langley accepted the offer.<sup>53</sup> Actually, Rockhill's purpose in seeking a connection with the Smithsonian was to obtain a letter of introduction which would identify him as sponsored by the Smithsonian and thus give him official status in the eyes of the Chinese and Tibetans. He was ready to embark on his great adventure. In the autumn of 1888, he again sailed for China, this time alone.

\* Seven years later, Rockhill was Third Assistant Secretary of State, and Bayard was American Ambassador to Britain. Rockhill had occasion to visit London, and of course he called on the Ambassador. As Rockhill took his leave after their meeting, Bayard said to him, 'Now, is there anything else I can do for you? Let me see, I will give you my number at the Cooperative Stores, and I will give you my card and write your name on it, and then, if you get into trouble with the police, they will know you.'<sup>51</sup>

## Into the Forbidden Land: Mongolia and Tibet, 1888-1892

Rockhill went first to Peking to make arrangements for the expedition. He stayed at the German Legation as a guest of his friend, the German Minister.<sup>1</sup> In view of his acrimonious parting from Denby, he probably saw little or nothing of the American Minister.

Many people in Peking, certainly those acquainted with Rockhill, must have been aware for some time that he planned to travel into Tibet, and most of those people probably considered him foolhardy to do so. In 1888, Tibet was the 'forbidden land', the most mysterious and least-known area of its size on earth.<sup>2</sup> So little was known about it that some European geographers speculated that somewhere within it might be a mountain higher than Everest. The sources of the great rivers of Asia—the Yellow, the Yangtze, the Mekong, the Salween, the Brahmaputra, the Indus, the Ganges—lay hidden and still unmapped in its interior.

A plateau two and one-half times the size of Scandinavia, at an altitude higher than the highest peaks of the Alps, Tibet was cut off from the rest of the world by intimidating obstacles both natural and man-made. To the south and southwest lay the Himalayas, the highest mountain range in the world. To the southeast the steaming, malarial valleys of northern Burma. Across the north stretched the barriers of the Kun Lun Mountains and the deserts of the Tsaidam Plateau, Turkestan and Mongolia.

By 1888, very few Europeans had penetrated to the interior of Tibet. The first were Jesuit priests from Peking in the seventeenth century. A few priests from Portuguese outposts, and the Hollander, Samuel van der Putte, had reached Lhasa in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the government of the Dalai Lama in Lhasa, under the insistence of the Chinese Ambans, closed the country's borders to most foreigners. This government had observed the British, French and Russian imperialists, to the south in India and Indo-China, to the north in Siberian and Mongolian areas. It knew of and feared espionage. It believed increased foreign contacts would not only undermine and debase the unique Tibetan brand of Buddhism that dominated the life of the people, but prepare the way for imperialist attacks. They threatened torture and even death to such outsiders who tried to reach Lhasa. Tibet, under the Manchus, was considered a tributary state, a part of the Celestial Empire, and Chinese authorities in Peking supported the Tibetans' ban on undocumented visitors with dubious motives. In Lhasa there were foreign traders, including Armenians and others, but these were by established commercial arrangements, and they released no public information.

The last Europeans known to have reached Lhasa were two French priests, Gabet and Huc, who did so in 1846. They had not come as surveyors nor as secret agents, but were unarmed, poor priests, speaking Tibetan, interested only in religion. They were expelled from Lhasa not by the lamas, but by orders of the Amban. Rockhill had read

Huc's celebrated account of that journey while he was still a child, and it was, he claimed, the major influence that aroused in him the desire to study Tibetan and visit Tibet. Since the visit by Gabet and Huc, several well-armed European explorers had tried to duplicate their feat but without success.

The authority of the government in Lhasa, however, did not extend throughout the country. Many areas were controlled by clans or tribes, and some of them were hostile not only to the authorities in Lhasa but to any outsiders, including the Chinese. These groups controlling small areas were classified by the central governments as bandits or warlords. Rockhill noted that even the impoverished peasants often had to resort to robbery just to survive.<sup>3</sup> Commercial caravans were usually well armed and familiar with their routes. A novice traveller from the outside had to proceed cautiously even when using a caravan as cover, feeling the way amidst a tangle of conflicting tribal hatreds and loyalties.

Rockhill proposed to enter Tibet from the north, the route followed by Gabet and Huc. Most travellers entered the country from the populated provinces of western China to the east or through the Himalayan passes from India to the south. The northern route, which required crossing deserts and several mountain ranges, was the most difficult means of entry and therefore the least-travelled. Rockhill calculated that he would be less likely to be detected by the Lhasa authorities if he used that less-travelled route.<sup>4</sup>

The expedition was financed out of Rockhill's own pocket. He lacked the funds for elaborate equipment or lavish supplies, so made a virtue of necessity. He proposed to travel as lightly as possible and in disguise. This was possible because of his fluency in both Chinese and Tibetan. He rarely mentions that he was well armed, but does mention how, with a single volley from his Winchester carbine at 600 feet, he had killed a wild yak<sup>5</sup> and with two or three shots, a huge wild bear.<sup>6</sup>

*My outfit was simple and inexpensive, for, dressing and living like a Chinaman, I was encumbered neither with clothes nor foreign stores, bedding, tubs, medicines nor any of the other endless impediments which so many travellers consider absolute necessities.*<sup>7</sup>

In Peking, he hired one young Chinese to accompany him as a servant, a young man named Liu Chung-shan. Liu was an experienced traveller in the outlying areas of the Chinese Empire. Two years earlier, he had accompanied the young English explorer, Francis Younghusband, on his epic journey across Central Asia from Peking to Kashmir in India. Just before departing Peking, Rockhill made arrangements with an American in the service of the Chinese government, William Pethick, to make a monthly payment of Liu's salary to the young man's father. Pethick, an accomplished Sinologist, was influential as the private secretary of the powerful Chinese official who controlled China's foreign relations, Li Hung-chang. In a letter to a correspondent in the United States, Pethick described Rockhill's projected journey and added, 'He will carry his life in his hands if he goes.'<sup>8</sup>

On December 17, the little expedition departed Peking in two mule-drawn carts for the first leg of the journey to Lanchow, the capital of Kansu province. The trip across northern China took thirty-two days. Along the way, they often stayed in Chinese inns, which were not particularly restful places for a weary traveller:

*The noise in a Chinese inn is deafening, and it never ceases day or night. Each guest yells from his door to huo-chi, or servants, for everything he wants, the huo-chi shout back, the cook bawls out the names of the dishes as they are ready, the cart-drivers wrangle with the chang-kuei-ti (inn-keeper), and the mules bray, and the pigs, of which there are always a half-dozen about, grunt and squeal, till one in sheer desperation joins in the general hubbub, and tries to shout it down.<sup>9</sup>*

On January 5, they crossed the Yellow River. They passed through Sian, the capital of ancient China then known as Chang-an. On January 18, they arrived in Lanchow, having travelled 1,350 miles since leaving Peking.

They lingered in Lanchow for the Chinese New Year festivities, then moved on to Hsi-ning, the most important city in western Kansu and a traditional starting point for caravans crossing Central Asia. Hsi-ning was the seat of the Chinese governor, or Amban, responsible for the outlying portions of the empire in Turkestan and Tibet. Soon after arrival, Rockhill was visited by three policemen seeking to know who he was, where he was going, why he had come to the city. He told them as little as he could. Rockhill wanted to stay away from the Amban, because he knew the Chinese official would probably stop him if he learned of his plans to visit Lhasa. Accordingly, wearing a big Mongol gown and fur cap, he departed the city immediately after the visit by the police for the village of Luser near the famous Tibetan Buddhist lamasery of Kum Bum. There would be no inquisitive police at the great religious center.

He arrived in Luser on the eve of the Dragon Festival, an important Chinese holiday. The streets of the town were thronged with holiday revelers, and on the grounds of the temple complex, a quarter-mile away, a great fair was in progress. Rockhill and Liu wandered for hours among the crowds. Rockhill found that no one took any notice of him, despite his six-foot-four-inch height and red hair. Everyone apparently assumed he was from some remote corner of the far-flung empire with which they were unfamiliar.

At the fairgrounds were all sorts of open-air restaurants and stalls selling all sorts of goods. There were gambling tables and Punch-and-Judy shows. Rockhill was surprised to see that the most popular attractions were peep-shows in which obscene pictures from Europe were the centerpiece.

As Rockhill and Liu strolled along enjoying the sights, the crowd around them suddenly scattered. Striding toward them were six or eight burly lamas armed with heavy whips, which they used freely against anyone unwary enough not to flee. Behind them walked a stately lama dressed in elaborate robes. He was a Gekor, or censor, whose duty it was to see that the rules of the lamasery were obeyed.

*This one had heard of the peep-shows, the Punch-and-Judy shows, gambling tables and other prohibited amusements on the fair grounds, and he was on his way with his lictors to put an end to the scandal. I followed in his wake and saw the peep-show knocked down, Punch and Judy laid mangled beside it, the owners whipped and put to flight,<sup>10</sup> and the majesty of the ecclesiastical law and morality duly vindicated.*

A few days after the fair, another important annual event occurred at the lamasery. Elaborate religious bas-reliefs were displayed. These were large figures, as much as twenty feet long and ten feet high, sculpted completely from butter. They were mounted on

wooden scaffolding and lit by hundreds of tiny butter lamps. Rockhill was told that they were displayed on this particular night at lamaseries all over Tibet, but the figures at Kum Bum were reputed to be the largest and most beautiful of all. Rockhill and Liu visited the lamasery and found them to be impressive works of art. Tibetan artists had worked on them for as long as three months, but they were displayed for only one night. The next morning, they were gone.

Rockhill remained six weeks in Lushar preparing for his entry into Tibet. He had to lay in supplies, acquire a tent and pack animals, and hire porters and animal herders. He had expected to stay only a short time, but his preparations took much longer than he had anticipated:

*Never in my life was my patience so sorely tried as during the six weeks which followed [the festivities in Kum Bum]. The most insignificant purchase took days to complete; the people were lavish in promises; good-natured, smiling, but never accomplished anything.<sup>11</sup>*

He also had 'no end of trouble resulting from the rascality and violent temper of the servant I had brought with me from Peking'. Although Rockhill himself handled the money, Liu, he learned, was making money by 'squeezing' the merchants with whom they dealt. He also proved to be 'too fond of his wine'. Once, when in his cups, he confirmed Rockhill's suspicions about his sharp business practices by telling his employer how he had cheated Francis Younghusband when he accompanied the Englishman across Central Asia. By the time they arrived in India, Liu boasted, he had stolen over three hundred ounces of silver.

Rockhill needed men to look after his little caravan. He wanted to hire at least one Tibetan lama who could deal with local officials as they travelled through Tibet, but Liu deliberately frightened away any good prospects. He feared that new members added to the party would want to share his 'squeeze' profits. Moreover, there were few qualified men willing to strike off toward Lhasa with a suspicious-looking stranger.

Rockhill succeeded in hiring two reliable-looking Muslims but could find no suitable and willing lama. He had become acquainted with someone in Hsi-ning who he thought might be able to help, so he went there to seek help. When he explained his problem to his friend, the man thought a while, then suggested a lama who lived in a nearby lamasery. When he mentioned the man's name, Rockhill started in surprise. 'Why, you are speaking of Bu lama!' he exclaimed.<sup>12</sup> It was his Tibetan teacher from Peking. Rockhill immediately went to find him.

He found Bu lama living in the finest house in the lamasery. He was warmly received and treated to 'a meal such as I had not eaten since leaving Peking'. On the wall in one room was a photograph of him and Bu lama taken a few years earlier in Peking, and 'in a prominent place among his curios was a tin trumpet my little daughter had given him'.<sup>13</sup>

Within a few days, Bu lama was able to identify a suitable man, and arrangements were made for him to join Rockhill in Lushar. His mission successfully completed, the explorer returned to Lushar to make last-minute preparations for his departure. But when the newly-hired lama arrived a few days later, he announced he had changed his mind. Another week was spent searching for a replacement before a passable recruit could be

hired and the caravan was able to depart Lusak.

The party skirted the great salt lake at Koko Nor and plunged into the Tsaidam Plateau of northern Tibet. Rockhill explained in his account of the journey:

*The name Tsaidam appears to be Tibetan, tsai, meaning 'salty,' dam, 'plain,' a very appropriate name, as salt is the chief if not the sole product of this forsaken land. I am mistaken; it is not the sole product, for the Tsaidam breeds mosquitoes so numerous and bloodthirsty that Mongols and cattle have to flee before them every year and seek shelter in the adjacent mountains.*<sup>14</sup>

He reached the camp of the Dsassak, the traditional chief of the Tsaidam, who turned out to be a stout man of twenty-eight who said he had met Rockhill two years earlier in Peking. He told the explorer that he had no hope of reaching Lhasa. The countryside swarmed with bands of brigands, and no party of less than twenty men could safely make the journey, which would take fifty days. Told he would need more men, more animals, and more provisions, Rockhill was forced to acknowledge that there were 'insuperable difficulties in the way of my going to Lhasa'.<sup>15</sup> He decided to head for Chamdo, a major town in eastern Tibet. From there, he would attempt to reach Assam in northeastern India, or, failing that, Ta Chien Lu in Yunnan province in western China.

His disappointment at being forced to abandon his plans to visit Lhasa were somewhat assuaged, he wrote later, when he was told at the Dsassak's camp that a large party of seventy-five Russians had reached the city during the previous winter. He would not have been the first Westerner since Gabet and Huc to reach Lhasa even if he had succeeded, although he would have been the first American. He concluded that the Russian group must have been the party of the great Russian explorer of Central Asia, Nikolay Mickhailovich Przhevalsky. In Peking just before departing on his expedition, he had learned that Przhevalsky had died in Mongolia while on his latest expedition. Apparently, his party had continued on into Tibet and reached the capital.

Before leaving the camp of the Dsassak, Rockhill visited a famous saint, a 'living Buddha', who was renowned as a fortune-teller. He was urged to consult the great seer about the possibilities for success of his forthcoming travel. He found the saint to be a 'good-looking boy of nineteen' dressed in yellow satin garments. Rockhill was accompanied by his men and some local Mongols, who crowded around as he explained to the living Buddha why he had come. The boy took up a small gold box, muttered some prayers, and shook out dice from the box. He then referred to an old book and delivered a pronouncement worthy of the Delphic Oracle of ancient Greece. Rockhill was embarking on a journey that could be dangerous, he proclaimed. 'You may accomplish it, or you may not,' he predicted, 'but as to going through eastern Tibet, that is beyond my ken, I can say nothing about it.'

*When he had finished, I turned around to see the effect of this remarkably equivocal oracle on the Mongols and was pleased to find their faces radiant. They considered that it forbode good luck for the trip.*<sup>16</sup>

On May 5, the explorer departed the camp of the Dsassak with a caravan of two Mongols, four Chinese, seventeen ponies and two huge Tibetan mastiffs for protection. They crossed the upper reaches of the Yangtze river, which Rockhill had been warned was impossible to cross at that point, and climbed through deep snow to cross passes above

16,000 feet in altitude. On May 25, they arrived at Jyekundo, a major crossroads lying at more than 12,000 feet in altitude. Rockhill hoped to find there a guide to take him to Chamdo and onward south to Assam.

Soon after arriving in Jyekundo, he learned that the Ponbo, or district chief, suspected he was a spy because he did not possess the official pass issued by Chinese authorities in Hsi-ning to permit travellers to proceed into Tibet. Rockhill had fled Hsi-ning after the visit by the police before he could obtain the permit. The Ponbo warned everyone in town not to sell any supplies to the stranger. He then quickly departed for a visit to a neighboring town to consult the authorities there about how to deal with this unusual situation.

The Ponbo was expected to return within eight days, and Rockhill was warned that the official would almost certainly issue an order for his arrest. He was urged to leave town, because even worse punishment might well be in store for him. He tried to find a guide to take him to Chamdo, but without success. No one was willing to accompany him, because his caravan was too small to be safe from gangs of robbers.

His only alternative was to return to China. He hurriedly made arrangements for two of his men to remain behind in Jyekundo with most of his baggage so he could travel as fast as possible. They would have to find their way back to China on their own and catch up with Rockhill somewhere along the way. He found a man willing to guide him as far as Kanze, a major town of eastern Tibet. He was a 'queer specimen of the Tibetan race, a wizened, blear-eyed, dirty old fellow, drunk more than half the time, but with all the cunning of the savage and a great fund of humor'.<sup>17</sup> The unpromising recruit turned out to be an excellent guide and loyal travel companion.

They hurriedly departed Jyekundo on May 29 and travelled through incessant rain, sleet, and hail. They often had to camp outdoors in the cold downpour. Their animals were driven to the point of exhaustion, and their supplies, which they had not been able to replenish in Jyekundo, ran alarmingly low. At Kanze they were accosted by a mob incensed at the presence of suspicious strangers, but they were able to talk their way out of a dangerous situation.

Rockhill still entertained a faint hope of finding a guide in Kanze who would take him to Chamdo and on to Assam, but he could find no one. His hope of reaching India had to be finally and definitely abandoned. He decided he would take advantage of the opportunity to travel through one of the more heavily populated parts of Tibet to learn everything he could about the country and its people. He hired a man willing to guide him to Ta Chien Lu, a major town just across the border in China's western Szechwan province.

They travelled through inhabited country, but the journey was grueling. They crossed mountain ranges and several times met with angry mobs, which were persuaded only with difficulty not to attack them. Rockhill found that the country swarmed with lamas, many of whom were insolent and antagonistic toward strangers. In the six hundred miles between Jyekundo and Ta Chien Lu, they passed no fewer than forty lamaseries housing thousands of lamas. They were compelling evidence that the country was ruled by a theocracy.

On June 24, four weeks after fleeing Jyekundo, they arrived in Ta Chien Lu. They had returned to China. In the city was a Catholic mission operated by several French

priests. They were the first Europeans Rockhill had met in months, and they gave him a warm welcome. When he told them he had come from Tibet across country to the west of Ta Chien Lu accompanied by only two men, they were dumbfounded. They told him they had been trying for twenty years, unsuccessfully, to cross into Tibet.

*I shall always treasure their praise as my greatest reward, coming from men than whom none living know better the hardships and dangers of Tibetan travel.*<sup>18</sup>

He stayed two weeks in Ta Chien Lu, enjoying the hospitality of the French mission and gathering information about southwestern China. He departed on July 10 and headed eastward through Szechwan toward the coast. He stayed ten days in Chung-ching as a guest of the British Consular Agent in his attractive cottage outside the city.

He travelled by boat down the Yangtze, and it was an enjoyable journey 'with just enough danger to give it zest'. The swift current swept them along through gorges and whitewater rapids.

*Once a whirlpool caught us, and we were spun around so rapidly that, dazed and sick, we sat crouching in the bottom of the boat till the men saw the whirlpool receding, when with a great shout, they bent to the oars and safely got us out ... I laughed a little at the fear shown by the boatmen. 'Like you, I laughed,' remarked one of them, 'the first time I came down the river, but years of work on it have taught me better, and I now venture on it only with fear.'*<sup>19</sup>

His boat journey ended at I-chang on August 8, and he arrived in Shanghai on August 20. He had travelled 4,700 miles in eight months, much of the journey through country almost totally unknown in the West. A few years later, in a summary of his experiences, he wrote:

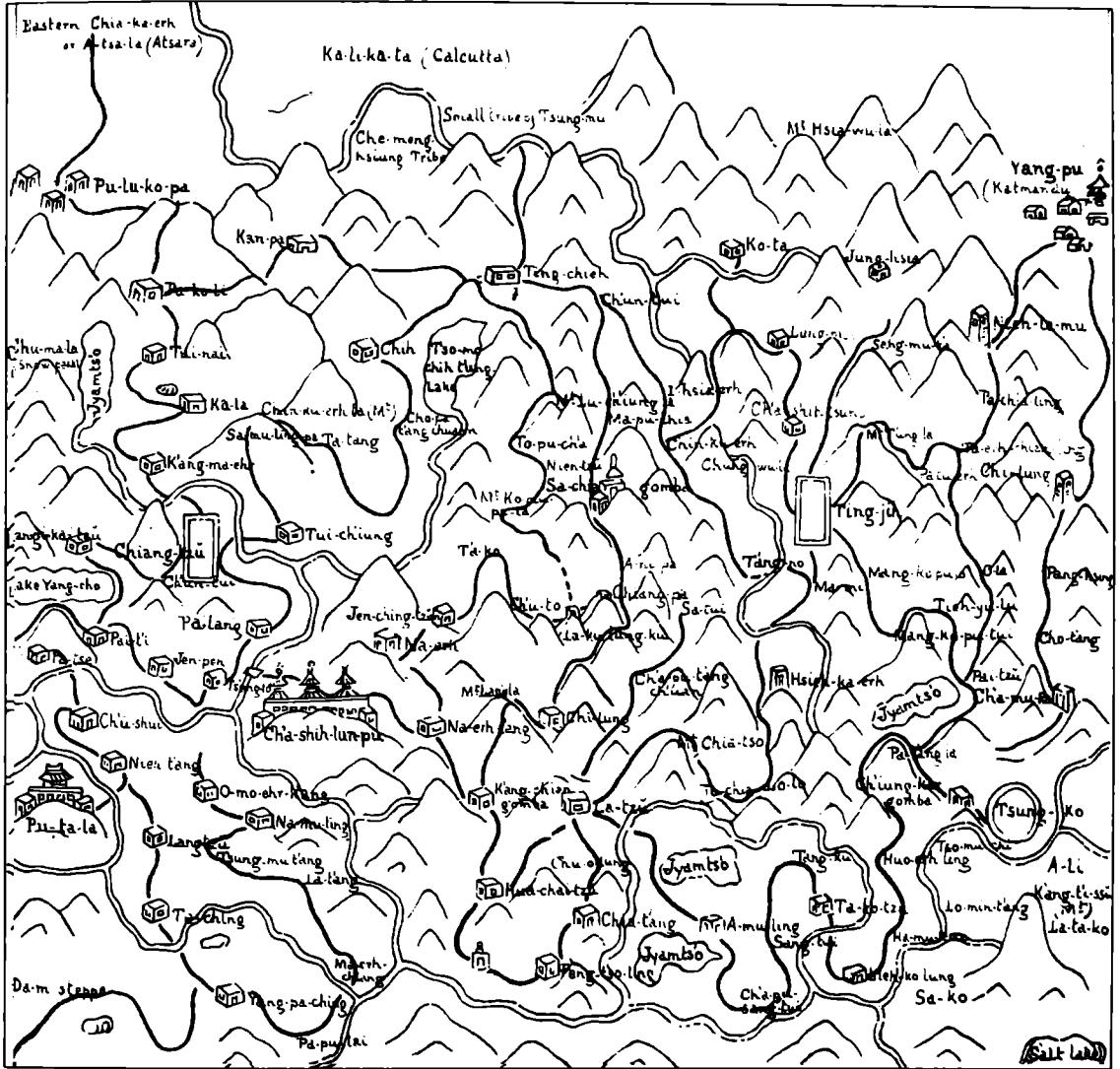
*I wandered in China, Mongolia and Tibet. I dressed and lived like a Chinese frontiersman, and ate all the dirty messes of Chinamen, Mongols and Tibetans. I used fingers instead of fork or chop-sticks. I licked my platter instead of washing it. And I conformed to every other social dictate of the countries through which I passed. I nearly starved to death. Time and again, I was snow-blind. I had to run for my life from hostile lamas of eastern Tibet. And I vowed I would never go on another such fool's errand again.*<sup>20</sup>

Like many such vows, it would be quickly forgotten. From Shanghai he wrote a long letter to Hippisley giving an account of the journey. He explained that he abandoned his plans to go to Lhasa when he heard that Przhevalsky's expedition had already reached the city. 'I did not want to reach Lhasa a bad second,' he explained. It was a slightly different reason than the one that appeared in his published account in which he said that he was prevented from going to Lhasa. He told Hippisley that in crossing eastern Tibet to Ta Chien Lu, 'I have been the first foreigner who has ever put his foot in this part of Tibet.'<sup>21</sup>

By the end of October, he was back in the United States to rest and recuperate from his journey. For nearly a month, he was almost blind and under a doctor's care. His eyes had 'completely given out' during the trip.<sup>22</sup> By December, however, he was 'wildly going over' his notes to begin work on a series of articles that *Century* asked him to write. His response to the magazine's offer was typical of Rockhill. 'I greatly dislike to write for the magazine-reading public,' he wrote to Hippisley in December. But he was compelled to do so, he explained, in order to make money to pay for the trip.<sup>23</sup>



Route map of Ulterior Tibet. (Taken from Hsi-chiao t'u lueh).



North

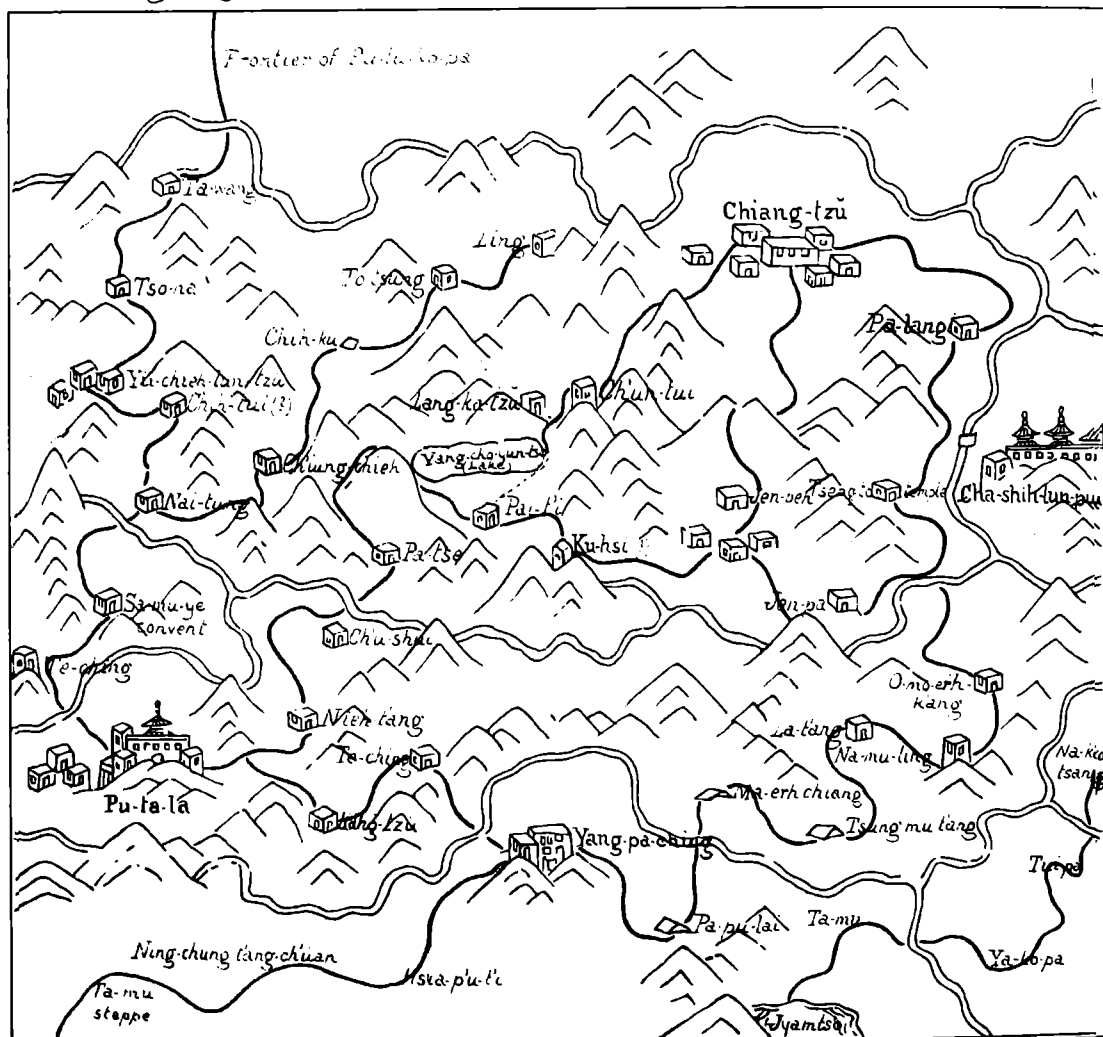
Map 1 Route map of Ulterior Tibet (after Rockhill, JRAS, 1891)

In all his writing for publication, Rockhill deliberately adopted an impersonal, objective, scientific style that his editors always wanted changed. The chief editor at *Century Magazine* was Richard Gilder, a respected poet and writer in his own right. Gilder complained that Rockhill's writing was 'very dry and crowded with names. Quite unreadable.'<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, the magazine published a series of long articles with apparently very little editing and followed them up by publishing Rockhill's book about his journey. After this first Tibet book was published, a friend wrote to him:

*Make the next one more personal and tell the world something of your hardships and dangers—it will be all the better for it.*<sup>25</sup>

He was a returned explorer, back from the 'forbidden land', and people wanted to read about his adventures, not about the structure of the Tibetan language or the history of

Map giving routes between Lh'asa and Shigatsé (Taken from Hsi-chao tu liieh).



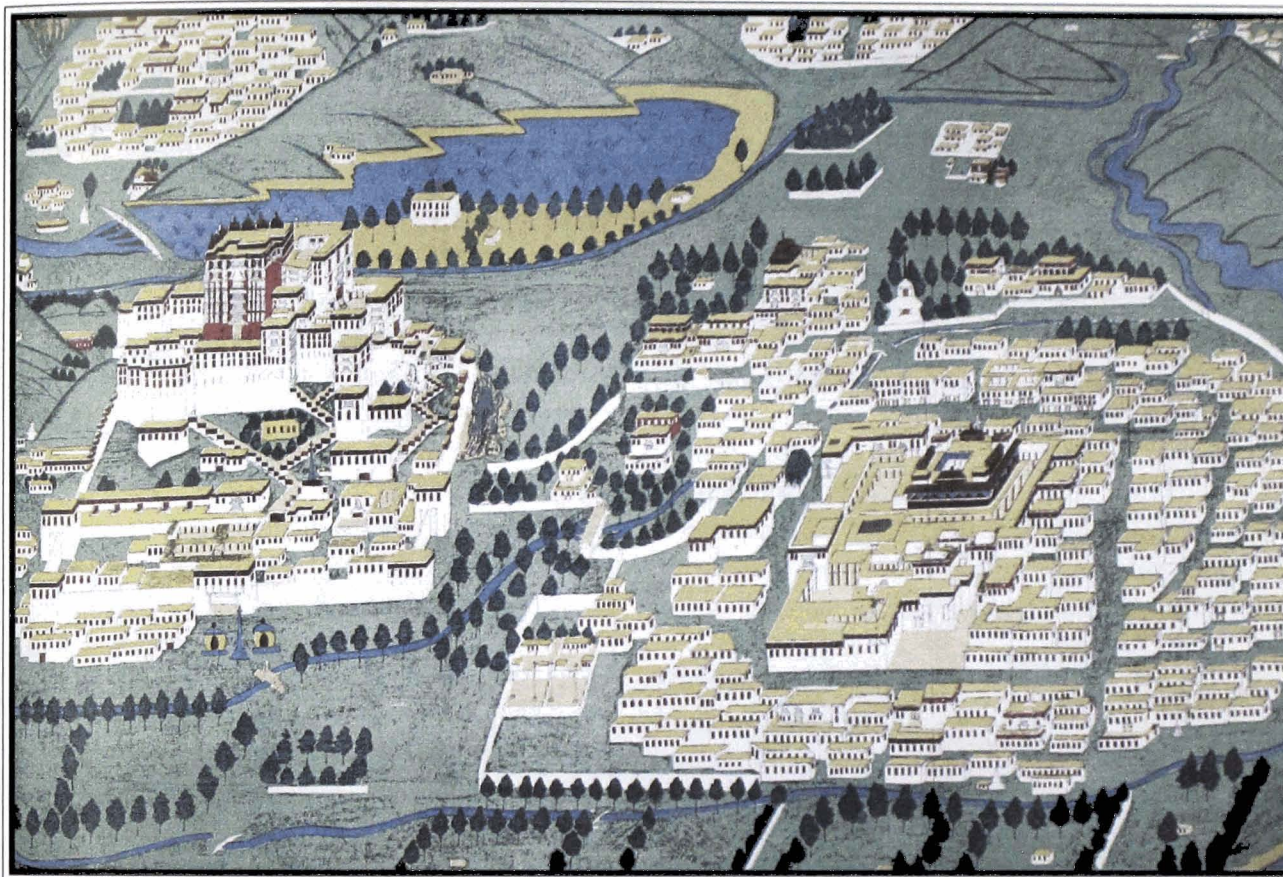
North

Map 2 Routes between Lhasa and Shigatse (after Rockhill, JRAS, 1891)

Tibetan Buddhism. He ignored them and continued, almost obsessively, to write in his dry, impersonal style. Several years later, he complained to one editor who criticized his style:

*It is really too humiliating for a man who has given a good many years of his life to the study of a country, even as remote a one as Central Asia to find out that the only thing that is of real interest to his fellow beings in all that he has done is of the most trivial character and absolutely of no interest to him.*<sup>26</sup>

1890 opened as a year of uncertainty. He had plenty to keep him busy for several months, writing the magazine articles and working on a book. But he had to make decisions about his long-term future. When he had sought an appointment to the Legation in Peking, he had not done so with a view to beginning a diplomatic career. Indeed, although he may not have been fully aware of it at the time, there did not exist a professional



Map 3 *Bird's eye view of Lhasa* (after Rockhill, JRAS, 1891)

American Foreign Service in which someone like Rockhill, without political connections in either political party, could build a career.

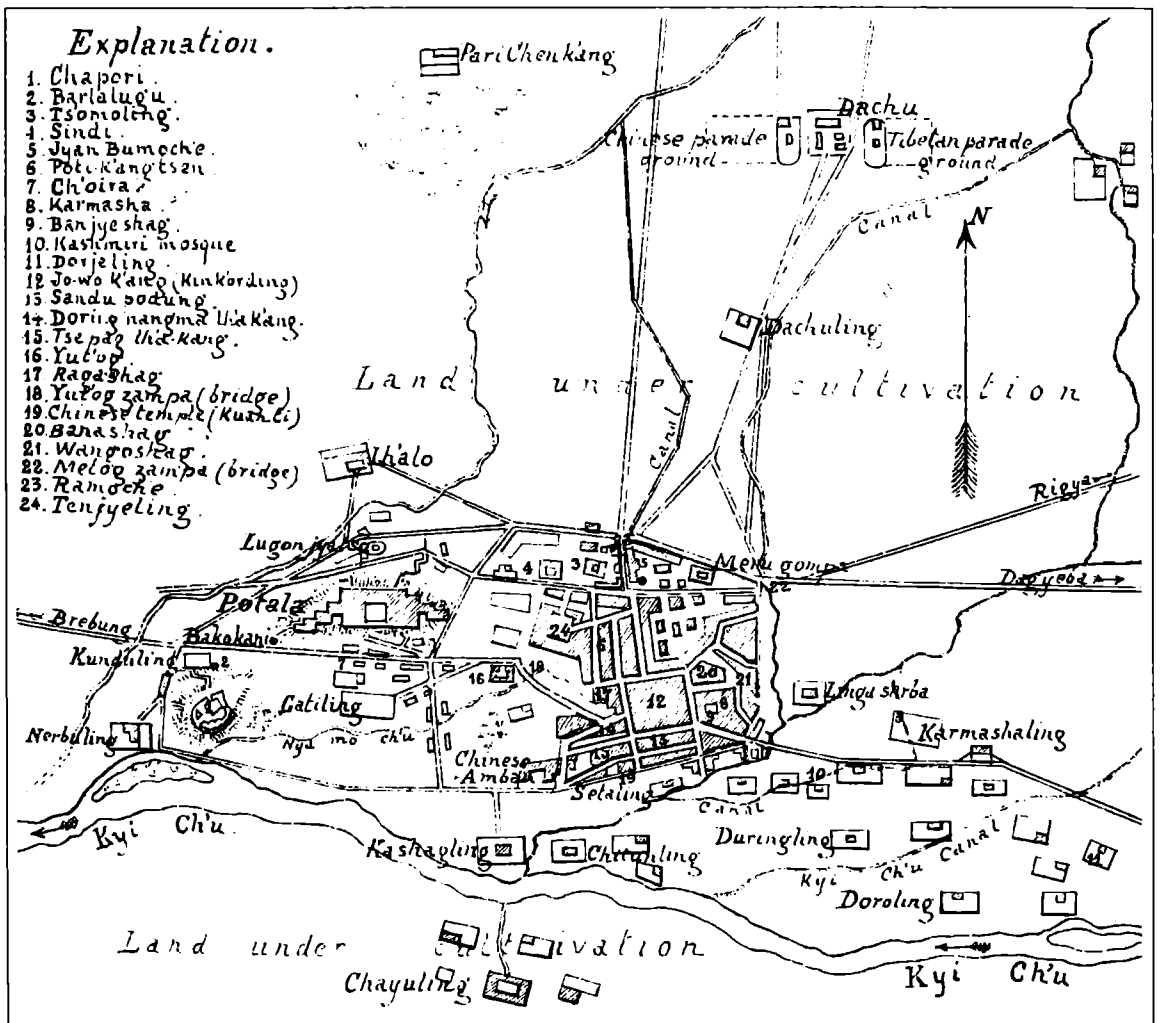
Appointments to the diplomatic service and almost throughout the government were due to political patronage. The corridors of the White House and the government departments were almost perpetually clogged with office-seekers. When control of the White House switched from one party to the other, all appointees were instantly swept out of office to make room for new ones. This had happened only twice since the Civil War—in 1884 when the Democrat Grover Cleveland replaced Republican Chester Alan Arthur, and again in 1888, when Cleveland was replaced by Benjamin Harrison—but it could happen again as a result of any future election. To attempt to build a career subject to quadrennial spins of the political wheel of fortune was a chancy undertaking. The few people who tried to fashion a career as a diplomat were independently wealthy, so being turned out of office was not a financial hardship for them. Rockhill depended upon his salary to live.

Nevertheless, in 1890, Rockhill decided to seek another appointment in the Department of State. Possibly he contemplated an eventual official, government-funded revisiting of Tibet, one that would take him to Lhasa. Precisely when he decided to continue to pursue a diplomatic career is uncertain. Perhaps it happened while he was still in

Peking and found his determination to visit Tibet on his own shaken by his experiences. He realized a growing attraction to the practice of diplomacy and his need for income. Whenever it was, within weeks of returning from Tibet, he began actively to seek reinstatement in the Department of State.

Thomas Bayard was no longer Secretary of State, presumably a plus for Rockhill in obtaining reentry into the Department. But Charles Denby had managed to retain his position as Minister to China, despite the change of administrations in 1888, so Rockhill's

Map 4 Plan of Lhasa (after Rockhill, JRAS, 1891)



Approximate scale of 3 li to the inch.

1/2 1/4 0 uli

chances of returning to Peking were presumably slight. 'I hear from the State Department that I am thought of for Korea,' he wrote to Hippisley on December 17. 'So be it, rather a cycle of Cathay or Korea than fifty years of America for me.'<sup>27</sup>

He was thought of for Korea because some important people were writing letters on his behalf, at Rockhill's request. On November 19, Craig Biddle, a judge in Philadelphia, wrote a letter to Donald Cameron, an influential senator from Pennsylvania, asking Cameron to support Rockhill for the position of Minister to Korea. Biddle described Rockhill as 'an eminent Oriental scholar', and himself as a relative of Rockhill by marriage.<sup>28</sup> On December 31, the Attorney-General of Maryland, William Pinkney Whyte, wrote a briefer and slightly less enthusiastic endorsement to the Secretary of State.<sup>29</sup>

Rockhill was an introverted, shy personality who customarily shunned socializing and preferred the company of documents and manuscripts to the companionship of other people—unless they closely shared his interests. He had to steel himself to seek the help of influential, powerful people to further his career. Their support did not ensure success, as he already knew, but he also learned that obtaining appointments and advancement in the diplomatic service of the nineteenth century without such people's support was virtually impossible.

It may have been early in 1890 that Rockhill became acquainted with a prominent Washingtonian, Henry Adams. There is evidence they may have met as early as 1884 before Rockhill went to Peking.<sup>30</sup> It is certain that in January 1890, the famous historian invited 'the Thibetan traveller' to dinner where they 'talked a little Gobi' and Rockhill was introduced to some of Adams's legion of friends.<sup>31</sup>

Presumably as a result of that meeting, he sent Adams a copy of one of his books, perhaps as part of his campaign to obtain another diplomatic assignment. If he sent copies of his two books to other important people in Washington, he probably learned that they were not the sort to attract or impress the politicians who held the power of political patronage. In choosing Adams to receive a book, however, he chose wisely. The historian responded by inviting the Rockhills to join him again for dinner 'and give me a Chinese education'.<sup>32</sup>

The grandson of one American president and the great-grandson of another, Henry Adams was a member of what was probably the most distinguished American political family in the nineteenth century. He had carved his own niche as a man of letters and historian, not a politician. He had taught medieval history at Harvard. His novels, *Democracy* and *Esther*, published anonymously, received excellent reviews. By 1890, he had completed two volumes of his nine-volume magnum opus, *The History of the United States under the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison*. His two books that would become his most famous writings, *The Education of Henry Adams* and *Mont-St. Michel and Chartres*, still lay several years in the future. He maintained an astonishingly heavy correspondence with an amazingly wide circle of friends that included many of the most famous and influential people of his time.

Though he shunned any active role in politics, Adams was a famous and influential, if somewhat enigmatic, figure in Washington. In 1890, he lived alone in a mansion at 1603 H Street, just across Lafayette Park from the White House. From his library window he could look across the park to the famous residence where his grandfather

and great-grandfather had lived. For several years, he and his wife, Clover, entertained lavishly with afternoon teas and evening soirées that attracted the capital's political, intellectual and artistic élites to what was regarded as a brilliant salon. But in 1885 Clover committed suicide, and Adams withdrew for several years from society.

Living alone, he began to preside over a ritual that became a Washington institution, his breakfast table. Breakfast at 1603 H Street was served at the European hour of 12:30 p.m., and all his friends had a standing invitation to attend. Lloyd Griscom, who went on to a distinguished career in the diplomatic service, was a regular guest. In 1890, he was a student at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and one of Adams's numerous 'adopted nephews' (Griscom's father was a wealthy shipping magnate). Griscom later recalled,

*When his colored major-domo answered your ring, you never inquired, 'is Mr. Adams in?' He was always in, and the right number of seats were ready. Uncle Henry presided and discoursed in his dry ironical manner on everything under the sun.*<sup>33</sup>

Many of the most influential people in Washington were regulars at Henry Adams's breakfast table. They included John Hay and his wife, Clara; Henry Cabot Lodge and his wife, Nannie; Theodore and Edith Roosevelt; Augustus St Gaudens, the artist; Clarence King, a brilliant but unstable geologist whose adventurous life-style fascinated Adams and Hay; Cecil Spring-Rice, a rising young diplomat at the British Embassy; and Senator Donald Cameron and his wife, Elizabeth. Adams was secretly in love with Elizabeth Cameron, called the most beautiful woman in Washington, although he was old enough to be her father (as was her rich and alcoholic husband). Adams wrote numerous, incredibly long letters to Lizzie Cameron, detailing everything he did and every bit of gossip he heard.

After he became acquainted with Adams, Rockhill dropped in at the famous breakfast table from time to time. It was probably there that he met many of the people who would later help him further his career in the Department of State. He was something of an odd man out in this company. He was not independently wealthy, as were Adams, Hay and most of the others. He was not a rising or established political figure in the capital as were Cabot Lodge, Theodore Roosevelt, and Don Cameron. Nor had he achieved fame in an artistic or literary endeavor. Perhaps his very different background enabled him to provide a perspective on subjects covered in the conversations that no one else could offer, and that attracted people like Adams and Hay to the newcomer.

Rockhill spent 1890 working on the Tibetan book, arranging for the publication of his 236-page article, 'Tibet: a Geographical, ethnographical and historical sketch, derived from Chinese sources' in the 1891 *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, along with the magazine articles and trying to land a diplomatic post. The writing went well, but the job-hunting proved to be frustrating. In July he received a letter from Henry Adams. 'A rumor reaches me that you and Mrs Rockhill are going abroad for years,' Adams wrote. 'I hope before you go, you will come to discuss your plans.'<sup>34</sup> Adams became privy to most of the gossip that swirled around Washington, either through his wide correspondence or at his breakfast table. Had he heard something about Rockhill being appointed to an embassy position?

Alas, no. Actually, it was Adams himself who was about to leave for a long absence abroad. On July 18, he and his friend, the painter John La Farge, departed on a long voyage to the south Pacific where they met Robert Louis Stevenson in Samoa. Adams would be gone for more than a year and a half. Rockhill would remain in Washington during that time, and no government appointment would be forthcoming.

He began to think about another expedition to Tibet, but financing another year-long journey out of his own pocket would be impossible. He would have to find a source of funds. Though he obtained a pledge of support from the National Geographic Society, it was not enough.

In November 1890, the first installment of the *Century Magazine* series appeared. Toward the end of the year, he began to build a cottage at Berkeley Springs in the mountains of West Virginia northwest of Washington on a plot of land Caroline had purchased in September. A secluded spa, cool Berkeley Springs was a popular spot for Washingtonians to escape the capital's wilting summer heat and bathe in mineral springs. Many built 'summer cottages' that were actually spacious houses. The town has been popular for its mineral springs since the days of Thomas Jefferson.

By January 1891, he had almost finished his Tibetan book. 'It will come out in March or April,' he wrote to Hippisley. 'The Century Company is getting it up very handsomely.'<sup>35</sup> He divided his time between Berkeley Springs and Washington, where, he told Hippisley, he could be reached in care of the Metropolitan Club.

By early spring, the Berkeley Springs cottage was almost complete. In April, as he and Dorothy worked to get it ready for occupancy, they were given a bad scare. Caroline and Daisy, on their way from Washington to join them in Berkeley Springs, narrowly escaped death in a terrible train wreck. The engine and several cars were totally demolished, and five people were killed, but the Rockhills miraculously escaped injury.<sup>36</sup>

The Tibetan book, entitled *The Land of the Lamas*, was published in the United States by the Century Company and in Britain by Longman, Greene and Company. It accurately reflected the personality of its author. Written as a narrative of Rockhill's journey, the book is, as its title implies, more an exposition about Tibet than an account of the author's experiences. Long passages are given over to what Rockhill learned about Tibetan society, culture, religion, language, and geography. It has not an iota of romanticizing.

In the 1890s, explorers' accounts of their journeys were popular with the reading public, and the most popular emphasized adventures and hair's-breadth escapes. Rockhill's book describes some very unusual and even exciting experiences, and it contains passages of dry humor. But the author plays down his adventures and concentrates on a scholarly, but to many, solemn and esoteric, investigation of Tibet. For example, it contains more than sixty pages of 'Supplementary Notes and Tables', which include a seven-page table showing the 'Thirty-three Yu-tung Hsi-Fan Tribes' and another explaining 'Peculiarities of the Amdowa and Panak'a Pronunciations.'

Despite the wealth of abstruse information the book offered, the anonymous critic for the *New York Times*, in the first review to appear, sniffed,

*There are many questions of great interest to students which Mr. Rockhill scarcely touches in this prettily illustrated volume. It ... may have been prepared for the general public rather than students. Perhaps Mr. Rockhill intends to enter more*

*minutely into such questions in another work addressed to scholars.*<sup>37</sup>

Other reviewers were less stuffy and more admiring. The *Atlantic Monthly* said:

*He is, we believe, the only American who has ever visited Tibet. His courage and pluck command our hearty admiration, and his book is a really valuable contribution both to geography and ethnology.*<sup>38</sup>

Sven Hedin, the Swedish geographer who became perhaps the greatest European explorer of Central Asia in the twentieth century, must have read Rockhill's book soon after it was published. Hedin's own voluminous accounts of his years of Asian exploration show that he was familiar in detail with Rockhill's Tibetan exploration, which just preceded his own first foray into Central Asia and Tibet in 1893. Hedin noted that the American 'did some first-rate mapping', a signal compliment from so distinguished and usually highly critical an explorer and geographer.<sup>39</sup>

By May, with the Berkeley Springs cottage completed, the Tibetan narratives published, and no diplomatic assignment on the horizon, Rockhill decided to attempt another Tibetan expedition. He had earlier spoken with the Assistant Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, with whom he had become acquainted in 1889, about the possibility of Smithsonian support for another expedition. On May 14, he wrote to follow up that conversation and inquire whether any financial support was likely. His letter was forwarded to the Assistant Secretary with a note from a staff member that said, 'I think we should get full value for all we do for Rockhill.'<sup>40</sup> The Assistant Secretary sent Rockhill a reply requesting an outline of his proposed itinerary and plans.

In his response, Rockhill explained that he planned to return to Koko Nor and Kum Bum, then visit a certain Tibetan tribe in that area 'and claim the services promised me on my former journey to travel towards Lhasa'.<sup>41</sup> If that did not work out, he continued, his subsequent activities would have to depend upon circumstances. But he assured the Smithsonian that 'Any one of the routes I propose following in Tibet will lead through inhabited regions of special interest to ethnology.'<sup>42</sup>

His letter made the rounds of the Smithsonian bureaucracy, gathering staff recommendations for Secretary Samuel Langley to use in making his decision. The first endorsement read, 'I do not know of anyone in the world so well-qualified to do this work as Mr. Rockhill ... If there is any possible way for you to aid him in going to perfect the work to which he is willing to devote his life, I must earnestly beg you to help him. We shall not be the losers by the investment.'<sup>43</sup> The Assistant Secretary recommended to Langley that Rockhill be given a salary of \$50 a month for one year. 'I have no doubt that the outcome will fully justify the outlay,' he concluded. Langley scribbled on the memo, 'cordially approved'.<sup>44</sup>

Rockhill spent the summer preparing for his journey. He ordered special thermometers from the United States Weather Bureau to use in making meteorological observations. He prevailed upon the Smithsonian to apply for a special passport for him. Obtaining the passport took more time than he anticipated, and he had to delay his departure. He finally decided to leave before it was issued and have the Smithsonian send it to him in China by mail. As autumn approached, he installed his family in the Berkeley Springs cottage where they would live during his absence and sailed for China for the third time. Aboard ship, he discovered that one of his fellow passengers was Crosby Noyes, a



correspondent of the *Washington Evening Star*, who left the ship in Yokohama.

He arrived in Shanghai at the end of October and waited for his special passport to arrive in the mail from Washington. He wrote to Samuel Langley to tell of his arrival. He told the Secretary that he might at any time read in the newspaper about riots and unrest in China, but he should not worry about them. 'Things will gradually settle down here without the firing of cannons,' he wrote, 'and all will soon go on as before, until another riot occurs which will probably be next year.' He mentioned meeting Crosby Noyes, 'who appears to be writing up the oft-told tale of a visit to Yokohama and the usual haunts of the globe-trotter on a trip around the world'.<sup>45</sup> Rockhill was headed for places no globe-trotter would dream of trying to visit.

The passport arrived, and Rockhill moved on to Peking to make arrangements for the journey as he had in 1888. Again, he hired two mule-drawn carts for the first leg of the journey. He hired a young Chinese to accompany him, but it was not the crafty Liu. This time, he took on a 'rather clever boy' whom he had known when he was attached to the American Legation.

*[He] thought himself a finished traveller, having once been to Urga, and picked up a few words of Russian, English and Mongol, and learned to scramble eggs, make hash, and boil potatoes. But his chief recommendation consisted in his being the trusted guardian of two great family secrets, a sovereign eye-medicine, and a wonderful cure for wounds and bruises in which bear's gall, powdered deer's horn and tiger's bone were, I believe, the principal ingredients. These medicines he administered freely, even recklessly, along our route, refusing any remuneration, being desirous, he said, only of doing good works. He thus gained for himself and for his master not a little consideration, inasmuch as we never remained long enough in any one place for the medicine to take effect.*<sup>46</sup>

The explorer also obtained from the Tsung-li Yamen a special passport, based upon his former position as a Secretary of the American Legation, authorizing him to visit the outlying Mongol and Tibetan areas under the control of the Amban at Hsi-ning. He wanted to avoid a repetition of the difficulties he experienced at Jyekundo on his previous journey, when he aroused the suspicions of the chief official there because he did not possess the proper papers.

The little expedition departed Peking on December 1, 1891. They crossed the Great Wall at Kalgan, where they paused for a few days to buy knickknacks to use in barter with the Mongols and Tibetans, and to lay in supplies. The sort of food on which Rockhill and his men subsisted during his Tibetan journeys is worth noting:

*I had boiled two sheep, and the frozen meat was packed in bags; several hundred little dumplings stuffed with mutton and cabbage were also frozen and stored away, together with bread, which the Mohammedans of north China make very well. Rice vermicelli, a few pounds of brick-tea, and sheep's paunch full of butter formed the bulk of our stores. When one has become sufficiently hungry, a most palatable article of diet is what is called by the Chinese chao-mien ('parched meal'). A little mutton or beef suet is mixed with wheat flour, and when the meal has been browned over a fire, finely hashed meat and a little salt are added, and the preparation is ready for use. Boiling water is poured over a cup of it, and at once you have a good and very filling gruel. This chao mien I used*

*throughout the journey, alternating it with Tibetan tsamba ('parched barley-meal'), or with similar delicacies as the countries through which we passed afforded.*<sup>47</sup>

As they travelled southwest across the western part of China, they stopped in 'miserable villages of poverty-stricken Chinese', where 'little can be found save vermin and dirt which everywhere abound'. Rockhill reflected on how quickly and effectively such a journey removes the veneer of civilization:

*It is astonishing how easily civilized men can revert to savagery—its primitive methods, its diet, its coarse and very often scanty food, and its general discomfort. When the initiatory period is over, one's body can adapt itself to all the inequalities of the soil; the stomach is proof against any food, and one views of washing as a bad habit in a dry, dusty country, and regards a coating of dirt or grease on the face and hands as an indispensable protection against the alkaline dust which, without it, would crack the skin and make it bleed.*<sup>48</sup>

The temperature at night regularly fell to fifteen degrees below zero, and the little band sought shelter in any available village hut. One night, they toiled on longer than usual until after darkness had fallen. They stopped in a village, 'a cluster of mud hovels', where they sought shelter in the largest building in town. Rockhill prevailed upon the landlady, 'a fat, asthmatic old dame', to give them a place to sleep.

*She induced the most ragged of her disreputable lot of retainers, a blind, opium-smoking beggar, to vacate with his wife, two boys and few lambs the den he occupied, and to let me have it for the night. It was warm inside, but dirty beyond description, the vilest hole I have ever been in. When I had finished my evening meal, the beggar's son told me that his father was a noted minstrel, and wished to regale me with one of his songs. He tuned a dilapidated banjo, and broke out in a wild screech, accompanied by many grunts, much sniffing, and the most horrible grimaces, rolling his sightless eyes about ... It was long, very long, and very painful to listen to ... He asked leave to sing another ditty, but I bribed him to desist, so he went to another hovel, and charmed the inmates with his songs far into the night.*<sup>49</sup>

Two months after leaving Peking, they arrived at the great Tibetan Buddhist temple complex at Kum Bum where Rockhill had stopped in 1888. They stayed six weeks, buying ponies and mules, laying supplies and buying clothing, and otherwise making preparations for the difficult journey across uninhabited northern Tibet. The explorer hired five Chinese, four of whom had been with him in 1889, and two Mongols.

The Mongols agreed to guide the group to Shigatse, a large town in western Tibet near the lamasery of the Panchen Lama, second in power only to the Dalai Lama. On his previous journey, Rockhill had crossed eastern Tibet. His plan this time was to traverse Tibet from northeast to southwest to investigate the western half of the country. He would bypass Lhasa. From Shigatse he could make a comparatively easy journey of a few hundred miles, through the Chumbi Valley, to British India.

While at Kum Bum, Rockhill received a letter from a Chinese official in Kanze, in eastern Tibet, which he had visited in 1889. The man had been helpful to him, and he wrote now to warn Rockhill that a price had been put on his head in eastern Tibet, because he was suspected of being a spy for the Lhasa government. In the tangled politics of Tibet and Central Asia, clan and regional loyalties counted for more than official

national authority, and the people in eastern Tibet resented the rule of the lamas in Lhasa. All of eastern Tibet, the official warned, was roused against the explorer, and his life would be in grave danger if he tried to retrace his previous journey.

Rockhill was headed in a different direction, but his men heard about the letter, and 'They very naturally felt disinclined to thrust their heads into the lion's mouth.' Two days after their departure from Kum Bum, one of his Chinese employees, pleading illness, abruptly left the party to return home. A month later, two more 'discovered they had pressing business at home' and departed.<sup>50</sup>

*The group departed Kum Bum in mid-March to head southwest across the Tsaidam Plateau into the wildest, most desolate portion of northern Tibet. Life in the Central Asian deserts is rough, indeed. Nature is without attractions of any kind. It is bleak and repelling. Never a tree is seen, and scarcely a flower. Probably the arctic regions alone offer a more meager flora.*<sup>51</sup>

In the midst of the desolation, they came upon 'three miserable beings, clothed in ragged garments, and emaciated beyond description'.<sup>52</sup> They were Mongol pilgrims, returning from Lhasa, who had been travelling for two months and lost their way. Their food had long since run out, and they were on the verge of final collapse. Rockhill gave them food and clothing and invited them to rest with his party for the night. He and his men watched in amazement as the three starving pilgrims, in less than an hour, each consumed six pounds of mutton, three pounds of butter, a bag of meal, and two caldrons of tea. They continued on their way the next morning 'in great spirits'. But they were living examples of what could happen to Rockhill and his small party in the country that lay ahead. The explorer knew, however, that the lesson was lost on the other members of his band:

*With any other people than the Chinese or Mongols, the remembrance of meeting these dying travellers would have long endured; but not so with them. They never think of the morrow. They eat and drink and make merry whenever they can, and let the morrow take care of itself.*<sup>53</sup>

They travelled for two and a half months until, in June, they left the last inhabited area they were likely to see for two months as they plunged into the totally uninhabited desert of northern Tibet. They crossed several ranges of mountains and travelled at a sustained altitude of more than 16,000 feet. The weather deteriorated, and snow and hail often fell. Their daily routine was brutally debilitating:

*We were daily and hourly soaked by violent storms of hail, snow or rain which the wild west wind drove in our faces till we were nearly blind. All the time I had my compass and notebook in my hand, recording bearings, the distance we had travelled, the topography of the country. When after having marched fifteen or eighteen miles, we discovered some sheltered nook or grassy slope, we scraped away the snow or made a bed of grass on the soaked ground, and pitched our tents. Then, while two or three of us wandered about picking up fuel, another lighted a fire, and soon we squatted around a smoldering heap of damp argols [dried dung] in the cook's tent until the caldron of tea boiled, when each one held out his little wooden bowl to be filled with the refreshing drink. This preliminary meal over, and while the one substantial repast we had in the day—boiled meat, vermicelli or a little rice—was being prepared, I took some sextant observations, if not too late, wrote down my notes on the day's work, and*

*looked after the ponies and mules which required constant care.*<sup>54</sup>

He sometimes suffered from snow-blindness and painful inflammation of his eyes. Even in the midst of the misery and privation, however, there were rare occasions when he could laugh:

*Last night, Damba amused us by singing songs in Chinese, Lh'san, Panaka and Mongol styles. He took off the Chinese admirably and I laughed until the tears ran down my cheeks—a rare treat (not the tears, but the laugh). I have not had such a one for the last six months.*<sup>55</sup>

On one occasion, while crossing a frozen river, his pony drowned and Rockhill almost lost his life:

*The men in single file rode their ponies across the ice without accident, though it cracked ominously. As I started to cross, Dowe shouted out, 'Sems chung, sems chung, Ponbo-la!' ('Look out, look out, sir!') but too late. The ice gave way under my horse, and we both disappeared beneath the water, which was very deep and swift and a foot or two below the lower surface of the ice. My baggy ch'uba and trousers held me up, and I caught on to the ice where I was able to cling, though the current threw my legs against the ice with such violence that I could not draw myself out, but the pony was swept under. I shouted to the men to throw themselves flat on the ice and creep out to me, which they did, and after much trouble, got me out, none the worse for the ducking.*<sup>56</sup>

The Mongol guide lost his way. They wandered over hills and along the banks of unknown rivers, and waded through morasses, keeping toward the southwest as best they could by depending upon Rockhill's compass and pure luck. Their food supply dwindled to almost nothing, only a little flour and tea. They finally divided the last cup of tsamba, which left only a small flask of brandy that was kept for emergencies. Rockhill was able to shoot a wild ass, but the animal was only wounded and escaped. No other game could be found. 'The silence of this vast wilderness,' Rockhill wrote in his diary, 'is positively oppressive.'<sup>57</sup>

They came at last to a well-beaten track leading to the southeast. The guide said he now recognized familiar landmarks. This was the road they should follow, he announced, and in ten days they would reach Shigatse. Rockhill felt certain it was the wrong road. However, 'In an evil hour and listening to the call of my stomach rather than the voice of reason, I kept to the road.'<sup>58</sup>

After having travelled for weeks without meeting a single human being, they came upon a cluster of black tents with sheep and yaks grazing nearby. Two of the men visited the nomad encampment to buy food and find out where they were. They returned with a sheep slung across one saddlehorn but also with bad news for their famished companions. The lost expedition had wandered into the region ruled by the authorities in Lhasa.

A few days later, Rockhill was awakened at daylight by the sound of voices outside his tent. He looked out to find that their camp was surrounded by fifty armed Tibetan soldiers, and more were arriving in groups of two and three. Their new neighbors pitched tents, and soon two who were obviously in charge appeared at the doorway of Rockhill's tent. He invited them in and offered them tea. His visitors were polite but insistent in questioning him. Who was he? Where was he going? Why had he come here?

The explorer did not try to disguise his identity and answered their questions fully.

They told him he would have to turn back and return the way he had come. He pointed out that he and his party were too exhausted and travel-worn to retrace their steps across the deserts and mountains they had just crossed. Moreover, they had been able to buy only a small amount of food, not nearly enough to last through a journey back across that empty wilderness. The conversation continued for two hours until the Tibetans, always polite and amicable, decided that everyone must stay put until some officials, who would arrive the following day, could decide what must be done.

When the expected arrivals appeared, three days were spent in discussions about where Rockhill should go next. The Tibetans decided that Rockhill and his party, with an escort of Tibetan soldiers, should go to the main road that linked northwest China with Lhasa. Higher-ranking officials who could be found there, they explained, would make the final decision about the strangers.

They travelled for ten days, escorted by ten Tibetan soldiers, and the trek turned out to be the most exhausting leg of the entire journey. Although it was by then the middle of July, the cold was intense. In the morning, their clothing was frozen stiff. Rain and snow fell almost continuously. Fortunately, their Tibetan escorts were unfailingly polite, friendly and helpful. They cheerfully shared their provisions with their charges. Rockhill recorded in his diary:

*And so I have ever found these peoples, with whom, I am glad to say, after travelling over twenty thousand miles in their countries, I have never exchanged a rough word,<sup>59</sup> and among whom, I think, I have left not one enemy and not a few friends.*

Their escort left them when they reached the Lhasa road, but they soon encountered groups of lamas who warned them that they should turn back. They should immediately leave Tibet or risk imprisonment and death, they were told. Once again, Rockhill's plans were thwarted. He was no more than ten days' travel from Shigatse and twenty-five days from India. The worst part of his journey was behind him. But it would be the worst kind of folly to continue toward Shigatse, now that his presence was known to the authorities in Lhasa. As had happened in 1889, he abandoned his plans and set his face eastward toward China. He decided to adopt the attitude of fatalistic acceptance always affected by his men, 'tien-ming' (it is heaven's will).

The small party continued on for more than two months across eastern Tibet. The country became more populated and inviting. Despite the warning from the official in Kanze, they encountered no threatening behavior from the local population. Indeed, the journey became almost enjoyable after the months of privation and hardship they had endured in the north. On October 2, they arrived in Ta Chien Lu, where Rockhill had broken his journey almost precisely three years earlier. He then followed the same route he had travelled in 1889, by river to the coast, which he reached toward the end of October.

In Berkeley Springs, Caroline and the two girls waited with increasing anxiety. On July 23, Caroline had received a letter from her husband dated March 22. He wrote that he expected to reach 'civilized parts' within two or three months, by July at the latest. She told a friend that 'He writes cheerfully, as he always does.' She added, 'He had already started for the desert (what desert?). I did not even know there was one.'<sup>60</sup> Now

it was October, and there had been no further news. She became increasingly convinced that her wandering husband must be dead.

In late October, a garbled telegram from Shanghai arrived at the Berkeley Springs telegraph office. The operator asked Caroline to come to the office to help him decipher it. Convinced it contained news of her husband's death, she could not bring herself to go to the telegraph office. She told the messenger she would wait until the corrected copy arrived. But waiting became unbearable, and she told Dorothy to run to the telegraph office. By the time she arrived, a corrected message had been received. It read, 'Arrived Shanghai'. Dorothy ran out of the office to hurry home with the good news, only to find her mother standing outside the office. Spurred by feelings of guilt that she had sent her young daughter on an errand she would not carry out herself, she had followed Dorothy to the telegraph office.

Rockhill's journey had been even more physically demanding and debilitating than his earlier one. He arrived in the United States suffering even more visibly from the hardships he had undergone than when he returned in 1889. Although he had the benefit of a long ocean voyage to help his recuperation, he arrived still obviously in need of rest and medical care.

In Berkeley Springs, Caroline received another telegram announcing the time of his projected arrival by train at Hancock, Maryland, where he would connect with a train to Berkeley Springs. At the appointed time of his arrival in Hancock, Caroline and Dorothy waited on the platform. Dorothy later described the scene:

*My mother had tortured herself with imagining all the things he had gone through, but the reality was worse than she had pictured. He was emaciated and almost blind from months spent in the snow, and it frightened one to see the condition in which his nerves were after his many hardships. He could hardly speak when he met us, and all the way in the train he sat quite still holding my mother's hand with the tears rolling down his cheeks. Instead of a joyful reunion, we must have suggested partakers in some direful tragedy.<sup>61</sup>*

## Chapter 5

## Assistant Secretary of State: Washington, 1892-1897

Rockhill was back in the bosom of his family, and he undoubtedly wanted to spend time with his wife and daughters whom he had not seen for a year. There was also the need for rest and recuperation from his ordeal. In December, Baron von Ketteler, the German diplomat the Rockhills befriended in Peking, and who was later to be murdered there by the Boxers, paid them a visit from Washington, where he was temporarily attached to the German Legation.<sup>1</sup> By the end of the year, Rockhill was ready to look ahead to the future.

1893 opened, as had 1890, as a year of uncertainty. Not that the returned explorer lacked projects to keep him busy for the immediate future. First, there was the Smithsonian. He had brought back from Tibet a large collection of artifacts and manuscripts. They must be sorted and catalogued. There was another book to write about his second adventure, and *Century Magazine* wanted an article. But what about the long-term future? Again, he was faced with the necessity of finding a job. He apparently abandoned his hope of an appointment to a diplomatic position abroad. He probably could not face again serving under a political appointee he could not respect. Perhaps after his two expeditions he was content to settle down for a while in the United States. He sought a position in the Department of State in Washington, and this time his efforts were promptly crowned with success.

In the presidential election of 1892, Grover Cleveland defeated Benjamin Harrison's bid for a second term and gained one for himself. Just over a month after Cleveland took office for the second time, Rockhill was appointed Chief Clerk at the Department of State. The appointment so soon after the new president took office apparently was a coincidence, because it does not appear to have been the result of political patronage.<sup>2</sup>

The Department of State Rockhill joined in 1893 was a far cry from the vast bureaucracy housed in Foggy Bottom today. Although the Secretary of State was the senior cabinet member, foreign affairs only rarely assumed primary importance in the councils of government. Foreign policy was based upon a few time-honored and virtually universally accepted principles and slogans, e.g. 'no entangling alliances', the Monroe Doctrine, Manifest Destiny. As late as 1898, only twenty-four positions carrying the title of diplomatic secretary existed in American diplomatic missions throughout the world. Diplomatic and consular positions were staffed separately and reported separately to Washington. A unified Foreign Service would be created only in 1924. Consuls were expected to supplement their meager salaries by the fees they charged, an arrangement that fostered shady, even illegal, practices.

According to John Hay's biographer, the Department of State even as late as the autumn of 1898 was 'an antiquated, feeble organization, enslaved by precedents and routine inherited from another century, remote from public gaze and indifferent to it. The typewriter was viewed as a necessary evil, and the telephone was an instrument of

last resort.<sup>13</sup> Most writing was still by quill pens, as a really functional fountain pen had only been invented in 1884.

Most communications to overseas missions were handwritten and sent by ship, so messages to such far-flung posts as Peking could take weeks to be delivered. Only the direst emergency could justify sending a telegram, which would be dispatched over undersea cables that belonged to private companies. The Department's functions were discharged by a professional staff of only a handful of people supported by a much larger group of clerks and stenographers. As late as 1897, its total personnel complement was eighty-six people, of which sixty-six were clerical and fifteen were either messengers or clerks. In the small, clubby Department of State of the early 1890s, Rockhill must have been acquainted with many of his professional colleagues, dating from his years of service in Peking, when he arrived for duty as Chief Clerk.

The Rockhills set up housekeeping at 1914 N Street in northwest Washington in what was then a suburb of the capital. Washington in the 1890s was not yet a city to compete with London, Paris or Vienna as an elegant world capital, but neither was it the disheveled city that had emerged from the Civil War thirty years earlier. The muddy streets of the 1860s had given way to broad, paved boulevards. Grand public buildings were joining the great Capitol building on which Lincoln had insisted that construction continue throughout the Civil War. A city was emerging to fulfill the dream of Pierre l'Enfant, who envisioned a magnificent capital. It had been a swamp beside the Potomac River when, in the eighteenth century, l'Enfant put pen to paper to design Washington

The city was expanding outward toward the boundaries of the District of Columbia. What had been corn fields and cow pastures a few years earlier had become leafy suburbs. Toward the northwest, especially along Massachusetts Avenue, great mansions of the wealthy élite were giving the fast-growing city an air of elegance. A new suburb, named for the President, of spacious houses with wide porches situated on large, shady lots was coming into existence on upper Connecticut Avenue. Real estate values had skyrocketed since the Civil War and had outstripped government salaries, a situation familiar to Washingtonians a century later.

Much that is familiar in the city today had not yet been built. Neither the Jefferson Memorial nor the Lincoln Memorial had yet risen to the west of the Washington Monument, and the western end of the Mall was still swampy ground on the bank of the Potomac. To the east of the Capitol, where today's Supreme Court building stands, was the Old Capitol Prison. The Supreme Court sat in the old Senate Chamber in the Capitol. It would move into today's marble Grecian temple only in 1935. Construction of today's magnificent Union Station had not yet begun. The city's railroad station, where President James Garfield was assassinated in 1881, stood on the Mall where today's National Archives Building is located.

Landmarks now familiar were only beginning to appear. The Washington Monument, under construction for decades, finally received its capstone in 1884 to become the tallest structure in the world until completion of the Eiffel Tower five years later. Just to the east of the Capitol, next to the Old Capitol Prison, was rising a vast palace of granite and marble to house the Library of Congress. When it was completed in 1897, it was the largest library building in the world. Even a century after its construction, it remains a building of grandeur, especially its soaring and imposing Main Reading Room.



Next door to the White House stood the State, War and Navy Building (now, the Old Executive Office Building) that housed those three federal departments and contained Rockhill's office. Completed in 1888, it was the largest office building in the world with ten acres of floor space and 553 rooms. It had been under construction for seventeen years, so long that incorporated in it were such modern conveniences as telephones and electric lights that had not yet been invented when its construction began. An English visitor to Washington a few years before Rockhill returned from his second Tibetan journey remarked on Washington's 'air of comfort, of leisure, of space to spare, of stateliness ... it looks the sort of place where nobody has to work for his living, or, at any rate, not hard'.<sup>4</sup>

The new Secretary of State was Walter Gresham, a long-time Republican who had broken with his party in 1890 over the issue of tariff reduction and had supported Cleveland in 1892. He was no stranger to Washington. He had served as Attorney-General under President Chester Alan Arthur and briefly as Secretary of the Treasury. There is no evidence that Gresham knew Rockhill, so Rockhill's appointment presumably was not due to the Secretary's efforts. Perhaps the new Chief Clerk's name was becoming known around the capital, thanks to the success of *The Land of the Lamas* and the acquaintances Rockhill had made at Henry Adams's breakfast table, and that accounted for his appointment. In June, the President appointed him to represent the Department on the board assembled to oversee the federal government's exhibit at the great Columbian World's Exposition in Chicago.

At the end of May, the Royal Geographical Society in Britain awarded Rockhill its Gold Medal 'in recognition of the services rendered by him to geography in his book *The Land of the Lamas*'. In London, the Chargé d'Affaires at the American Legation, Henry White, accepted the award on Rockhill's behalf. The British in the 1890s apparently assumed that all explorers were military officers, because the report sent from London said the medal was awarded to 'Col. W. Woodville Rockhill'.<sup>5</sup>

As Chief Clerk of the Department of State, Rockhill did not formulate or execute American foreign policy. But the position was an excellent vantage point from which to watch the broad sweep of foreign affairs. He could follow the development of major issues and how they were dealt with. He handled all the Department's important correspondence including messages sent to the White House and Congress. In Peking and Seoul, he had learned how an overseas mission operated—the management of foreign affairs on the micro level. Now, he had the opportunity to watch the process at the center of power, on the macro level.

During the decades after the Civil War, foreign affairs were seldom a matter of primary concern in Washington. That situation continued until the turn of the century when the results of the Spanish-American War suddenly thrust foreign policy to the fore and made it an important political question. During the 1890s, the issue that would bring about that transformation increasingly occupied those in Washington concerned with the nation's foreign policy. Its opponents called it 'imperialism'.

Since its founding, the United States had steadily expanded and added new territory, but that territory—except for Alaska, purchased in 1867—had always been contiguous to existing American territory. Having filled out the continental landmass that would become the first forty-eight states, the United States faced the question whether to

follow the example of the major European powers, especially Britain and France, and acquire overseas territories not contiguous with the United States and perhaps already densely inhabited by indigenous peoples. In 1893, this issue focussed Washington's attention in two directions: south toward the Caribbean, in particular the island of Cuba and the isthmus of Panama; and westward out across the Pacific toward Asia.

Already by 1893, an anti-imperialist movement was growing, and Grover Cleveland stood squarely behind it. In his inaugural address in 1885, Cleveland had made clear his strong opposition to 'a policy of acquisition of new and distant territory'. Even before he took office for his second term, Cleveland had to decide whether he still stood by that statement because of events in a place few members of his new administration knew anything about, Hawaii.

In 1892, Hawaii was an independent kingdom, but real power in the islands lay in the hands of a growing group of Americans, mainly sugar planters and missionaries. The Americans wanted the islands to be annexed by the United States, and they sought an excuse to overthrow the indigenous Hawaiian queen who ruled the islands. They found one in January 1893, when she announced she planned to proclaim a new constitution, which would emphasize 'Hawaii for the Hawaiians'. The annexationists formed a provisional government and demanded the queen's abdication. They were supported by American Marines landed from the cruiser *Boston* and by the American Minister who promptly extended *de facto* diplomatic recognition to the provisional government. The queen stepped down, and the new government immediately sent a commission to Washington to request annexation.

If Benjamin Harrison had been re-elected in 1892, Hawaii might have become an American possession in 1893. Harrison, a lame-duck president, sent a treaty of annexation to the Senate for ratification. But president-elect Cleveland announced he wished to deal with the matter, so the Senate delayed taking action. Immediately after his inauguration, Cleveland withdrew the treaty, and Hawaii remained independent. The provisional government remained in power, and its position was strengthened when a new American tariff passed in 1894 restored Hawaiian sugar to the favored position it had held before 1890.

Rockhill played no role in this first foreign policy crisis of Cleveland's new administration beyond handling the correspondence, but he must have closely followed the unfolding of events. Hawaii was a stepping-stone to Asia, and the Americans in both Washington and Honolulu regarded it as such.

If Rockhill's responsibilities as Chief Clerk were not enough to keep him fully occupied, he had plenty of other projects to fill his days. He continued work on the Tibetan book. He continued to sort and catalogue the collection of Tibetan and Chinese acquisitions for the Smithsonian. While he was so engaged, a young geographer named William Churchill was also busy at the Smithsonian working on a collection of artifacts brought back to the United States from the south Pacific in the 1840s by the Wilkes Expedition. They had become lost and had only recently been re-discovered. Churchill was preparing them for exhibition by sorting and cleaning the objects and deciphering the text on nearly illegible old labels. Many years later, he recalled the hours he spent with Rockhill at the National Museum as the Smithsonian was then called:

*Mr. Rockhill was engaged in installing his collections from China, objects of the*

*richest art of modern times ... priceless relics of a past which elsewhere than in the Middle Kingdom would be prehistoric ... I found Mr. Rockhill a volunteer collaborator of inestimable value. He gladly turned from his own task to give me the benefit of his advice. He was as keen as I could be in seeking to decipher the mildewed and almost effaced labels on these bits of wood and stone. He displayed an acquaintance with the cultural development of these savages of the South Sea which transcended that of many special students of Polynesian ethnology.*<sup>6</sup>

Whether Rockhill's financial situation was significantly affected by the great financial panic that broke out in the summer of 1893 and triggered the long economic depression of the mid-1890s is difficult to determine. That he had business investments is certain, but his surviving correspondence does not discuss serious financial reverses. The business collapse probably frightened him, though, because it apparently frightened just about everyone. Henry Adams, who had returned from his South Seas jaunt in 1892, had gone again to Europe in the spring of 1893. He was so alarmed by news of the panic that he cut short his vacation and returned to the United States.

In February, Rockhill made a trip to London where he read a paper about his second Tibetan expedition to a meeting of the Royal Geographical Society. A recipient of the Society's Gold Medal, he was already well known to its members by reputation, and he was personally acquainted with several of them. His audience was interested in Tibet for many reasons. Everyone loves a mystery. Geographers, intellectuals, imperialists and the curious average person all find scarce and difficult-to-obtain information of special interest. It is that aspect of human nature that makes censorship so often self-defeating. The paper he read aloud was written in the usual dry, precise, scholarly Rockhillian prose and contained more than 12,000 words.<sup>7</sup> The audience of leading British geographers, both professional and amateur, was familiar with his previous publications, notably his 1891 paper in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, in which he had published transcribed copies of Chinese maps of Tibetan areas.

On April 14, 1894, exactly one year after his appointment as Chief Clerk, Rockhill received a promotion to Third Assistant Secretary of State. It was not a position of great power, but he was at least on the ladder of policy-making in the Department of State if only on the lowest rung. As soon as he knew the promotion was certain, even before it was official, he wrote to General James H. Wilson, whom he had accompanied on the visit to the Great Wall and the Ming Tombs in 1886. "Tis to you, I do not forget it, that I primarily owe this promotion," he wrote. "The position is much more congenial to me than that which I have been filling."<sup>8</sup> Precisely what Wilson did on Rockhill's behalf is not clear. Rockhill carried on a heavy correspondence with this 'best friend' throughout his stay in Washington, and he apparently was convinced that Wilson was a man with great influence in the higher reaches of the American government, no matter which party held the White House.

April also saw the publication of his Tibetan article in *Century Magazine* entitled 'Driven Out of Tibet'. In May, the Smithsonian purchased the collection of Mongolian and Tibetan artifacts, paying Rockhill \$843.45. He contributed a long article, 'Notes on the Ethnology of Tibet', to the 1893 Smithsonian Secretary's Report.

In the summer of 1894, the dispute between China and Japan over Korea that had been smoldering for twenty years finally erupted in full-scale war. The immediate cause

was an uprising by a religious sect in the southern part of Korea. The Korean authorities were unable to suppress the revolt and requested Chinese assistance. The Chinese Resident, Yuan Shih-kai, advised the powerful Chinese official in Tientsin who controlled Chinese foreign affairs, Li Hung-chang, to send the help the Koreans requested.

Acting under the terms of the Treaty of Tientsin of 1885 that had ended the last crisis between China and Japan over Korea, Li notified Japan that China was sending troops. The Japanese promptly replied that Japan, too, would send an armed force. By the time the two outside forces arrived, the Koreans had succeeded in suppressing the uprising. But the two hostile armies could not face each other on the disputed peninsula for long without an outbreak of some kind occurring. In August, war was declared.

The war was a momentous event in the modern history of Asia (and therefore, one could argue, of the world). It was one of those watershed events that sharply redirect people's thinking and cause countries to revise policies. It was the first modern war for both China and Japan. Both had been busy building modern armies and navies, and the war was regarded as a test to determine which had been more successful. Most Western military observers thought that China's massive military forces, as backward and unprepared as they were, would easily crush the forces of 'little Japan'. However, a string of quick Japanese victories soon demonstrated that Japan had in a few years built an efficient if rather small military machine that China could not match.

In July, even before war was formally declared, Britain approached the United States about taking joint action to intervene and prevent war from breaking out. The United States replied that it would take no action except as a friendly neutral. Traditional American policy to avoid entanglement with the European powers was maintained. In early October, after Japan had won victories on both land and sea, the British suggested a joint intervention with Germany, France and Russia. Secretary of State Gresham replied that 'While the President earnestly desires that China and Japan shall speedily agree upon terms of peace alike honorable to both, and not humiliating to Korea,' the United States could not join the other powers in intervening.

Rockhill, of course, had been closely following events. In October, he wrote to Hippisley;

*Though I do not think a good thrashing will hurt China in the least—in fact, it is the only tonic which seems to suit that queer country—still, I am very sorry to think that Japan will be allowed to become the ruling power in the Far East, for the Lord only knows where they will stop.*

He added two further prescient predictions: 'Japan is bound to become a great manufacturing country ... I look some day for Formosa to go to Japan.' On a more personal note, he told Hippisley, 'I still long to get back to the East, maybe I will some day. I hate this quill-driving business though the kind I am doing is quite congenial.'<sup>9</sup>

Toward the end of the year, his second Tibetan book, entitled *Diary of a Journey Through Mongolia and Tibet in 1891 and 1892* was published. Perhaps because it was published by the Smithsonian rather than a commercial publisher, it was less widely reviewed than the first book, but the reviews that appeared were very favorable. Rockhill had written to Hippisley, 'It is my plain, unvarnished tale, my diary, which I have found to be the easiest way of telling my story, though I fear those who attempt to read it will find it pretty dreary work.'<sup>10</sup>

He sent a copy to Henry Adams but did not receive an immediate response. The letter that Adams finally sent to acknowledge the gift is worth quoting in full because of what it reveals both about Rockhill and about how he was perceived by his friends:

*Unlike the ordinary recipient of books, I have waited to read yours before acknowledging the gift. I have now finished it. Perhaps the chief impression it leaves on me is the modesty of the author. I am lost in astonishment that anyone should in pure gaiety of heart undertake and carry through such an adventure, and then relate it as though it were a ramble down Pennsylvania Avenue. You seem to be trying to convince us that you have been doing nothing in particular, and that Tibet is a kind of outlying ornamental pleasure-ground somewhere near Georgetown. By the side of your undertakings, all our little literary efforts here are insignificant, and our labor is child-play, yet you make nothing of it. I am half inclined to be angry with you for not blowing your trumpet louder, considering that in this advertising age only the loudest trumpets have a chance of being heard. But, after all, it is your own affair, and if you do not like blowing the trumpet, we must do it for you. Certainly, you have done enough to warrant it. I feel quite a new spring of self-esteem that I should be able to treat you with familiarity. It is as though I had lived on intimate terms with Marco Polo, and had Genghis Khan to dinner.<sup>11</sup>*

Meanwhile, the war in Asia continued. In January and February, Japanese forces drove into southern Manchuria and began to pose a threat to Peking itself. Li Hung-chang sent peace missions to Japan but to no avail. The European powers and the United States, busy reassessing their evaluations of both countries and their consequent policies in Asia, refused to take sides. By spring, Li Hung-chang was forced to swallow his pride when it became clear that China had no hope of achieving victory over Japan and no hope of enticing the United States to intervene to stop the war. He himself went to Japan to sue for peace. He was accompanied by two Americans who played active roles in the negotiations: William Pethick, Li's private secretary (with whom Rockhill had made arrangements in 1888 to have monthly payments made to the father of his servant, Liu); and John W. Foster who had served in several diplomatic positions, including Secretary of State, and who played an important role in drafting the peace treaty.

Pethick is a fascinating but very shadowy figure in the history of Sino-American relations. He served in the Union army in the Civil War and went to China when the war ended. He mastered both written and spoken Chinese and served for several years as interpreter at the American Legation in Peking. He subsequently served in Tientsin simultaneously in the American Consulate and as Li Hung-chang's confidential secretary. According to John W. Foster, 'His influence upon [Li Hung-chang] and upon Chinese politics was very decided, and always in the direction of liberal ideas and progress.' Foster described him as 'a man of much erudition' who was said to have translated for Li several hundred books in English, French and German. He died in China in 1901.<sup>12</sup>

The Treaty of Shimonoseki, signed on April 17, was a humiliation for China. The Chinese renounced all claims of control in Korea; ceded Formosa, the Pescadores Islands and the Liaotung peninsula in Manchuria to Japan; granted business concessions to Japan; opened more treaty ports; and paid a large indemnity. But the ink was hardly dry on the treaty when, on April 23, France, Germany and Russia presented diplomatic notes to Japan that said, in effect, that in taking the Liaotung peninsula from China,

Japan had gone too far. Possession of the peninsula by Japan, said the three European countries, 'would henceforth be a perpetual obstacle to the peace of the Far East'. The European Powers were obviously reluctant to see Japan gain a firm foothold on the Asian mainland.

The Japanese at first resisted, but finally agreed to give up their claim to the peninsula in exchange for additional indemnity. Japan had won the war but in the eyes of many Japanese had been denied the fruits of victory. There was widespread anger among many Japanese, especially among the country's military leaders who were determined to become established on the mainland. China had been humiliated by the war, while Japan was angered and humiliated by the peace settlement. The war completely altered the equation of power in East Asia, left both belligerents dissatisfied, and set in motion a train of events that extended well into the next century.

It must have been during the early years of the decade, when Rockhill was living and working in Washington, that he became acquainted with two men who became close personal friends and important professional colleagues: John Hay and Theodore Roosevelt. He was already having dinner with Roosevelt in December 1893.<sup>13</sup> He was probably introduced to both men by Henry Adams, perhaps as early as 1890 at Adams's breakfast table.

John Hay first arrived in Washington in 1861 with Abraham Lincoln to serve, with John Nicolay, as one of Lincoln's two private secretaries. Hay was twenty-two years old, a recent graduate of Brown University. He had obtained his position with Lincoln through his uncle who was a lawyer in Springfield, Illinois and a friend of Lincoln. Hay and Nicolay lived in the White House with the Lincolns, and they were probably the two people, outside of Lincoln's own family, closest to the president during his term of office. Hay subsequently held diplomatic posts in Paris, Vienna and Madrid; wrote poetry and a novel; edited the *New York Tribune*; served as Assistant Secretary of State; and collaborated with Nicolay in writing a ten-volume biography of Lincoln. He married the daughter of a millionaire industrialist in Cleveland, Ohio.

Hay was Henry Adams's closest friend. In the 1880s the two men built adjoining mansions on the lot at the corner of 16th and H Streets in Washington, the present site of the Hay-Adams Hotel. When both were in the city at the same time—which probably was not often, because both travelled a good deal and spent summers in Europe or in summer homes in New England—they took daily afternoon walks together up 16th Street and ended the afternoon with tea together at one or the other of their houses. Hay was a regular guest at Adams's breakfasts. In the mid-1890s, Hay was in his mid-fifties and was often in poor health. He was a multi-millionaire (thanks to his wife), and he was convinced that his most productive years were behind him.

Theodore Roosevelt came to Washington in 1889 as a thirty-year-old member of the Civil Service Commission appointed by Benjamin Harrison. John Hay had known Roosevelt's father during the Civil War and again in the 1870s when Hay was living in New York and working as the editor of the *Tribune*. Hay no doubt picked up the young Roosevelt when he arrived in Washington, and it was probably Hay who introduced him to Adams.

As the only really active member of the Civil Service Commission, Roosevelt in the early 1890s fought fierce battles against political patronage and to promote selection

and promotion by merit in the federal government service. Perhaps he and Rockhill were drawn together by a common interest in how people without political connections could prosper in government service. The virile Roosevelt, who so admired the cowboys and other men of action he had met in the Dakota Territory, was probably also attracted by Rockhill's reputation as a Tibetan explorer and French Foreign Legionnaire as well as his experience as a rancher. In the middle years of the 1890s, Roosevelt was influential in the Republican Party and regarded as a man with a bright political future.

Rockhill must have dined with Adams, Hay and Roosevelt on several occasions in the 1890s when he was living in Washington. One occasion, on January 4, 1894, is documented when he, Adams, and the Roosevelts had dinner together.<sup>14</sup> Another dinner at which the conversation must have been especially stimulating occurred on April 5, 1895. Rockhill, Hay and Roosevelt were joined by Rudyard Kipling, Frederick Remington and Owen Wister, among others.<sup>15</sup>

It was a lucky guest who was fortunate enough to be able to join these men and their wives for an evening of dinner and conversation, because their conversation when together must have been a heady brew. There was Adams, the patrician Boston Brahmin, world-weary, detached, and ironic, but enormously learned and aware of every bit of Washington gossip; Hay, a son of the middle west and intimate of Lincoln transformed into a refined man of letters and millionaire connoisseur of fine art (he had a Botticelli hanging above the staircase in the entrance hall of his 16th Street mansion); Roosevelt, the youngest of the four, noisy and dominating every conversation with opinions about everything, but displaying an astonishing breadth of knowledge about every subject; and Rockhill, the tall, quiet, scholarly Orientalist and explorer. Rockhill was lacking the fortune as well as the political and social connections of the other three, but was able to draw upon his experiences in the Foreign Legion, on his ranch in New Mexico, and in China and Tibet to top almost any story the other well-travelled members of the group cared to relate. In their politics, Hay, Roosevelt and Rockhill were in agreement, being conservative and Republican in their views. Adams, the ironical and detached gadfly, was critical of the men and policies of both parties.

On May 28, Walter Gresham died and was replaced as Secretary of State by the Attorney-General, Richard Olney. Like his predecessor, Olney was a lawyer by profession with no experience in international affairs, but he differed from Gresham in his personal attributes. Gresham was friendly, easy-going and informal. Olney, by contrast, was 'brusquely courteous, business-like and reserved'.<sup>16</sup> Apparently, Rockhill was able to get along with both. Under Gresham, he had been promoted to Third Assistant Secretary of State. On February 11 1896, after working less than a year under Olney, he was promoted to First Assistant Secretary.

The promotion vaulted him over the Second Assistant Secretary, Alvey Adee. Adee had served eight years in the American Legation in Madrid during the 1870s and joined the Department of State in 1878. He was appointed Second Assistant Secretary in 1886. He could have risen higher, but he preferred to remain in a position less conspicuous and under less pressure than First Assistant Secretary. Adee became a fixture in the Department, the closest thing then possible to a permanent civil servant and indispensable expert advisor to fledgling diplomats and novice decision-makers. He often served as Acting Secretary, and he was well acquainted with Rockhill.

By 1896, Adee was a familiar personage in the corridors of the Department of State and regarded with great affection. He cut an unusual figure. Diminutive in stature, he customarily dressed in an outfit, which included a wing collar and cutaway coat that was already becoming quaintly old-fashioned by the mid-1890s. He was extremely deaf and used an ear trumpet. Presumably because of his deafness, he spoke in a high falsetto voice. He often worked until late at night, then slept in his office. If the Secretary were absent, he would scribble a quick note at day's end about that day's activities. It often closed, 'fatiguedly, but always chipperly yours'. His signature, an 'A' trailing off into a squiggle, was well-known and respected in Washington and diplomatic establishments all over the world. John Hay called him 'semper paratus Adee'. He continued in his position as Second Assistant Secretary until a week before his death in 1924.<sup>17</sup>

As First Assistant Secretary, Rockhill occupied a position very much a prey of political patronage. As soon as his appointment was announced, Theodore Roosevelt dashed off a quick note of congratulations from New York:

*Three cheers! But where does this leave me as a Republican? ... All I mind is that I fear this may be a less permanent position, and I never wish to see you leave the Department until you go to China as Minister.*<sup>18</sup>

Five days later, Roosevelt added a postscript:

*Of course, I thought at once that a promotion like this might turn you out of office a year hence. Whether it will be any use trying to keep you in your position as First Secretary, I don't know; but I do know that there are two or three of us going to make a resolute effort, and I guess we can fix you up in your former place anyhow. Anyway, I shall have but two favors to ask of the incoming administration, if it is Republican, and both of those will be the retention of people whom no sensible man would dream of dispensing with.*<sup>19</sup>

In 1895, the chronic problem in China, riots against missionaries, again became acute when serious outbreaks occurred in Fukien and Szechuan provinces. Missionary property was destroyed, for which the Chinese government paid compensation. However, the American government decided as a matter of policy that the Chinese government should be held to stricter accountability in taking steps to prevent riots, so a diplomatic note was drafted in the summer of 1896 to present to the Tsungli Yamen on 'The Prevention Of Anti-Foreign Riots'.

Rockhill was serving as Acting Secretary, so the message sent to Denby in July carried his name. The message reviewed the recent outbreaks and concluded that provincial officials had not done all in their power to prevent the riots from occurring. It proposed that the Chinese government hold the viceroy of a province responsible for any riots that might occur in areas under his jurisdiction, and mete out punishment if the outbreak were severe, 'although his only fault may be ignorance'.

Rockhill has been criticized for this message. How could an official unaware of a riot until after it took place be justly punished for failing to prevent it? While Rockhill probably agreed with the reasoning in the message, it was not, of course, his personal communication. It represented a statement of policy by the American government. The message sent to Peking was a draft, and Denby was invited to review it and offer suggestions for changes, based upon his years of experience in China, before it was sent as an official communication to the Chinese. Denby made no significant changes, and



the formal note presented to the Chinese in November contained all the points of the draft. Ironically, American missionary groups later criticized Rockhill for failing to champion their missionaries in the field vigorously enough.

In the summer of 1896, Li Hung-chang was sent to St Petersburg to represent China at the coronation of the new Tsar, Nicholas II. Li was widely blamed in China for the humiliation the nation had suffered at the hands of Japan, and his name was closely linked with the shame of the Treaty of Shimonoseki. His power was curtailed, and he began to look vulnerable to his enemies at court. It was rumored that the Empress Dowager sent him on his mission to Russia to get him out of China and the clutches of his enemies.

Li attended the coronation, but that was not the real significance of his visit to Russia. On June 5 in St Petersburg, he signed a treaty with Russia. For Russia, it cleared the way to construct a railroad across Manchuria that would be the final link of the Trans-Siberian Railroad already under construction to link European Russia with the Pacific coast. For China, the treaty was a fifteen-year mutual security pact with Russia. For both countries, it was aimed primarily at Japan, designed to block further Japanese encroachments on the mainland. For Li personally, there was a bribe, it was rumored, from the Russians to get the treaty signed. It was a huge bribe, if it was given, which rumor claimed was three million rubles. The rumor also said that when Li returned to China, the Empress Dowager forced him to turn over to her a share of it.<sup>20</sup>

After finishing his business in St Petersburg, Li and his huge entourage proceeded on a leisurely journey around the world. He visited the major capitals in Europe and continued on to the United States. He arrived in New York at the end of August to a well-publicized welcome. The New York newspapers had been full of news about his visit for a month or more, and the exotic visitor was greeted by parades and banquets. But he had little opportunity for substantive discussions with American leaders. Grover Cleveland was a lame-duck president who would not run for re-election, having served the traditional two terms. The Secretary of State, Richard Olney, was vacationing on Cape Cod when Li arrived in New York. Cleveland wrote to Olney, 'I suppose we will have to do something by way of entertaining Esquire Li Hung Chang. How would it do to light a bunch of fire crackers?'<sup>21</sup>

Cleveland's attitude was reflected in his administration's handling of the visit. The army, not the Department of State, was responsible for arrangements. There were plenty of firecrackers in the form of parades and a massive naval review in New York harbor. The President received Li briefly in New York at an official reception but had no talks with him. Olney remained on Cape Cod for the duration of the visit.

With Olney on vacation, Rockhill served as Acting Secretary, but he apparently saw little of Li. He attended a banquet in New York, hosted by Americans, both official and unofficial, who had served in China, and another banquet in Washington. The Chinese official's time was monopolized by the army and by former missionaries and businessmen in China. The Acting Secretary of State apparently did not even sit near the guest of honor at the two dinners he attended, although he was probably one of very few Americans present who could have spoken to Li in his own language. Businessmen hovered around Li in the expectation that the visit would produce a flood of contracts and concessions for American commercial activity in China, but they were disappointed. The visit sparked a good deal of newspaper coverage of ceremonial events, but little else.

In the presidential election in November, William McKinley defeated the 'boy orator' from Nebraska, William Jennings Bryan, in a landslide. Foreign policy played no role in the campaign. The overriding issue, made acute by the panic of 1893 and the long ensuing economic depression, was monetary policy that pitted McKinley's strong support of the gold standard against Bryan's call for free coinage of silver.

With a change of both administration and party soon to occur, Rockhill's future was uncertain and it remained so for months. After the election, as he waited to learn his fate, Caroline took the girls to Paris where they stayed the winter while waiting, like their pater familias, to learn what their future held.

As he waited, fearing that he would be told by the new Administration to leave the government, two of his friends also waited, but they expected to be invited to join the new Administration. John Hay was one of a group of wealthy Republicans who, in 1893, had bailed William McKinley out of a situation that could have been disastrous for him, both financially and politically. McKinley had signed a note to guarantee a large debt of a friend. When the note came due, the financial panic had struck and the man could not pay. Neither could McKinley, who was legally liable and stood to go bankrupt. Even in circumstances that did not reflect adversely on McKinley, bankruptcy would have meant the end of any hopes for the presidency. As a potential Republican candidate who stood an excellent chance of being elected, McKinley was saved by a fund subscribed by a group of wealthy supporters, including Hay. McKinley was expected to pay off the political debt he owed to members of the group. Hay was widely rumored to be the front-runner for appointment as American Ambassador to Britain.

Rockhill's other friend who was waiting and hoping was Theodore Roosevelt (who had not contributed to the fund in 1893). A Police Commissioner in New York, Roosevelt had let it be known among his friends that if McKinley won, he sought a position in the new Republican Administration, but not just any position. Roosevelt wanted to be appointed Assistant Secretary of the Navy. As the author of a book, *The Naval War of 1812*, that had been well received, and a friend of the naval historian, Alfred Thayer Mahan, who was famous in the 1890s as the high priest and philosopher of naval strategy, he possessed the credentials for the appointment he sought.

On February 11, Henry Adams wrote to one of his many correspondents, 'I am still waiting to know whether the Hays go to London, or anywhere, and whether Rockhill gets a post.'<sup>22</sup> On February 23, Rockhill wrote to General Wilson, 'I hear from very reliable sources that it is absolutely settled that our friend, Hay, is going to London.'<sup>23</sup> Hay's appointment soon came through, and Roosevelt's followed in April. Rockhill continued to be held in suspense as he went on carrying out his duties for months after McKinley took office.

The new Secretary of State was John Sherman, a long-time Senator from Ohio. Sherman was the brother of General William Tecumseh Sherman and well advanced in years. Critics of his appointment said he was senile. He owed his appointment to the fact that Mark Hanna, McKinley's political manager and financial angel, needed an official position. Hanna was a wealthy businessman from Ohio, McKinley's home state, who had decided years earlier that William McKinley was a man of destiny in national politics. He guided McKinley's political career and spent large sums of his own money to get his protégé elected president. McKinley appointed Sherman to his cabinet in

order to vacate a Senate seat from Ohio to which Hanna could be appointed.

Rockhill sent a barrage of letters to General Wilson, begging Wilson to use his influence on Rockhill's behalf. Apparently, he remained convinced that Wilson had access to the top levels of the new administration and could influence appointments. He explained that John Sherman was very kind to him and had asked him to remain in his post, at least until another appointment could be arranged. But he did not want to remain as Assistant Secretary of State, Rockhill explained to Wilson; he wanted to go to China. Couldn't Wilson put in a few words for him in the right places?<sup>24</sup>

It is difficult to divine the exact nature of Rockhill's relationship with Wilson. They had first become acquainted when Wilson visited China in the 1880s to investigate railroad-building possibilities. In the 1890s, Wilson was deeply involved with a group of businessmen trying to obtain a railroad concession from the Chinese. His close confidant was William Pethick. In 1894 during the Sino-Japanese War, Wilson and Pethick had actually conspired to overthrow the Manchu dynasty and install Li Hung-chang as the leader of China. They counted on Japan's total defeat of China to hasten the Manchus' downfall. When it became clear that Japan would not march on Peking, their scheme collapsed. In 1897, they continued to pursue their railroad-building dreams using Pethick's access to Li Hung-chang.<sup>25</sup>

Rockhill was aware of Wilson's business activities. He sometimes passed official documents to Wilson, reports from Denby and other officials in China that provided useful information to someone interested in obtaining a railroad concession. Wilson and members of his family sometimes stayed with Rockhill as house guests when they visited Washington.

Rockhill took no part in Wilson's schemes, however. He had little interest in business affairs. Away from his official duties, he spent his time in scholarly pursuits, translating esoteric documents or writing articles. These were usually about Tibetan Buddhism and Chinese history, for what Washington insiders considered obscure journals. For example, in 1897, Rockhill published 'Tibetan Buddhist Birth-Stories; extracts and translations from the Kandjur' in the American Orientalist Society Journal. So long as he had a sufficient income, Rockhill had little interest in making money. He looked upon Wilson as someone who could help him in his diplomatic career.

Wilson may have regarded Rockhill as a somewhat naïve bookworm whose official position and future prospects in the diplomatic service could be useful. Wilson himself had diplomatic ambitions. He hoped that Rockhill would be appointed Minister to China, while he would be named Minister to Russia. His schemes for constructing railroads in Manchuria and northern China could then be advanced. But apparently Wilson did not possess the influence Rockhill thought he had. Wilson himself never did receive a diplomatic appointment, and the weeks dragged on after the new administration took office with no news of anything for Rockhill.<sup>26</sup>

There is evidence that Wilson did make efforts to promote Rockhill's appointment to China. In May, several letters, all from businessmen and all strongly supporting Rockhill for China, arrived at the White House. Many were worded in such a way as to indicate that the writers were not personally acquainted with Rockhill. The President of the General Electric Company in New York wrote to endorse Rockhill and added, 'Suggestions as to the particular fitness of Mr. Rockhill for the position indicated have been made by a gentleman in whose judgment our company has the greatest confidence.'

Ironically, several American businessmen in China later complained that Rockhill did not do enough to support American business. Besides the businessmen's letters, several more from people well acquainted with Rockhill, e.g. the President of the American Asiatic Society, also asked McKinley to appoint Rockhill to Peking.<sup>27</sup>

A third group of letters, also obviously orchestrated, opposed the appointment. The writers were missionaries in China or heads of missionary organizations in the United States with people in China. By May, Rockhill's possible appointment to Peking had been so widely rumored that American missionaries in Swatow heard about it and wrote to McKinley to protest. A telegram said tersely, 'all Peking missionaries oppose Rockhill'. All the letters were written by representatives of Protestant denominations. Three writers opposed his appointment because, they explained, they had heard that Rockhill was a Roman Catholic. One wrote, 'We do not believe that a Roman Catholic is capable of representing American interests in a country where so large a proportion of American citizens are Protestant missionaries.'<sup>28</sup> It was not the last organized campaign by American missionaries in China against Rockhill.

On April 14, Caroline sailed from France to return to the United States, leaving the girls to attend school in Europe. Rockhill wrote to Wilson, 'I am awfully anxious to have her back. She is my best counsellor. I am all at sea without her.'<sup>29</sup> Rockhill was correct. His wife was good with and judged most people well, far better than he. Rockhill's best relationships were only with intellectuals and well read people who admired his scholarly and adventurous activities.

Theodore Roosevelt moved into the Navy Department in his usual whirlwind manner, but he did not forget his friend languishing in limbo in the Department of State. Roosevelt buttonholed colleagues and wrote to friends on Rockhill's behalf even as he grabbed the reins in his new job. He even sought an honorary degree for his friend. On April 9, he wrote to Francis Cabot Lowell,

*Couldn't we get an LL.D. awarded to the outgoing Assistant Secretary of State Rockhill? He was Olney's righthand man, and has been the best Assistant Secretary of State we have ever had, and he is one of the two or three explorers of Tibet in its least-known and uttermost portions. He was awarded the gold medal by the Royal Geographical Society of London. In every way he is a man whom Harvard should honor.*<sup>30</sup>

Apparently, Roosevelt's plea went unanswered. No degree was awarded.

On April 29, the increasingly desperate Assistant Secretary wrote to General Wilson:

*My personal affairs are still in a chaotic condition. The President has promised me a position which, to use his words, he thought 'would prove entirely satisfactory to me.' What it is, he alone knows. Of course, I continue to urge my own appointment to China as long as there is a shadow of a chance.*<sup>31</sup>

On May 10, he formally resigned his position in the Department. He was replaced by Judge William R. Day, a close friend of McKinley from Canton. Day was a thin, pale lawyer in delicate health. He knew nothing of international affairs and nothing about the inside workings of Washington. Under the foggy Sherman, Day took over most of the major responsibilities of the Department. He was known to have access to the White House so he was regarded as very influential in the highest echelons of the government, but he remained a reticent, enigmatic figure. With the increasingly vague Sherman as

Secretary, Day as First Assistant, and the deaf Alvey Adee as Second Assistant, one foreign diplomat was reported to remark about the Department of State under the new Administration, 'The head of the Department knows nothing, the First Assistant says nothing, and the Second Assistant hears nothing.'<sup>32</sup>

Rockhill was being considered for two diplomatic posts: Minister to China and Minister to Greece, which included serving as envoy to Rumania and Serbia. He could take comfort from the fact that Roosevelt from inside the government was still doing his utmost. On June 9, Roosevelt wrote to Richard Olney:

*Now, about the important matter of Rockhill. I have been four times to see the President about Rockhill. It evidently is not settled yet. I have been trying to arrange for a last desperate push. I earnestly wish that you would write as strong a letter as you know how for Rockhill to the President ... Don't make China an ultimatum. Say that Greece will be satisfactory if China is impossible, but that you earnestly hope Mr. Rockhill will be given the place to which he is entitled. Put it as strong as you can. I know you won't like to do this. Well, I haven't liked to go to the President again and again about Rockhill myself ... but I did gladly. I do hope you do this for Rockhill, too. As you know, I haven't the slightest interest in it, except a desire to see Rockhill treated as I think he should be.*<sup>33</sup>

On June 19, a telegram to J. Addington Porter, McKinley's secretary in the White House, signed by seven senators and several other people including General Wilson, urged the President to submit an appointment of Rockhill soon, so Congress could deal with confirmation before summer adjournment. But the message made no mention of support for any specific appointment. The telegram apparently prompted a note from Porter to Judge Day at the Department of State on June 21. Porter wrote: 'to ask whether there are any complications to be considered should it be contemplated to appoint Mr. Rockhill Minister to Greece'.<sup>34</sup>

On July 8, the long months of uncertainty ended. He was appointed Minister to Greece. According to the head of the *New York Tribune's* Washington bureau, McKinley on more than one occasion had remarked that the position of Minister to China was too important and too well-paid to waste on someone like Rockhill without political influence, whatever his credentials for the job.<sup>35</sup> Caroline had not been happy with the prospect of returning to China, and a rumor apparently circulated that she had worked quietly behind the scenes to derail the appointment. She denied that she had, although she made no secret of her distaste for another assignment in Peking. On the day the assignment to Athens was announced, she wrote to General Wilson:

*I had absolutely nothing to do with the substitution of Greece for China ... I was prepared, with the superb talent I have for drifting, to go anywhere, even to that — blank place where it looked for a while as if we might take up quarters, with equanimity.*<sup>36</sup>

On August 8, the Rockhills dined with Roosevelt in what was probably a farewell party.<sup>37</sup> Roosevelt wrote with apparent pride to Cecil Spring-Rice, the young British diplomat who was a regular at Henry Adams's breakfast table, that he, Roosevelt, had been responsible for keeping Rockhill in the diplomatic service by arranging the appointment to Athens.<sup>38</sup> But only a few days earlier, he had written to General Wilson to say, 'Rockhill should, of course, have gone [to China]. He is wasted on Greece, as you say.'<sup>39</sup>

## A Miserable Exile: Athens, 1897-1899

Rockhill and Caroline sailed from the United States toward the end of August and picked up Dorothy and Daisy in Naples. The family continued their journey aboard an Italian steamer, which made several stops before reaching Piraeus, the port for Athens. Aboard ship, Rockhill came down with ptomaine poisoning, an omen of this singularly ill-fated assignment.

Athens in 1897 was not one of the great capitals of Europe. The total population of the whole of Greece was only a little more than two million people. The year before, a war with Turkey had broken out, sparked by a religious riot between Christian Greeks and Muslim Turks on the island of Crete. The Greek army had been no match for the Turks who occupied Thessaly before the European Powers stepped in to stop the fighting. A year later, the city was still thronged with ragged soldiers returned from the disastrous war.

In Washington, foreign affairs, handled by the kindly but doddering John Sherman, took their customary back seat in the councils of government, and few countries attracted less interest than Greece. Athens was a Mecca for archeologists and other lovers of antiquity. But for an American diplomat whose interests and area of expertise lay several thousand miles to the east, it was exile.

Athens in late summer was hot and dusty, and to the American Orientalist, uninspiring. Both the Greek government and the American Legation were in advanced stages of dilapidation and decay. In October, the new Minister reported officially to the Secretary of State:

*I beg to inform you as a matter of general interest that the disorganization of all branches of the government here resulting from the recent war is becoming more painfully evident every day. The Treasury is empty, and the various Departments unable in consequence to satisfactorily discharge the duties devolving upon them. The War and the Interior Departments are those most embarrassed. The former has been discharging the volunteers for the war and certain classes of soldiers of the reserve, but is unable to give these men more than about \$1.50 for their services, having deducted from the amount of pay due them, the value of their uniforms and outfit. As a result, the streets are full of half-uniformed men begging, and several riots have taken place in attempts to get bread and shelter.<sup>1</sup>*

His inventory of Legation furniture listed three office chairs in poor condition and one damaged desk. In November, he sent in a request for a typewriter:

*Being ... obliged to do all the copying in the record books—or, in other words, write over my compositions three times, it would be a great relief if I were able to do some of this mechanical work in a still more mechanical way.<sup>2</sup>*

He was convinced that nothing he might report from Athens would find any interested readers in Washington, so as usual, he decided to devote himself to scholarly pursuits. He began to translate the Latin text of William of Rubruck's account of his thirteenth-

century journey to Mongolia. He followed his familiar pattern, secluding himself in his library, surrounded by books and manuscripts. Caroline took advantage of living in the land of Plato and Aristotle by studying about the country and making sightseeing trips. Rockhill shut himself away, calling Athens 'this vile hole'. On November 5, he wrote to General Wilson,

*I would like to have more work and hope the Department will send me somewhere else before the end of the Administration. My wife and the girls actually swear they like it here. I wish I did.*<sup>3</sup>

Early in 1898, he probably took interest in two articles published in the *North American Review*. If he did not see the magazine in Athens, friends in the United States probably sent him copies, because the first two issues of the new year contained articles about China written by people he knew very well. In the January issue appeared 'America's Opportunity in Asia' by Charles Denby, Jr. The February issue carried 'America's Interests in China' by General James Wilson. Both writers argued that vast, rapid changes were occurring in China in the wake of the Sino-Japanese War. The war had not only reshuffled the political and military lineup in eastern Asia by underscoring China's weakness and revealing Japan's surprising military muscle.

Denby and Wilson argued that it had also opened up unprecedented economic opportunities in China.

In 1899, the dismemberment of China by the European Powers and Japan, and its eventual disappearance as a single economic and political entity, was taken for granted by many people.<sup>4</sup> Denby and Wilson accepted this widespread assumption that China was about to be dismembered and swallowed up by the Great Powers. Denby echoed the arguments his father had made from Peking for more than a decade that the American government should more aggressively support American businessmen seeking opportunities in China. The United States must carve out a sphere of influence before it was too late, Denby charged.

*These powers recognize ... that the present is a critical period in the history of China; that when the breaking up and the inevitable partition comes, those who have established themselves will obtain recognition of their interests, those who have failed to do so must see their trade go to the masters of the soil.*<sup>5</sup>

Wilson seconded Denby's argument, referring to 'the present crisis in China', but he disagreed with Denby's prescription that the United States should join in the scramble for Chinese territory. He reviewed the activities of the European Powers in China in the nineteenth century, and he acknowledged that 'it is an indisputable fact that so far, no European power which has ever gained a footing in China has permanently or voluntarily relinquished it'. He concluded by arguing that this trend must be arrested:

*The Far-Eastern question has reached an acute stage, full of danger for China as well as for all who really desire to see her saved from destruction and made strong enough to maintain her right of national existence against the world.*<sup>6</sup>

Rockhill must have read these and similar accounts being published about China with increasing frustration and anger. He no doubt agreed with his friend, General Wilson, that China's friends must take action, and soon, if the country was to be saved from the greed of the other Great Powers, but he was powerless in his present position to do anything. Here he was, rotting in a diplomatic backwater, while critical, far-reaching events

were occurring in the country he knew more about than anyone in government service in Washington.

John Hay's experience as Ambassador in London was precisely the opposite of Rockhill's. Long a staunch anglophile, Hay had often spent long periods in Britain, including weekends at some of the great country houses. He was already acquainted with many British leaders before he arrived as Ambassador. Hay was thoroughly enjoying himself. His principal assistant was Henry White who had already spent several years at the London Embassy in the 1880s. White was one of that scant handful of Americans who were trying to fashion a diplomatic career before the turn of the century. White was independently wealthy; unlike Rockhill, he would not suffer financial hardship if he were turned out of office by a change of administrations. White was acquainted with Rockhill and a close friend of Theodore Roosevelt and John Hay. Hay considered White and Rockhill the two most capable men in the American diplomatic service.<sup>7</sup>

In January, John Hay took a vacation from his duties in London and with his wife met Henry Adams in Egypt for a cruise on the Nile. Adams was reluctant to make the trip, because of fond memories of a similar cruise he had made on his honeymoon. But he found, after some unhappy initial moments, that he was enjoying the lazy days on the water with his friends. In mid-February, as they loafed along, watching the palm-fringed river bank slip past and visiting ancient temples on shore, they learned of electrifying news being flashed around the world. The American battleship *Maine* had blown up in Havana harbor. The crisis in Cuba which had been simmering for years suddenly became acute, and war with Spain appeared imminent.

Surprisingly, Hay did not hurry back to his post in London when he learned the news about the *Maine*. He finished the cruise with Adams. Then the friends split up, with Adams heading for the Holy Land and Syria, while the Hays crossed the Mediterranean to visit the Rockhills in Athens. On March 6, Henry White had written to his vacationing boss from London:

*I have just had a letter from Rockhill who finds Athens deadly dull. How lamentable that such material of which the value would be inestimable in China should be wasted in Athens.*<sup>8</sup>

Adams planned to move on to Athens in a few weeks. On March 11, Hay wrote to Adams from Athens:

Rockhill is bored to extinction. He is looking forward with rapture to your coming next month ... He wants you to go with him to Constantinople, Sofia and the rest of his circuit, and I should think it would be a most amusing trip for you.<sup>9</sup>

The Hays continued on to London, and Adams arrived on the first of April. 'Rockhill and I roam all over the place,' he wrote ten days later to Lizzie Cameron. 'We haunt low quarters where I bargain for coins with dirty pawn-brokers and greasy Greek peddlers.'<sup>10</sup> They made plans for the Rockhills to join Adams for a week's trip to Mycenae, Corinth and Delphi. When the time for departure arrived, however, Rockhill decided to stay at home, so Adams, Caroline and Dorothy made the trip, to Adams's delight. But after several days of clambering over ruins and bare, rocky hillsides in the hot sun, his interest in antiquities was beginning to flag when they arrived in Delphi:



*The place itself, plastered against the mountain, is hotter than a radiating steam-heater ... Mrs. Rockhill and I toiled wearily up and down the mountain, over wastes of ruins without one patch of shade, and invoked every demon in the Pantheon to confound Greek theaters and race-courses. One could not find a spot level enough even to lie down on.*<sup>11</sup>

After three weeks, Adams had his fill of sightseeing in Greece. On April 23, he wrote to one of his legion of correspondents:

*I am now tired, and the hot weather has come, and I shall drop Olympia. One Greek stadium is very like another, and the Nike and the Hermes are familiar as the Venus of Milo. Tomorrow, I go to Constantinople with my friend, Rockhill, who is our Minister here.*<sup>12</sup>

Adams and Rockhill went to Constantinople for a few days, then moved on to Sofia. Meanwhile, war had broken out between the United States and Spain, and the two travellers tried to follow events. On May 1, they heard surprising news about a mutual friend, and Adams wrote to Lizzie Cameron to ask about it:

What on earth is this report of Roosevelt's resignation? Is his wife dead? Has he quarreled with everybody? Is he quite mad?<sup>13</sup>

Roosevelt had resigned his position as Assistant Secretary of the Navy to lead the Rough Riders.

At dinner on May 2 in Sofia, Adams read aloud from telegrams of the Reuters news service that the United States had bombarded Cadiz in Spain—'We promptly had a fit.'<sup>14</sup> But they learned the next day that the bombardment took place not at Cadiz but at Cavite in the Philippines, across the bay from Manila. The news was of Commodore George Dewey's crushing defeat of a Spanish fleet in Manila Bay.

The change of hemisphere gave me a sharp disappointment. Still, Rockhill and I drink Dewey's health regularly every hour or two, and I guess Cavite will serve for the moment.<sup>15</sup>

The travellers parted company in Belgrade where 'King Milan has shut up Rockhill for an indefinite time.'<sup>16</sup> Adams proceeded through Europe to London. Rockhill eventually escaped the clutches of the king to return to his exile in Athens and follow the news of the war as best he could from local newspapers.

It must have been some time during 1897 or 1898 in Athens that Dorothy met the man she would marry three years later in the United States. Joseph Clark Hoppin was in his late twenties, a graduate of Groton and Harvard who held a doctoral degree in classical studies from Munich. He spent the academic year 1897-98 as a lecturer on Greek vases at the American School of Classical Studies in Athens. In one of his letters written during his stay with Rockhill, Henry Adams mentioned in passing that during a visit to the American School he met 'a Hoppin—less sympathetic [than another young American Hoppin was with]'.<sup>17</sup> When Dorothy married Dr Hoppin in 1901, he was a professor of classics at Bryn Mawr College. Like so much else associated with this ill-starred sojourn in Athens, the marriage was not a happy success. It lasted only a little more than a decade, ending in divorce.

In early June, Adams wrote from London to tell Rockhill that he was settling in for the summer in Britain. His letter was full of the war with Spain. 'I should say that Spain

was about to disappear from the map ... nothing but a shell remains ... Spain is moribund, and has not strength enough even to lie down and die.'<sup>18</sup>

The course of the war was all against Spain, so Adam's direful reading probably reflected public opinion in general. Dewey's spectacular victory had effectively ended Spanish rule in the Philippines. McKinley was shepherding the annexation of Hawaii through Congress. Another Spanish fleet was bottled up in the harbor at Santiago de Cuba, and an American army was landing in Cuba. July was the month of decision when the second Spanish fleet was destroyed, the American army in Cuba was victorious, and the war ended in an American victory only three months after it was declared.

July was also a momentous month for Rockhill. Tragedy was visited upon the family in their unhappy exile. They made plans to visit the island of Corfu to escape Athens's summer heat, but Rockhill decided he should remain at his post, so the visit was cancelled. On July 5, just as news of the American naval victory at Santiago must have been reaching Athens, Caroline was stricken with typhoid fever. With the benefit of constant nursing, her fever appeared to be decreasing when terrible hemorrhages set in.<sup>19</sup> After a two-week illness, she died. Rockhill summed up the impact of her death on him when he wrote to Caroline's mother that her daughter had been the center of his universe and in losing her, he had lost everything.<sup>20</sup> Many years later, Dorothy wrote of her mother:

*She was forty-three years old, beautiful and gay, the most delightful companion and the most unselfish wife imaginable. During the twenty-one years she was married to my father, she helped him in every way without a thought for herself. Where his intolerance antagonized, she would charm people back; she made friends for him; she gave him self-confidence when his modesty and shyness stood in his way; she smoothed the rough places (and there were a great many) and laughed at them with a sense of humor that, though sometimes biting, was never so where he was concerned.<sup>21</sup>*

Letters of condolence poured in from friends. Hay and Adams wrote from London. Adams was mortified by the thought that Mrs Rockhill had contracted her fatal disease while she was travelling around Greece with him. Rockhill told Hay to assure Adams that his wife had been in perfect health until shortly before her death. 'I never saw her happier or brighter than she appeared to within a fortnight of her death,' he wrote.<sup>22</sup> He could not bear to remain in Athens. He took the girls on a trip to Constantinople. In September, they went to Rome.

In August, John Hay received a message from McKinley inviting him back to Washington to serve as Secretary of State. John Sherman had resigned in April, and Assistant Secretary William Day replaced him for the duration of the war. Day had never been completely comfortable or happy in the Department of State, and when the war ended, McKinley relieved him of his duties as Secretary so he could serve on the commission to work out a peace treaty with Spain. McKinley had for a year and a half served as president with two weak, inexperienced Secretaries of State. He must have come to realize he needed someone with experience and stature for the job, especially since the war had thrust foreign policy into a position of new importance. It apparently took McKinley only a short time to settle upon his Ambassador in London as his choice for the senior cabinet position.

Hay received the President's message with mixed feelings. He had enjoyed his short

tenure in England and looked forward to several more years there. He had earned the respect of the British as the best American ambassador in living memory, perhaps ever. Queen Victoria had once remarked, 'He is the most interesting of all the Ambassadors I have known,' and she had been on the throne for more than sixty years. Hay could not refuse the President, however, and he began preparations to return home.

On August 17, Rockhill wrote to Adams in London. He had apparently heard of Hay's appointment as Secretary, and he wrote to inquire about possibilities of being transferred from Athens to Washington. Adams replied on August 24.

*Your letter ... arrived here this morning at breakfast, and I threw it at once across the table to Hay ... Your friends have not in the least forgotten you in the changes in the cards. Everything will be done to bring you back, or relieve your strain. We shall need time to find out what can be done. Hay has been ordered home, to be sure, but he knows as yet almost as little as you do about the situation there, or whether he is to have any control either of policy or patronage.*<sup>23</sup>

Adams suggested that Rockhill write to all his 'political friends' about possibilities in other departments of the government. 'You had better reserve as many cards as your sleeve will hold,' he advised. He wondered if Rockhill would be willing to accept his old job as Third Assistant Secretary. 'In that case you would give the Major [McKinley] two political offices to fill,' he pointed out. On the same day, he wrote to his sister,

*Just now I want to help poor Rockhill who is wild to escape from Athens, and wants to get back to the State Department. Hay would, I think, be glad to have him there, for he has a very weak staff, but he is afraid of the Senate and the President. I know that you will feel for Rockhill's awful position at Athens with the two girls, and probably he has written to you about it.*<sup>24</sup>

The stricken exile should count on no help from his friends, at least for the present.

John Hay departed Britain in mid-September and took up his duties in Washington on October 1. He soon found he had plenty to keep him busy. 'My place here is horribly unpleasant,' he wrote to a friend a few weeks later. 'The work is constant and unceasing.'<sup>25</sup> He found he was besieged by office-seekers but had no offices within his power to confer.

*As to appointments under the State Department, it is clear that I am to have nothing to say. I could not appoint even my Private Secretary ... nor my confidential clerk. When I came to look at the Consular Service, I found that ... every vacancy which can possibly occur during my incumbency has been provided for by a memorandum on file ... The President is not to blame. The pressure is so cruel that he must use these offices to save his life.*<sup>26</sup>

Even three years later, the situation had not changed. In 1902, he wrote, 'I have made no appointments in the Foreign Service since I entered the State Department.'<sup>27</sup>

On October 2, the day after he took office, Hay wrote to Rockhill to let him know he had not forgotten his friend, but also to let him know that Hay did not have it in his power to bring Rockhill back to a position in Washington. The letter caught up with Rockhill in Rome, and he responded to thank Hay 'for having thought of me amidst all your occupations, but [I] deeply regret that I should have given you any concern'. He said he was thinking of leaving government service. 'Perhaps an opportunity may present itself ... to settle down in some quiet corner in Washington,' he wrote.<sup>28</sup>

He settled in for a winter of waiting in Athens. He continued work on translating

William of Rubruck's account of his travels in Mongolia. The Royal Geographical Society apparently asked him to edit Sarat Chandra Das's account of his explorations in Tibet, and he began to work on that as well as on a Tibetan-English dictionary Sarat Chandra Das had compiled.

Hay and his other friends in Washington continued their search for a suitable assignment for him. In mid-December, Adams was back in Washington and feeling lonely because Hay was too absorbed in his work to spend time with Adams who described to Rockhill the situation in Washington:

*I wish to Heaven that Hay had enough influence to get you transferred to Spain, and he is anxious to do it, I think, but I do not believe that, without a more or less sharp struggle, he can get so much as a clerk appointed anywhere or to anything. As for you, Spain would be, in my opinion, hardly an improvement on Athens, and socially less sympathetic. I should much rather have you come back here, where the State Department is in sore need of men, and even Adee is almost used up; but your friends would not lose any chance, in any direction,<sup>26</sup> that offered, to bring you back, and you may depend on their doing their best.*

In January, a new possibility suddenly beckoned. The splendid new Library of Congress building had been completed in 1897, and a new Librarian was appointed to take on the massive task of moving the institution into its new quarters and cataloguing a huge mass of books that had been put in storage while the building was under construction. The new appointee was John Russell Young, Rockhill's old boss in Peking. But Young died in January after less than two years on the job, and several people in Washington immediately considered the scholarly Rockhill appropriate for the vacancy.

John Hay and Henry Adams lobbied on Rockhill's behalf. But the position of Librarian of Congress with the great new building under its supervision had become a prime political plum, and a fight developed in Congress over the appointment. Samuel Barrows, a defeated Republican Congressman from Massachusetts, was seeking an appointment, and the vacant Librarian position was rumored to be earmarked for him. Hay tried to head off his appointment by arranging to have Rockhill's position in Athens offered to him, but Barrows declined the offer.

Barrows obviously possessed no qualifications to serve as Librarian, but to the disgust of Hay, Adams and others, McKinley submitted his nomination for Senate confirmation. A battle developed over the nomination. Henry Cabot Lodge, who had reluctantly supported the candidacy of his fellow Republican from Massachusetts, switched to oppose Barrows's confirmation.<sup>30</sup> The loss of Lodge's support persuaded Barrows to withdraw his candidacy. By early February, Adams thought the campaign he and Hay had conducted on Rockhill's behalf was on the threshold of success, but another politician got the job. Adams wrote to Rockhill to break the bad news and offer consolation:

*I am sorry you lost it, if you wanted it, but I do not believe you could have endured the bore of it. Confinement to a desk, with only Congressmen to provide quotations, novels for their daughters and offices for their sons, would have been intolerable to you in your present mood, if I know anything about it from my own experience.<sup>31</sup>*

It was one of Adams's rare references, and only an oblique one, to the death of his wife, Clover (she is never mentioned in *The Education of Henry Adams*).

On April 4, Rockhill received a telegram from Adee: 'Your name suggested by friends Director Bureau American Republics. Salary five thousand. Would you accept if appointed?'<sup>32</sup>

The Bureau of American Republics was created in 1890 at a conference of countries of the Americas held in Washington. Its purpose was to promote inter-American commercial relations through publication of statistics, trade reports and other material of use to businessmen. Though not an agency of the United States Government, the institution was placed in Washington under the supervision of the Secretary of State. It was therefore a somewhat strange anomaly in Washington, and whether it ever actually accomplished its mission is doubtful. In 1910, it was transformed into the Pan-American Union with financial help from Andrew Carnegie.

In early 1899, the position of Director had been mired in uncertainty for months.<sup>33</sup> A temporary director appointed in February 1898 had finally resigned in March 1899. His replacement lasted less than week. Pleading ill health, he resigned in early April. The position was obviously difficult to fill, and Hay seized the opportunity offered by its sudden vacancy to bring Rockhill back to Washington. Adee's telegram went out the same day the resignation was received. How much Rockhill knew about the institution he was asked to head is uncertain, but he immediately accepted the offer.

Rockhill's appointment was obviously considered by everyone involved to be a temporary expedient. He was being brought back to Washington to serve as John Hay's adviser on Far Eastern Affairs, not to serve the needs of businessmen in Latin America. During his years in the Bureau, he apparently spent little time on hemispheric matters.<sup>34</sup> His principal focus throughout his tenure was on Asia and especially on the problems of China. His salary, always an important consideration for Rockhill, was higher than it would have been as an Assistant Secretary of State, and it was supplemented by a salary from the Department. He would be financially comfortable in his new position.

He departed Athens on April 27. He left a note for his successor: 'For my part, I cannot imagine anyone finding anything in such a stupid place to cause him to like it, unless all of his interests are archeological.'<sup>35</sup> Perhaps his ungracious tone should be excused. Leaving Athens must have been like receiving a reprieve from prison.

Henry Adams was again on the road, touring in Europe, and he met the Rockhill family in Italy. Leaving the girls in Naples, Rockhill accompanied Adams to Rome for a brief visit before his ship sailed for the United States.<sup>36</sup> On May 4, Adams wrote to Hay,

*At Naples, on our return from Sicily, we found Rockhill and brought him up to Rome. He seems well and bright, anxious to be employed, and delighted to work for you ... I write only to say that if you like, you can quarter him in my house ... If he is to do Department<sup>37</sup> work of a kind to help you, he should be close at hand like a private secretary.*

Rockhill returned to Naples, picked up Dolly and Daisy, and on May 5, they sailed for the United States. His miserable exile was ended. So was his apprenticeship. He would now move into a position of influence and prestige in the American government as a close senior advisor to the Secretary of State. Within four months, he would play the pivotal role in an event that would influence the course of American foreign policy in Asia for a half-century.



**Fulfillment**  
**1899-1914**

## Writing the Open Door Notes Washington, 1899-1900

On May 18, John Hay sat in his big office on the south side of the State, War and Navy Building overlooking the Ellipse, writing a letter to Henry Adams:

*I was reading your letter from Rome this morning when I walked Rockhill himself, looking very fit. He wants a few days to himself, and then wants, he says, plenty of work, something to deaden thoughts and kill fidgets.*<sup>1</sup>

Rockhill quickly settled into his new job, and he soon learned that Washington's view of the world had changed radically during the two years that had elapsed since he left the Department of State to go to Greece. The brief war with Spain had changed everything. Foreign affairs had moved to center stage in Washington, and the United States was busy, like the European Powers, acquiring overseas colonial possessions. In six months, the United States had vaulted across three-quarters of the Pacific Ocean, annexing Hawaii in the summer of 1898 and taking Guam and the Philippines from Spain as part of the peace settlement signed in December. American army troops patrolled in Puerto Rico and Cuba. In the Philippines, 60,000 American troops were fighting an all-out war against Filipino guerrillas, and the generals in command were asking for more troops.

Suddenly, to some Americans, Asia no longer seemed so far away. It was argued that the Philippines in 1899 was closer to the United States, in terms of travel time, than California had been to New York when California was admitted to the Union as a state. Like several of his successors, William McKinley had been elected president to deal with domestic economic problems, or so he thought. Less than two years into his presidency, problems overseas suddenly shot to the top of the agenda in Washington, and they remained there until the end of his tenure in office.

Rockhill had been transferred back to Washington to serve as Hay's advisor on Far Eastern affairs, but he had last set foot in Asia in 1892. The transformation in the Philippines was not the only significant change that had occurred there since then. Japan, by its victory over China, had achieved an international status nearly equal to the European Great Powers, while China was regarded as hopelessly moribund and backward. Even China's well-wishers were beginning to think that only massive intervention by the West could shake the country out of its lethargy and decline, and set it on the road to becoming a modern nation-state.

Drawn powerfully by China's helplessness, the Europeans and Japanese were beginning to 'carve up the Chinese melon' as they sought to acquire territory on which to construct railroads, to mine coal and iron, to build coaling stations for their navies and ports for their trade, and, perhaps, eventually to impose taxes and duties collected in their respective spheres of influence. A commonly-used theme in articles and editorials that Rockhill must have read with avid interest was that the United States had better either



join the scramble and gain territory in China before it was too late, or take steps to try to arrest the grabbing orgy. Britain already controlled the largest single share of China's trade and was the paramount power in the country's heartland, the Yangtze valley. The British therefore were ambivalent toward what was happening in China. It was two relative newcomers on the scene, Germany and Russia, that were trying hardest to grab territory in order to challenge British supremacy.

Germany was carving out its sphere in the Shantung peninsula. In March 1898, Germany and China signed a convention that gave Germany possession of Kiaochow Bay as a naval base. The port of Tsingtao on Kiaochow Bay became, not a treaty port like the others open to all the Powers, but a possession of Germany with the rights of use and exploitation of natural resources reserved for Germany. In December, Charles Denby reported from Peking:

*The seizure of Chaio-chow [sic] by the Germans has precipitated the discussion of the partition of China ... Conflicting interests, jealousies, international collisions cannot be avoided if this populous country is divided among several holders.*<sup>2</sup>

The race for spheres of influence had begun.

Russia in 1891 began construction of the Trans-Siberian Railroad, a 5,000-mile conduit to link European Russia with the Pacific. The logical terminus of the railroad was the Russian port of Vladivostok on the Pacific coast. But Vladivostok was ice-bound for several months of the year. The Russians eyed ice-free ports further south in Korea or the Liaotung Peninsula as the ultimate terminus for the railroad they were building at such cost.

In December 1895, Russia chartered the Russo-Chinese Bank, an ostensibly private institution actually controlled by the Russian government. In September 1896, three months after Li Hung-chang signed the Sino-Russian Treaty in St Petersburg, that bank reached an agreement with the Chinese government to construct the Chinese Eastern Railway across Manchuria. Constructing that railroad would, from the Russian point of view, serve two purposes. It represented the shortest route for the Trans-Siberian Railroad to reach Vladivostok, and it gave Russia a foot in the door in Manchuria.

On March 27 1898, less than three weeks after Germany leased Kiaochow Bay from China, Russia also leased from China the southern tip of the Liaotung Peninsula, including Talienwan Bay and the city of Port Arthur. The lease document also gave the Chinese Eastern Railway the right to build a branch line to the south to connect the main east-west line with Talienwan Bay. Russia's plans were moving along nicely. On April 10, France signed an agreement with China to build a railroad through southwestern China from Tonkin to Yunnan and to build a naval coaling station on Kuang-chou Bay.

Britain, watching this scramble for pieces of China among the other Powers, was not idle in that winter and spring of 1897-98, despite already being the acknowledged paramount foreign power. A series of Sino-British agreements gave Britain, among other things, legal control of most of the Yangtze valley; a lease on the port of Wei-hai-wei on the northern coast of Shantung; a ninety-nine-year lease on the peninsula across from Hong Kong, to be known popularly as the 'New Territories', and concessions to build two railroads.

By November 1898, China had granted nine railroad concessions to Britain, three to France, three to Russia and one to Belgium. The Great Powers were carving up China at an accelerating pace. By the end of the year it appeared that soon Russia would

control Manchuria; Germany, the Shantung Peninsula; Britain, the Yangtze valley; Japan, Fukien Province across the strait from Formosa which Japan had acquired in the war settlement of 1895; and France, the two southernmost Chinese provinces abutting Tonkin. Manchuria and Korea were becoming areas of mounting tension between Russia and Japan.

Not everyone viewed an impending dissolution of the Chinese Empire in cataclysmic terms. A book entitled *China: The Long-lived Empire*, written by an American travel writer and published in 1899, argued:

*This present 'break-up of China,' a catch-phrase which has lately roused Occidental interest and anxiety, is an old story, very often repeated in this oldest surviving empire of the world, an old-new subject fittingly dismissed in Colonel Yule's small footnote thirty years ago: 'It has broken up before' ... The Occident ... need not assume that this is at all the end, the absolute and final ruin, the last wreck and crash of the old empire, of its curious, four-thousand-year-old civilization, all because the present parvenu Manchu dynasty happens to fall. 'It has broken up before.'*<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps this passage reflects the attitude of many Chinese in 1899 and helps to explain why the 'Occident' appeared to be more concerned about these events in China than were most Chinese.

The control that the Powers sought to exert in China was, in theory, economic rather than political. Unlike the situation in British India, the controlling Power in each emerging sphere of influence did not directly rule there. The Chinese Emperor still ruled the Empire, granting concessions to private companies and banks to build railroads, construct ports, mine coal and iron, and construct telegraph lines and other support facilities. But both the controlling Powers and the Chinese knew that Chinese political control was rapidly becoming a fiction. The concessions were granted to private companies, banks and combines, but those ostensibly private institutions were merely the means through which governments exerted control. The Chinese—the educated élites, if not the masses—were not blind to what was happening to their country, and many were not indifferent despite the apparent apathy of the masses of China noted by every Western traveller who wrote about China in the late nineteenth century. A group of progressive officials in the Manchu court prevailed upon the Emperor, Kuang-hsu, to adopt a program of reforms of the government, the educational system, the army and navy, indeed of all aspects of Chinese society. Their purpose was to stop, then reverse, the country's decline that was leading to its dismemberment. A leader of the reformers, a visionary scholar named Kang Yu-wei, sent a memorial to the Emperor in the spring of 1898 to plead for reforms:

*If Your Majesty will not decide, or will prefer to remain in the old grooves of the Conservatives, then your territories will be swallowed up, your limbs will be bound, your viscera will be cut up, and Your Majesty will scarcely manage to retain your throne or to rule over more than a fragment of your ancient Empire.*<sup>4</sup>

In an article published a little more than a year later, Kang wrote that the Emperor clearly realized the threat China faced if reforms were not begun.<sup>5</sup>

The Emperor issued an edict on June 11, 1898, followed over the next three months by a flood of some forty decrees covering a multitude of subjects. It was the period later known as the 'Hundred Days of Reform'. To forestall opposition by conservatives and

reactionaries in the court, the reformers conspired to seize the Empress Dowager and her most trusted supporter, Jung-lu, who commanded the northern Beiyang army. But their plan was foiled before it could be carried out, in part by Yuan Shih-kai. The entire reform effort was ill conceived and hastily carried out. It was well intentioned, but it was probably bound to fail, because it attempted to change too much too fast. The short-lived effort ended with the Dowager Empress in firm control of the government and stifling all reform, even as she publicly proclaimed her enthusiasm for it. The rush by the Powers to carve out spheres of influence continued.

The United States took little interest in these events in China during the winter, spring and summer of 1897-98 because it was preoccupied with the deepening crisis and war with Spain. In the spring of 1898, China was decidedly not a subject of primary concern in Washington, so it is not surprising that when the British ambassador in Washington on March 8 presented a 'very confidential' memorandum to President McKinley seeking American cooperation in opposing the actions of the other Powers in China, McKinley replied that he was unaware of anything happening in China to cause the United States to depart from its traditional policy of avoiding foreign entanglements. When the war ended, attention in Washington focussed on what to do about Cuba, Puerto Rico and, especially, the Philippines, not China.

While these fast-moving events were occurring in China, and the breakup of the country appeared to be accelerating, Rockhill was languishing in his exile in Athens, insulated from Asian affairs. When he sat down at his desk in Washington in the late spring of 1899, the situation in China was very different from what it had been when he served in the Legation in Peking more than a decade earlier, and it was not an object of primary concern among his superiors in the government. The new Far East advisor had to make up for his two years of enforced idleness in Greece and quickly bring himself up to date about current conditions in Asia. He read as much as he could, and he sought information from people with recent first-hand experience. He also did what he could to focus attention in the White House and the Department of State on the accelerating crisis in China.

A book that he read with more than ordinary interest was entitled *The Breakup of China*, published in May. The author was Lord Charles Beresford, a distinguished British admiral and Member of Parliament. In 1898, Beresford was selected by the Associated Chambers of Commerce of Britain—why they chose an admiral is not clear—to tour China and report on the situation there, especially as it related to trade and commercial activity. Before he left London, Beresford called on Ambassador John Hay who urged him to consult with Americans in China.

Beresford visited all parts of China, and his tour was widely reported in the press. He talked with foreign businessmen and diplomats, Chinese officials, newspaper correspondents, and others, and he was able to gather an enormous amount of data. He returned to Britain via the United States. He gave several speeches at Chambers of Commerce urging that the United States cooperate with Britain to oppose the hardening spheres of influence and keep China open to commercial activity equally for all countries. On February 21, he was the guest of honor at a dinner in Washington hosted by John Hay, by then Secretary of State, and attended by a large group of influential Americans and

foreign diplomats. John Hay was very much aware of Beresford's tour of China and his campaign to gain Anglo-American cooperation to keep the country open to commercial activity. Beresford hurried on to Britain where he quickly turned his notes into a thick book that was rushed into print. Beresford's speeches in the United States and his widely-advertised book did much to turn American attention toward China.

As the premier foreign power in China, Britain opposed dividing the country into spheres of influence that could close large portions of the country to British trade and other commercial activity. But if China were going to be divided up, Britain's leaders were determined to see that Britain got its proper lion's share. One writer later described the British contradictions:

*British policy in China suggested the expedients of a bareback rider who had mounted two horses going in opposite directions. Salisbury wanted an open door for trade with all China, but he also wished to have a sphere of special privilege.<sup>6</sup>*

On April 28, 1899, the day after Rockhill departed Athens to return to Washington, Britain and Russia exchanged diplomatic notes that recognized, in effect, Manchuria as a Russian sphere of influence and the Yangtze valley as an area of British special interest. Lord Charles Beresford rose in Parliament on June 9 to declare:

*From what I can gather from Her Majesty's Government, they have been bellowing for the Open Door, but they have been working all the time for the spheres of influence.<sup>7</sup>*

Rockhill decided Beresford was a 'bag of wind', but he nevertheless carefully read Beresford's book and everything else he could find about the current policies of the Great Powers toward China.<sup>8</sup>

Toward the end of June, Rockhill received a letter from Theodore Roosevelt:

*We know nothing about you or where you are ... Can you not spend a week or two with us at Oyster Bay? We shall be so glad to have you. Mrs. Roosevelt will be just as glad as I shall be.<sup>9</sup>*

Rockhill had not seen Roosevelt since before going to Athens. In the interim, the dynamic Teddy had resigned from the Navy Department to lead the Rough Riders in Cuba, then had been elected Governor of New York. The two men exchanged letters about a visit to Sagamore Hill, but they were not to meet during this busy summer. Both had crowded schedules, and they could not settle upon a mutually acceptable date.

In the late spring or early summer, within weeks of Rockhill assuming his new position, the Hippisley family arrived in the United States on leave to visit Nina's family in Baltimore. Rockhill and Hippisley had not seen each other for several years, so it was natural that Hippisley should run down to Washington from Baltimore to visit his friend. Rockhill was no doubt eager to learn everything he could about the current situation in China from such an experienced China Hand. They met sometime in July. Years later, Hippisley wrote, 'Naturally, I went over as frequently as I could to Washington to discuss the conditions in China with him.'<sup>10</sup>

Rockhill introduced Hippisley to Hay, and the Englishman took the opportunity to explain to the Secretary of State the fears that merchants in Britain felt about the prospect of a curtailment of free trade in China. He no doubt also mentioned the interest of the Chinese Customs Service, his employer, in keeping the 'open door' for trade open.

John Hay left Washington around the first of August for his vacation home in Newbury,

New Hampshire. He customarily escaped Washington's muggy summer heat in New Hampshire or Europe. A few days after arriving at his summer home near cool Lake Sunapee, he wrote to Adams:

*I left Washington last Monday, being just able to crawl to the station. The heat has been so steady and uncomfortable that it has nearly used us all up, and besides that, the State Department, always impossible, has been a little Hell upon earth the last few days.*<sup>11</sup>

Rockhill returned to Washington from a brief vacation on the afternoon of the same day Hay left the city. He found waiting for him a letter from Hippisley dated July 25. Hippisley explained that he had sent Rockhill a wire on July 23 to suggest another meeting to discuss China, but he learned that Rockhill had gone away for a holiday. Hippisley and his family would soon leave Baltimore to go north to Quebec to board a ship for England, he wrote, so he probably would not have an opportunity to meet Rockhill again. He therefore decided to put in a letter what he had wanted to discuss.

Hippisley explained, 'I write these lines to ask you to use your influence towards, if possible, inducing the Government to do what it can to maintain the open door for ordinary commerce in China.' He went on to explain that spheres of influence had become a reality in China, but special privileges in those spheres were, so far, limited to construction of railroads and coaling stations, and exploitation of mines. They did not extend to tariffs or customs duties on goods passing through the areas, but preferential tariffs might easily be introduced soon by one or another of the Powers. Once instituted by one country, the others were bound to follow suit. That brought Hippisley to the crux of his communication:

*I venture therefore to suggest that the United States loses no time in calling the attention of all the Powers to the changes now taking place in China, and, while disclaiming any desire on her own part to annex territory, in expressing her determination not to sacrifice for her annually increasing trade any of the rights or privileges she has secured by treaty with China; and, to assure this end, that she should obtain an undertaking from each European Power that all the Chinese treaty tariff shall without discrimination apply to all the merchandise entering its spheres of influence; and that by any treaty, ports in them shall not be interfered with.*

Hippisley's writing style was tortuous and made his simple suggestion more difficult to grasp than was warranted. A country in control of a sphere of influence in China, he proposed, should not reduce or eliminate the Chinese tariff on its own goods passing through its sphere while unfairly keeping the tariff on other countries' goods. Moreover, all Chinese ports should remain open to all nations. The 'open door' of equal trade opportunities for all countries with China should be kept open. Hippisley further explained that 'I would like to see the United States take the lead in securing such an agreement.'<sup>12</sup>

On August 3, Rockhill dashed off a brief letter to Hay in New Hampshire. He explained that he had just missed the Secretary when Hay left Washington, 'not that I had anything particular to speak to you about, but I had some ideas I wanted to submit to you on Chinese matters'. He enclosed a copy of Hippisley's letter, 'thinking you might like to read it'.<sup>13</sup>

For John Hay, China was probably not a subject uppermost in his mind in the summer

of 1899. The growing conflict in the Philippines probably sparked more debate in Cabinet meetings than any other subject, although it was a problem mainly for the War Department. For the Secretary of State, there was an ongoing dispute with Canada and Britain over the boundary between Alaska and Canada. Another headache involved the proposed isthmian canal in Central America.

A canal had been envisioned for decades, and by 1899 the United States was ready to get on with digging one. But a diplomatic stumbling block stood in the way in the form of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty. It had been signed by Britain and the United States in 1854 to ensure that any canal would be a joint project by both countries, and would be neutral—that is to say, unfortified—and open to the ships of all countries. It was signed in the heyday of Britain's power and support for free trade. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, British interest in building a canal waned while American interest increased. In 1899, if a canal was to be built by the United States, the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty would have to be amended or nullified, and Hay was negotiating with the British about it. Pressure to solve the annoying treaty problem and get on with building a canal was growing, and he was feeling it in August 1899.

Despite Hay's preoccupation with other matters, Hippisley's letter triggered a rapid-fire exchange of letters among Rockhill, Hippisley, Alvey Adee and Hay about China that continued through the month of August. It produced one of the most famous initiatives in American diplomatic history.

On August 3, the same day he wrote to Hay, Rockhill replied to Hippisley. He told his friend from England that he had sent Hippisley's proposal to the Secretary. Moreover, he added, he had been discussing China with the Secretary. Rockhill said he favored taking action stronger than Hippisley proposed:

*I would like to see [the United States] make a declaration in some form or other, which would be understood by China as a pledge on our part to assist in maintaining the integrity of the Empire.*<sup>14</sup>

But, he explained dejectedly, it was unlikely that the United States would take any action at all.

*It might be interpreted by a large part of the voting population ... especially the Irish and Germans, as an adoption of the policy advocated by Great Britain.*<sup>15</sup>

In 1899, George Washington's injunction to 'avoid entangling alliances' was regarded by many Americans to be the cornerstone of American foreign policy, and entanglement with Britain should be particularly avoided. To be considered following the lead of Britain, or doing what Britain wanted done, was political poison for any American politician.

On August 7, Hay sent a reply to Rockhill. It was hand-written and marked 'Confidential'. He thanked his advisor for his letter and said he personally 'was more than ready to act' along the lines that Rockhill and Hippisley advocated. But he foresaw the same problems that made Rockhill pessimistic about the whole idea:

*The senseless prejudice in certain sections of 'the Senate and people' compel us to move with great caution.*<sup>16</sup>

On August 16, Hippisley replied to Rockhill, explaining that his idea precisely addressed the problem in American domestic politics that Rockhill had described:

*My object in urging prompt action on the lines of my note of the 25th, was precisely to forestall any suggestion likely to prove injurious to the Administration, that it was following the lead of or leaning towards England, by inducing it to take the initiative herself; then, if England took similar action, she would follow America's lead.*<sup>17</sup>

Rockhill sent off a letter to Hoppisley only two days later, so it was probably not a reply to Hoppisley's latest letter. He expressed more optimism about the prospects for American action. He had just received, he wrote, 'pretty clear assurance from the State Department that it may take some action sooner than could be anticipated from the position it held until within a few weeks and which I gave you in my last letter'. He still wanted the United States to take strong action:

*Our action to my mind should be such that the very vague assurances given by Great Britain, Russia and other powers as to their desire to maintain and insure the integrity of the Chinese Empire should be expressed in much stronger terms and assume tangible shape.*<sup>18</sup>

The next day, he sent a letter to Adee containing long excerpts from Hoppisley's two letters. He obviously now thought some sort of American action was possible.

On August 21, Hoppisley responded to Rockhill's last letter with a long letter enclosing a memorandum about the 'Open Door'. It contained three recommendations that set forth in more detail the proposal he had made in his original letter of July 25:

*Each [Power] in its respective sphere of interest or influence.*

- (1) will in no way interfere with any treaty port in such sphere or with the interests vested in it;*
- (2) will promise that unless the ports opened to trade in it are declared free ports, the Chinese treaty tariff as existing or as hereafter amended shall apply to all merchandise landed or shipped, no matter to what nationality such merchandise may belong; and that the dues and duties so leviable shall be collected by the Chinese government; and*
- (3) will levy no higher harbour dues on vessels of another nationality frequenting any port in such sphere than shall be levied on vessels of its own nationality, and no higher railroad charges on merchandise belonging to subjects of other Powers transported through such sphere than shall be levied on similar merchandise belonging to its own nationals transported over equal distances.*

He explained that he did not mean to ignore Rockhill's main preoccupation:

*Of course, if the independence and integrity of China can be safeguarded, too, let that be accomplished. I entirely agree with you as to the value and importance of such a step, but I had not broached it, because it seemed to me the Administration was very lukewarm about taking any action, and hence I cut my proposals down to an irreducible minimum.*<sup>19</sup>

Rockhill had begun in early August to write a magazine article arguing his views which he hoped might have some effect on American public opinion. In the middle of the month, he sent a draft to Hoppisley for his review and comments. But on August 24 he put the article aside, because Hay wrote him the go-ahead letter he had been waiting and hoping for. Like Hay's August 7 letter on this subject, it was written by hand and marked 'Confidential'. Adee had sent Hay the excerpts from Hoppisley's letters, and Hay had changed his mind:

*I have already received, from representatives of the powers concerned, assurances that the recent extension of spheres of influence ... will not result in restricting our commercial freedom of action in China. But I agree with you that some more formal engagement of that sort would be desirable. If you have time between now and next Wednesday to set down your views on this question in the form of a draft instruction to Mr. Choate, Mr. White, Mr. Tower, and General Porter [American envoys to Britain, Germany, Russia, and France, respectively], I would be greatly obliged.*

He added a comment which reveals that John Hay had not the slightest inkling of the impact that this proposal by Hippisley and Rockhill would have on world public opinion, future American foreign policy, and his own reputation:

*I am taking a good deal for granted—your presence in Washington, your leisure, and your inclination to give us a coup d' épau<sup>20</sup>le. But if it should not be convenient, all right.*

On August 28, Rockhill wrote jubilantly to Hippisley:

*My project of publishing our views on the policy of the United States in China has been nipped in the bud, as I have been requested by the Secretary of State to submit the project to him on the steps which should be taken by the United States at once to insure our commercial interest. I have embodied the substance of all your remarks in it. Colonel Hay will be here tomorrow, and I shall have a talk with him on the matter ... I think things are in a fair way to go according to our views.<sup>21</sup>*

He followed it up with another letter the next day, perhaps after he had spoken personally to Hay. 'The question seems now in very good shape,' he told Hippisley. 'Hay's interest is awakened, and I think we will do something.'<sup>22</sup>

Rockhill's assigned subject was restricted to 'commercial freedom of action' rather than the broad question of China's territorial integrity, but he nevertheless attacked it with a will. His exchanges with Hippisley had helped to crystallize his thoughts, and only four days after the date on Hay's letter, the same day he wrote his jubilant letter to Hippisley, he was ready with a long memorandum sent to Hay from the Holland House in New York.

He opened his argument with several pages of critique of Lord Charles Beresford's book because, he explained, 'no one person has done more within the last few months to influence public opinion in the United States on the Chinese question than Lord Charles Beresford'. In a brief note to Hay enclosing the memorandum, he explained, 'I have reviewed ... the principal points of [Beresford's] work. This shows ... that the policy suggested as best suited to our interests is not a British one, for Great Britain is as great an offender in China as Russia itself.' There was no need, he argued, to focus on building up the Chinese army with foreign officers, as Beresford advocated. There was no point in attempting to abolish spheres of influence, because 'they must be accepted as existing facts [Rockhill's emphasis]', a point made twice in the memorandum. So, Rockhill concluded, 'What should be our immediate policy?' It should, he answered, seek negotiations to obtain from the other Powers assurances on three points—the same three points Hippisley had outlined in his August 21 letter. The memorandum then dealt with each major Power in turn to explain why each Power would agree with this proposal. Rockhill closed by saying he would return to Washington within a few days,



and would be delighted to discuss his memorandum with Hay.<sup>23</sup>

He immediately received a go-ahead from Hay and prepared a draft of a diplomatic note based upon his memorandum. On September 6, diplomatic notes were sent to American ambassadors in London, St Petersburg, Berlin, and Paris for presentation to those governments. The texts were almost identical with Rockhill's draft. In November, similar notes were sent to Japan and Italy.<sup>24</sup>

In this rather casual manner, within less than two months, the Open Door Notes famous in history were conceived, written and dispatched. Indelibly linked with John Hay, they were neither originated nor written by him. In fact, only the persistence of their author, Rockhill, persuaded the Secretary of State to agree to issue them. The proposals they contained were the ideas of Alfred Hippisley and no doubt represented concerns important just at that time to his employer, the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs Service.

The crucial role played by Hippisley in the episode was not generally known for many years. In fact, Hippisley himself deliberately kept it a secret. In a letter dated September 18 1909, to the famous Peking correspondent of the *Times* of London, George Morrison, Hippisley wrote:

*One portion of your letter has surprised me immensely, and that is your allusion to my connexion with the 'Open Door' negotiations. How did you hear of it? During all these ten years, I have been most careful never to breathe a word about it, even after Mr. Hay's death, lest the disclosure of the fact that what is generally regarded as Mr. Hay's chief diplomatic success was due to the initiative of an Englishman should do harm to the cause we both had at heart. I suppose it is Rockhill who must have informed you of the facts.*<sup>25</sup>

A published account of those exchanges during the summer of 1899, explaining Hippisley's role, did not appear until 1928.

When the Notes were sent out, Hay obviously had not the faintest suspicion that they would become the most famous initiative in his entire tenure as Secretary of State, indeed, one of the most famous in American diplomatic history. That is not surprising, because most of what soon became fixed in the popular mind about America's 'Open Door Policy' that the famous Notes set forth had no basis in what the Notes really said. They did not introduce the term, 'Open Door', which identified them in the public's mind. It had been in use, especially in Britain, for decades. In fact, the term did not even appear in the text. The Notes did not announce a sweeping new doctrine as so many people thought. They proposed three very carefully defined, carefully hedged-in principles of commercial opportunity. But the significance that came to be attached to the Open Door Notes in the public's mind began to form soon after they were sent out.

Two months passed after the Notes were sent before news reports began to mention them, but those reports signaled the beginning of the Notes' fame as icons of American diplomacy. Significantly, the first reports were published in Britain, the country with the biggest stake in maintaining an 'open door' in China. A report from London published in New York on November 4 said:

*The Daily Chronicle, commenting editorially upon 'this new departure in American policy, which will be fully approved in England,' dilates upon its 'immense importance' and suggests, 'it may affect the international politics of Europe in a very remarkable degree.'*<sup>26</sup>

On November 10, a correspondent in Washington reported a flurry of visits to the Department of State by 'the diplomatic representative of every nation directly interested in the Chinese question'.<sup>27</sup>

Replies to the Notes were slow in arriving, however, and equivocal in tone, at least initially. Everyone was in favor of the Open Door principle, but no one wanted to be left behind if spheres of influence were the wave of the future in China. Britain responded first with an interim note on September 29, which essentially agreed. A diplomatic note dated November 30 gave Britain's formal agreement, 'provided that a similar declaration is made by the other Powers concerned'. That proviso was echoed by the others. Germany gave an informal response on December 4 that said, 'If the other Cabinets adhere to the proposal of the United States Government, Germany will take no objections.' France gave its formal agreement on December 16, Japan on December 26, and Italy on January 7. The German formal response was given on February 19.<sup>28</sup>

The Russians were the most wary and most tardy in responding. On December 19, Rockhill called on the Russian Ambassador, Count Cassini, to discuss the matter. Cassini asked several questions, especially which countries had accepted the proposal. Rockhill replied that Britain, Germany and France had all indicated agreement. Russia was obviously reluctant to give any written commitment, although Cassini told Rockhill his country had no objections.<sup>29</sup> The Russian formal response, dated December 30, was the most vague and equivocal of all the official replies, but it did not specifically object or refuse to agree. Hay decided to treat it as an unequivocal acceptance. He wrote to Charlemagne Tower, the American ambassador in St Petersburg:

*Our object is now to give the widest significance to the Russian reply of which it is capable. Without running the risk of bringing upon ourselves a contradiction of our assumption, we want to take it for granted that Russia has acceded to our proposals without much qualification ... I think we may congratulate ourselves on a most fortunate outcome of the entire transaction.*<sup>30</sup>

By early in the new year, Hay and Rockhill began to realize, from the news coverage and the response of the other Powers, the growing significance of what they had wrought. They had dispatched no battleships, they had sent no expeditionary forces, they had signed no treaties, they had rattled no sabers. Literally with the stroke of a pen, they had struck a blow for high principle, had arrested the greedy actions of the other Powers in China, and had made a very favorable impression on American public opinion. The very term 'open door', even if they did not originate it, connoted idealism, friendship and moral principle pitted against a door closing or closed because of greed and economic exploitation.

The Open Door initiative reached its triumphal conclusion on March 20, a month after the last formal note of agreement, from Germany, arrived. Hay sent brief, identical messages to the American ambassadors in all the countries to which the Open Door Notes had been sent.

*You will please inform the Government to which you are accredited that the condition originally attached to its acceptance—that all other powers concerned should likewise accept the proposals of the United States—having been complied with, this Government will therefore consider the assent given to it by—as final and definitive.*<sup>31</sup>

It was Hay's (and, perhaps, Rockhill's) master-stroke. No mention was made of qualifications or equivocations. No one could object and deny he supported the Open Door principle. George Kennan, the distinguished diplomat and historian, in a lecture at the University of Chicago in 1951, described the effect of Hay's tactic in down-to-earth terms. 'It was like asking every man who believes in truth to stand up,' Kennan explained. 'The liars are obliged to be the first to rise.'<sup>32</sup>

When the United States announced that its Open Door initiative had been accepted, there was an immediate outpouring of praise by the press that probably astonished Rockhill and Hippisley as much as anyone else. In London, the *Daily Mail* said, 'It is a triumph for President McKinley.' *The Times* editorialized, 'The Government and people of the United States are to be congratulated upon the successful achievement of a considerable service to the world.' American papers were no less laudatory. The *New York Times* called the initiative 'a noble work of peace', while the *Chicago Herald* said there had never been 'a more brilliant and important achievement in diplomacy'. John Hay, suddenly and by popular acclaim, was elevated to the rank of world statesman. For perhaps the first time in American history, a Secretary of State gained a position of leadership among the world's Great Powers. Hay, as much or more than anyone, was probably surprised by his new suddenly-won prestige, both in the United States and abroad.

George Kennan in his 1951 lecture explained how the 'Open Door' became fixed in the minds of Americans over the next half-century as an icon of American diplomacy:

*[Nothing] succeeded in shaking in any way the established opinion of the American public that here, in this episode of the Open Door Notes, a tremendous blow had been struck for the triumph of American principles in international society — an American blow for an American idea.*

The 'Open Door' became firmly attached to American foreign policy in Asia, and it remained so for fifty years. By 1918, it had become a 'Principle of Foreign Policy to be maintained like the Monroe Doctrine', according to the *New York Times*.<sup>34</sup> In 1919, one of the *Times's* star correspondents proposed that it should be cited in the Covenant of the League of Nations, to be 'included on the same basis as the Monroe Doctrine'.<sup>35</sup> In 1921, the *New Republic* magazine declared, 'We stand for the Open Door.'<sup>36</sup> In 1922, America's popular Open Door Policy, hitherto simply a unilateral declaration of principle, was raised to treaty status. At the disarmament conference convened in Washington the previous year, the problems of China were also discussed, and a 'Nine-Power Treaty' signed. The treaty used language that could be directly traced to Rockhill's exchanges with Hippisley in 1899 and to the Hay notes. The signatories pledged, for example, 'to respect the sovereignty, the independence, and the territorial and administrative integrity of China' and 'to use their influence for the purpose of effectually establishing and maintaining the principle of equal opportunity for the commerce and industry of all nations throughout the territory of China'. As late as 1949, Secretary of State Dean Acheson, speaking about American policy in the wake of the assumption of power by the communists in China, said, 'Meanwhile our policy will continue to be based upon ... our friendship for China, and our traditional support for the Open Door.'<sup>37</sup>

Some commentators have argued that the legacy handed down by the famous Notes, despite their popularity with the public, has been deleterious. Professor William Appleman Williams, writing in the 1950s a few years after George Kennan, pointed to

the Notes as a source of all that went wrong with American foreign policy during the first half of the twentieth century. 'When combined with the ideology of an industrial Manifest Destiny,' Williams wrote, 'the history of the Open Door Notes became the history of American foreign relations from 1900 to 1958.'<sup>38</sup> Williams's book argued that it was not a history to be proud of, being a sorry record of exploitation, chicanery and outright aggression.

Most diplomatic historians have argued that the significance of the famous Notes has always been overrated in the popular imagination.<sup>39</sup> The United States, they have pointed out, was never willing to use force to defend the principle of the Open Door or to protect China from economic exploitation. Everyone paid lip-service to it, they have maintained, but it had little effect on the course of events in Asia. George Kennan in his 1951 lecture agreed, but he emphasized that his principal point was the strong, positive, lasting effect Hay's Notes produced on American public opinion about the country's foreign policy.

Rockhill in 1899 wanted the United States to take stronger action than Hay's Notes set forth, as his exchanges with Hippisley reveal, but he was realist enough to know that his hope could not be realized. He did as much as he and Hay realized was possible at the time. He was dealing with a specific set of circumstances at a specific time, and he probably had little inkling that his handiwork would be applied so sweepingly in such different circumstances so far into the future. The situation in China and the role of the United States in international affairs were very different in 1921 as compared with 1899, and even more so in 1949.

Since the effect of the Notes was almost purely psychological, it is difficult to measure it precisely from the historical record. Contrary to William Appleman Williams's assertion, their effect was wholly positive, if not as far-reaching or decisive as many diplomatic historians might prefer. Whatever effect the Notes had on the march of events in Asia, they became fixed in the American popular psyche, as George Kennan explained, as one of the triumphs of American diplomacy. They thereby influenced for fifty years the thinking and actions of American statesmen and diplomats who formulated and executed American foreign policy in Asia, and thus influenced the course of American diplomacy in Asia for a good portion of the twentieth century.

Despite the success of the Open Door Notes, March was not a good month for John Hay. On February 5, he and the British Ambassador, Lord Pauncefoot, had signed a treaty amending the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty and, Hay thought elatedly, clearing the way for construction of an isthmian canal. Instead, it sparked weeks of rancorous debate in the Senate, which finally refused to ratify it (a greatly amended version was ratified in 1902). Hay on March 13 personally handed to President McKinley a letter of resignation. His long-held contempt for the Senate had boiled over. 'I fear my power to serve you in business requiring the concurrence of [the Senate] is at an end,' he wrote to the president.<sup>40</sup> But McKinley on the same day wrote a reply which refused to accept the resignation:

*Nothing could be more unfortunate than to have you retire from the Cabinet. The personal loss would be great, but the public loss even greater ... Your record constitutes one of the most important and most interesting pages in our diplomatic history.*<sup>41</sup>

Hay stayed on, but four days later—only three days before sending out the final, triumphant Open Door Note—he wrote to his son, Adelbert:

*I am horribly busy, and am having, now in my old age, my first experience of filthy newspaper abuse. I have made some mistakes, but they have not got onto them. The things they blackguard me for are the ones where I am absolutely sure I am right.*<sup>42</sup>

The filthy abuse was prompted by provisions in the canal treaty Hay had signed, notably a stipulation that said that the canal, although built solely by the United States, could not be fortified by the United States. Many people, including Hay's good friend, Theodore Roosevelt, strenuously objected.

For Rockhill, less than two years after his life reached its nadir in Athens, everything seemed to be coming up roses in the spring of 1900. On January 16, Henry Adams had written to one of his correspondents:

*Sister Anne staggered me by announcing that Rockhill is to marry again—in April—a Miss Perkins—or is it Parker—or somebody—of Connecticut. Tant mieux!*<sup>43</sup>

The engagement had been announced January 2. Rockhill's fiancé was Edith Howell Perkins of Litchfield, Connecticut. Her father, J. Deming Perkins, was a state senator, influential in Republican politics, who had served as one of McKinley's electors in 1896. They had met in Athens when Miss Perkins, who was sixteen years younger than her affianced, was touring with her father. Rockhill had visited her several times since returning to the United States, including a visit during that busy August of the Open Door Notes. On January 18, Roosevelt weighed in to write,

*No people will be more sincerely pleased than Mrs. Roosevelt and myself are. I cannot say how glad I am! I want you to give my warmest regards to Miss Perkins. I anticipate seeing you. We are really delighted.*

He added a hand-written 'with heartiest congratulations'.<sup>44</sup>

On April 25, the happy couple were married in the First Congregationalist Church in Litchfield. The ceremony, according to the *New Haven Evening Register*, 'was attended by one of the largest and most fashionable assemblages which have graced an occasion of this kind in Connecticut in several years'.<sup>45</sup> Telegrams of congratulations poured in from the President, Cabinet members, the diplomatic corps in Washington, and 'others prominent not only in the official and social life of Washington and other cities in America, but also of several European, South American and Asiatic cities'. A reception at the Perkins home in Litchfield was attended by more than 200 guests. The wedding was reported in the *New York* and *Washington* newspapers. The bride and groom spent an eleven-day honeymoon in Litchfield before Rockhill had to return to his duties in Washington. The couple, along with Daisy, two servants, and two boarders, settled in at 1828 H Street, two blocks from the Hay and Adams mansions and about the same distance from the Department of State.<sup>46</sup>

China continued to be the focus of Rockhill's attention, but he was not allowed to forget that his official position was Director of the International Bureau of American Republics. Agreement had been reached to hold another meeting of the American republics in Mexico City early in 1901. It would be the first such meeting since 1890 when Rockhill's bureau had been created. He and Hay were scheduled to attend. Responsibility for planning the meeting fell mainly on Rockhill, and he devoted a good

deal of attention to it throughout the late winter and spring.

Spring also saw the publication of two pieces of his writing. The Hakluyt Society of Britain published his translation of the text of William of Rubruck's thirteenth-century account of his journey to Mongolia. It was the work he had begun during his idle days in Athens. The book contained more than 300 pages since it included a translation of the text of an account of a journey to Mongolia by another thirteenth-century churchman, John of Pian de Carpine. It was a product of massive, careful scholarship, but that did not prevent a pedantic reviewer for the *British Geographical Journal* from filling two pages of a review with quibbles about the spelling of proper names and other minutiae.<sup>47</sup> By contrast, *The Nation* in New York, in a long review, said, 'It is with much pride that we place this piece of faithful work by our countryman on the shelf between Rawlinson's Herodotus and Yule's Marco Polo.'<sup>48</sup>

As usual, a copy was sent off to Henry Adams. Adams replied from Paris, where he was immersed in the literature of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in preparation for Mont-St Michel and Chartres, so he took more than usual interest in the book. He told Rockhill, 'The amount of work you have put into it was known to me before, but is obvious at every page.' Adams had not been able to attend Rockhill's wedding, and he closed by acknowledging receipt of a letter from Edith whom he had not yet met:

*Of her I hear nothing but the most enthusiastic accounts, and I shall have nothing to do but to applaud them. This will be easy. I will begin with the winter. You will tell her that I am a cooing dove, a regular tumbler.*<sup>49</sup>

The other piece of writing was a magazine article entitled 'The United States and the Future of China' which appeared in the May issue of *Forum*. Given Rockhill's relationship with the Secretary of State, the article is probably significant as reflecting not only the author's personal views but Hay's as well. He reviewed the scramble for spheres of influence in the wake of the Sino-Japanese War, and argued that the Open Door Notes had stopped the scramble.

*They have put a stop to the grab policy which ... has resulted so disastrously to China and to the real interests of foreigners and their enterprises in the Empire ... The Government of the United States has not only served the cause of peace and civilization but has rendered a vast service to China.*<sup>50</sup>

But only temporarily, he stressed. Even though, in Rockhill's view, the scramble for spheres was not in the Powers' interests, it would begin again if China did not reform her government and institutions, maintain domestic order, and stop anti-foreign riots. If nothing were done, the other Powers would find excuses in the riots against foreigners, as they had in the past, to resume 'cutting up the Chinese melon'. In view of the storm that would be unleashed in Peking less than a month after this article was published, the final summation is significant:

*The events of the last four years must have shown China that if she fails in these duties she is destined to share the fate of all weak states. Serious breaches of faith on the part of China, dereliction in performing her international duties must inevitably be followed by fresh demands for territory and guarantees, and if again begun, no one can predict where these will end. No Power at present is desirous to see the spark ignited which will produce the final catastrophe. China, and China alone, can prevent it. All of her well-wishers can but pray that she*

may not let the opportunity now afforded her by the United States pass away unused.<sup>51</sup>

When he wrote those words, Rockhill was aware that riots and growing anarchy of greater than usual intensity were spreading in northern China. The previous December, Edwin Conger, who had replaced Charles Denby as American Minister in Peking, had sent a report on a familiar subject, riots against missionaries. These upheavals occurred in Shantung, not far from Peking. Conger's report is noteworthy and stands out from all the others sent to Washington over the years on the same subject, because it introduced a term that would become painfully familiar within a few months. 'Early in October last, a secret society called "Boxers" in the neighborhood of Ch'ih Ping assembled with the avowed purpose of driving out foreigners and extirpating Christians,' Conger reported. The riots had been contained, he added.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, the secret society continued its terrorist activities.

For months he continued to report on the worsening situation in Shantung with a tone of increasing apprehension in his messages. On January 2, he passed along the text of a secret edict the Empress Dowager had issued in November. Read in retrospect, after the terrible events of the following summer, the exhortation it made was significant, though probably not so apparently ominous to foreign diplomats and statesmen at the time:

*Our Empire is now laboring under great difficulties, which are becoming daily more serious. The various powers cast upon us looks of tiger-like voracity, jostling each other in their endeavors to be the first to seize upon our innermost territories. They think that China, having neither money nor troops, would never venture to go to war with them. They fail to understand, however, that there are certain things which this Empire can never consent to, and that, if hardly pressed upon, we have no alternative but to rely upon the justice of our cause, the knowledge of which in our breasts strengthens our resolve and steels us to present a unified front against our aggressors.*<sup>53</sup>

This must have been written at about the same time, or soon after, Rockhill was writing the Open Door Notes. It was not unreasonable to think, a few months later when the text was received in Washington, that the highly-publicized Notes had altered the thinking of the Chinese leadership reflected in the secret edict.

The Legation in Peking and the Department in Washington exchanged numerous messages during the first months of 1900 about the spreading trouble in Shantung. On May 8, Conger reported, 'The Government either strongly sympathizes with the "Boxers" or it is afraid of them. It is reported and believed that there are many "boxers" and sympathizers with them in the army.'<sup>54</sup> The messages from Washington, signed 'Hay', may have been drafted by Rockhill. They counseled calmness, and their tone suggested a belief that Conger was more wrought-up and fearful than was warranted.

Boxers had first appeared in 1898 in Shantung, although their origins may have reached all the way back to a secret society formed in the eighteenth century. Their name in English was a shorthand version of their Chinese name, which was usually translated as 'fists of righteous harmony'. The movement was a violent spasm of nativistic xenophobia directed against all the foreign elements that were increasingly affecting Chinese society. The Boxers hated railroads, telegraph lines and mining operations that disturbed the

spirits of the earth and air. They raged against the foreign concessions and treaty ports where foreign devils lived privileged lives and Chinese were treated with contempt as despised beings of a lower order in their own country.

More than any other foreign presence, the Boxers hated the missionaries. In their efforts to convert Chinese to Christianity, missionaries attacked some of the most basic elements of Chinese life and belief. Unlike the diplomats in Peking or the foreign merchants and bankers in the treaty ports, the missionaries were spread out through the countryside and thus were visible, inviting targets.

The Boxers formed a true grassroots movement that arose spontaneously among the rural peasantry. However, it never spread into central or southern China. One reason may have been because it was not directed against the Manchu rulers. Had it sought the overthrow of the Manchus as well as the expulsion or destruction of foreign elements, it might have found favor among the Cantonese and other southern Chinese and become a country-wide phenomenon. As it was, it was confined throughout its brief lifespan to northern China.

The Boxers dressed in a particular costume, performed weird rituals of magic and espoused mystical doctrines that appealed to, and awed, the illiterate and superstitious peasant. Their battle cry was 'sha, sha!' (kill, kill!). They claimed that their rituals gave them protection against firearms that could not harm them. The strong supernatural cast of their doctrines and preaching exerted a powerful hold on the popular Chinese imagination.

The movement was born in Shantung as a reaction against the activities of the Germans in the leasehold they had acquired in 1897. The Germans were building a naval base on the shores of Kiao Chow Bay, the only major naval base they ever built outside Germany. Tsingtao was becoming a model German city of European buildings and clean, orderly streets. Signs were in German, and there was a brewery that produced the best beer in Asia. German missionaries spread through the peninsula, seeking converts. It had been the murder of two German missionaries that the German government used as a pretext to justify the occupation, then the legal acquisition of their leasehold. German troops patrolled through the leasehold and undertook punitive expeditions against villages where anti-foreign incidents occurred. The Germans were more aggressive in establishing their presence in China than were any other foreigners, and their activities aroused more resentment than arose elsewhere.

The Boxers first directed their wrath against Chinese Christian converts but soon began attacking foreign missionaries. Fueled by the appeal of its mysticism and its xenophobic propaganda, the movement spread like a grass-fire through the rural peasantry, rapidly gaining hordes of active adherents and supporters. The Chinese army did nothing to oppose the Boxers and even welcomed them into their ranks. However, both Li Hung-chang and Yuan Shih-kai recognized the danger the movement created for China, and they both opposed it to some degree. Yuan was the temporary governor of Shantung, and he used the troops under his control to suppress the Boxers. But the Empress Dowager in Peking made clear her wish that the army cooperate with the Boxers. So long as they directed their violence against only foreigners and did not foment revolution against the Manchus, Tzu-Hsi was content to watch them run wild and even to lend them



encouragement and support.

By the middle of the spring of 1900, the Boxers burst out of the Shantung Peninsula like a torrential wave, spreading across neighboring Manchuria, Shansi and Chihli. They tore up railroad tracks and telegraph lines, burned churches, and murdered missionaries and their Chinese converts. By May, mobs of angry Boxers, growing daily in strength, were converging on Peking.

If the diplomats in the Legation Quarter and the businessmen in the concessions of Tientsin had been fully aware of what was developing so rapidly around them, they logically would have been seized with panic. But hardly any of them realized the true import of what was happening, although reports about the movement had been sent back to home governments in Europe and America for months. On May 24, sixty guests gathered for a formal dinner at the British Legation to celebrate Queen Victoria's eighty-first birthday. After dinner, they were joined by guests from the other legations for dancing on the Legation's tennis court under the soft light of paper lanterns strung through the tree branches overhead. While they waltzed and sipped champagne, swelling mobs, literally shouting for the foreigners' blood, were streaming toward the capital.<sup>55</sup>

If all high-level government officials can be expected to make at least one serious error of judgment during their term of office, Rockhill chose this critical moment to make his. On June 1, he sent a note to Hay:

*I return herewith the despatches from Mr. Conger which you kindly sent me to read. I cannot believe that the 'Boxer' movement will be very long-lived or cause any serious complications. The day the Chinese authorities choose to put an end to it, they can easily do so. I think they have now realized they must act, and will.*<sup>56</sup>

Even as he wrote those words, the storm was about to break in Peking. On June 11, Conger wrote out a cabled report: 'We are besieged in Peking, entirely cut off from outside communications.'<sup>57</sup> He was proven correct, because the message did not reach Washington until September 25. The siege at Peking had begun.

Rockhill's woefully incorrect assessment reflected his lack of first-hand experience in China for so many years. Riots against foreigners were so common, it was hard to believe that what was happening in Shantung was any different. In past years, the Chinese government had shown it could stop and even prevent such outbreaks if it tried. Rockhill simply could not believe that the situation in 1900 was so much more serious than any in the past. Nor could he believe that the Chinese government, which is to say the Empress Dowager, could be so obtuse as not only to take no action to prevent the Boxer menace from spreading, but actually to abet it. The Chinese were doing precisely what he had warned against in his May *Forum* article. He could not believe that they would act in a manner so obviously against their own best interests. In other words, he failed to appreciate how desperate so many Chinese had come to feel about what was happening in their country.

But even with an opportunity to observe events first-hand in Peking, he might have misjudged the situation. Many foreign residents there who, like Rockhill, had the benefit of extensive experience in China, could not be persuaded in the spring of 1900 that a crisis of unprecedented magnitude was building in Shantung and nearby provinces. On May 26, a journalist for a Shanghai newspaper wrote from Peking, 'Nobody worries

much about the Boxer stories.' In early July, when the siege was at its height, the *Times* of London said that until as late as May 24, private correspondence from Peking gave 'no premonition of the storm which was about to burst'.<sup>58</sup>

By the middle of June, events in China had begun to command space on the front pages of daily newspapers in the United States and Europe. On June 17, Rockhill must have felt shock when he read the headline, 'German Minister Reported Killed'. The Minister was Baron von Ketteler, the same von Ketteler who had brought news of Daisy's birth to Rockhill in Peking in 1887. He was reported murdered by the Boxers. Like all the other news from Peking, this report was based upon a rumor heard in Shanghai and was not confirmed until weeks later. Virtually all the news stories about the situation in northern China were based upon rumors that were usually reported from Shanghai. The news was fragmentary and often contradictory from one day to the next. Much of it was later found to be totally wrong. The news stories consistently conveyed assurance that all would soon be well, because a relief force under the command of a British admiral named Seymour had set out from Tientsin in the middle of June and was advancing along the Tientsin-Peking Railway. Rescue of the besieged diplomats was expected within a matter of days.

Nineteen hundred was an American presidential election year, and the party nominating conventions met during the summer. Reports from the conventions vied with news from China for space on the front pages of the nation's newspapers. The Republican convention opened at Philadelphia on June 19. In Washington, the weather was even hotter than usual, so McKinley had gone off to his home in Canton, Ohio, to escape the capital's muggy weather and await the verdict of the convention. As expected, he was nominated for a second term. Theodore Roosevelt, the governor of New York and war hero of San Juan Hill fame, was chosen to be his running mate. The Democrats met in early July and nominated Bryan for a second try for the presidency. Foreign policy, for perhaps the first time in a presidential election, provided the main issue. Taken up enthusiastically by the Democrats, it was 'imperialism'. McKinley, in his only speech of the summer, accepted his nomination in an address delivered from the front porch of his home in Canton. He defended his administration's actions in Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines, and he singled out the Open Door Notes for praise as a ringing success.

As the weeks passed, news from China grew more alarming. There were still no reliable reports from the legations. Even more ominously, there was also silence from Admiral Seymour's relief force. Toward the end of the month, Seymour was able to get a message through to Tientsin that he was stalled and under siege himself by more than 100,000 Chinese a few miles from Peking. A second relief force was sent out to rescue the rescuers. By the first of July, Seymour and his battered command were back in Tientsin having suffered 374 casualties, and the situation in the legations remained in doubt. What had happened to Seymour's force fueled fears that the foreigners in Peking must have been overwhelmed and massacred.

On July 3, John Hay convened a meeting of the Cabinet to discuss the situation, perhaps because of the disturbing news of Seymour's failure to reach Peking. On the same day, he sent a message to all the Powers that emphasized that the United States did not consider itself at war with China despite what was happening. A definitive

statement of American policy, the message carried the imprint of Rockhill, because it incorporated most of the ideas he had been promoting ever since his return to Washington. The policy of the United States, the message explained, was

*to seek a solution which may bring about permanent safety and peace to China, preserve Chinese territorial and administrative entity, protect all rights guaranteed to friendly Powers by treaty and international law, and safeguard for the world the parts of the Chinese Empire.*<sup>59</sup>

This message has often been lumped with the Open Door Notes of the previous September as part of the Open Door episode. In fact, it has sometimes been confused with the earlier messages. It was significant in stating officially what Rockhill had wanted to put in the original Open Door notes: the United States stood committed to preserve China's territorial integrity. Unfortunately, this message was issued when the crisis in China was reaching its most critical stage, so it was largely ignored by the Powers to whom it was sent. Unlike the earlier Notes, it did not ask for a reply.

Some time in the middle of July, Hay discussed with Rockhill a proposal to send Rockhill to China as the President's special representative. No one knew whether Conger or anyone else in the Peking legations was alive. The continued weeks of silence were transforming fear into a growing conviction that the diplomats must be dead. Another relief expedition was massing in Tientsin, but it had to await the arrival of troops from outside China. On July 19, after McKinley met with the cabinet, the White House announced that Rockhill would go to China. Hay sent him a document signed by the president appointing Rockhill 'Commissioner of the United States of America to China'. The next day, *The Standard* in London said editorially, 'The Washington idea of sending Mr. Rockhill to China is an excellent one, and might advantageously be imitated by the British and other governments.' On July 21, Theodore Roosevelt, now the Republican candidate for vice-president, wrote to Rockhill:

*I felt as if a load were off my mind when it was announced that you were to go to China. 'All things come to him who waits and works while waiting.' Of course, you should have been sent to China three years ago, but it is all right to have you there now. I have not any but the most muddled idea as to what is to happen in China, and as I will have to take the stump, I shall be grateful for any hints you can give me.*<sup>60</sup>

Rockhill replied that 'The best and most concise outline of the policy of the United States in China is contained in the circular instruction sent by the Secretary of State on July 3rd'.<sup>61</sup>

The announcement of Rockhill's appointment also prompted letters—sent to McKinley, not Rockhill—protesting the appointment. As had happened in 1897 when rumors of his appointment to China caused missionaries to protest, angry letters from American missionaries again arrived at the White House. Rockhill, charged one especially irate correspondent, was 'anti-Chinese—no justice from him to them; anti-missionary—the greatest American interests in China are missionaries; anti-Protestant—nearly all American interests in China are Protestant'.<sup>62</sup> The protesters again railed against his supposed Roman Catholicism and consequent inability to represent American interests properly. The letters were routinely forwarded by the White House to the Department of State where Hay, of course, ignored them.

Although no communications had been received from the Legations for weeks, the Chinese Minister in Washington continued to receive messages from China, including some that originated in Peking. On July 11, Hay asked him for permission to use Chinese channels to get a message through to Conger. 'Communicate tidings bearer,' Hay sent in the Department of State's cipher. On July 20, a reply, also in cipher and dated July 16, arrived. 'For one month we have been besieged in British Legation under continued shot and shell from Chinese troops,' it read. 'Quick relief only can prevent general massacre.'<sup>63</sup>

Adee personally decoded the message and pronounced it genuine. But when the news was released, many people doubted its authenticity. For weeks, it had been assumed that everyone in the Legations had been killed. On July 16, the *Daily Mail* in London had published a dispatch from its correspondent in Shanghai entitled 'The Peking Massacre'. It gave a detailed account, quoting authoritative Chinese sources, of a massacre that the report said had occurred on the night of July 6-7. Everyone in the Legations had been killed, it claimed. In Britain, plans were being drawn up for a memorial service in St Paul's Cathedral to honor those slain in Peking.

Hay prevailed upon the Chinese Minister to send one more message as a test to confirm that Conger was still alive. Again using the State Department's code, he asked Conger for the name of his sister, in order to make doubly sure that only the Minister could send a reply. Conger sent the right answer. Hay's exchanges with Conger cast doubt on the accuracy of the *Daily Mail's* widely circulated story. But no more messages were passed, and how much longer the Legations could hold out, if they had not yet been overwhelmed, was anyone's guess.

On July 27, with still no word received from Peking, Hay gave Rockhill his formal written instructions. They were, perforce, brief and vague:

*Though it is not possible at the present moment to lay down the precise lines on which you are to discharge the duties assigned you as Commissioner of the United States to China, as supplementing the general oral instructions previously given you at the Department, it seems pertinent to inform you that your special duty will be to promptly and fully Inform the Department on all subjects coming to your knowledge bearing on the present general condition of affairs in China, and particularly on all points in any way affecting the interests of the United States.*<sup>64</sup>

He would be accompanied only by Edith who planned, at least initially, to stop in Japan. He had no staff, no aides. He had no idea what he might find in Peking. Indeed, he did not know if he would be able to reach Peking. A newspaper report explained:

*Mr. Rockhill does not underestimate the extent of the task set for him by the President ... [It] will 'involve a large amount of travel in China. Mr. Rockhill is of the opinion that it will not be sufficient to merely look into conditions in Shantung Province and, perhaps in Peking, if he can gain access to the capital. He also must visit other provinces and cities where there are disquiet and danger to foreign interests, and this will be fraught with some personal risk.'*<sup>65</sup>

On August 3, accompanied by Edith, he sailed from San Francisco aboard the *America Maru* on his first trip to China in more than seven years, this one more challenging than any of the others.

## Chapter 8

## Negotiating the Boxer Settlement: Peking, 1900-1901

The *America Maru* sliced through the summer seas of the central Pacific in the middle of August, headed for Yokohama after a stopover in Honolulu. Among Rockhill's fellow passengers was an old friend, General James H. Wilson. He had been on duty in Cuba, commanding American occupation troops, when he received urgent orders to proceed to China to command troops sent from the Philippines to rescue the Americans in Peking. He hurried to San Francisco, arriving only a few hours before the ship sailed.

In those days before the introduction of radio communication on shipboard, the *America Maru* was cut off from the outside world with no means of receiving news. So the Rockhills and everyone else aboard must have been unaware that an international Relief Force entered Peking on August 14 to raise the siege of the Legations and rescue the beleaguered foreigners. Those aboard the *America Maru* must have learned of the event only when the ship reached Japan on August 22.

Rockhill stayed a few days in Japan to hold talks with the Japanese Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. He reported to Hay that 'It all looks more muddled from here than from Washington.'<sup>1</sup> But he must have been pleased to report, and Hay must have been pleased to read, the two Japanese leaders' assessment of American policy:

*They both seemed to think that the independent position of the U.S. placed it in a position to play a leading part in formulating plans for negotiations acceptable to all powers.*<sup>2</sup>

The American position that both Hay and Rockhill had doggedly maintained in their instructions to Conger—to act separately from the other Powers, if often concurrently—gave promise of paying dividends in the negotiations that must be held between the Powers and China.

He went on to Shanghai, arriving on August 29. He had two long conversations with Li Hung-chang.<sup>3</sup> The old man had been dismissed from the Tsungli Yamen during the Hundred Days of Reform in 1898, and since then he had been living in a sort of exile in Canton. In June, he had been urgently summoned back to the capital by the Empress Dowager who apparently began dimly to grasp the catastrophe that was unfolding. But the astute Li, realizing that he could do nothing in Peking until the whirlwind spent itself, had been in no hurry to reach the capital. He had been in Shanghai since July 18.

Now, his presence was urgently required in Peking to negotiate with the victorious foreign Powers, but Li appeared still to feel no urgent need to reach the capital. Rockhill had told Hay from Japan that Li, 'notwithstanding his great age and loss of prestige, is the man to conduct negotiations with the Powers'.<sup>4</sup> In Shanghai, Li told him that he was empowered by the Emperor to conduct negotiations, but he 'did not care when the negotiations began'. In their second conversation, 'he was so rough, so impolite that I had to stop the conversation'.<sup>5</sup> 'Peking,' Rockhill told Hay, 'is still practically cut off from the rest of China. No news of any kind, either from the Legations or private

individuals, has been received here.<sup>6</sup>

On September 7, the American Consul in Nanking reported on a conversation he had with the Viceroy, Liu Kun-yi. When he told Liu about Rockhill's mission to China, the Chinese official asked him 'to extend his earnest and cordial invitation' to Rockhill to visit Nanking for a meeting with the Viceroy. Liu promised that he 'would open his heart to [Rockhill] and tell him freely all he knew of the matter'.<sup>7</sup>

First, however, the Commissioner had to get to Peking. He was able to reach Taku, at the mouth of the Peiho River near Tientsin, aboard an American warship, the *U.S.S. New Orleans*. In Tientsin, he found 'foreign troops in complete control of everything and acting much as they would in a conquered city'. There was no cooperation among the various military contingents, and the British and American military commanders feared a possible outbreak of serious trouble between some of them. Looting was commonplace.<sup>8</sup>

From Tientsin to Peking, he travelled in transportation provided by the American military forces. The countryside between the two cities had been abandoned by the Chinese, and the villages lay in ruins. Foreign troops patrolled, and he saw several corpses of Chinese peasants, apparently shot by the soldiers who mistakenly took them to be Boxers. Military officers told him that although there were still bands of Boxers roaming about, they posed no danger.<sup>9</sup>

On September 18, he arrived in Peking where he met, for the first time, Edwin Conger. He consulted with the Minister and with General Adna Chafee who commanded the five thousand American troops that had been sent from the Philippines to join the Relief Force. Their conversations were joined by General Wilson who had proceeded directly to Peking and had arrived before Rockhill.

Much of Peking lay in ruins, especially the area around the Legations which had been the scene of so much fighting. The city was being systematically looted by the victorious Relief Force. From the lowest-ranking privates to generals and even the rescued diplomats themselves, the victorious allies carted off the treasures of the city, and what was not carried away was often wantonly destroyed. Units of soldiers roamed the countryside on punitive expeditions, often killing innocent villagers and looting villages. The pillaging and occasional killing continued for several months.

The Emperor, the Empress Dowager, and the whole court had fled the city just before the arrival of the foreign troops to seek a safe haven at Sian in western China, far removed from Peking. It was the city that had served as the capital of China during the Han and Tang Dynasties, then known as Chang-an. There was no effective Chinese authority in Peking. Whatever order that did exist was due to the presence of the foreign troops. But they were divided into separate national groups without a single commander to issue orders.

A supreme commander of the international force had been designated. Because of the murder of the German Minister, Baron von Ketteler, Kaiser Wilhelm had insisted that a German officer must be placed in command of the Relief Force. A Field Marshal, Count von Waldersee, was selected. But he was in Europe when the siege occurred. Only a small contingent of German troops were on hand in China, and they had not been part of the Relief Force when it entered Peking. Field Marshal von Waldersee arrived in China only in October, too late to command any troops in the relief effort.

However, the troops he brought with him proved to be the most rapacious among all the foreign soldiers. Meanwhile, until his arrival, the cooperation that existed among the various allied forces depended solely upon the good will of the individual commanders.

Back in the United States, the raising of the siege in mid-August had abruptly changed the focus of attention by the government from the safety of the Americans in Peking to consideration of how to deal with the aftermath of the upheaval. John Hay had retreated to his summer home at Lake Sunapee in early August with a high fever. He would remain there for two months. In Washington, the workhorse Alvey Adee served as acting Secretary of State. In the absence of both the President and the Secretary of State, Adee worked in close contact with the recently-appointed Secretary of War, Elihu Root, in dealing with the situation in China. However, he also kept in touch with Hay by mail and telephone.

With the presidential election less than three months off, and with imperialism its main issue, McKinley was acutely conscious of the presence of a force of American soldiers in China. Moreover, General Arthur McArthur in the Philippines was pleading for their prompt return to continue military operations against the Filipino guerrillas. With the siege lifted and the Americans in Peking safe, McKinley proposed to Hay that the American troops be returned to the Philippines and the Legation staff moved to Shanghai.<sup>10</sup> In doing so, he was aligning the United States with Russia who proposed prompt withdrawal of all troops and diplomats from Peking. But Russia's motivation was quite different from McKinley's. The American President wanted to demonstrate that the United States had no desire to grab Chinese territory. Russia sought to have all foreign forces evacuated from northern China in order to give Russia a free hand to move as she pleased in Manchuria.

The lineup of countries that emerged when war broke out in 1914 was far from being sorted out in 1900 in China. In aligning itself with Russia by calling for troop withdrawals, the United States was placing itself in opposition to Britain who, in October, formed an alliance with Germany to oppose Russian machinations in Manchuria. But the British also took steps to see that the Germans were excluded from Britain's principal sphere of influence in the Yangtze valley. It was obvious that the Germans wanted to gain a foothold there. Britain had no intention of removing its troops from northern China until the unsettled situation was resolved. Each of the major Powers was wary and suspicious of the others.

From Peking, Rockhill joined Conger in urging, as strongly as he could, that American troops remain in northern China until Chinese authority could be restored. Hay had written to McKinley to agree that the troops could be withdrawn immediately. But when he received the recommendations from the two men on the spot, he reversed his position, and the troops remained.<sup>11</sup> However, they soon began to be gradually sent back to the Philippines, and by the end of the year, only two-fifths of the number on hand in August were still in China.

From Peking, Rockhill wrote to Hay, 'I think Mr. Conger is in all probability the ablest foreign representative in Peking ... we have hit it off admirably, nothing could have exceeded the cordiality of his reception and the gratefulness of his accepting me as a cooperator. It might have been so awkward for both of us!'<sup>12</sup> Toward the end of the month, Hay wrote to Whitelaw Reid, the wealthy owner of the *New York Tribune* who

was an old friend:

*About China, it is the devil's own mess. We cannot possibly publish all the facts without breaking off relations. We shall have to do the best we can, and take the consequences—which will be pretty serious, I do not doubt ... I take it you agree with us that we are to limit as far as possible our military operations in China, to withdraw our troops at the earliest day consistent with our obligations, and in the final adjustment to do everything we can for the integrity and reform for China, and to hold on like grim death to the Open Door.*<sup>13</sup>

Rockhill remained in Peking only a few days, but he found time to confer with Prince Ching, who had been sent from Sian by the Emperor to deal with the foreigners, and with Sir Robert Hart whose long residence in China had earned him the position of a resident sage. Rockhill reported to Hay that Prince Ching agreed that the Emperor should return to Peking as soon as possible, and he assured Rockhill that the Chinese government would do everything possible to restore order and 'conditions necessary to future cordial relations'. 'In all this,' the Commissioner told Hay, 'I think the Prince was absolutely sincere.'<sup>14</sup>

He departed on September 14 to return to Shanghai. He arrived on the 30th aboard the *U.S.S. Brooklyn*, the flagship of the American Asiatic Fleet that was famous from the battle of Santiago in 1898. His object was to visit the Chinese viceroys in Hankow and Nanking who had been responsible for keeping central and southern China peaceful during the months of upheaval in the north. Their views of the situation would be valuable aids to assessing the prospects for a restoration of Chinese authority in the north, and their cooperation would be crucial.

In Shanghai, he had dinner with Sir Ernest Satow who was on his way to Peking to replace Sir Claude MacDonald as British Minister to China. Satow told Rockhill he was convinced that British policy was identical with American policy, and he urged Rockhill to tell the two Chinese viceroys with whom Rockhill would soon confer that such was the case.<sup>15</sup>

Whether Edith accompanied her husband on his trip to Peking, or whether she remained in Japan or Shanghai, is uncertain. However, it is certain that she accompanied him on his visits to Nanking and Hankow, although they travelled separately. He made the trip aboard an American warship, the *U.S.S. Nashville*, accompanied by several American diplomats recruited in Shanghai as a staff. Edith followed the next day on a commercial river steamer accompanied by the wives of the officials travelling with her husband. The steamer trip was an abrupt introduction for her to the adventure of travel in China. 'The food,' she reported to her family, 'was something perfectly fearful—I could not swallow one thing all day.'<sup>16</sup> The two parties were reunited in Nanking where the Rockhills were the guests of the Chinese viceroy. Edith's crash course on living in the mysterious East continued:

*I must say it is a wee bit of a queer feeling to be set down here, miles from everywhere and the guests of a Chinese. However, I am gradually getting used to it now, though I find China is enough to make anyone a bit nervous.*<sup>17</sup>

At Nanking and Hankow, the Commissioner conferred with the viceroys with whom he was able, of course, to speak directly in Chinese. The talks went well in both places. He had several long meetings with each viceroy and was able to obtain their views in



detail. The Yangtze valley and, indeed, the whole of southern China had remained quiet during the Boxer trouble thanks in large measure to their efforts. Both officials made clear to Rockhill their support for the Powers' efforts to restore order in the north. Rockhill reported to Hay that the two viceroys were 'the only officials sincerely desirous of peace'. They were in danger of being replaced, he told the Secretary, because of their opposition to the Boxers and their sympathy for the actions of the Powers, and he strongly recommended that the United States protest any efforts to remove them. But he also recommended that the United States dissociate itself from the actions of the British who had stationed several gunboats at both cities in an obvious gesture to support the viceroys. Rockhill believed that such an overt show of force only undermined whatever authority and influence within the government the two friendly officials possessed. When the two travellers returned to Shanghai, Edith wrote to her family in Litchfield:

*Will feels well-satisfied with his trip, and feels that these men may be able to save the situation. At all events, he has gotten in touch with the Chinese side of the question.*<sup>18</sup>

Meanwhile, in Peking, Washington, and the capitals of Europe, arrangements for negotiations with the Chinese were inching along. The Powers had first to reach agreement among themselves as to their position on several issues before they could begin negotiations with the Chinese. It became increasingly apparent that the formulation of a Joint Note, setting forth a position agreeable to all the Powers, for presentation to the Chinese would be done by the ministers in Peking rather than a group of special representatives meeting somewhere else. In late October, Conger wrote to Hay:

*As yet, none of the Powers has appointed other than their Ministers to negotiate, or sent advisors or counsel, and I should not like to be the only one for whom such support is deemed necessary. But, realizing the unusual, difficult problem before me, and knowing Mr. Rockhill's familiarity with the views and policies of the Department of State and his experience in important diplomatic work, I should like very much to have his assistance, and hope he has already been instructed to join me.*<sup>19</sup>

He was so instructed, and he and Edith departed Shanghai to return to Peking. This time, they did not travel in pomp aboard an American warship, but rather on a coastal freighter loaded with wood and kerosene, its interior reeking of opium fumes, and towing at dead-slow speed an immense iron lighter. It lacked any amenities for passengers, so the Rockhills had to provide their own bedding, eating utensils and food. Edith reported that the crew constantly smoked cigarettes while working amid the flammable cargo until 'it made my hair stand on end'.<sup>20</sup>

In Tientsin, they found the city to be in a 'state of robbery, confusion, disorder and disgrace'.<sup>21</sup> Peking was more orderly. They moved into the American Legation compound and set up housekeeping in the three rooms that Rockhill had built. These were the ones that had been the source of friction between him and Charles Denby. On their first night in the city, they were the guests of honor at a dinner hosted by General Chaffee.

On October 26, the ministers gathered in the first of many meetings convened to hammer out their joint position to be presented to the Chinese as a basis for negotiations. The Spanish minister happened to be the doyen of the diplomatic corps in Peking, so

the meetings were held at the Spanish Legation with the host minister presiding. The arrangement did not make an awkward situation better. Spain had no stake in China, had taken no part in the relief of Peking, and thus was an inconsequential actor throughout. A few months later, Rockhill described the Spanish minister as 'a perfect old ass', and told Hay about the others who were attending the meetings:

*There is not a man here in the Diplomatic Corps whose opinion carries great weight with his government, everyone is only at best a second-rate man—and Heaven knows the questions involved are big enough to require the best statesmanship at every step!*<sup>22</sup>

The positions of both Rockhill and Conger were awkward, even embarrassing. Only the ministers attended the meetings. No one else had an advisor from his home ministry, and space in the Spanish Legation would not have permitted every minister to have a staff present, so Rockhill could not attend the meetings. The language used was French, but Conger knew no French so he seldom understood what was being discussed. The others made no attempt to provide any translation for him so he could not even explain to Rockhill after a meeting what had been discussed. On a few occasions, the Belgian minister sat next to him and was able to whisper the gist of the discussion. Rockhill thought that in failing to help their colleague the other ministers acted atrociously. Rockhill would buttonhole other ministers after each meeting to learn what had taken place. Conger was also aware that Rockhill was a close friend of the Secretary of State whose confidence he enjoyed, while Conger hardly knew John Hay. He occupied a position of political prestige in the Republican Party, but he could not communicate with Hay in the same manner of easy familiarity as Rockhill.

The ministers wrangled for two months about the joint position they should present to the Chinese. The basis for their discussions was a diplomatic note France had sent to all the Powers in early October. It contained six points that addressed such questions as providing compensation for loss of life or injury, and destruction of property; punishing Chinese leaders who fomented the disturbances; and ensuring that another outbreak by the Boxers would not occur. In more than a dozen meetings, they debated these and other points.<sup>23</sup>

They spent much time on what can only be described as minutiae. A good deal of debate, and many cabled exchanges with home ministries, were devoted to the word 'irrevocable', whether what was to be presented to the Chinese would be, in French, a 'decision irrevocable'. The original suggestion, 'ultimatum', was dropped when Sir Ernest Satow pointed out that, in diplomatic parlance, an ultimatum meant that if it were rejected, armed conflict would ensue. No one wanted a resumption of fighting with the Chinese.

The arguments over 'irrevocable' caused embarrassment for the American minister. The American government decided it was strongly opposed to the use of the word and cabled Conger instructions not to accept it. But a mix-up in coding and decoding cables caused precisely the opposite message to be communicated to poor Conger, and he announced to the group the acceptance of the United States. When the mistake was discovered, the Joint Note was in its final form, ready for presentation to the Chinese. Conger had to announce his mistake and the refusal of the United States to sign the note. This caused a last-minute flurry, and he hurriedly cabled Washington, begging permission to sign the Note anyway. A prompt reply still opposed 'irrevocable'. Only

after Rockhill fired off a telegram explaining that 'further delay most dangerous' and strongly urging 'accepting at once' did Hay and McKinley reluctantly agree to drop their objection in the interest of harmony among the Powers. The incident caused Conger embarrassment with both his colleagues in Peking and his superiors in Washington. Rockhill wrote to Hay:

*I feel sure you were much put out over the retention in the Joint Note of the word 'irrevocable,' but there is no one to blame for it. It resulted simply from one of those inevitable errors which are bound to occur with cipher messages. I am rather inclined to think now that it makes very little difference how we qualify our demands.*<sup>24</sup>

As the diplomats continued to argue, debate and split legalistic and linguistic hairs, chaos continued to reign all around them in Peking and surrounding countryside. On November 20, Rockhill wrote to Hay,

*I sincerely hope the final settlement of all this Chinese muddle is near, but I greatly fear that it is not. At all events, it will certainly be a year before things in this part of China—I mean Tientsin and Peking—begin to assume their normal appearance. The people are only slowly coming back, for they nowhere have any confidence in the offers of protection and freedom to pursue their avocations made them by the foreigners—the Americans and Japanese to a certain degree excepted.*<sup>25</sup>

On December 3, in a letter to Nannie Lodge, he gave a graphic description of the horrors that continued to be visited upon northern China:

*From Taku to Peking, the whole country is in a beautiful state of anarchy, thanks to the presence of foreign troops sent there to restore order. The 'disciplined armies of Europe' are everywhere conducting operations much as the Mongols must have done in the 13th century. Hardly a house remains from the seacoast to Peking which has not been looted of every moveable object it contained, and in half the cases the houses have been burned. Peking has been pillaged in the most approved manner, and from the General down to the lowest camp follower, from the Ministers of the Powers to the last attaché, from the Bishops to the smallest missionary, everyone has stolen, sacked, pillaged, blackmailed and generally disgraced themselves—and it is still going on. Yesterday, my wife and I walked to the Observatory on the wall. The magnificent bronze instruments, some dating probably from the 13th century, were being taken to pieces by French and German soldiers to be sent to Paris and Berlin. These instruments had been left unharmed, untouched for seven centuries but they could not escape the civilized westerners. French and Germans could bury the hatchet for once and rob in the most fraternal manner.*<sup>26</sup>

He concluded,

*This expedition will go down in history as the most disgraceful one of this century—and what breaks my heart is that we should be associated with it, that do what we may, we must bear our share of the shame attached to the manner in which the military operations have been conducted.*<sup>27</sup>

General Chaffee sent a rather stiffly-worded letter to Field Marshal von Waldersee to protest the actions of the German and French troops in removing the ancient astronomical instruments. His letter did not prevent removal of the instruments, but it did prompt a mild rebuke to Chaffee from the War Department for presuming to send such

a communication to the allied commander-in-chief.

On December 24, the Joint Note, embodying twelve demands, was presented to the Chinese. Of the two accredited Chinese negotiators, Prince Ching attended the meeting to accept the Note, but Li Hung-chang was ill and remained away. Somewhat to the surprise of the ministers, the Chinese immediately accepted the Note, as presented, as a basis for negotiations.

On January 1, the *Times* of London published a report that Russia was carrying on separate, secret negotiations with the Chinese designed to gain a free hand for Russia in Manchuria. Moreover, the report claimed, the two countries had signed a secret agreement in Manchuria the previous autumn. The British regarded Li Hung-chang as pro-Russian, and the wily diplomat was suspected of trying to cut a deal separately with Russia and undercut allied unity.

In truth, such negotiations had been going on for months. The Chinese hated and feared Russia more than any other Power, and they had hoped from the beginning to be able to deal with each Power separately, thus using the time-honored Chinese strategy of pitting one barbarian state against another, using barbarians to control barbarians. On January 29, Rockhill wrote to Hay:

*Sir Ernest Satow told me that Li Hung-chang had suggested to him (last Friday, I think) in conversation that the Powers demand of China communication of the negotiations now in progress between it and Russia. China, Li added, would be delighted to communicate them and place itself in the hands of the Powers for protection against Russia whose demands it could not deny and whose constant threats terrified it.*<sup>28</sup>

A little later he told Hay, 'Altogether, Russia is having and will in all probability continue to have everything her way in this part of the world.'<sup>29</sup>

On February 19, Hay sent a diplomatic note to the Chinese minister in Washington expressing the opposition of the United States to private negotiations and its 'sense of the impropriety, inexpediency, and even extreme danger to the interests of China of considering any private territorial or financial arrangements, at least without the full knowledge and approval of all the Powers now engaged in negotiation'.<sup>30</sup> A copy was sent to all the other Powers. Britain and Japan were also disturbed by the idea that separate, secret negotiations might be going on, and they warned the Chinese that they should break them off, if the *Times* report was correct. Whether Hay's thrust and the warnings from Britain and Japan had any effect is uncertain, but on April 5, Russia sent a note saying, in a roundabout way, that the secret talks had been broken off.<sup>31</sup>

The negotiations with the Chinese, based upon the Joint Note of December 24, opened in early January. On most of the twelve points in the Note, there was little to debate. Agreement was reached with reasonable promptness on such questions as the size of the Legation Quarter in Peking (it would be greatly enlarged), the razing of the forts at Taku, the prevention of a renewal of Boxer propaganda, restrictions on the importation of arms, and most of the others. On only two articles was there disagreement, but they provoked debate that caused the negotiations to drag on for eight months: the punishment of Chinese officials responsible for the deaths of foreigners; and the indemnity China must pay to the offended Powers.

Ever since the relief of the Legations in August, everyone, including the Chinese,

had assumed that Chinese officials responsible for the upheaval must be punished. Li Hung-chang had urged the Court to punish the worst offenders immediately in order to make the negotiations with the victorious Powers run more smoothly. An Edict was issued in September decreeing punishments, but it was considered by the Powers to mete out punishment that was too mild to too few guilty parties. Germany proposed that the guilty officials be turned over to the Powers for punishment as a condition to get negotiations started, but that idea was rejected.

The negotiators debated who should be punished and what their punishment should be. More than two hundred missionaries had been murdered in the provinces. Germany led the Powers in demanding the death penalty for those responsible, but the Chinese balked. Some of the condemned might be members of the Imperial family, and the Chinese could not accept the idea of executing them. The worst punishment that could be given to princes of the blood, the Chinese negotiators said, was banishment to the western deserts. The Powers had agreed that the Chinese must deal out the punishment, whatever it was, and the United States argued against demanding punishment that the Chinese would probably find some way to avoid actually implementing.

To a large degree, the question was moot. The Powers did not know the identities of all the minor officials and others scattered around the country who might have been responsible for the murders, and they had no practical means of finding out. Many of the most notorious leaders of the uprising had committed suicide after it collapsed. Nevertheless, the issue prompted lengthy discussion and debate.

The question of the indemnity was the knottiest. How much should it be? That question generated a host of others. How much could China pay? How was it to be calculated, in one lump sum, then to be divided among the Powers (as the United States urged), or sums calculated individually for each Power? How was it to be denominated, in gold, silver or some other currency? From what source, or sources, in China would the money be drawn? In December, Sir Ernest Satow had suggested three general categories of indemnity: first, for damage to government property, death or injury to people holding official positions, and the war expenditures of the Powers; second, for damage to private property of companies, religious institutions and private individuals, and death or injury to private individuals, including missionaries; third, for damage, injury or death to Chinese who suffered because they were employed by foreigners. If the Powers had been in accord about basic principles, the technicalities of the problem would have been formidably complex, in view of all the multitude of people and organizations seeking compensation. With the Powers divided and suspicious of each other, the issue became maddeningly intricate.

When discussions began in January, a figure of \$200 million was proposed. Sir Robert Hart had earlier estimated that the maximum amount China could possibly pay, based upon customs receipts, was \$250 million. The figure grew ever larger as the debate went on, month after month. The discussions were hampered by the need of the ministers to communicate with their home ministries, and communications were not always completed promptly. The Russians in particular appeared to have trouble receiving instructions from St Petersburg. The ineptness of the Spanish Minister as chairman did nothing to help the situation.

Rockhill and Conger continued to suffer from their awkward situation. In the

November election, McKinley had been re-elected, so Conger was not required to submit his resignation as custom dictated when a new president took office. Presumably, both he and Rockhill would have resigned if McKinley had lost. Rockhill could easily have employed his relationship with Hay to undercut Conger, but he did not. On December 1, he had written to Hay:

*Conger tells me he has had quite enough of China, he will probably request the President to give him some other Mission. He says he would like Mexico or Japan. I don't like to think of our interests out here, during this critical period, in the hands of a new Minister, without special knowledge of China. But Conger is doing so well, as results show, that I hope he may get what he wants.*<sup>32</sup>

On January 9, he reported to Hay,

*[Conger] is most anxious to do exactly as you tell him and is a dear, good fellow with good judgment ... probably no one in his place could do better.*<sup>33</sup>

But a little later, he also told Hay, '[Conger's] trouble is that he does not assert himself sufficiently'.<sup>34</sup>

*As for myself, with endless meetings giving no sign of reaching a conclusion, I shall be heartily glad to leave here. I have never had to work under such difficult conditions and with such small results.*<sup>35</sup>

By February 18, he was reporting to Hay,

*I feel very sorry for Conger who is most solicitous to carry out your views, but who now feels, I greatly fear, that he has lost your confidence. The papers also say he does not seek my advice. That is not true. He consults with me on everything, but as I cannot take part in the proceedings, where he is obliged to sit silently through his ignorance of French, my advice and his views hardly ever are expressed where or when they can be of use. What little I have been able to do has been through private conversations with various Ministers.*<sup>36</sup>

Three days later, Conger approached Rockhill to say that he realized more fully every day that he was unable adequately to defend American interests in the negotiations. He planned, he explained, to request leave and to recommend that Rockhill take over as the American representative. The switch was approved by Washington, and on March 11, the Congers departed China for the home leave they had no doubt been looking forward to for months. The Rockhills, to Edith's relief, moved from their cramped three-room quarters into the Minister's Residence. The press speculated that Conger planned to resign from the Department of State to run for governor of Iowa or some other elected office. But by summer, he was scheduled to return to his post in Peking, although Rockhill remained as American representative at the negotiations until their conclusion.

As was his custom, Rockhill threw himself wholeheartedly into his expanded responsibilities. Edith was delighted with her husband's new position, although it meant more work for him and less time for him to spend with her. She wrote to her family,

*Will has been at several more meetings, and enjoys the work very much and is head over heels in it. I hardly see him any more these days.*<sup>37</sup>

Whether he enjoyed the work is debatable. His private letters to Hay spoke constantly of frustration at the glacial pace of the negotiations and often expressed contempt for several of his fellow negotiators.

Edith, however, was thoroughly enjoying her first experience as the wife of a senior

American diplomat. There was an endless round of social events—dinners, teas, receptions. Seated next to Field Marshal von Waldersee at a formal dinner, Edith found him 'hard to amuse'. Von Waldersee, posed in uniform, is in the collection of pictures that Edith or her heirs rejected. There were rides in the country, badminton games and other sports. Both Rockhills took up tennis 'with a vengeance'. The British organized tent-pegging exhibitions and horse races. On New Year's Day, the Germans held a military review on the Palace grounds that Edith thought was 'a magnificent sight'. It was followed by reviews by the other national military contingents. She admired the American troops: 'Our men are certainly fine fellows, and way beyond the average of other armies.' She proudly reported that five thousand Chinese had signed a petition asking that the American troops remain in China. But she also noted their frequent drunkenness. In January, a memorial service was held on the occasion of the death of Queen Victoria. Edith reported to her family that 'the days fly by', and she could not believe she had already been in China several months.<sup>38</sup>

During his years in France and China, Rockhill became friendly with many non-Americans. In fact, to judge from the comments about him that have survived in letters and memoirs, he may have had amicable relationships with more non-Americans than with his fellow countrymen. During his stay in Peking as Commissioner of the United States to China, he made the acquaintance of two non-Americans who became life-long friends and admirers: Valentine (later, Sir Valentine) Chirol and George Ernest Morrison.

Chirol headed the Foreign News Department of the *Times* of London. An avid traveller, he visited India no less than seventeen times and wrote several books about his journeys in the subcontinent, the Middle East and China. He had visited China twice in the 1890s, in 1895 in the wake of the Sino-Japanese War, and in 1898 when the scramble for spheres of influence was shifting into high gear. He made his third visit after the suppression of the Boxer uprising. He went first to Shanghai in the autumn of 1900 and travelled far up the Yangtze River to the gorges. He then moved north to Peking, arriving in February. He was shocked at the condition of the city he had last seen in 1898.

Chirol was introduced to Rockhill by the correspondent of the *Times* in Peking, George Morrison. An Australian, Morrison was, like Chirol, a tireless traveller. While still a youth in Australia, he made two incredible walking tours of more than five hundred miles each, one completely across the continent from north to south. In 1893, he walked, dressed as a Chinese and alone, from Shanghai overland to Rangoon, Burma. During his subsequent years of residence in China, he visited every province except Tibet. He arrived in China as the *Times's* correspondent in 1895.

By 1901, Morrison had become something of a legend in China. His reports had made the *Times* the leading and most respected purveyor of news and analysis about China in the Western world (a position it would relinquish when he left the paper in 1912). During the siege of the legations by the Boxers, he had performed some heroic acts that earned him still more respect and admiration. After the siege was lifted, he had the unusual experience of reading his own obituary in the *Times* which had been published when it was believed that everyone in the legations had been massacred.

Morrison apparently was a born newsman. He cultivated important contacts, including such invaluable news sources as William Pethick, the American Sinologist who served

as Li Hung-chang's private secretary. Pethick fed Morrison a regular stream of items from Li's private correspondence (with Li's knowledge and tacit consent) that allowed the *Times* to beat its competition regularly. The *Times*'s scoop in January 1901, that Li Hung-chang was holding secret negotiations with the Russians was obviously the result of a tip-off from Pethick to Morrison. Edmund Backhouse worked as a translator and news-gatherer for Morrison when Backhouse first arrived in China, several years before he began his collaboration with J.O.P. Bland.

Bland was an imperialist, but with varied experience in China. He lived in his final years to see his views discredited. In his 1932 book, *China, the Pity of It*, he bemoaned the 'sapping of the masculine element', the 'fallacious assumption that all men are equal', and the tendency in England, after W.W.I, to favor foreign nationalist sentiments and oppose those at home. He could already see the dangers to the Britain he had known, from Adolf Hitler, and the loss of India. He opposed the British Labour Party and its way of thinking, to give help to those whom he believed didn't merit it.

The influence and prestige enjoyed by correspondents of the *Times* all over the world a century ago is rarely, if ever, duplicated today among newsmen. The *Times* of London was regarded as practically an organ of the British government—the government of the then most powerful country in the world—and what it published was read avidly everywhere as ex-cathedra announcements from London. Correspondents of the *Times* often functioned practically as co-equals with British diplomats. At the famous conference of the Great Powers at Algeciras, Spain, in 1906, the *Times*'s correspondent, Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, kept in close touch throughout with the official British representative, Sir Arthur Nicholson. 'I am very glad,' Nicholson wrote, 'that Mackenzie Wallace is here. I talk most freely to him, feeling absolute confidence in his discretion. He has a cool head and his opinion is worth having.' The Germans thought that Mackenzie Wallace had been sent by Whitehall to keep an eye on Nicholson.<sup>39</sup>

In Peking, George Morrison visited the British Legation regularly, often on a daily basis if some important issue was being dealt with, and he had virtually unlimited access to the British minister. He was certainly more famous, and probably more highly respected as a Sinologist, than any of the British ministers who served in Peking during his many years there.

The relationship between Morrison and Rockhill was the familiar one of mutual benefit between a foreign correspondent and a diplomat. Morrison was not a scholar of China like Rockhill. He never learned to read or speak Chinese. But he had a nose for news and nurtured a wide variety of news sources. If he was not as knowledgeable as Rockhill about Chinese history, he had become an expert on contemporary China. He was no doubt a valuable source of information and advice about contemporary events in China for the American diplomat. Rockhill, both because of his knowledge as a scholar, his ability to speak and understand Chinese, his relative lack of race prejudice, and his official position, was valuable to Morrison. He apparently was quite open in discussing delicate, official subjects with the journalist. In 1906, after he became well acquainted with Rockhill, Morrison wrote to Chirol:

[Rockhill] is the most pro-Chinese of all the Ministers and his relations in consequence with the high Chinese officials are more than usually cordial ... He is a warm-hearted fellow and is quite glad to do anything he can for us. He speaks



*with more freedom than most diplomatists.*<sup>40</sup>

Like so many of the China Hands who became Rockhill's friends, Morrison developed not only a warm personal relationship with him but also deep professional respect for his understanding of China. After Rockhill's death, Morrison wrote to a Chinese friend:

*The late Mr. Rockhill [was] one of the most distinguished of American ministers and one of the men most sincerely sympathetic to China.*<sup>41</sup>

The Rockhills saw a good deal of Morrison at dinners and other social events. Edith thought the thirty-five-year-old journalist was 'quite handsome'. Rockhill carefully maintained contact with both Chirol and Morrison after he departed Peking upon conclusion of the Boxer negotiations, and they reciprocated.

In March, General Chaffee informed Rockhill that he had received orders to withdraw the remainder of the American troops from China, leaving only a small Legation guard. The War Department had begun communicating about withdrawal in February, and mounted units had already begun to withdraw to the coast to eliminate the need of shipping fodder to Peking for the horses. Rockhill fired off a telegram to protest, saying that the withdrawal 'will be highly prejudicial to our interests' and 'weakens us in the discussion of any military questions'.<sup>42</sup> But the withdrawal went forward, and Chaffee departed Peking on May 23 with all remaining troops except the Legation guard. In July, Chaffee replaced Arthur Mac Arthur as commander in the Philippines.

Rockhill tried to persuade the group of negotiators to focus on such questions as maintaining the territorial integrity of China, of reform in the Chinese government, of maintaining the Open Door. He realized that this was the time when fundamental reforms could be demanded and put into effect. But the ministers preferred to focus their attention on punishing guilty Chinese officials and, especially, on the indemnity. The small Powers, with no commercial stake in China, were interested purely in the amount of money they could extract. The trading nations—Britain, France and Germany—had more complicated concerns. While seeking the maximum payments, they also had to ensure that the amounts were not so great as to force China to raise tariffs to ruinous levels, increase taxes, perhaps cripple the economy and thereby adversely affect the trade and other commercial interests of the Powers. The ministers decided to appoint a Commission of Indemnities, consisting of the British, French and Japanese ministers, to investigate Chinese revenues in detail to determine precisely how much indemnity the country could pay. A second commission, made up of the German, French, British and Japanese ministers, was appointed to look into means of payment.

On April 18, Rockhill wrote to Hay,

*I feel sure that you, like myself and all those who are sincerely desirous of bringing this miserable muddle out here to an end, are much put out at the way everything is hanging fire.*<sup>43</sup>

He described his fellow ministers, one by one:

*The Russian representative, since the Manchurian convention has been dropped, appears perfectly willing to see negotiations here drag on indefinitely, and to help waste as much time as possible over details of no special importance. The German Minister is apparently hampered at every turn by his military men. The policy of Germany out here seems to be to secure control of the diplomatic negotiations through the preponderance of its military. The French Minister is apparently*

*willing to do anything which puts the German in a false position, and the British is delighted to do the same as regards Russia. Italy follows closely in the wake of Great Britain, and Japan, after her recent show of determination concerning the Manchurian agreement, seems to be willing to wait without saying anything for the European Powers to take some step concerning the indemnity and the evacuation of the Expeditionary Forces.*<sup>44</sup>

Unlike some of his colleagues, notably the British Minister, Rockhill was given wide latitude in presenting the American positions. He was intimately familiar with American policy, he agreed with it, and he knew the thinking of the American Secretary of State, so Hay and McKinley gave him only general guidelines and allowed him to use his own judgment in presenting and defending American policy in the discussions. Even so, he had to request instructions from Washington on several occasions about technical questions having to do with the indemnity. After several months had gone by, and several requests for instructions had arrived in Washington, Hay sent a cable which reveals how impatient Washington had become to see the negotiations wound up (and demonstrates the Secretary's confidence in his negotiator's judgment):

*Take whatever course seems expedient to assist in bringing matters to conclusion.*<sup>45</sup>

Sir Ernest Satow, by contrast, was given no latitude at all by the new British Foreign Secretary, Lord Lansdowne, who appeared to wish to control all British decisions in London. The other Ministers sometimes grumbled that the British slowed down the pace of negotiations because every question was referred to London.

American policy on the question of punishment of guilty officials, as on indemnities, consistently took a position lenient with the Chinese. Indeed, it was so much so, that some of the other ministers, notably the French and German, complained that the United States appeared to want to see the Chinese avoid any punishment at all. When the question was finally resolved, only four persons were condemned to death and a much smaller number than originally presumed guilty were given lesser sentences. When the decisions were announced and reported to Washington, John Hay wrote a note to McKinley:

*Rockhill now informs me that the Ministers have indubitable evidence that a considerable proportion of those officials for whom the other Powers were demanding a death sentence are entirely innocent of any wrong-doing, and that a considerable number of the others were much less culpable than was at first thought. It is perfectly clear that if we had not interfered and called a halt to the pursuit of vengeance, the blood of innocent men would have now been on the hands of the Christian world.*<sup>46</sup>

On May 1, the Commission on Indemnities made its report. It recommended a total indemnity of 450 million Haekwan taels. A tael was an unminted piece of silver with a value according to its weight. In the primitive Chinese currency system, it was the principal medium of exchange, along with copper coins. There were several different taels, and they were not uniform in weight or value. The Shanghai tael, used for most of the banking transactions in the treaty ports, was slightly smaller, and therefore worth slightly less, than the Haekwan tael. According to the price of silver in the summer of 1901, a Haekwan tael was worth \$74, so the indemnity totaled \$333 million.

The United States claimed a lump sum of 34 million taels, or \$25 million, the least of any of the major Powers and only slightly more than Italy. It represented about 7½

percent of the total indemnity. The shares of Russia and Germany together represented 49 percent. Some of the others thought the amount claimed by the Americans was ridiculously low.

In June, the Emperor in Sian (in reality, the Empress Dowager) issued an edict to the effect that 'our Sacred Mother's advanced age' dictated that the court should return to Peking after the hot summer weather ended. It fixed September 1 as the date the court would depart Sian to return to the capital.

The meetings continued their weary round through the spring and into the summer. The principal subject for discussion was how the indemnity was to be paid. Agreement was reached in July, and work began on a draft of a Protocol setting forth the terms. But in August, the British and the Russians had a disagreement over a technicality, and there was more delay. By the end of August, agreement was reached for a second time, and the Protocol was made ready for signing. The indemnity would be paid by thirty-year bonds issued by the Chinese government paying 4 percent interest. The bonds would be financed by raising the tariff. The amount was denominated in Haekwan taels, but each recipient country could choose whether to receive payment in gold, silver, its own currency, or some other medium of exchange.

In early September, one last hitch occurred when Kaiser Wilhelm insisted that the Chinese delegates at the signing perform the kowtow before the German delegates. It was the same act of prostrating oneself that all foreign envoys had always objected to performing before the Chinese emperor. But the delay was brief, because no other country supported the German proposal. Edith wrote:

*It has been a funny game—has ended in the complete victory of the Chinese, to everyone's delight, as the demand was too outrageous coming from a civilized Power—one which has always objected to the Kowtow.*<sup>47</sup>

The Protocol of twelve articles and numerous annexes was signed on September 7, with Rockhill signing for the United States. It was not the agreement sought by Hay or Rockhill, but it would have been much harsher on China except for the Americans' consistent efforts to ameliorate the demands. When the terms emerged clearly from the discussions, Rockhill wrote to Hay,

*It is true that the proposal of the United States to scale down the indemnity has not met with the approval of a single one of the Powers, but our insistence in the cause of moderation has unquestionably been instrumental in forcing them to limit their demands. Had it not been for our endeavors, China would, without a doubt, have been obliged to consent to infinitely harder terms than those which will be probably submitted. In numerous other ways, the United States has been able to exercise a moderating influence in the councils of the Powers, while still maintaining the concert which, clumsy as it undoubtedly is, is still, as long as it exists, a tolerable guarantee of the maintenance of Chinese integrity and of equal trade privileges for all the world.*<sup>48</sup>

His pride of accomplishment was leavened with a large admixture of relief that the whole detestable business was nearing its long-delayed end. In July, when it appeared that the Protocol was about to be signed, he had written to Hippisley:

*I am sick and tired of the whole business and heartily glad to get away from it. I have been able to do something for commercial interests, and in a number of points have been able to carry out the Secretary's views, but have been practically*

*alone in the negotiations ... I trust it may be a long time before the United States gets into another muddle of this description.*<sup>49</sup>

Edith nevertheless felt proud of her husband and what he had accomplished:

*Will has had nothing but praise on all sides—he has been very successful in everything he has attempted to do, and though we have not gotten all we wanted, we have vastly more than ever seemed possible.*<sup>50</sup>

As he signed the Protocol, Rockhill—and everyone else at the ceremony—must have just become aware of startling news flashed over the wires from the United States: President McKinley had been shot on the afternoon of September 6 as he visited an international exposition in Buffalo, New York. They probably knew only that bare fact on September 7 in China, across the International Date Line from the United States. Two bulletins issued by the President's doctors on the evening of September 6 in Buffalo, after they operated on the President, were reassuring in saying that the president was rallying and resting comfortably.

The Commissioner of the United States of American to China and Mrs Rockhill departed Peking the day after the signing of the Protocol, his assignment completed. 'All the world came to the station to bid us bon voyage,' Edith wrote with obvious pleasure. Rockhill was no doubt happy to be finally free from the endless debates of the negotiations. In all, more than seventy meetings had been held to reach agreement on the terms of the Boxer settlement. It marked the first time that the United States sat down at an international conference as an equal with the Great Powers of the world to negotiate a major agreement to settle a military conflict involving the Powers. It represented another step by the United States—following the war with Spain, and the participation of American troops in the international Relief Force in China—out of its traditional continental isolation into the arena of international politics. But it must have been clear to Rockhill as he sailed for home, and to everyone else involved in the tortuous negotiations, that the problems that produced the Boxer upheaval had not been solved.

They spent three days in Tientsin waiting for their steamer. They were entertained at dinners and luncheons, one hosted by Charles Denby Jr, who was in private business in Tientsin. Edith had with her only one evening gown, but decided she would not worry about her monotonous wardrobe since she was the only woman present at the dinners.

When they departed Tientsin, their ship sailed first to Shanghai to pick up additional passengers. As they steamed up the Whangpu River toward the city, they noticed all flags flying at half-mast. When the ship docked, they learned that President McKinley, who had appeared to be recovering from his wound, had suddenly taken a turn for the worse and died a week after being shot. A memorial service, organized by the American Consul-General, was attended by officers and crews of ships docked at the port and the entire consular corps. So when Rockhill set sail for home on September 20, he knew that his friend and supporter, Theodore Roosevelt, was in the White House.

The Emperor, Empress Dowager and the court had not departed Sian on September 1 as announced in the June edict, because bad weather made the roads in western China impassable. The departure was finally made on October 24, and a fantastic procession of sedan chairs, two thousand carts, cavalry units, mounted officials, thousands of flags and a whole corps of coolies smoothing the track ahead set out on a lurching, screeching

700-mile journey to Peking. The final stage was accomplished by train, which included a special coach provided by the Powers for the Imperial family and its retainers. It was the first time China's rulers travelled in the 'fire cars' that were exerting such a profound influence on the Celestial Kingdom.

When the incredible procession reached Peking, it paused before the great Gate of Heavenly Peace at the entrance to the Forbidden City. Above the gate loomed the blackened, half-destroyed ruins of the great tower that had formerly arched over the huge gate. One onlooker, an Italian midshipman named Don Rodolpho Borghese, later described the unforgettable scene:

*There was a strong wind and much dust, but all Peking had collected on top of the wall. We could not have chosen a better place to watch it from. First to arrive were the Manchu bannermen on their fiery little horses. Next came a group of Chinese officials in ceremonial robes, and finally the Imperial palanquins, which advanced at almost incredible speed between two ranks of kneeling soldiers. The higher the rank of the person carried in the palanquin, the faster he should go. The Court chairs seemed to move as fast as the Tartar cavalry.*

*When they reached the enclosure between the wall and the outer lunette, the chairs halted, and the Emperor and the Empress Dowager stepped down to carry out the ceremonies prescribed by the Book of Rites for a homecoming, that is to say, to burn incense and recite prayers in the tiny temple built up against the side of the wall. In that temple there is a shrine to the tutelary gods of the Manchus. As she got out of her chair, the Empress Dowager looked up at the smoke-blackened walls and saw us: a row of foreigners, watching her arrival from behind the ramparts. The eunuchs seemed to be trying to get her to move on, as it was not seemly that she should remain there in full view of everybody. But the Empress was not to be hurried, and continued to stand between two of her ladies who held her up under the arms on either side, not because she needed support but because such is the custom in China.*

*At last she condescended to move, but before entering the temple where the priests were all ready to begin the ceremony, she stopped once more and, looking up at us, lifted her closed hands under her chin and made a series of little bows.*

*The effect of this gesture was astonishing. We had all gone up on the wall in the hopes of catching a glimpse of the terrible Empress, whom the West considered almost an enemy of the human race. But we had been impressed by the magnificence of the swiftly moving pageant and by the beauty of the picturesque group, by the palanquins of yellow satin flashing with gold. Something told us that the return of the Court to Peking was a turning-point in history, and in our breathless interest we forgot our resentment against the woman who was responsible for so much evil.*

*That little bow, and the graceful gesture of the closed hands, took us by surprise. From all along the wall there came, in answer, a spontaneous burst of applause. The Empress Dowager appeared pleased. She remained there a few minutes longer, looking up and smiling.*<sup>51</sup>

Then the single person most responsible for the death, destruction and misery visited upon China the year before entered the little temple and performed her ceremony. She passed once again through the great Gate of Heavenly Peace into the Forbidden City, and the Boxer drama ended.

## Advisor to Roosevelt and Hay: Washington, 1901-1905

The Rockhills arrived at Victoria, British Columbia, aboard the *Empress of Japan* on October 17 and proceeded on to Washington. Rockhill turned over to the Department of State the official version of the Boxer Protocol. He resumed his position as Director of the International Bureau of the American Republics. As had been the case in 1899, everyone may have considered the position a temporary expedient until he could be placed in a position in the Department of State. John Hay continued to serve as Secretary of State, so Rockhill enjoyed the good fortune of serving under both a president and a secretary of state who were old friends.

On November 30, Rockhill submitted to Hay his report on the Boxer settlement negotiations. He provided a brief account of the negotiations, the main points of American policy, and the principal provisions of the protocol. The bulk of the thick document is a complete collection of the official communications exchanged between Peking and Washington and the full text of the protocol. On December 11, Roosevelt sent it as a special message to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. It was published as an appendix to the 1901 volume in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series. It remains a valuable historical document.

The Rockhills resumed their place in Washington society. Edith had barely had time to become acquainted in the city before leaving for China, so she set about getting to know her husband's circle of friends. At dinners and teas, she and her husband became active in Washington's social life. On November 7, the new president and his wife hosted their first formal dinner at the White House. Among the fourteen guests were the Rockhills.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, within a few months, Rockhill was already hoping for an opportunity to return to Asia. On February 2, Henry Adams wrote to Elizabeth Cameron, 'The caitiff Rockhill is trying to get back to China! What a tom-cat he is!'<sup>2</sup> By summer, however, his desire for a quick return was waning. He was finding life in Washington rather pleasant. Working on important foreign policy issues under both a secretary of state and a president who were close friends was both challenging and rewarding. In August, while on a vacation in Évian-les-Bains in France, he wrote to Hippisley:

*The President some months ago told me he wanted me to go back to China as Minister as soon as he could get Conger out. I said I would go, though I did not want the place at all but would much like to go to Japan. I know no more about it than that. For the time being—ever since my return home last autumn—I have held the confidential position of advisor to the Department of State on Chinese affairs. If I must meddle in Chinese matters, I prefer to do so from Washington where I can more easily and effectively urge my views than from the Legation in Peking. There is a possibility of my going back to the Department as Assistant Secretary again for a while in case the present Assistant can be got out*

*—he wants an Embassy—but as this will entail a serious loss of income for me, I don't care for it.*<sup>3</sup>

He was not appointed Assistant Secretary, and one reason may have been that Hay and Roosevelt found the unorthodox arrangement for Rockhill in Washington congenial. There were not yet any geographical bureaus in the Department of State. There was no position of Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs, as there is now, which permits the incumbent to concentrate on Asian matters. If Rockhill had moved into the Department as Assistant Secretary, he would have had to devote much of his time to diplomatic issues in other parts of the world and to administrative and consular problems. Issues connected with Asia were important to American foreign policy in the first decade of the century, and the President and the Secretary of State needed someone like Rockhill, with long experience and expert knowledge of the area, in a position in which he could devote all his time to it. The Rockhills, especially Edith, were probably also enjoying the social life of Washington, despite his general aversion to social functions. In August, having no doubt hosted the Rockhills several times at 1603 H Street, that inveterate gossip and socializer, Henry Adams, wrote to Elizabeth Cameron, 'Mrs. Rockhill appears to be a qualified success socially; she dines here this evening.'<sup>4</sup>

Two months after the Rockhills departed China and exactly two months before the Empress Dowager and her retinue returned to Peking, Li Hung-chang died in the capital. He was seventy-nine years old. He had long been considered, at least in the West, China's premier statesman of the nineteenth century. Although not a Manchu, he had served the Manchu rulers for forty years and had directed China's foreign relations with the Powers for a quarter-century. He was regarded as a formidable opponent by Western diplomats. In all his diplomatic negotiations, Li had always faced opponents who not only held all the trumps and aces, but who knew that Li held no worthwhile cards at all. Nevertheless, he had, by adroit maneuvering and astute reading of his opponents' relationships, extracted the most favorable results possible for China. His reputation was tainted by persistent rumors that he took advantage of his powerful position to enrich himself. It was said that he was one of the richest men in the world, although no one in the West actually knew the extent of his wealth. His family engaged in extensive cultivation of the opium poppy at a time when the Western Powers were trying to assist China in stamping out the opium evil. He was arrogant and considered untrustworthy. The British were convinced he was pro-Russian.

But Li had also long been a strong advocate of reform in China, not necessarily in the direction of democracy but to learn from the West to strengthen China economically and militarily so as to make the country more formidable politically. A Western biographer wrote of him:

*With all his faults, he was for thirty years the one man whose influence was generally admitted to be the most hopeful sign of China's long-expected and still-deferred awakening.*<sup>5</sup>

There was no one in China who could replace Li Hung-chang, and his absence would be felt.

As the year 1902 opened, China was trying to recover from the disruptions of the Boxer chaos and its aftermath. After the Empress Dowager and her retinue returned to Peking, a measure of normalcy was restored to the capital, perhaps too much of a return

to the status quo ante. The Empress Dowager lost no time in starting to smooth relations with the Powers after the Boxer debacle, perhaps encouraged by the reception she received from the foreign gallery who witnessed her return from atop the city wall. On January 28, she and the Emperor received the members of the diplomatic corps in a formal audience, the first time the Empress Dowager appeared in public in an audience with the foreign ministers.<sup>6</sup>

Three days later, she received the ladies of the diplomatic corps. Mrs Conger was the doyenne, so she delivered a brief address in response to the Empress Dowager's words of welcome. The ladies of the diplomatic corps, including Mrs Conger, had been received by Tzu Hsi once before. Mrs Conger subsequently met her on several occasions and came to like and respect her. In her memoirs of her years in Peking, Mrs Conger, who had suffered through the siege of the legations, painted a very positive, even flattering portrait of the Old Buddha, quite at variance with her popular image as an ogre.

China was quiet after the Boxer uproar, except for the familiar occasional outbursts against missionaries and other foreigners which quickly spent themselves, and it largely receded from the consciousness of decision-makers in Washington. With the Philippine insurrection all but completely suppressed, attention in Washington switched back to the western hemisphere. The long-standing disagreement with Canada and Britain over the Canadian-Alaskan boundary continued to give trouble. A dispute with Germany over Venezuela flared. Disagreement arose among several countries over fishing in the Grand Banks off Newfoundland. Most importantly, efforts toward building an isthmian canal were redoubled.

The new President was seized with these and other subjects and took little part in the diplomacy of eastern Asia during 1902 and much of 1903. Roosevelt was a man of strong beliefs and convictions, and when he did focus his attention on eastern Asia, those convictions became apparent in American policies during his administration. He felt contempt for China as a weak country that had allowed its destiny to be determined by others. In his autobiography, he mentioned China only briefly to offer it as an example of a country not strong militarily and therefore at the mercy of other countries. In the election campaign of 1900, during and immediately after the siege of the legations in Peking, he repeatedly told voters that China 'invites aggression from without, and incites her own people to ferocious and hideous barbarism.'<sup>7</sup> Japan, by contrast, he admired as a strong country that had, against odds, achieved parity with the Great Powers of Europe. For Russia, he felt a strong aversion, as did John Hay, as a country whose spokesmen consistently lied. Not surprisingly, he admired Germany as a powerful country, but he also thought that if the United States were ever drawn into a war with one of the Great Powers, it would be with Germany.

If Roosevelt was interested in an area or subject, his habit was to conduct very personal diplomacy through the diplomats, journalists, businessmen and others, both American and foreign, with whom he was intimately acquainted. Three of his confidants with whom he maintained extensive, candid and very uncensored correspondence on sensitive diplomatic subjects were senior European diplomats: Cecil Spring-Rice, the British diplomat who had been a regular at Henry Adams's breakfast table; Jules Jusser of France; and Speck von Sternburg of Germany. Roosevelt's style differed greatly from his predecessor's. He maintained an enormously wide acquaintance with a variety of people,



and he preferred to deal through them rather than established government channels.

With China on a back burner of the American diplomatic stove for the time being, it may be that Rockhill found time to devote to promoting the activities of businessmen in Latin America, as his position was intended to do. His primary responsibility, nevertheless, continued to be China. On January 5, *The New York Times* published his article entitled 'Future of American Trade in China' as part of a special supplement on the prospects for international trade. He offered an optimistic forecast for American trade prospects, but he warned that American businessmen must better tailor their products to overseas markets if American exports were to increase.

On May 21 he was the guest of honor at the annual banquet of the American Asiatic Association held at Delmonico's restaurant in New York. Created four years earlier, the group was composed mostly of businessmen. The subject of his remarks was therefore trade prospects in Asia. However, he did not limit his observations strictly to commercial subjects. He wanted to talk about politics, too:

*It is too often said and too readily believed that we have no interest in politics in China, that our interests are purely commercial. How can this be? Can the negotiations so successfully carried on by our Secretary of State to secure the open door in China be called purely commercial? Have they not had far-reaching effect on political conditions in China?*<sup>8</sup>

In just a few words, he summed up his beliefs about what course China should follow and what the policy of the West toward China should be. Essentially, he continued to hold and expound these beliefs until the end of his life:

*Whatever may be the defects of the Chinese plan of government, it is the best-suited to that peculiar people. To try to change the present regime and substitute something more in conformity with Western ideas would be folly ... administrative reform in China can only result from constant and general pressure from without, [but] sudden change must inevitably bring revolution and be followed by years of chaos.*

Considering that he spoke in early 1902, nearly a decade before a revolution forced the abdication of the Manchus and signaled the beginning of decades of chaos in China, his analysis was remarkably prescient.

Also of importance at the dinner at Delmonico's and worth noting was the introduction he was given. John Foord, the president of the Association, served as toastmaster. In introducing the guest of honor, he said in part:

*Mr. Rockhill embodies to the businessmen here present one extremely valuable idea, and that is his career is a convincing demonstration of the fact that the diplomatic service of this country can be divorced from partisan politics. Mr. Rockhill entered public life under a Democratic administration. Nobody now cares what are Mr. Rockhill's politics. They do know that Mr. Rockhill is eminently the most capable man to perform certain duties. I ask you as businessmen: is not that the idea, after all, of public service, and, above all, is not that the ideal of our Diplomatic Service?*

Actually, he began his career under the Republican administration of Chester Alan Arthur, but Foord's point was well-taken. Rockhill's career was on a path unusual in the American government. He was unusual, if not absolutely unique, in having become a professional American diplomat when no such profession formally existed. He was

probably unique in being the first true area specialist in the Department of State. There were other Sinologists employed in the American diplomatic and consular services. But they were like many British and European experts who stayed on in China for most of their working lives, holding a diplomatic or consular appointment for part of that time in order to earn a living. They did not return periodically to put their expertise at the service of their government at home. William Pethick was one example of such an American. Rockhill's movements between China and Washington every few years followed a pattern that would only later become familiar among professional American diplomats in the twentieth century.

He would be followed by such men as George Kennan, Chip Bohlen and Foy Kohler in Russia, and the respected China Hands of the 1930s and 1940s: John Stewart Service, John Paton Davies, O. Edmund Clubb, and John Carter Vincent. Rockhill's able successors as the China experts of American diplomacy in mid-century would be tragically and unjustly hounded from government service for adhering to the tradition so tenaciously followed by their pioneering predecessor: to report accurately, honestly, expertly and without political bias to their government about the situation in the country in which they served; and to give the same kind of honest, expert, non-partisan advice to their elected and appointed superiors when they worked in Washington. Rockhill, though he never knew it in his lifetime, was the first in a distinguished line which, one can only hope, continues today.

Some aspects of diplomatic practice, e.g. the crucial need for honest and objective reporting based upon expert knowledge, are timeless. With regard to other aspects, a wide gulf yawns between the diplomatic world William Rockhill knew and our own. Soon after he arrived back in Washington from Peking, Conger sent a request to Hay for authority to create a fund the Legation could use to buy information from Chinese sources. Hay asked Rockhill for his reaction, and the advisor sent a scathing response. 'It seems to me that it is inadvisable to let diplomatic officers trust for valuable information to what they can buy from dishonest underlings in governmental offices,' he wrote to Hay.

*If the Legation in Peking was in close touch with the Chinese and other Legations, it would not often be necessary to buy news from the Chinese. Our Legation is not in close touch with the Chinese, and everyone in it knows this as well as I do. It has never been in close touch with the Chinese government—this is notorious ... I can hardly imagine that if every member of our Legation is wide awake and doing his best to establish close social relations with Chinese and foreigners alike, it will be necessary to place a 'corruption fund' at the Minister's disposal.*<sup>10</sup>

His advice to Hay was categorical. 'I would not allow him a cent,' he wrote, 'and I would insist on being as well and as promptly informed as other governments.'<sup>11</sup> It is no secret that other governments did indeed employ a 'corruption fund', and that this practice continues. On March 22, Congress took the first step toward not only building a corps of China experts to serve as American diplomats, but also toward creating a professional diplomatic service. Ten student-interpreter positions were authorized for the Legation in Peking 'with a view to supplying interpreters for a potential tenure of ten years'. Selection would be non-partisan on the basis of merit. The congressional action probably

delighted the only true Sinologist in the Department of State. But he probably also felt the irony in how he had had to struggle to gain permission to learn Chinese at the Legation less than twenty years earlier.

Diplomatic activity may slow down, as American diplomacy did in eastern Asia in early 1902, but it never ceases. On January 30 occurred one of those events, like the Sino-Japanese War of 1894, which echoed down the years and changed the course of events not only in Asia, but in Europe as well. Britain and Japan signed an alliance. It was the first of the series of pacts that would arrange the lineup of countries for the bloodbath that began in 1914.

The signatories pledged to support the Open Door, but the real purpose of the agreement lay in its recognition of the special interests of both countries in China. In other words, the alliance was intended to endorse and protect their spheres of influence.

For Britain, it also meant that, with an Asian ally possessing a powerful navy, the British could pull fleet units back from Asia to counter the growing German naval challenge in European waters. For Japan, it meant that with powerful Britain at its side, Japan could face the growing Russian challenge in both Korea and Manchuria. The pact was obviously directed mainly at Russia which, on March 6, joined France to issue a declaration affirming the two countries' adherence to the integrity of China. It also warned that they would 'consult' in the event that actions of another Power 'might become a menace to their own interests'. The British-Japanese agreement forced all the other Powers to recalculate their positions in eastern Asia.

Japan's concern about Russian intentions was prompted in no small measure by the fact that, during the previous August when the Boxer upheaval was being suppressed, Russian troops had overrun the whole of Manchuria, even those areas where there had been no Boxer outbreak. With the signing of the Boxer Protocol in September, the occupation troops of the other Powers were withdrawn, but in the early spring of 1902, Russian troops remained in much of Manchuria.

Possibly prompted by the British-Japanese alliance, Russia on April 8 issued a formal declaration, in a document called The Manchurian Convention of Evacuation, that it would withdraw its troops from Manchuria in three stages over the ensuing eighteen months. Hay and Roosevelt deeply distrusted the Russians and viewed any promises they might make with suspicion. But the American leaders also realized that the United States could take no strong action in Asia to force the Russians out of Manchuria. Hay reluctantly decided to put as good a face as he could on the situation and publicly accept the Russian declaration at face value. Apparently, like Britain, the United States felt forced to regard Manchuria as a Russian sphere of influence even as it continued to advocate the Open Door as the cornerstone of its policy in China.

The Russian economic stake in Manchuria was already significant and promised to grow when the rail lines to Vladivostok and Port Arthur were completed. Manchuria had become, like Korea, a diplomatic battleground for the imperial strivings of both Russia and Japan, and the other Powers were watching closely to see which country would triumph. Japan's alliance with Britain lit a fuse which would explode two years hence in an Asian war that would throw the largest armies ever to fight until that time into the greatest battles fought until that time.

In the summer of 1902, that monster, the Boxer Indemnity, again reared its head.

China was having trouble meeting its payments on the bonds because of complications in the international financial markets. Indemnity payments were denominated in Haekwan taels, but several of the recipient countries chose to receive their payments in gold. Li Hung-chang had readily agreed to convert the taels into gold or any other currency each recipient country might designate. But in the year since then, the price of silver had fallen dramatically, causing the value of the Haekwan tael to fall correspondingly. The Powers receiving payments in gold insisted that the amount of gold they received should be maintained. To do so meant that China would have to increase the amount of taels in each payment.

Hay asked Rockhill to look into the situation. The advisor examined all the documents, and on June 2, he wrote a long report for the Secretary.<sup>15</sup> Drawing upon his own knowledge of the Peking negotiations as well as the voluminous records, Rockhill explained that it was never the intention of the negotiators to force the Chinese to maintain the gold value of the payments. When Li Hung-chang agreed to convert the taels to gold, it was with the implicit understanding the number of taels would remain constant. Rockhill's report concluded:

*No suggestion was ever made that China should bear the loss of exchange through the possible fall in the value of the amount she had offered in payment of the claims of the Powers.*<sup>12</sup>

Alone among the Powers, the United States did not insist on maintaining the gold value of the payments. The problem continued to remain unsolved for several years, and eventually China began to fall into arrears in its payments.

In October, Roosevelt was given the opportunity most American presidents consider the most important any president can be given: to fill a vacancy on the Supreme Court. An Associate Justice announced his intention to retire within a few months. Roosevelt had already filled one vacancy on the Court when he appointed Oliver Wendell Holmes in July. It did not take him long to settle on a candidate for this second vacancy. He chose William Howard Taft.

Taft was in Manila serving as Governor of the Philippines. In early 1899, when the Boxer troubles were heating up in China, he had been serving as a federal judge in his home town of Cincinnati, Ohio. To his surprise, he was summoned to Washington by President McKinley and asked to head a commission sent to the Philippines to arrange installation of a civil government to replace the military rule that had been in place since 1898. In July 1901, the switch to civilian government was made, and Taft was appointed the first Governor. He found he liked the islands and their people, although the 300-pound Taft never became accustomed to Manila's sticky, tropical heat. But his long-held ambition, known to all his friends, was to serve as Chief Justice of the United States. Taft was a legal scholar by training, experience and temperament, so it is not surprising that his name surfaced when a vacancy on the Supreme Court occurred.

On October 26, Roosevelt sent a cable offering Taft the appointment. To the President's surprise, Taft promptly cabled a reply declining the offer. He preferred to continue as Governor of the Philippines, he explained. On November 16, Roosevelt sent a letter insisting on the appointment. He explained that he planned to move the other two men on the Commission that ruled the Philippines each up a notch to Governor and Vice-Governor respectively, and to appoint William Rockhill as Commissioner. He

planned to submit the nominations to Congress for confirmation in February. However, none of the appointments were made, because Taft insisted on staying in Manila. According to Henry Adams, Commissioner in the Philippines was not the only position Roosevelt offered to Rockhill. In a letter to Elizabeth Cameron, Adams wrote:

*There is a hitch in the Philippines. Taft now wants to stay. This will throw out Rockhill, who had already lost Japan by taking the Philippines.*<sup>13</sup>

Despite his desire to return to Asia in a diplomatic post, Rockhill would remain in Washington for 2 ½ more years.

Throughout 1903, international diplomacy in Asia focussed, as it had in 1902, on Manchuria and Korea. Russia and Japan continued to maneuver with helpless China and Korea held hostage, while the other Powers, unwilling or unable to intervene actively, watched with increasing concern. The jockeying over Manchuria became a tangled tale of double-dealing and mendacity, especially on the part of Russia.

In Washington, the focus was on revision of its commercial treaty with China. Article XI of the Boxer Protocol provided for revision of commercial treaties, and the United States was not the only country seeking a new treaty. The negotiations were perhaps the most important diplomatic event in Sino-American relations during 1903. An American team consisting of Minister Conger, the Consul-General in Shanghai, and a private American citizen met with a Chinese team in Shanghai to conduct the negotiations. The Chinese team was headed by Prince Ching, the Grand Councillor to the Emperor who, along with Li Hung-chang, had negotiated the Boxer Protocol. In Washington, Hay and Roosevelt left the matter almost entirely in Rockhill's hands. One of the most important American objectives was to gain permission to open consulates in Manchuria, an objective that impinged directly on what the Russians and the Japanese were up to in Manchuria and therefore guaranteed that the negotiations would be protracted.

April 8 1903, was the date scheduled for the second stage of the Russian withdrawal from Manchuria as specified by the Manchurian Convention of Evacuation. The first stage had taken place the previous October as scheduled. But the date for the second withdrawal passed with no Russian action taken, and on April 18, the Russians instead presented China with a list of seven demands, which included a provision that no new treaty ports, or consulates, were to be opened in Manchuria without prior Russian approval.

Even as Conger was reporting from China about the Russian demands, the Russian Ambassador in Washington was denying to John Hay that any such demands had been made upon the Chinese. The American Ambassador in St Petersburg asked the Russian Foreign Minister for a clarification. The Russian official also denied that any demands had been made. On May 12, Hay wrote to Roosevelt, 'Dealing with a government with whom mendacity is a science is an extremely difficult and delicate matter.'<sup>14</sup>

The Chinese rejected the Russian demands, but they also rejected the American proposal to open new consulates in Manchuria. They feared it would be likely to cause problems for them at a critical time during their dealings with the Russians. Rockhill drafted instructions to the American treaty commissioners directing them to make known to the Chinese the Russian denial that Russia had made any demands on China. He hoped that officially revealing the Russian deceit would encourage the Chinese to accede

to the American proposals, but it did not.

American public opinion was in no mood to support any strong American action in far-away Manchuria, as Rockhill, Hay and Roosevelt clearly realized. In April, Hay wrote to the President, 'I take it for granted that Russia knows as well as we do that we will not fight over Manchuria, for the simple reason that we cannot.'<sup>15</sup> In July, Roosevelt wrote to Brooks Adams, Henry's brother and an ardent expansionist:

*As yet public opinion is not so far awake that I can go to the extent I would like to go in the Manchurian business; but already I can go a great deal farther than would have been possible a few years ago, and I think the public is understanding the situation more and more all the time.*<sup>16</sup>

Actually, public enthusiasm for foreign adventures was waning, not growing. The fever of 1898 for overseas expansion was already beginning to recede, and there could be no question of threatening the duplicitous Russians with any strong action.

The three-cornered maneuvering continued on through May, June and July, with the Russians and Chinese offering proposals and counter-proposals to the American demand to include new consulates in Manchuria in the revised Sino-American commercial treaty. When the weather in Washington grew uncomfortably hot, Hay and Roosevelt retired to their summer homes in New Hampshire and Long Island, respectively, leaving management of affairs in Asia in Rockhill's hands. He met several times with the Chinese Minister and the Russian Ambassador, and maintained communication with the negotiators in Shanghai and with Hay in New Hampshire. At one point, in late July, Hay became confused whether the United States was demanding that provisions for opening consulates in Manchuria be included in the text of the treaty itself or in a separate annex, and he had to ask Rockhill for a clarification.

By late July, Rockhill decided that Conger was showing 'extraordinary weakness' in presenting the American position in the negotiations in Shanghai. He recommended to Hay that a 'suitable instruction' be sent to the Minister, although he feared that even a blunt telegram 'may not ginger him up'.<sup>17</sup> He told Hay he was postponing a visit he planned to make to Europe, because 'I do not feel I could enjoy my holiday with all this uncertainty about the Chinese matter.'<sup>18</sup>

On August 3, he informed the Secretary:

*I think there is no doubt that while the Russians have officially informed you that they have absolutely no objection to the Chinese opening new localities to trade, they are working against it in every way they possibly can, and have so intimidated Prince Ching that he does not dare do it.*<sup>19</sup>

But on August 13, Prince Ching finally agreed to the American demand for consulates in Manchuria. The barrier to revising the commercial treaty was removed. October 8 was set as the date for the new treaty to be signed, the same date scheduled for the final Russian withdrawal from Manchuria. In late August, the Rockhills sailed for Europe aboard a Holland-America Line steamer for their delayed vacation.

In the middle of August, speculation appeared in the press that Rockhill would soon replace Conger in Peking. The report stated that Conger's work in Peking 'has not been attended by that degree of success or satisfaction which was expected or desired', and Roosevelt wanted to replace him.<sup>20</sup> Why this speculation should appear at this particular time is not readily apparent. Rockhill's months of work on the commercial treaty

negotiations and their successful conclusion no doubt served to sustain the high regard in which he was held by the President and the Secretary of State. Perhaps Roosevelt or Hay had been speaking off the record to reporters. In any event, the change was not made.

Roosevelt did, however, continue to consider Rockhill for an overseas assignment. At about the same time the speculation about Peking appeared, Roosevelt again offered Rockhill the position of Commissioner in the Philippines.<sup>21</sup> This time, the President was recalling Taft to replace Elihu Root as Secretary of War, and Taft agreed to accept the appointment. Roosevelt tried to keep the matter a secret, because the switch would not occur for several months, but word got out. Rockhill, however, declined the offer, and someone else was appointed. Conger had been in Peking since 1898, and obviously his tenure there would end soon. Rockhill obviously hoped to replace Conger and did not want another appointment to cause him to miss out, no matter that he wanted very much to get out of Washington. Moreover, he had little or no interest in the Philippines. The previous July, when he was hard at work on the commercial treaty, John Hay had written to the President:

*I hope you will not send Rockhill away to the Philippines in case of a vacancy there. He is perfectly loyal to you and will go where you send him without a kick. But he is so rare a product that he ought to be used where he can be most valuable. He is of great service where he is—I would miss him enormously. Of course, if you saw a chance to send him to Peking, nothing ought to stand in the way of that. But there are other men who would do as well as he in the Philippines, and he would rather stay where he is, and wait his chances in the diplomatic service, where he would be 'one man picked out of ten thousand'.*<sup>22</sup>

But for the one man in ten thousand there were still many months of hoping and waiting and Washington socializing to be gotten through before the long-desired assignment to China materialized. Ten months later, in May 1904, Henry Adams wrote to Elizabeth Cameron, '[The Rockhills] come to dinner and bring guests and chat pleasantly, but still wonder when they are going to China.'<sup>23</sup>

In September 1903, Horace Allen, the American Minister to Korea, returned to the United States on leave. This was the man whom Rockhill had supported during his brief tenure as Chargé d'Affaires in Seoul in 1887. Allen had been appointed Minister by McKinley, and by 1903 he had been in Korea nearly twenty years. Despite his longevity there, he had not been the most adept American diplomat in Asia. As early as 1896, Rockhill had commented on his work as a diplomat in Korea:

*He is a very good, honest fellow, with little or no judgment—in the conduct of official affairs, I mean—but with a fairly good education ... He has on one or two occasions rather mismanaged our affairs out there, having taken a too-partisan view of questions of Korea policy in which Japan and China are interested. We had to give him a sound rating for what he had done, disapprove of his actions, and sit on him pretty hard, since when he has gone along very steadily.*<sup>24</sup>

Allen was upset by the obviously anti-Russian, pro-Japanese policy of the United States under Roosevelt, and he intended during his leave to take up the matter in Washington.

Allen first spoke to Rockhill whom he had once called 'that splendid fellow'.<sup>25</sup> Soon after Roosevelt assumed the presidency, he had told Allen that if he had any information

or recommendations to offer regarding American policy in Asia, he should 'tell Rockhill everything, and he would dole it out to [Roosevelt] as he could use it'. A short time later, Roosevelt told Allen that Rockhill was 'the author of, and sponsor for, our Asiatic policy'.<sup>26</sup> Rockhill, as Allen must have expected, defended the American tilt toward Japan, including a willingness to see Japan absorb Korea—Allen's number one sore point—and to help Japan check Russia in Manchuria.

Dissatisfied with the result of that interview, Allen went to see Roosevelt himself. He told the President that 'he was making a mistake regarding Russia'. Had Allen talked to Rockhill, the President asked? Yes, the Minister replied. Then we should all gather this evening in the White House to discuss it, Roosevelt decided.

To have been a fly on the wall and witness the proceedings when the three men gathered at the appointed hour of nine-thirty would have been fascinating. To judge from Allen's account of it in his diary, the discussion was spirited to say the least. Allen was suffering from a toothache, which did nothing to soothe his temper. He attacked the President's Asian policy as pointless, unwise, and one to make the United States the 'cat's-paw of Britain and Japan'. He implied that American policy was naïve. He opined that 'There was no more likelihood of [Russia] voluntarily evacuating Manchuria than there was that we should evacuate Texas or, to make the example better, Hawaii.' The United States erred badly in failing to cement friendship with Russia, he argued.

His pro-Russian, anti-Japanese critique of the administration's policy touched off fireworks, as the President aggressively took issue with each point he made. Allen became rattled by Roosevelt's 'trip-hammer queries'. The President repeatedly called upon Rockhill to support his policies, and the Asia advisor obliged. Allen finally had to retire, in some confusion no doubt, expressing regret that he had made such a poor showing in presenting his arguments. He went home and wrote in his diary, 'I fear Rockhill is leading them to a precipice.'<sup>27</sup>

Rockhill subsequently took Allen to task for his ill-advised performance at the White House, but the headstrong Minister was not finished yet. En route back to Korea, he gave an interview to a newsman reiterating his views and his differences with administration policy. It was carried all over the world by the Associated Press, and Roosevelt was furious. A telegram of censure went out to Seoul. Allen lamely explained, 'Reporters whom I did not see have reported an interview,' and he meekly told Roosevelt, 'will comply with your instructions'.<sup>28</sup> He stayed on as Minister—rumor had it that John Hay intervened with the President to head off Allen's dismissal—but his effectiveness as the President's representative in Korea was at an end. America's pro-Japanese policy continued with its implied willingness to see Korea disappear as an independent country.

The revised commercial treaty was signed at Shanghai on October 8 as scheduled, but the Russian evacuation from Manchuria did not take place. In September, the Russians had proposed new terms for their departure that would keep their troops in place into 1904. By the end of the year, Russia and Japan were clearly on a collision course over Manchuria.

As the year 1904 opened, one of the chronic headaches in the Sino-American relationship, the immigration of Chinese into the United States, was again threatening to sour relations. The Chinese Exclusion Treaty, signed in 1883 and renewed in 1894, was



due to expire and would be considered for renewal. It excluded unskilled and semi-skilled laborers from entry into the United States. It permitted admission of non-laborers, but it specified that they must be registered, and the definition of who was eligible for entry was usually interpreted very narrowly. Most importantly, American law based upon the treaty denied citizenship to all Chinese (John Hay once remarked, 'Congress has done its work so well that even Confucius could not become an American.'<sup>29</sup>) The Chinese had signed the treaty and agreed to its renewal only because they felt compelled to do so. They resented its provisions, and it was likely that they would resist its renewal. It was even more likely that Congress would pass a new exclusion law whether the treaty was renewed or not.

Resentment against the United States was growing in China, not only because of the insulting exclusion law, but also because of the persistent reports of acts of discrimination and violence against Chinese in the United States, especially on the west coast. Rude behavior by immigration officials towards Chinese who arrived to enter the United States legally was reportedly widespread. For several years, the Chinese Minister in Washington had been sending protest notes to John Hay about the exclusion laws and the incidents.

Roosevelt vigorously supported the exclusion of Asian laborers. In 1902, he urged that the exclusion law be extended to Hawaii and the Philippines to prevent those American possessions from being used as conduits for Asians to enter the United States illegally. Congress debated the issue vehemently in 1902 and passed an interim law to extend exclusion until expiration of the treaty on December 8, 1904. The question would then be reviewed again.

Roosevelt did not favor excluding all Chinese. He argued for admitting students and other 'qualified' immigrants, and he repeatedly berated the chief of the immigration service about rude behavior toward Chinese at American ports of entry. Moreover, he knew the issue was an irritant in American relations with China. He once told Rockhill, 'I am trying in every way to make things easy for the Chinese here. Chinese laborers must be kept out of this country, but I want to secure the best possible treatment for Chinese businessmen, students and travelers.'<sup>30</sup> However, he was, in the end, a politician, and he also knew that on the west coast, with a rapidly growing population, public opinion at that time strongly favored even total exclusion of all Asians.

Elsewhere in the country, public opinion was not so clearly one-sided. In general, organized labor supported exclusion. It was beginning to gain political muscle as the American Federation of Labor under Samuel Gompers continued to grow, and it was gaining the attention of politicians. Businessmen opposed exclusion. The American Asiatic Association strongly lobbied Congress in opposition to any new law. Obviously, the question of Chinese immigration would become increasingly important and difficult in both American domestic politics and Sino-American relations as the date for renewal of the Exclusion Treaty in December approached.

On April 5, Roosevelt announced in a cabinet meeting his intention to send a message to Congress favoring renewal of the Chinese exclusion law. Roosevelt was an unelected president who faced an election in November, and he was not taking victory for granted. His move was made with an eye on California's electoral votes. Congress wasted no time in reenacting the exclusion law while negotiations about the exclusion treaty were

still in progress.

The Chinese Minister protested, and in October, he presented Hay with a proposed draft for a new treaty that forcefully set forth the Chinese position. In his diary, Hay wrote that it was 'a very strong paper; one which I could not conscientiously handle, as my convictions would be in his favor all the way through'.<sup>31</sup> By the end of the year, with no sign of a change in American policy or law, agitation to organize a boycott of American goods began in China, and the question of renewal of the treaty continued to hang fire.

Meanwhile, war had broken out between Russia and Japan. On February 8 1904, the Japanese mounted a daring surprise attack on Russian battleships lying at anchor at Port Arthur and damaged three ships. The damage was not severe, but the Russians never fully recovered from the shock of that initial attack. The diplomatic maneuvering over Manchuria and Korea that had been going on since the signing of the Boxer agreement abruptly ended.

Japan's diplomacy since the Boxer troubles had succeeded in isolating Russia from any help, now that the guns began firing. Britain took no part in the hostilities, but it was an ally of Japan and obviously supported the Japanese. The United States was officially neutral, but leaned toward Japan. Germany had urged Russia on in its Asian adventures, but the Kaiser wanted only to have Russia bogged down in Asia so as to give Germany more freedom of maneuver in Europe. Only France had been a consistent ally of Russia, but France was in no position to provide any support for Russia in a war with Japan in northern Asia. Immediately following the night attack on the Port Arthur squadron, Japanese troops landed in Korea and the Japanese sank several Russian ships in a brief naval battle. The Japanese drove across the Yalu River, and the epic siege of Port Arthur began. The remnants of the Russian Pacific Fleet were destroyed or rendered useless in a naval battle in August when the Russian ships tried to escape from Port Arthur to Vladivostok. With his Pacific Fleet gone, Tsar Nicholas II in November sent his Baltic Fleet off in an incredible voyage around Africa and across the Indian Ocean to deal with the Japanese.

By early 1905, these two issues—Chinese exclusion under American law which was stimulating popular support for a boycott of American goods in China; and the intensifying war in Manchuria—brought China back to the forefront of official thinking in Washington. Roosevelt had been elected in his own right in November, and he was focussing his attention more and more on Asia. In January, John Hay told him about another long-standing issue creating official headaches, one that grew out of an American international embarrassment called the American China Development Company.

The Company was created in the wake of the Sino-Japanese War to pursue that persistent and elusive empire-builder's dream, building a railroad. It sought a railroad-building concession from the Chinese government. Its stockholders included some of the most famous and powerful names in American industry and finance, e.g. Edward H. Harriman, the presidents of the National City Bank of New York and the Chase National Bank, the head of the Carnegie Steel Corporation, and J. Pierpont Morgan. Its first application for a concession was unsuccessful; a Belgian firm got the nod. But in 1898, it obtained the right to build a railroad to link Hankow with Canton, potentially one of the most important and lucrative railroad segments in China. The company floated \$40 million worth of bonds to construct 710 miles of main line, 150 miles of branch lines,

and 78 miles of siding. The contract specified that the concession could not be transferred to other nations or people of other nationalities.

The ownership restriction was almost immediately violated, but the identity of the stockholders was kept secret. It was generally believed that Europeans, notably the King of Belgium, had become major stockholders. The whole operation almost from the beginning was mired in controversy, mismanagement, hostility from the local population, shady financial dealing, and constant squabbling among the Europeans, Americans and Chinese. In January 1901, Rockhill had written to Hay about the company from Peking while he was occupied with the Boxer negotiations:

*The promoters have no earthly intention of attempting to develop [the concession] ... They simply use it as an asset on the stock markets of Europe and America for purposes of speculation.*<sup>32</sup>

By the end of 1903, only about ten miles of track had been built and put into use. On December 23 1904, the Chinese formally served notice on the Secretary of State that the concession would be revoked. Hay wrote in his diary that 'The Chinese had stood it as long as they could, and now that control has passed evidently to the Belgians, they must declare the concession forfeited.'<sup>33</sup> But that was far from the end of the story, as Roosevelt and Rockhill were to learn through the months of 1905.

On December 20, George Morrison, the *Times's* correspondent in Peking, wrote to Rockhill:

*Sometimes we hear you are coming to Peking. If you do consent to come, you may be sure of this: that there is no man living who will find a gladder welcome awaiting him than will you both from Chinese and foreigners.*

Valentine Chirol visited Washington during December and met Rockhill, among many other people. At the end of the month, he wrote to Sir Ernest Satow, the British Minister in Peking:

*The best piece of news I brought back with me, though probably it is no news to you, is that Rockhill's appointment to Peking as soon as the new administration is officially formed on March 4, appears to be definitely settled. I had several long talks with him, and he is evidently delighted at the prospect. He is nominally in charge at the Bureau of South American Republics, but he does not disguise the fact that he takes absolutely no interest in them, and as a matter of fact, his real work consists in advising the President and Mr. Hay, who both have very great confidence in him, on Chinese and Far Eastern affairs generally.*<sup>35</sup>

On January 2, Roosevelt privately informed Rockhill his appointment as Minister to China would be announced soon, and Rockhill began preparations for his transfer.<sup>36</sup> He made a trip to Europe to visit his mother, who still lived in Switzerland, and to bring Daisy, who was attending school in Switzerland, back to the United States. She would accompany him and Edith to Peking.

While stopping over in London en route back to the United States, he was introduced to a young man, William Phillips, who was serving as personal secretary to Joseph Choate, the American Ambassador.<sup>37</sup> Phillips was a member of a wealthy, prominent Boston family. A graduate of Groton and Harvard, he counted John Jay as an ancestor. In other words, he possessed the kind of waspy background and family connections held by most of the young men who sought a diplomatic career before the establishment of a

professional Foreign Service. As he himself pointed out in his memoirs, he was independently wealthy and did not need to work for a living. Phillips went on to a long and distinguished career that extended beyond World War II. He held several top-level positions including Undersecretary of State, Ambassador to Canada, Ambassador to Italy, and Political Advisor to General Eisenhower in London for the Normandy invasion.

Rockhill was impressed by young Phillips. He asked if Phillips would like an appointment as Second Secretary on the Legation staff in Peking. Phillips was enjoying his work in London, and he admired and respected his boss, Joseph Choate. But Choate was soon to be replaced as Ambassador, so Phillips decided he ought to make other plans, too, since the new Ambassador would no doubt want to appoint his own private secretary. He accepted Rockhill's offer. Rockhill continued on to Washington to make arrangements for his journey to Peking.

On March 5, the day after his inauguration, Roosevelt formally announced Rockhill's appointment to Peking. It was part of a widespread shakeup of American envoys overseas. Among the many other changes announced, Conger would go to Mexico, and Horace Allen would end his diplomatic career by leaving Korea. After his appointment was announced, Rockhill wrote to General Wilson, 'I feel sure of one thing, that my wife will be the main feature in making my mission a success.'<sup>38</sup>

On March 25, the new Minister to China was the guest of honor at a luncheon hosted by the American Asiatic Association. The Ministers of China and Japan were also on hand and delivered brief remarks. Rockhill's speech is worth noting because of what it reveals about the modest, self-effacing nature of the man and his regard for his friends. The American Open Door doctrine for China, he proposed, ought to be known as the Hay Doctrine.<sup>39</sup> Not only had every step in the development of the famous doctrine been arranged by the Secretary of State, Rockhill explained, he had also ensured that it was accepted by all the Powers. Rockhill's own pivotal role in the Open Door Notes episode was left unsaid.

Rockhill may have felt moved to make his proposal to honor John Hay, because he knew Hay's health was precarious. The Secretary had been in poor health for several years. He had planned to step down at the end of Roosevelt's first term when he had already served more than six years, an unusually long tenure for any cabinet officer. But the President persuaded him to stay on. Immediately after the presidential inauguration, on March 17, he sailed with his wife and Henry Adams for a period of rest and recuperation in Europe. Rockhill probably saw him just before he departed Washington, and the new Minister to China, who was fully aware of the great debt he owed John Hay, probably sensed that it would be the last time he would see his friend and benefactor. Hay was obviously in failing health and weakening when he left Washington in March. The Rockhills sailed for China in April.

John Hay spent three months resting in Europe, including several weeks under a doctor's care in Germany. He returned to Washington in the middle of June. He felt rested and was able to put in a few days at his desk. But his vitality was gone and his body worn out. He retreated to his summer home at Newbury, where he died on July 1. He was sixty-six years old.

## Chapter 10

## Minister to China: Peking, 1905-1909

The Rockhills arrived in Shanghai on May 20 to find the city plastered with posters and notices urging a boycott of American goods to protest the exclusion law. The Consul-General asked the new Minister to meet with members of the leading local merchant guilds who had held a meeting a few days earlier to push the boycott. Rockhill agreed and met the group the day after he arrived. He pointed out that the old exclusion treaty had expired the previous December, and negotiations were in progress on a new treaty. He asked them to refrain from any hasty actions that would adversely affect the negotiations. The group responded that they understood and seemed to go away satisfied. But inflammatory articles pressing for a boycott continued to appear in the press.<sup>1</sup>

The new arrivals moved on to Peking where the new Minister took up his official duties on June 1. He must have done so with feelings of elation. Almost twenty-one years after first arriving in Peking, he was finally moving into the position to which he had aspired for so many years. It was the fruition of a long-held ambition. But his elation was tempered by the sobering information contained in a pile of telegrams and messages awaiting him from consuls and private American citizens all over China reporting that the boycott movement was rapidly spreading.<sup>2</sup>

The newly-arrived Minister found that the Legation compound was undergoing a transformation. One of the provisions of the Boxer Protocol called for expansion of the Legation Quarter, and many legations were being enlarged and improved. In the American compound, the old buildings had been pulled down, and new residences for the Minister and the Secretaries, and a new chancery, were under construction. The Rockhills took up residence temporarily in an old temple where the Congers had been living.

An Asian historian, writing of the impact of the West on Asia, described the decade between the Boxer settlement and the abdication of the Manchus as 'the heyday of Western authority in China'. No admirer of the record compiled by the Western Powers in wielding that authority, he described China as it appeared to many during those years:

*Missionaries had practically established a monopoly control of education. The coastal areas where the foreigners held sway became the centre of a new life. Canton, Shanghai and Tientsin became the seats of financial and economic power, which was predominantly in European hands. The Yangtze was policed by foreign gunboats. The foreign consulates, lords and masters not only in their own territory but in territories larger than European states, felt a glow of satisfaction that by their prestige they were able to afford protection to all who sought it.*<sup>3</sup>

There were well over fifty treaty ports where foreigners could trade freely and enjoy the benefits of extra-territoriality, although the term, 'treaty port', was an elastic one that included many different places where foreigners were given such benefits under several

different arrangements.<sup>4</sup> Not all treaty ports were great centers of commerce like Shanghai and Canton, nor were all of them seaports. Many lay far inland up the rivers, and several handled insignificant amounts of trade.

Sixteen treaty ports contained foreign concessions or settlements controlled by foreign governments where foreign populations, often sizeable, lived comfortable lives under their own laws and their own administration. The foreign concessions varied in size from 115 acres in Hankow to 1,000 acres in Tientsin. They were usually pleasant, orderly, essentially upper class European settlements composed of Western-style buildings. Just across a canal or wall teemed a Chinese city, more crowded, less orderly. The two communities existed side by side in a symbiotic relationship.

Shanghai was the premier treaty port and the largest seaport on the China coast. It contained the two largest foreign enclaves, the International Settlement and the French Concession. Technically, they were not concessions, being areas set aside for foreign residence but not leased to a foreign power. Together, they encompassed over twelve square miles.

The people of Shanghai, Chinese and non-Chinese alike, considered themselves residents of the foremost city of China and one of the great cities of the world. The headquarters of great trading firms and financial institutions were housed in imposing buildings facing the Bund, which followed the winding Whangpu River. The International Settlement was essentially a British city where a British upper-middle-class life style set the social tone. Great mansions of the wealthy taipans lined Bubbling Wells Road, surrounded by gardens and tennis courts. International Settlement expatriates, as they classified themselves, entertained each other at elaborate and costly social functions. They enjoyed the largest, best-appointed theater in Asia, the Lyceum, and read daily newspapers published in English (several), French, German, and Japanese. The Shanghai Club boasted of having the longest bar in the world. Household help was cheap and plentiful. Only rarely did expatriates venture into the Chinese city.

The International Settlement was administered by the Shanghai Municipal Council, an institution controlled by the British who always occupied seven of the nine Council seats. Almost 800 tall Sikhs, imported from India, served as policemen. Justice was administered by courts of foreign judges who decided cases according to the laws of twelve different countries, depending upon the nationality of the defendant. Peking, of course, was not a treaty port, and the businessmen and bankers of Shanghai and the other treaty ports were often at odds with the diplomats of the Legation Quarter whom they considered excessively concerned about Chinese sensibilities.

The First Secretary of the American Legation was John Coolidge, who had been in Peking since 1902. Although he was over forty, Coolidge was on his first diplomatic assignment. He owed his appointment to his friendship with John Hay's son, Adelbert, whom he had met in Australia where young Hay was serving in a diplomatic post. Coolidge was a man of wide experience. After graduating from Harvard in 1884, he had begun travelling when he was twenty-four, and when he arrived in Peking, he had been around the world several times. Apparently, he and Rockhill got along very well.

Soon after the Rockhills' arrival in Peking, William Phillips, the young man Rockhill recruited in London, arrived. The new Second Secretary was pleased to find he was met at the station by the Minister and Mrs Rockhill and the First Secretary, John Coolidge.

Phillips had no background or training for an assignment in China, and he was fascinated by his new, exotic surroundings. He was a careful, sensitive observer, and in his memoirs, written nearly half a century later, he gives insightful if rather brief impressions, not only of Peking near the end of the Empress Dowager's long reign but also of his new boss.

Phillips discovered that Rockhill was very different from Joseph Choate, the Ambassador in London for whom he had worked. Whereas Choate had been friendly and approachable to a young, junior member of his staff, Phillips found Rockhill to be remote and unsocial:

*He lacked [Choate's] human qualities and was bored by any form of entertainment. I doubt whether he cared for anyone except his wife to whom he was utterly devoted ... His wife must have led a dreary life in Peking, for she was sociable and enjoyed meeting the diplomatic colleagues, but in this she had little encouragement from her husband.*

He noted that Rockhill spent most of the day shut up in his library 'bent over Chinese manuscripts' or writing official messages. His only recreation or exercise was a walk every afternoon with his wife atop the city wall. But Phillips also noticed that the Minister was 'highly respected by the Chinese officials with whom he came into contact'.<sup>6</sup>

In a letter written to his mother from Peking, Phillips gave a somewhat longer, more detailed description of his boss's personality than he put in his memoirs. It also sounds a bit more candid, perhaps because it arose from a freshly-made impression and was not written much later for publication:

*Mr. Rockhill is a tremendously hard worker and has no pleasures outside of his work. He never rides, rarely dines out, and has no amusement whatsoever—which is bad for any man. He is a difficult man to solve and difficult to get on with unless you are careful, and I never feel that if I stand well with him for the present it means much for the future. That is, he takes a violent fancy to a person and as quickly changes around to a dislike which he doesn't attempt to conceal. I have already seen several instances of this, although fortunately the wind has blown in my favor so far. I admire Mrs. Rockhill very much, and no one could have been nicer and kinder than she. No ordinary woman could have got on with Mr. Rockhill without difficulties, and she has done it by sinking her own ideas and opinions entirely in his.*

*On reading this, it seems to convey the idea that I don't like my chief which is entirely erroneous. He is a splendid fellow to work with, but it is socially that he is uncertain and, of course, we are all thrown together very intimately in this little community.*

Phillips decided that Rockhill was 'essentially a Chinese scholar who cared deeply for the country'.<sup>8</sup>

Just at this time, another young American diplomat, Francis Huntington-Wilson, was serving as Second Secretary in the Legation in Tokyo. He had joined the diplomatic service in 1897 and had already been in Asia several years. Like William Phillips, he would go on to a long and distinguished diplomatic career. He was acquainted with Rockhill, and it is interesting to compare his impression of the Minister in Peking at this time with Phillips's. While he came to know Rockhill quite well, he never served with him at a diplomatic post or in Washington, so his impressions are probably based

more upon Rockhill's reputation and less upon personal knowledge than are Phillips's.

*[Rockhill] was an accomplished orientalist and one of our most experienced men both in the State Department and in the diplomatic service. Tall, handsome, and blue-eyed, Rockhill was an impressive figure and a good diplomatist, in spite of considerable irascibility and a certain angularity of character ... to 'gush' over people, even when it was in his interest to do so, was not in his nature.*<sup>9</sup>

By the time he arrived in Peking as Minister, Rockhill had attained a stature and reputation that few other American diplomats and China Hands were able to achieve. He was probably better known in China than in his own country, although he never became really famous in either country. His customary self-effacement prompted him to shun the limelight, even when he deserved to have it shine upon him. But his achievements as a diplomat and as a scholar had earned him special respect in the diplomatic world and in the world of Asian scholarship. His long association with China and Tibet, his mastery of their written and spoken languages, and perhaps above all, his explorations into Tibet and his writings, combined to gain for him a special niche among those small groups of people whose opinion he most valued. Others were impressed by his native fluency in French, that he had been an officer in the French Foreign Legion, and had spent time as a cowboy rancher, roping horses and cattle in the far west. His intimate acquaintance with Theodore Roosevelt and John Hay no doubt also contributed to the aura that had begun to be associated with him.

As soon as possible after his arrival in Peking, Rockhill began to catch up on the current situation in China. He had several meetings with George Morrison soon after his arrival, including a dinner on June 6, in which he no doubt listened carefully to what the *London Times'* correspondent had to say. He soon became aware that China was changing. The atmosphere in Peking and the treaty ports was different from what it had been when he was last in China nearly four years earlier. There was a new spirit abroad in the land. Both foreign affairs and domestic activity were affected, but in different ways.

In foreign relations, no one had yet emerged to fill the shoes of Li Hung-chang, and Chinese foreign policy was marked by drift and confusion. The Foreign Ministry was often unaware of the Empress Dowager's actions that affected China's relations with other countries. On July 1, in his last letter addressed to John Hay, Rockhill wrote:

*The lack of any settled policy among the high officers of the Chinese government—I refrain from using the word 'statesman,' as I fear there is not one to be found in China at the present time—is terribly evident. Indecision and a determination to drift with any current is shown on every side. It is manifest to the most casual observer that China is quite unable to manage her international affairs without strong support and constant pressure from without.*<sup>10</sup>

But in domestic affairs, a new dynamism with a definite direction was becoming manifest. A reform movement was underway. It was not the hasty, ill-conceived reform-by-edict fiasco of 1898, nor was it the primarily xenophobic, violent spasm of the Boxers. It was invigorated by intellectuals who had returned to China with degrees from Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard and Yale to spread a simple, potent doctrine: 'China for the Chinese'. Their influence was especially evident in the treaty ports, but it was spreading into the hinterland. On July 7, the new American Minister wrote to the President:



*There is now coming into existence in China a public opinion and a native press, both crude and usually misinformed, but nevertheless there is a public opinion, and the government knows it and recognises that it must be counted with [sic]. This public opinion and press are at least developing a national spirit in China and inciting the various elements in the provinces. They are both opposed to the acceptance of Japanese leadership and advocate on every subject, 'China for the Chinese.'*<sup>11</sup>

The Empress Dowager, less isolated from the outside world since her return from Sian than she had been before the Boxer outbreak, was not deaf to the growing demand for reform. Within days of her return to the capital, she began to issue decrees on specific reforms, including some that had been proclaimed by Kuang-hsu in 1898 and suppressed by the Old Buddha after the attempted coup against her was quashed. Over the next few years, several reform decrees were promulgated. One decree, to reform the government by drafting a constitution that would lead eventually to a constitutional monarchy, was issued after a delegation of Chinese intellectuals spent a year abroad studying constitutions in Europe and the United States. The process was still being debated when the Manchus were overthrown.

For one group of young educated Chinese, reform of the current system, no matter how far-reaching or how urgently implemented, did not go far enough. They sought the complete overthrow of the Manchu dynasty and creation of a Chinese republic. They lived abroad in exile or in the foreign concessions of the treaty ports, out of reach of the Chinese police. On August 13, 1905, less than three months after Rockhill arrived back in Peking, a meeting of several splinter groups that advocated a republic was held in Tokyo. It was occasioned by the arrival in Japan of Dr Sun Yat-sen who became the acknowledged leader of the republican revolutionaries. The groups agreed to form a body, the Tung Meng Hui or Sworn Brotherhood, which evolved into the Nationalist Chinese party, the Kuomintang.

How much Rockhill knew of the fledgling republican movement is uncertain. Perhaps he knew such a movement existed abroad among a few small exile groups, but he probably knew little or nothing more than that. In 1905, the idea that a small group of revolutionaries living abroad, mostly students and young intellectuals, could overthrow the Ching Dynasty and establish a republic in a country with no democratic or republican traditions, must have seemed farfetched. Moreover, the new Minister had plenty of other more urgent matters demanding his attention.

Rockhill needed to bring into play all his knowledge and experience in China, because the summer of 1905 was a difficult time in Sino-American relations. He was seized simultaneously with several complex issues. The growing boycott was perhaps the most striking manifestation of changes in Sino-American relations that were beginning to sweep China, but it was not the only problem on the American Legation's agenda. There was a return, for example, of that headache, the Boxer Indemnity.

China had fallen into arrears in payment of the Indemnity because of the decline in the price of silver and subsequent increasing burden of converting silver-backed taels into gold. The bankers had been struggling for years to work out a practical solution, and a complicated system had been devised to ease the burden and keep the payments flowing. It was a technical matter of more concern to bankers than to diplomats, although

in December 1904, the Chinese Minister in Washington discussed the matter with John Hay. He pleaded that the United States take the lead in agreeing to accept reduced indemnity payments.<sup>12</sup>

There was another aspect to the Indemnity question that interested Rockhill deeply. What he had strongly suspected and told John Hay in 1901 was becoming increasingly obvious: the amount of indemnity claimed by the United States, though the smallest claimed by any of the Great Powers, was substantially more than the amount needed to settle all the claims by Americans for compensation. The idea of remitting the unneeded amount back to China began to form. Just before departing Washington for Peking, Rockhill discussed the matter with Roosevelt, then met with the Chinese Minister. The Minister reported to Peking:

*Rockhill says that the President ... would like to know whether the remitted money would be given to the people or used for some other purpose ... It seems appropriate for us to inform the American government that this indemnity should be remitted for the purpose of establishing schools and sending students to study abroad.*<sup>13</sup>

The idea of remitting the Indemnity would take several years to germinate and come to fruition.

A more serious and immediate problem that summer was the dispute over cancellation of the Hankow-Canton railroad concession given to the American China Development Company in 1898.<sup>14</sup> The Chinese had given notice in December 1904, that the concession would be cancelled. They were fed up with the mismanagement and financial chicanery that had produced almost no useable railroad. The legal reason given for the cancellation was that ownership of the company had passed to Belgium, thereby violating the terms of the concession, which specified American ownership. But in January, King Leopold sold 1,200 shares of stock in the company to J.P. Morgan. That made Morgan the single biggest shareholder and put ownership back in American hands. Morgan decided he did not want to see the concession cancelled, and a legal battle began between the company and the Chinese government.

Two prominent Americans were pitted against each other in the legal dispute. John Foster, the former Secretary of State who had represented China in the negotiations to end the war with Japan in 1895, again represented China. Elihu Root, until recently American Secretary of War, was one of the lawyers for the company. However, the lawyers were unable to reach a satisfactory agreement, and by June, the American President began to take an active interest in the matter. With John Hay incapacitated by his final illness, Roosevelt was beginning to serve as his own Secretary of State and play an active role in several matters affecting Sino-American relations.

In the case of the American China Development Company, he decided he was strongly opposed to cancellation of the concession. His reasons were not economic or financial. He was motivated by fear of a loss of American prestige. In Roosevelt's view, to permit the militarily contemptible Chinese to dictate to the United States by unilaterally canceling the concession was an intolerable embarrassment. But J.P. Morgan had changed his mind about holding on to the company. He decided that the concession was not worth the trouble and expense of contesting its cancellation. He was negotiating with the Chinese about terms for the Peking government to buy out the American company.

Roosevelt strongly urged him not to do so. The two men met at Sagamore Hill on August 7 to discuss the matter, and Morgan departed reportedly having changed his mind again and leaning toward keeping the company.

During August, the tangled mess became more tangled. One reason was the confusion that gripped Chinese government operations. The Chinese Minister in Washington told Roosevelt that the Chinese wanted to cancel the concession and had made a generous offer—reportedly in excess of \$6 million—to buy out the company. But at the same time, the Foreign Ministry in Peking was telling Rockhill that the government was willing to see the concession continue so long as changes were made in its management.

Roosevelt's opposition to cancellation became more adamant, and he told Rockhill to look into the matter. The Minister responded that his investigation indicated that what Roosevelt had been told in Washington was probably true. There was a division of opinion within the government about what to do. The Empress Dowager had ordered the Chinese Minister in Washington to go ahead and enter into negotiations with the company to buy it out, but she had again neglected to inform the Foreign Ministry. She was apparently beginning to pay attention to public opinion in China. Rockhill explained to Roosevelt the background:

*It must be remembered that throughout the whole of China at the present time there is a very strong feeling in favor of the Chinese regaining possession at the earliest possible date of the railways building or built in their country, and a determination not to make concessions of any kind to foreign countries.*<sup>15</sup>

Roosevelt nevertheless continued his opposition and continued to urge J.P. Morgan not to give in. Edwin Conger paid a visit to Sagamore Hill and urged the President to continue his opposition to cancellation. Toward the end of the month, Morgan again sailed into Oyster Bay aboard his yacht, *Corsair*, for another meeting with Roosevelt. But the offer made by the Chinese was too good to pass up, and by the end of the month, the matter was settled. Morgan accepted the Chinese offer of \$6,750,000. Rockhill cabled Roosevelt, 'Price paid company gives it great profit, nowise affects honor or interests of America.'<sup>16</sup>

But Roosevelt was not persuaded, and he believed Morgan had made a great mistake. To a friend he wrote, 'I did my best to get Pierpont Morgan and the Hankow concession people to stand to their guns, but they would not do it.'<sup>17</sup> To another friend he wrote, 'If I had been in closer touch with the workings of the State Department, I should have taken drastic action long ago ... I am sure I could have put the thing through.'<sup>18</sup> Many years later in a speech to the American Asiatic Association, Rockhill said that the loss of the Hankow-Canton concession was the hardest blow the United States had ever suffered in China.<sup>19</sup>

The principal focus of Roosevelt's attention that August was overseeing the peace negotiations being held in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to end the war between Japan and Russia. The hawkish, aggressive Roosevelt, somewhat ironically, had maneuvered himself into acting as a mediator to arrange peace between the two belligerents.

By the spring of 1905, both Russia and Japan had become exhausted by their long, grinding war in Manchuria. The Japanese had won a string of spectacular victories on both land and sea, but at a fearful cost. They had suffered enormous casualties, which

the small island nation could not replace. Given time, the Russians could replace their equally enormous losses from their huge army back in European Russia. In early 1904, when the war began, the single-track, 4,000-mile-long Trans-Siberian Railroad could handle four trains a day. By the spring of 1905, fourteen trains a day were rolling east toward Manchuria.

But the Russian government had been shaken to its foundations by the revolution that had broken out in January when Tsarist troops killed hundreds of peaceful demonstrators in St Petersburg on 'Bloody Sunday'. By summer, it was being suppressed only with difficulty. The famous mutiny aboard the battleship *Potemkin* occurred in mid-June. Russia, less drained physically than Japan despite suffering a string of defeats, nevertheless by early summer was also growing more receptive to the idea of ending the war.<sup>20</sup>

Despite official American neutrality, Roosevelt made no secret of his support for Japan in the war. But the succession of smashing Japanese victories prompted him to fear that a Russian collapse could open the way for Japanese expansion in Asia and perhaps threaten American interests. On June 9, the White House sent messages to Tokyo and St Petersburg offering to mediate a peace settlement. As early as March, the Japanese had sent feelers to Washington about possible mediation. The Russians dithered for awhile, but by July, both sides accepted Roosevelt's offer. In early July, Rockhill went to the Peking railroad station to bid goodbye to George Morrison whom the *Times* was sending to the United States to cover the peace negotiations. He carried with him a letter of introduction from Rockhill to Roosevelt.

Formal negotiations began at the Navy Yard in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on August 8. The Chinese wanted to send a delegation to observe, because they were afraid that Russian occupation of southern Manchuria would be replaced by Japanese occupation. The United States opposed having a Chinese representative present. Roosevelt feared that a difficult, delicate situation would be further complicated by a Chinese presence.

Rockhill reported that he had succeeded in persuading the Chinese to abandon their request to be represented by assuring them that the United States would fully defend Chinese interests. But the day after he sent that reassuring message, the Chinese announced that they would not be bound by any agreements reached at Portsmouth, because they were not involved in the negotiations. Peking's announcement further angered Roosevelt who was already angry with China about the two other issues bedeviling Sino-American relations, the boycott and the Hankow railroad concession. On August 22, his response to Rockhill's proposal to remit the unused Boxer Indemnity back to China revealed his growing exasperation:

*I have all along been intending to make that recommendation very strongly in my message [to Congress]. I only hesitate on account of the action of the Chinese government, or its inaction, in the matter of the boycott and in the matter of this Hankow railway concession. I may do it anyhow, but I wish you would in the strongest way impress upon the Chinese government that the chance of my getting any favorable action by Congress will be greatly interfered with by the failure of the Chinese to do justice themselves in such important matters as the boycott and the Hankow concession.*<sup>21</sup>

During a meeting at Sagamore Hill a week or two later, Roosevelt repeated to George Morrison that he had been in favor of returning the Boxer Indemnity to China, but the boycott was causing him to have second thoughts.<sup>22</sup>

The negotiations in Portsmouth continued throughout August. They almost broke down completely when Russia adamantly refused Japan's demand for a large indemnity to pay its war expenses. Only Roosevelt's tireless mediation saved the situation. By early September, the two sides reached agreement, and a peace treaty was signed. The Russians ceded the Liaotung Peninsula leasehold and Port Arthur to Japan, along with the southern portion of the Chinese Eastern Railway (now called the South Manchurian Railway) and associated coal mines. Japan also received the southern half of Sakhalin Island and certain fishing rights. The treaty called for Chinese endorsement of the Japanese acquisitions in Manchuria, and it was given in a treaty signed in December by Yuan Shih-kai for China. Both parties agreed to evacuate their military forces from Manchuria within eighteen months, except in the Japanese leasehold and those needed to guard the rail lines and the mines. Russia formally acknowledged Japan's suzerainty over Korea.

However, Japan did not receive the large indemnity it coveted, and many Japanese had expected their country to gain even greater amounts of territory in Manchuria. There was widespread feeling in Japan, as there had been in 1895, that Japan had won a war but had been denied the fruits of victory. There were hard feelings toward the United States because of its role in arranging the treaty negotiations. In Tokyo, special squads of police surrounded the American Legation when news of the details of the peace agreement was published, to protect it from angry crowds. The outcome of the war was to divide Manchuria between Russia, who continued to control the northern half, and Japan who became paramount in the south. Within a short time, the former belligerents developed cordial, even cooperative relations.

For Rockhill in Peking and Sino-American relations in general, the most troublesome issue of that issue-filled summer was the boycott. Everyone understood that it was prompted by the exclusion law in the United States. Despite strenuous efforts by both side, the Exclusion Treaty of 1894 had expired in December with little prospect of reaching agreement on a new treaty. Rockhill had departed Washington in April with vague instructions from John Hay to reopen the treaty negotiations in Peking, and he did so with Prince Ching almost immediately after presenting his credentials on June 17. As had happened in Washington, several drafts were exchanged over ensuing weeks, but agreement could not be reached.

The boycott formally began on July 20, and by early August it was in full swing. American business interests in China began to feel its effects. Standard Oil, for example, reported it was beginning to suffer losses. Businessmen demanded that Washington take up the matter of the boycott more vigorously with Peking. The issue was becoming important in American domestic politics. The American government adopted the position that the boycott was an unfriendly act on the part of China, and it pressed the Chinese government to take measures to suppress it. Rockhill met several times with Prince Ching and sent diplomatic notes demanding that action be taken against the boycott until treaty negotiations could produce results. Prince Ching agreed to take action, but he also pointed out that the Chinese had had ample provocation for their

action. On July 1, he reminded the American government:

*This movement has not been inaugurated without some reason, for the restrictions against Chinese entering America are too strong and American exclusion laws are extremely inconvenient to the Chinese. The coolie immigration treaty has now expired, but although this treaty is null, the exclusions are still enforced. The great inconveniences brought to all Chinese merchants have thus led to this movement, but if the restrictions can be lightened by your government and a treaty drawn up in a friendly manner, then this agitation will of its own accord die out.*<sup>23</sup>

Rockhill thought the movement would eventually die out even if no change were made in the exclusion law. It is, of course, important to remember that he had absolutely no means of affecting the exclusion law. On July 26, he sent a copy of a newspaper item that reported a large meeting held in Shanghai to rally support for the boycott, but he added as a comment, 'I fancy the movement will stop the day the boycotters begin to lose anything by the movement; until then, there will be much talking and agitation.'<sup>24</sup>

On August 17, Rockhill reported that although there was agitation in volatile Canton and a few other treaty ports, the situation was serious only in Shanghai. Moreover, he added, merchants were beginning to desert the ranks of boycott supporters who increasingly consisted of students and others without an economic stake to lose but capable of making a great deal of noise. On instruction from Washington, he continued to address protests to the Chinese Foreign Ministry and press the government to issue an edict condemning the boycott. Roosevelt wrote him weekly letters during August, directing him to keep the pressure on. One example of Roosevelt's vigorous urging was his letter of August 22:

*I intend to do the Chinese justice and am taking a far stiffer tone with my own people than any President has ever yet taken, both about immigration, about this indemnity, and so forth. In return, it is absolutely necessary for you to take a stiff tone with the Chinese when they are clearly in the wrong.*<sup>25</sup>

Roosevelt was, indeed, taking a stiff tone with his own people. For example, in November, the San Francisco Merchants Exchange sent him a formal protest that demanded that the government take strong measures to stop the boycott, because their trade with China was suffering. Roosevelt's response was couched in the usual forthright and forceful Rooseveltian prose. He and the Department of State, he wrote, had done everything they could possibly do about the boycott.

*Anything further must be done by your own representatives in the Senate and House, by way of making such changes in the exclusion law as to prevent the injustice and humiliation to which the Chinese who do not belong to the coolie class have been subjected in coming to this country. If you and all the other American merchants who are injured by the boycott will urge your Representatives in Congress to do away with the cause of the boycott, you will probably succeed.*<sup>26</sup>

In the middle of August, on instruction from Washington, Rockhill broke off the treaty negotiations, which were going nowhere. The two sides could not agree on such points as the definition of 'laborer', an important matter because they agreed that laborers could be excluded. Rockhill operated under the handicap of having received only the vaguest of oral instructions, and Washington never clearly defined his powers as a

negotiator. Dr Edward T. Williams, who served for several years on the Legation staff as the Chinese interpreter, accompanied Rockhill on his many visits to Prince Ching to discuss the treaty. Williams later wrote that it was simply impossible for Rockhill to arrive at an agreement acceptable to the Chinese that also would have been accepted in Washington.

In September, the Chinese asked that the negotiations be resumed, and Rockhill recommended that the United States agree, despite the failure of the months of haggling that had already taken place. Washington refused, and the Chinese did not seem especially upset by the decision. The negotiations were never resumed, and no exclusion treaty was signed. The exclusion law continued in force, and it continued to be enforced overzealously in American ports of entry. Roosevelt continued his strong admonitions to the Bureau of Immigration to treat legal Chinese entrants courteously.

At the end of August, the Chinese issued an edict condemning the boycott. By then, its effects were beginning to wane, but it sputtered on into the following year and continued to affect adversely the relations between the two countries.

Throughout the months of dealing with the boycott problem, Rockhill followed a sort of dual track that he often followed as an American diplomat dealing with China. On one track, he faithfully and scrupulously obeyed the instructions he received from Washington. He took a stern, unbending line with the Chinese in demanding that the United States receive its lawful due under existing treaties and agreements. He agreed with this approach, because he recognized that the greatest threat to Sino-American relations and to stability in China was the weakness and fragility of the Manchu government. If that government collapsed, chaos would ensue. Two means by which diplomacy could contribute to the government's viability were to demand that the government maintain internal order by preventing violent outbreaks against foreigners, and by demanding that the government honor its treaty commitments. The various treaties with the Great Powers might be unequal and discriminatory against China, but they were unquestionably legal. Only by honoring the treaties' requirements could the Chinese government resist encroachments by the Great Powers and maintain its viability as a sovereign entity.

The Great Powers continued to nibble away at Chinese sovereignty whenever an opportunity arose. The greatest threat to the stability of China and its government in 1905 was not yet the activities of Chinese revolutionaries but the constant and continuing pressure by the Great Powers to gain control of pieces of China. Any lapse by the Chinese in honoring treaty commitments or protecting foreign residents created an opportunity for Great Power intervention. Rockhill consistently and strongly advised Washington to hold the Chinese to their treaty obligations and demand protection for missionaries and other foreign residents. This was the most effective way to shore up the government in Peking and thereby avoid the disaster everyone feared: the collapse of the Manchu government, which would produce internal chaos and probably civil war.

Rockhill's second track was his reports on conditions in China and advice to Washington about the most effective kind of policy for the United States to adopt. Even as he advocated taking a firm stand with the Chinese government on treaty commitments and maintaining order, he consistently pleaded for understanding of the Chinese point of view. For example, in one message to Washington about the boycott, he included the

texts of two toughly-worded notes he had sent to Prince Ching demanding punishment for one of the boycott ringleaders, and complaining of the laxness of a viceroy in dealing with the boycott in his area. But his message to Washington ended on the same note as before:

*I am disposed to believe that the explanations made by the viceroy for his apparent dilatoriness are to a certain extent true; the fear that if he adopted radical measures for at once stopping the movement in the excitable and turbulent city of Canton, uprisings might take place is a natural and reasonable one. I think that the agitation will gradually die down.*<sup>27</sup>

Rockhill was not, of course, always successful. But he did as much as anyone in his position could, in the face of deep and widespread ignorance, misunderstanding and prejudice on both sides of the Pacific, to smooth relations.

Academic studies of diplomacy sometimes recount the activities of senior diplomats, like Rockhill, as though the diplomats functioned as one-man foreign ministries, devising as well as executing policies and originating as well as drafting the texts of diplomatic notes. Of course, they do not. Those who write such accounts betray their lack of experience in the real world of diplomacy. Rockhill was the consummate professional who scrupulously and exactly carried out the policies and instructions he received from Washington. It is true that he often agreed with those policies, and it is also true that when he disagreed, the difference was at times more of degree than of direction. He often was able to influence policies, especially when he was in Washington, in daily personal contact with the policy-makers, and particularly during the tenure of John Hay as Secretary of State. But it would be a mistake to think that he devised and was therefore responsible for the policies he executed. Moreover, to think that he always fully agreed with those policies or with the contents of the notes he drafted and presented to the Chinese government is to risk making mistaken inferences from the written record.

It is a fact that his efforts to convey to Washington an understanding of the Chinese point of view on critical issues jeopardized the diplomatic career he had worked so long and carefully to fashion. During the boycott agitation, Speck von Sternburg, the German Ambassador in Washington, reported to Berlin that Roosevelt was becoming dissatisfied with his Minister in Peking, because he seemed to view all questions from a Chinese rather than an American point of view. The President wondered if Rockhill had spent too many years in Asia.<sup>28</sup> Von Sternburg was a close friend of Roosevelt, and the President often confided in him, so his report to Berlin was undoubtedly based upon conversations he held with Roosevelt.

Roosevelt often thought aloud in the presence of close friends like von Sternburg, so the German diplomat's report may have reflected more a passing impression mentioned casually by Roosevelt than a carefully considered opinion that could presage an important decision like replacing his Minister to China. China was fortunate to have such a sympathetic champion as Rockhill serving as American Minister in Peking during those critical years, especially in view of Roosevelt's outspoken contempt for the country. The United States and Roosevelt were equally fortunate to have such an astute and experienced diplomat and Sinologist as their eyes and ears in the Chinese capital.

In the midst of all the problems and activity of that busy summer of his arrival in Peking, Rockhill received a message from the President which, according to William



Phillips, depressed him.<sup>29</sup> The Legation was to receive a visit by the President's daughter, Alice, accompanied by a large official delegation. Roosevelt asked his friend, the Minister, and Mrs Rockhill to 'look after' his daughter.

In that summer of 1905, the Secretary of War, William Howard Taft, decided to revisit his old haunts in the Philippines. To accompany him, he and Roosevelt assembled a delegation of more than eighty people, including members of Congress and their wives and a large contingent of newspapermen. The President hoped to influence congressional attitudes towards policies that he was formulating about the Philippines. Roosevelt decided that his daughter should go along, and she was delighted to do so. Taft did not plan to visit Peking, but Roosevelt wanted Alice to go there, perhaps because his friend, Rockhill, was the Minister.

Alice Roosevelt was twenty-one years old, a bewitching beauty often called 'Princess Alice' in the press. Rumor had it that Roosevelt sent her with Taft to get her away from the hordes of male admirers who lay siege to the White House (actually, her heart was already lost to Nicholas Longworth, a member of Congress several years her senior who accompanied her to Asia and whom she married the following February). In her long skirts, fitted shirt-waists, and upswept hair topped by a straw boater or flower-bedecked hat, she was the perfect Gibson Girl straight out of a drawing by Charles Dana Gibson. Her presence lent an air of glamour to the Taft excursion and gave the press something on which to focus stories. They dubbed her Asian tour, 'Alice in Wonderland'.

William Phillips was probably correct in divining that news of an impending visit by Alice Roosevelt and a passel of Congressmen made Rockhill feel depressed. Aside from diverting his attention from the many important matters demanding action that summer, there was the question of accommodations. The Rockhills were still living temporarily in their converted temple while the new Legation buildings were being completed. It was inadequate for the President's daughter, and it certainly could not accommodate her entourage. There was only one hotel in Peking that offered lodgings suitable for her companions, but it could not accommodate all of them. They would have to be parceled out among private dwellings, including friendly legations. And then there was Princess Alice herself. She was already becoming known for her impetuous personality and acerbic tongue. She was just the sort of high-profile official visitor likely to say or do something to put further stress on the already stressful relationship with China.

The Taft party's first stop was Japan where the Secretary conferred with the Prime Minister. Taft told him that the United States would recognize Japanese suzerainty over Korea, if Japan would give an assurance it would take no aggressive actions against the Philippines. The Japanese leader agreed. Taft had no instructions to make such a deal, but when he reported the conversation to Washington, Roosevelt responded that he had said just the right thing. The rather off-hand exchange became enshrined in diplomatic history as the Taft-Katsura Agreement, and it was followed almost immediately by a renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in which Britain also acknowledged Japan's control of Korea. The country was already occupied by Japanese troops, but the actions by Britain and the United States set the stage for Japan's formal annexation of Korea three months later.

From Japan the Americans sailed to the Philippines. Taft played host, showing Alice and the other members of the party around and introducing them to his many Filipino

friends. They visited several of the islands. In Jolo, Alice was amused, if somewhat taken aback, when the Sultan of Sulu proposed marriage.<sup>30</sup>

The next stop was Hong Kong where a debate developed about whether they should visit Canton. The American Consul-General in Canton met them in Hong Kong and advised against a visit. The boycott agitation was at its height, anti-American feeling ran strong, and Canton was notoriously the most volatile city in China. The Consul-General feared demonstrations and perhaps even violence if the famous visitors appeared in the city. However, Roosevelt cabled from Washington that Taft should go to Canton to meet the boycott leaders and take some action to end the troublesome boycott.

It was decided that the Secretary would enter the city to meet the boycott leaders, but Alice would go only as far as the International Concession on Shaneen Island in the river. They travelled separately, Alice aboard an American gunboat. Taft held a meeting with a group of Chinese but made no headway in stifling the boycott. On Shaneen Island, Alice was able to look across the narrow belt of water that separated the International Concession from the city to see Chinese moving to and fro along the riverfront. Some of them, she noticed, shook their fists at her.<sup>31</sup>

The party returned to Hong Kong where they split up. Taft and most of the group returned to the United States, while Alice, with a still sizeable contingent of more than forty people, went on to Peking where they arrived on September 12.

When she arrived in Peking, Alice Roosevelt must have already been acquainted with Rockhill from his many visits over the years to her father in the White House and at Sagamore Hill. However, she gives no hint in her memoirs that she was. Her description of him as he then appeared to her is interesting to compare with the impressions of William Phillips and Francis Huntington-Wilson at about the same time.

*Mr. Rockhill was a great Chinese student and lover of China. In the past he had gone far into Tibet disguised as a Chinese. Though he was very tall and of an almost washed-out fairness, he had somehow grown to look curiously Chinese; one felt that China had gotten into his blood; that if he let his mustache grow and pulled it down at the corners in a long thin twist, and wore Chinese clothes, he could have passed for a serene expounder, whether of the precepts of Lao-tze or Confucius, I do not know.*<sup>32</sup>

The high point of the visit was an audience with the Empress Dowager and the Emperor. Alice, the Rockhills and several members of the party stayed the night at the summer palace, fourteen miles outside the city, in order to be ready for an early morning audience. The evening before, they were guests of honor at a huge banquet. Alice loved the many exotic dishes and especially the wine. She drank so much of it that she had trouble maintaining her dignity and navigating a straight course to her bedroom.

At eight o'clock the next morning, the group was received in audience. The Empress Dowager sat on a throne raised several steps above the floor. Alice thought she looked younger than her age, which was over seventy. She sat very erect, and her small, brilliant black eyes were piercing and alert. Mrs Rockhill presented Alice who curtsied three times as she advanced to the bottom of the steps leading to the throne. On the lowest step sat a young man in his early thirties, 'limp and huddled, his mouth a little open, his eyes dull and wandering, no expression on his face'. This was the emperor, Kuang-hsu. They were not presented to him, and no one paid any attention to him. It was obvious

whose hands held the ruling power in China.<sup>33</sup>

Tzu Hsi was in her charming mode during the audience, but after lunch, during a stroll in the garden, Alice got a glimpse of her savage, ruthless side. The two women were accompanied by Wu Ting-fang, the former Chinese Minister to the United States, who walked along with them and served as interpreter as they exchanged conventional pleasantries. Alice knew him from his many years in Washington.

*Suddenly ... the Empress said something in a small, savage voice, whereat he turned quite gray, and got down on all fours, his forehead touching the ground. The Empress would speak; he would lift his head and say in English to me; back would go his forehead to the ground while I spoke; up would come his head again while he said it in Chinese to the Empress; then back to the ground would go his forehead again. There was no clue to her reason for humiliating him before us ... It was a curious experience to see the same man who enjoyed making blandly insolent remarks at dinner parties in Washington and invidious comments on America in press interviews, kowtowing at one's feet. One literally had the feeling that she might at any moment say, 'off with his head,' and that off the head would go.*<sup>34</sup>

Alice would have liked to stay longer in Peking—she was never able to visit the Great Wall or the Ming Tombs—but the party left after a few days of formal calls and diplomatic dinners. In Tientsin, they had dinner with Yuan Shih-kai who had replaced Li Hung-chang as Viceroy of Chihli Province, then went on to Korea. Alice had committed no faux pas, but Rockhill was nevertheless happy and relieved to see the group depart. He wrote to James Rodgers, the Consul-General in Shanghai:

*My experience with a section of the Taft party which came up here was the same as yours. I never saw such a pack of irresponsible men and women in my life ...  
Yesterday, at 11 am, I was glad to say goodbye to the last of them in Tientsin.*<sup>35</sup>

His antipathy was reciprocated. Several members of the party were angry, because they had not been included in the reception at court, although they knew a request to include all of them would never have been granted. After they left China, several of them complained that they had been treated shabbily by the American Minister. A report in *The New York Times* said they accused Rockhill of 'a dereliction of social duty' and 'marked scantiness of attention' to them. They experienced, they said, 'execrable mismanagement of the reception and direct discourtesy on the part of the Minister'.<sup>36</sup> However, apparently Alice Roosevelt made no complaints, and Rockhill heard nothing more about it.

Shortly after Alice Roosevelt's departure from Peking, the Legation staff was able to move into the new buildings in the Legation compound. They decided that their new quarters left much to be desired. According to William Phillips, the architect had been an employee of the Treasury Department with no knowledge of the climate or conditions in Peking and 'more accustomed to the construction of Post Offices than Legations'.<sup>37</sup> Rockhill thought the collection of buildings was 'a blot on the landscape'.<sup>38</sup> Funds appropriated for construction turned out to be insufficient, and shortcuts were made by the builders. Phillips one day happened to lean against one of the massive pillars that flanked the front door of the Minister's residence and was astonished to hear it emit 'a painful moan'.<sup>39</sup> The pillar, which he had thought was made of stone, was made of

metal painted to look like stone. Funds for Phillips's own house ran out, so the second story was truncated, leaving the building looking like two mismatched blocks, one atop the other. Phillips thought the five buildings 'gave the impression of a very ugly hen squatting beside four equally ugly chicks'.

Photographs of the compound published in the rotogravure section of *The New York Times* in early 1908 show a group of neo-classic buildings, much like the British were fond of building in India and other colonies. They do not look unattractive, although the house where Phillips must have lived does have a strange silhouette. The compound itself appears devoid of trees with very little shrubbery, so it has a barren, forlorn look in the photograph. An American woman, who was resident in Peking at that time, later wrote her impressions of the compound when its occupants first moved in:

*Our Legation ... had just been completed under [Rockhill's] direction. Built of dark gray stone and standing in the shadow of Peking's ancient inner wall ... it looked stern and bare and formidable enough, but even then, the wide compound with its parade ground, its barracks, and its high grim walls were beginning to assume the bright aspect of a well-kept garden. In the Minister's residence, an adequate building which stands apart in one corner of the grounds, one encountered a delightful hospitality and an atmosphere of dignity wholly befitting.*<sup>40</sup>

The Rockhills made their residence attractive by furnishing it with beautiful Chinese antiques including many gorgeous carpets. William Phillips thought the rose-colored carpets in the great hall were especially beautiful, but he noticed that when Rockhill hosted luncheons and dinners for important Chinese officials, the beautiful rugs were nowhere to be seen. He learned that it was a common custom for Chinese to chew betel nut after a meal, and guests often expectorated the red juice freely. The carpets had to be protected.<sup>41</sup>

The new Secretary of State who replaced John Hay was Elihu Root. He was appointed in July but did not sit down at his desk in Washington until September. Roosevelt greatly admired Root, and he would have supported Root as a candidate for president in 1908 if Root had chosen to run. But Root's many years as legal counsel for big corporations were regarded as a drawback in running for president. Moreover, he was in poor health and already sixty years old. He felt he was too old to seek the presidency (he died one week before his ninety-second birthday in 1937).

He was a personality rather different from John Hay. He possessed a sharp sense of humor and a sharp tongue. In contrast to Hay's penchant for subtle irony laced with literary allusions, Root was known for his wisecracks. One of many proposals he received to improve the diplomatic service was a design for a uniform for American diplomats. It was one of Alvey Adee's pet projects, which he had unsuccessfully urged several of Root's predecessors to adopt. Many European countries had uniforms for their diplomats to wear at official functions, so the idea was in keeping with current usage in Europe. Adee had designed an outfit that featured silk stockings and satin knee breeches, a silk coat with a red satin sash, and lace frills. Root simply ignored the proposal. After he left the Department of State, his successor, Philander Knox, found a file folder containing the uniform design in one of his desk drawers. On it was written a notation in Root's handwriting: 'The only suggestion that I would make for the improvement of this costume is that a sprig of mistletoe be embroidered on the coat tails.'<sup>42</sup>

Root was a famous and highly respected lawyer, with no diplomatic experience. So he was a throwback to the Secretaries of State before John Hay. But he had served for five years as Secretary of War under McKinley and Roosevelt, and he had often taken over some of John Hay's responsibilities during Hay's frequent illnesses. His appointment was widely applauded. Rockhill was not so well acquainted with Root as he had been with John Hay, so his relationship with Washington changed subtly after September, becoming less close and more official in nature.

John Hay is regarded as one of the two or three most accomplished Secretaries of State in American history, but he took little interest in the organization or operation of the department he headed. He depended upon the ultra-dependable Alvey Adee to keep the machinery running. He once said, 'One Adee is all we have in the pantry,' and he worried that Adee might suffer a breakdown from overwork. The Department in 1905 when Hay died was not very different from the antiquated organization he took over in 1898. It was during Root's tenure that many initial actions were taken to expand and improve the Department of State so its organization and procedures could discharge its expanded responsibilities more efficiently.

The first step was taken on November 10 1905, when Roosevelt issued an Executive Order that placed both diplomatic and consular positions, except ambassadors and ministers, on a civil service basis. It specified that examinations were required for entrance into the Foreign Service, and promotions must be based upon merit. Roosevelt wanted the reform ensured by legislation, but he could not persuade an indifferent Congress to take action. Root organized an examining board, which held both written and oral examinations.

Meanwhile, in China, boycott agitation continued sporadically in Canton, Shanghai and a few other scattered localities. In the minds of Roosevelt and others in Washington, every anti-foreign outburst was ascribed to the boycott, whether or not such was the case. In October, five American missionaries were murdered at Lienchou in volatile Kwangtung Province where Canton is located. The causes were purely local, including rivalries between Catholic and Protestant missionaries, and had nothing to do with the boycott, or any other organized anti-foreign movement. But the incident attracted much attention in Washington and was lumped in people's minds with the general unrest that seemed to be gripping China. In December, a more serious incident that was related to the boycott occurred in Shanghai. A general strike called by boycott organizers sparked a riot. A police station was set afire and the prisoners released. The German Consul and the American Vice-Consul were injured, and twenty Chinese were killed. Sailors had to be landed from warships to restore order.

By the end of the year, Roosevelt and many others in Washington and in Europe were beginning to fear that another Boxer upheaval was brewing. Roosevelt ordered four additional battleships sent to strengthen the Asiatic Fleet, and he told Taft to send two batteries of field artillery to the Philippines to stand ready for immediate deployment to China. He was determined that the mistakes and delays of 1900 would not be repeated. *The Washington Post* reported that, 'This time, only young and vigorous general officers will be on duty ... for the prospective China expedition.'<sup>43</sup> Taft requested Congress to appropriate \$100,000 to house the China expedition troops in the Philippines. Newspaper reports in January and February reported that a major American military expedition

would be sent to China by summer. In February, Taft said in a speech in Chicago:

*The Eastern situation is problematical. China is now in a state of unrest. To many, it seems that the conditions which prevail there are similar to those which preceded the Boxer uprising.*<sup>44</sup>

But by spring, the crisis, if that is what it was, blew over. In late February, Roosevelt sent Rockhill a set of strong demands to ensure that the Chinese government would maintain order. They included taking steps to deal sternly with anti-foreign incidents and 'efficient measures ... to prevent a renewal of the outrages of nineteen hundred'.<sup>45</sup> Rockhill presented them to Prince Ching who promised to do everything possible. By April 2, Roosevelt was writing to his friend, General Leonard Wood, the military commander in the Philippines, 'I do not believe there will be an expedition to China, but I wanted to be sure that if it was needed, we would not be unprepared.'<sup>46</sup> Rockhill, not surprisingly, had taken a rather different view of the situation throughout the episode. On March 29, he wrote to Hippisley, 'I cannot understand the senseless scare about Chinese affairs in the U.S. It is certainly not from me that the Washington people got the materials for getting it up.' On April 21, he told Hippisley:

*It is very interesting at present to try and trace out who—or what group of persons—can be responsible for the systematic campaign of misrepresentations concerning everything in China, which is now going on ... I think that the Washington government is rapidly getting over its excitement.*<sup>47</sup>

By May, the boycott movement had ended completely, but the new reform movement and the 'China for the Chinese' sentiment that had fueled the boycott continued.

Among the several British China Hands whom Rockhill befriended during his years in Peking was John Otway Percy Bland, the co-author with Edmund Backhouse of *China Under the Empress Dowager*. Bland was born in Ireland in 1863 and first arrived in China in 1883 to serve in Sir Robert Hart's Imperial Maritime Customs Service. Rockhill became acquainted with him during his first assignment in Peking as a junior diplomat. Bland served two years as Hart's secretary, and after leaving the customs service, he was for two years the Secretary to the International Settlement in Shanghai where he became known as 'the uncrowned king of Shanghai'. He subsequently turned to journalism and became a colleague of George Morrison on the *Times*.

Bland and Rockhill became close friends, but their views of China, their principal mutual interest, differed. Bland was probably typical of the long-term Western expatriates in China in his attitude toward the country. Fascinated by China's ancient civilization, he nevertheless considered the country hopelessly backward and unable, for the foreseeable future, to govern itself as a modern society and take its place in the world as a modern nation. In May 1906, he had two conversations with Rockhill about China in which the differences in their outlooks were discussed. The entries in Bland's diary reveal much about Rockhill's evolving attitude toward China and how it differed from most Western expatriates' views:

*May 9. Visited the American Legation. Saw Rockhill whose views in regard to the Chinese are curiously impractical. He seems anxious to admit their theoretic rights to control their own affairs, and at the same time is forced to admit their entire unfitness to do so. May 14. Rockhill called at six. His views of things Chinese are tinged with solutions of impractical republicanism and equality-of-*

*man nonsense. He sees things, not as they are, but as they might be if the Chinese were Americans. Tells me the police here are discarding queues and the women unbinding their feet! An hour's walk disproved these conclusively.*<sup>48</sup>

Many people acquainted with Rockhill only slightly or only by reputation probably would have been surprised to learn how old China Hand Bland viewed the American's attitude toward the Chinese. Bland may have considered Rockhill's views impractical, but he came to respect the American diplomat's knowledge, diplomatic skill and judgment. Several years later, in his book about the events of these years that led up to the revolution that deposed the Manchus, Bland wrote:

*To Mr. Rockhill, America's just and far-seeing Minister at Peking, belongs a large share of the credit for a policy which greatly advanced the prestige and influence of his country in the Far East.*<sup>49</sup>

The Sino-American commercial treaty signed in October 1903, had provided for opening two American consulates in Manchuria, but the Russo-Japanese War prevented any action being taken immediately. The war settlement specified several cities in Manchuria to be opened to international trade and settlement, so in the spring of 1906, the United States took steps to open consulates in Mukden and Antung. The man selected to establish and take charge of the consulate in Mukden is one of the most intriguing characters to appear in Rockhill's life story. He and Rockhill were very different personalities who disagreed on many fundamental questions having to do with China. His appearance in the international politics of northern Asia, like a gorgeous but short-lived bursting rocket, is worth tracking. His name was Willard Straight.

Straight was born in Oswego, New York, and first arrived in China in 1902 at the age of twenty-one as a recruit in Sir Robert Hart's Imperial Maritime Customs Service. He was assigned to study Chinese in Nanking for six months. At the end of that period, he so outstripped his three fellow students in the final examination that Sir Robert summoned him to Peking to continue his study of Chinese and serve as Hart's secretary. It was a marvelous opportunity of which Straight took full advantage. He became acquainted with many important people in the Legation Quarter while gaining proficiency in Chinese and learning about the country.

When the Russo-Japanese war broke out in February 1904, he resigned from Hart's service to become a journalist with the Associated Press to report on the war. He spent most of the next year or so in Japan. He joined the small army of other journalists from all over the world sent to report on the war but politely detained in Tokyo by the Japanese. In the spring of 1905, he was able to go to Korea, and as the war was ending in the late spring, he finally reached Manchuria for a brief stay.

With the war ended, he wound up his career as a journalist to take a position in the American diplomatic service as private secretary to the American Minister in Seoul. He carefully watched, and wrote in his diary an absorbing eyewitness description of the Japanese formal annexation of Korea in November. Straight's experiences in Korea permanently colored his views on Asian politics, especially with regard to Japan. He came to consider Japan a rapacious, imperialist power that threatened stability and the balance of power in Asia, and he became convinced that American policy in Asia should be directed toward containing Japanese expansion. With Korea annexed by Japan, the American Legation in Seoul closed. Straight followed the American Minister, Edwin

Morgan, to Havana, Cuba, for a brief stint as a consular officer.

Throughout the time he had spent in the Far East, Straight had been busy exerting his considerable charm on influential people he had the good fortune to meet. They included Alice Roosevelt and the railroad magnate, Edward H. Harriman. During his brief assignment in Cuba, he handled arrangements for Princess Alice's honeymoon there with Nicholas Longworth. When the decision to open a consulate in Mukden was made, Straight eagerly applied for the assignment. Rumor had it that Roosevelt personally selected him to be the first American diplomat in Manchuria.

Straight was twenty-six years old, a boyishly handsome young man possessed of many talents. He had studied architecture at Cornell University and was endowed with artistic ability of a truly professional level. His many charcoal and pencil sketches made in China, Japan and Korea display the eye and hand of a born artist. He could write like a professional, too. His diary contains passages of descriptive writing as fine as anything being published, especially his first impressions of the exciting East as he was sailing via the Suez Canal and Ceylon on his first trip to China. He was blessed with an excellent singing voice, and when he accompanied himself on the guitar or mandolin, his audiences were reportedly enchanted. He possessed an ingratiating personality that apparently charmed just about everyone he met.

Above all else, Willard Straight was a romantic. He viewed life as an adventure and the world as the stage on which adventures are played out to admiring audiences. The Far East seemed to him a particularly stimulating setting for great adventures. He was an admirer of Kipling and often mentioned the writer in his diary. Straight viewed Asia through a sort of romantic gauze filter as a fabled and exotic place where men of vision and strength, like his Kipling heroes, built fabulous empires.

On one of his first nights in Peking in 1902, Straight had dinner with two Americans who had seen much of the world including China. One was John Coolidge, the well-travelled First Secretary in the American Legation. Straight described the evening in his diary, and a reader can visualize the newcomer, all wide-eyed with fascination, hanging on every word as Coolidge and the other old Asian Hand spun their gripping tales of the East.

*Such tales of men one has heard about and read about from the lips of those who knew them. One sits and listens and drinks it all in, uneasy the while lest something should be lost and feeling dissatisfied that there is no possibility of playing Boswell and setting all down in a series of notes that might be referred to at future need ... Coolidge has been everywhere, done everything, seen everybody—newspaper correspondents, authors, diplomatists, statesmen, all passed in review before my wondering ears.<sup>50</sup> Yarns of Rockhill and of Savage Landor, tales of Pethick ... of Yuan Shih-kai.*

But Straight was no mere dreamer. He possessed the ambition and drive to pursue his dreams with vigor and singleness of purpose. As American Consul in Mukden, with the vast wealth of Manchuria spread out around him, he was at last in a position to turn his dreams of empire into reality. One of the people with whom he would have to cooperate in this enterprise was his superior officer, the American Minister in Peking, William Rockhill.

Rockhill and Straight were of different generations. Straight was young enough to be



Rockhill's son. But a difference in age was not all that separated them. Rockhill was fascinated by China and Tibet for themselves. He wanted to understand their languages and cultures. Like the scholar he was, he wanted to know about these ancient civilizations. For him, China was an end in itself, and his position as an American diplomat was a means that permitted him to pursue his quest for knowledge of the East. For Straight, China and Manchuria were not ends, but means to another end. He pursued knowledge of China to enable him to act out his great adventure of empire building. It was inevitable that the two men would disagree.

Straight arrived in Mukden in early October after a journey from Washington via Europe and the Trans-Siberian Railroad. Before departing the United States, he had interviews with E.H. Harriman and Roosevelt who asked him to report on what he observed in Russia and especially in Manchuria. Two days after his arrival in Mukden, Straight sent off a twenty-page letter to Roosevelt giving in detail the impressions he had gathered on his trip.<sup>51</sup>

Straight's first months in Mukden through the autumn and winter were unhappy. He set up his consulate in the city in temporary quarters he called 'a dirty hole'. He found that rents were sky-high, and the Department of State was agonizingly slow in providing funds to lease permanent quarters, so he had to remain in the unsuitable temporary housing for months. The city in the depths of the Manchurian winter was miserable. There were few other foreign consuls, and he felt isolated and alone.

Rockhill was on leave in Japan when Straight arrived. When the Minister returned to Peking in December, Straight wrote to him to request permission to visit Peking, but for some reason, Rockhill opposed a visit and found reasons in the regulations why Straight should postpone it. Rockhill's tendencies toward obstinacy and perversity came to the surface, to Straight's bafflement and anger. The Minister did not even correspond directly with the new Consul in Mukden. He communicated using William Phillips as a go-between. Phillips visited Mukden soon after Straight's arrival and immediately developed a liking for the new man. Phillips urged Rockhill to approve a visit. He wrote long letters to Straight, explaining what was going on in Peking and relaying Rockhill's reactions to reports Straight sent to Peking and Washington. John Coolidge, the First Secretary Straight had befriended during his Customs Service days in Peking, also wrote friendly letters. In one, he offered advice to the fledgling consul who apparently enjoyed writing reports. Coolidge stressed the need to report only those matters of real importance and to avoid the common tendency of the newcomer to over-report.

By the end of winter, Straight's unhappiness and frustration boiled over in a letter to Edwin Morgan, his former boss in Seoul and Havana. Rockhill had finally sent him a brief letter about a minor official matter, and Straight wrote to Morgan that 'His Excellency' in Peking had 'finally deigned' to communicate directly. He gave vent to anger about such other matters as the State Department's tardiness in appropriating funds for permanent quarters for the consulate. Morgan responded with a reply designed to soothe and lend encouragement to the young consul. Morgan was well acquainted with Rockhill, and he told Straight:

*R. is a perfectly nice person, if you take him aright—irritating, I grant you, and not always of the same mind—but a man not to fight, and fundamentally a gentleman.*<sup>52</sup>

With the coming of spring, things began looking up. The State Department funds came through, and Straight was able to lease an old temple complex outside the city for his consulate and living quarters. It consisted of several buildings clustered around a courtyard. They were old and drafty, and even after Straight had them renovated, they were uncomfortable, especially in the frigid Manchurian winter. But they had style and atmosphere and provided a spectacular setting for Straight to pursue his grandiose plans for empire. He erected a huge flagpole at the entrance, fifteen feet higher than any other in Mukden, atop which flew an enormous American flag that could be seen from miles around across the flat Manchurian plain.

Mukden was an important Asian crossroads. Anyone travelling between China and Europe via the Trans-Siberian Railroad passed through it. Many of those travellers, American and non-American alike, became houseguests of Willard Straight in his converted temple. Many later recalled enchanting evenings in the American Consulate. There was dinner in the garden-courtyard under the stars, perhaps with a golden full moon hanging in the sky, accompanied by conversation that ranged over not only international affairs and politics, but art, music and literature. After dinner, Straight would strum his guitar or mandolin and in his clear voice sing college songs from Cornell and ballads of Kipling he had set to music. His guests were entranced by their brilliant, talented, handsome and amazingly youthful host.<sup>53</sup>

Straight finally visited Peking in the spring, and Rockhill's perverse antipathy melted under the younger man's charm. After Straight returned to Mukden, letters began to flow more regularly between them on official matters. Rockhill happened to see and admire one of Straight's drawings done in Korea, and he wrote to request one. After receiving it, he assured Straight that it was excellent and that he would value it highly.<sup>54</sup>

Despite the warming of Straight's relations with Rockhill, the two men never really became friends. Their personalities and temperaments were just too different. Straight called Rockhill 'His Eccentricity' and in one letter referred to 'William Woodpile in Peking'. In a letter to Morgan, he wrote that he thought the Department would want to keep him in Asia when his current assignment ended, but 'There's no place out here, save that of Minister in Peking which I would trade for my present billet.' Anything less than Minister would be unacceptable because he would have to work for Rockhill:

*First Secretary is not paid enough and is not independent, so that I am not for it.*

*Under His Eccentricity, moreover, it would be impossible. I could not stand it.*<sup>55</sup>

He speculated in a letter to Bland that he might resign from the Foreign Service when his tour of duty in Mukden ended in the summer of 1908. Bland strongly urged him not to do so, because, the Irishman pointed out, Straight might well attain the rank of Minister before he reached his thirty-fifth birthday.<sup>56</sup>

Straight's differences with Rockhill extended beyond personality and temperament to fundamentally divergent views on American policy in China. Straight was an exponent of what later would be called Dollar Diplomacy. George Marvin, who arrived in Mukden in the summer of 1907 as Vice-Consul and became a close friend of Straight, afterwards wrote:

*Straight's attitude toward China and especially toward the Manchurian situation was entirely different from that of the American Minister. Mr. Rockhill was content to affirm the doctrine of the 'Open Door;' Straight jeopardized his life*

*and nearly brought about a break in diplomatic relations with Japan by his insistence on maintaining the Door in Manchuria actually open. He saw opportunities for development of American trade in North China and for railway building which Mr. Rockhill ignored. He detected and reported Japanese treaty infringements which were very disturbing to Peking and Washington. So it is easy to understand how for a long time there was a lack of understanding between Mukden and Peking.*<sup>57</sup>

Marvin recognized Rockhill's stature and accomplishments as a diplomat and expert on China even as he sided with his friend, Straight, in the policy disagreements:

*[Rockhill] was one of the two or three most noted sinologues of his time ... He was an acknowledged master of the old diplomacy of forms and laissez-faire ... He was all his life a warm friend of China, but he entirely missed—or rather he did not acknowledge—the constructive commercial possibilities of his office.*<sup>58</sup>

Rockhill saw the possibilities, but he also saw the pitfalls inherent in the tangled political situation in Manchuria. The impatient, headstrong, younger man urged action, while his older and more experienced superior counseled caution and a wary approach to the possible tar-baby of Manchuria. Years later, when Straight was serving with the American army in France during World War I, he wrote a passage in his diary that reveals how he regarded himself in relation to people he considered too cautious. He wrote about Sir Robert Hart, but he might well have been writing about Rockhill:

*I'm reminded under circumstances such as these of my judgment of Sir Robert Hart. He could have done a lot more than he did, but I was never quite sure whether, had he tried, he would have lasted. His greatness may have lain in the fact that he accomplished anything and still held his job. We of ardent temperament are sometimes too prone to set a standard of the ideal, and then curse those who have done the possible because it fell short of what we know might have been accomplished.*<sup>59</sup>

On one important subject, Japan, about which Straight, Marvin and other younger officers in China thought they held views different from Rockhill's, the differences may not have been as great as they thought. Straight's experience in Korea had made him a firm foe of Japan, and he considered his mission in Manchuria to be to block Japanese encroachments there. He, and others, thought Rockhill supported Japan, perhaps because of the pro-Japanese sentiments that Rockhill, Roosevelt, Root and others had expressed during the 1904-05 war. But by early 1907, Rockhill's views of Japan had changed rather significantly, and more nearly coincided with Straight's than the younger man apparently realized. On April 5 1907, George Morrison wrote from Peking to Valentine Chirol:

*Rockhill has been a warm supporter of the Japanese hitherto, but he says their deceit and trickery in Manchuria and Hankow are very trying to the patience. He complains, too, of the oysterlike secretiveness of [Japanese Minister] Hayashi here.*<sup>60</sup>

The younger Americans in the Legation and the consulates regarded Rockhill with a mixture of awe, respect and dislike. He was a remote, aloof figure who could be sarcastic and critical when those barriers were penetrated. But they were aware of his reputation in the diplomatic service, and the astute ones soon learned to respect his knowledge, experience, judgment and professional skill. They were impressed by his capacity for

hard work and his ability to focus all his attention on the tasks at hand. Esson Gale arrived in Peking in the summer of 1908 as one of the ten student interpreters attached to the Legation to study Chinese for two years in preparation for a career as a consul. Gale soon learned what a difficult person the Minister could be, but he was fascinated by him. He has left one brief glimpse of Rockhill as he must have appeared often to many of his subordinates:

*A tall, impressive man with large head and booming voice, he was the prototype of our career diplomats. I would often watch the Minister in his office in the Legation Chancery, seated behind a tall roller-top desk, nervously fingering a chaplet of Tibetan prayer beads. While so engaged, his inveterate cigarette was for the moment out of his hand. Some two weeks after one of the student interpreters arrived in Peking, he asked him with characteristic irony, 'Do you think you know all about China?'*<sup>61</sup>

Gale spent much of his working life in China, most of it spent as an official in the Salt Tax Administration. He came to admire the complex, puzzling Minister. Many years after Rockhill's death, he wrote, 'William Woodville Rockhill was unquestionably one of the ablest diplomatic officers that the American foreign service produced.'<sup>62</sup>

Rockhill's reputation as someone difficult to deal with was offset somewhat by his wife. As prickly as he often was, Edith was admired and regarded with affection. The younger officers called her 'the Tai-tai' (Mandarin for 'Mrs' or 'older lady'), and she was universally liked. When she is mentioned in memoirs and surviving letters, she is almost always described in warm, admiring terms. Esson Gale admired her as a 'charming hostess', and agreed with William Phillips that her unsociable husband gave her few opportunities to display her talents. She was patient and helpful with the younger diplomats, especially the newcomers, and they often tried through her to soften her irascible husband.

By the summer of 1907, events had combined to create the opportunity for what Willard Straight sought: an American economic empire in Manchuria. There was, first, the arrival of a new Chinese governor in Mukden. He was Tang Shao-yi who had spent several years in the United States and held a degree from Columbia University. He brought with him his nephew, Alfred Sze, to serve as the director of railways. In a remarkable coincidence, Sze was a graduate of Cornell who had there become acquainted with Straight. Straight was quickly able to establish close, friendly relations with the new governor.

Tang Shao-yi had already held several important positions in the Foreign Ministry and was well known among the diplomats and expatriates in Peking. Rockhill knew him quite well. Tang had served as Yuan Shih-kai's deputy in Korea in the 1880s when Rockhill was there as Chargé at the American Legation. Tang's intimate acquaintance with Europe and the United States, his fluent English, and the positions of influence and power he had already held combined to win for him a wide circle of foreign friends and official contacts. J.O.P. Bland, who came to know him as well as any non-Chinese, described him as 'a highly complex and fascinating personality'. Bland considered him 'brilliant and forceful', but the Irishman also thought he combined 'the free-and-easiness of an American with the dignity and elusive subtlety of an Oriental', a description not intended by Bland as a compliment. One of his defining personal traits, Bland thought, was 'a certain tendency to sudden disenchantment, a petulance of discouragement, which

left him abruptly weary of the sordid, ungrateful world'. Most relevant to Willard Straight's immediate attraction to the new governor was Bland's observation:

*Newly-arrived diplomats and financiers, much impressed by [Tang's] American frankness of manner and apparent knowledge of affairs, were disposed to regard him and his work as constituting a radical departure from the traditions of the Waiwupu [Foreign Ministry]. But they learned before long to revise that opinion.*<sup>63</sup>

Tang told Straight that he hoped to float a large loan from American bankers to finance development in Manchuria and thereby block Japanese encroachments. His ideas meshed perfectly with Straight's. He further explained that his superior, Hsu Shih-chang who was the Viceroy of the three provinces of Manchuria, was enthusiastic about the idea. In July, Hsu had obtained official permission from Peking to seek out a loan of \$20 million from foreign sources.

Another event favoring Straight's plans was the formation of a British consortium, the British and Chinese Corporation, to build a railroad north from Peking to connect with the Chinese Eastern Railway which was the eastern segment of the Trans-Siberian. The Japanese controlled the South Manchurian Railway that linked Port Arthur, through Mukden, with the Chinese Eastern Railway. It was the only rail line north of the Great Wall linking China with the Chinese Eastern Railway and, ultimately, Europe. A second line controlled by the British would be enormously profitable and of immense strategic importance. Straight saw the possibility of American investment in the project.

The British representative in China of the British and Chinese Corporation was J.O.P. Bland who had resigned from the *Times* to try making money in railroads. Straight had become acquainted with Bland during his days in Nanking spent studying Chinese. As representative of the British and Chinese Corporation, Bland made regular visits to Mukden, and Straight quickly renewed their friendship. The two men had many other common interests besides investment in railroads. In Nanking, Straight had provided sketches to illustrate a book by Bland entitled *Verse and Worse*. When their relationship was renewed in Mukden, Bland was writing a book that became the charming *Houseboat Days in China*. He persuaded Straight to draw a series of illustrations for it. His friendship with Straight continued until Straight's death.

On August 7, Straight wrote to E.H. Harriman to tell him of Tang's hopes for an American loan to finance railroad construction and other projects to develop Manchuria. He reported the formation of the British and Chinese Corporation and its efforts to gain a concession to build a railroad to parallel the South Manchurian Railroad. He proposed that Harriman arrange a large loan through his contacts on Wall Street to invest in the railroad and Tang's other projects. Straight as the American Consul in Mukden could coordinate activities in Manchuria.

Straight had good reason to believe that Harriman might be interested in such a scheme. Harriman had first visited Asia in 1905 at the same time Alice Roosevelt and Taft were touring. In fact, he followed hard on Princess Alice's heels to visit Peking where Rockhill angered him by refusing to request an audience with the Emperor and the Empress Dowager. In the face of Harriman's angry insistence, he submitted a request that was, as he predicted, refused.<sup>64</sup> Harriman met Straight in Korea, and like so many others, he was captivated by the young diplomat's charm. Straight was careful to cultivate his acquaintance with Harriman and regularly wrote the millionaire long letters reporting

on economic developments in Manchuria, especially relating to railroads.

Harriman controlled transcontinental railroads in the United States and the Pacific Mail Steamship Company that operated trans-Pacific steamers. As Straight was no doubt aware, his dream was to create an around-the-world transportation system under American control, and the purpose of his trip to Asia in 1905 had been to buy or lease the South Manchurian Railroad to link his Pacific Mail steamers with the Trans-Siberian Railroad. He felt certain he could gain use of that line from Russians to reach Europe. It would then be comparatively simple to establish a trans-Atlantic steamship line to complete a system girdling the entire globe.

Unfortunately, his visit to Japan occurred just as the unpopular peace treaty brokered by Roosevelt was signed, and the popular anger it sparked in Japan prompted the Japanese government to reverse its initially friendly acceptance of his proposal. Harriman nevertheless did not abandon his dream. If he could not buy an existing railroad across Manchuria, perhaps he could build one. Straight saw the possibility of cooperation with his friend, Tang Shao-yi, and Bland's British railroad builders to bring Harriman's dream to fruition.

However, like Harriman's visit to Japan, the timing of Straight's proposal was unfortunate. The financial panic of 1907 affected Harriman as it affected others on Wall Street. In October he replied to Straight's letter with a cable that said that unsettled financial conditions prevented him from becoming involved in large new enterprises.<sup>65</sup> But he held out the possibility that he would be willing to examine the idea again when economic conditions returned to normal.

In the spring of 1907, a new First Secretary had arrived to replace John Coolidge on Rockhill's staff. He was Henry Fletcher, a veteran of Roosevelt's Rough Riders in Cuba. Fletcher was in the early stages of a diplomatic career that would extend to the end of World War II and include service as Ambassador to Italy, Undersecretary of State, and Special Advisor to the Secretary of State at the Dumbarton Oaks conference in 1945. He had served as Second Secretary in Peking while Rockhill was in Washington but had been transferred to Havana just before Rockhill's arrival. He therefore was familiar with Peking but unacquainted with his new boss. After a few weeks, he decided that 'Mr. R. is a strong man, and it is a pleasure to be associated with him.'<sup>66</sup> Fletcher thought the new buildings in the compound were 'very nice', and he was happy with his own quarters, especially after Edith helped him decorate and furnish them. Fletcher had befriended Willard Straight in Havana, and he looked forward to working with the ambitious young Consul. He also looked forward with anticipation to serving as Chargé d'Affaires, because Rockhill was due to take a long period of home leave in the United States. Several years later, Edith told one of Fletcher's relatives that Fletcher was the only man her husband felt completely comfortable leaving in charge of the Legation for a long period of time.

On October 1, Rockhill departed Peking to return to the United States on leave. He travelled by train to Tientsin with J.O.P. Bland who mentioned their meeting in his diary:

*October 1, 1907. To Tientsin by the Morning Mail. Travelled down with Rockhill, en route for home. Talked the whole time, interesting but tiring. R. is very sound on things in general and takes them as they come, not expecting too much from the Chinese, though quite realizing the difficulties ahead. He thinks*

*our present railway policy is very dangerous.*<sup>67</sup>

From Tientsin, the Minister travelled north by train for his first visit to Willard Straight in Mukden. Straight wrote to Edwin Morgan in Havana:

*He was most attractive as a man [presumably in contrast to his manner in his official capacity]. I had never seen him in a good humour before and liked him immensely ... we had an exceedingly good time.*<sup>68</sup>

Straight's new friend, Tang Shao-yi, was well acquainted with Rockhill, and he was warmly hospitable. He showed the visitors the magnificent collection of art in the palace. To judge from Straight's description in a letter to Morgan, it was truly extraordinary. It included, for example, the ceremonial robes of the Emperors Kang-hsi and Chien-lung, and art works from the Tang Dynasty. Rockhill, Morrison and Straight all were capable of appreciating such a treasure trove, and they were overwhelmed. Although they spent several hours wandering through numerous rooms, they 'did not see one hundredth of the treasure'.<sup>69</sup>

After visiting Straight in Mukden, Rockhill continued on to the United States via the Trans-Siberian Railroad and Europe, accompanied by George Morrison as far as London. He arrived in New York on November 27 and went straight to Washington where he spent December and January. He found changes were occurring in the Department of State. Francis Huntington-Wilson had returned to Washington from Tokyo to become Third Assistant Secretary. William Phillips had departed Peking the previous summer to return to Washington. He went to work for Wilson, with another returned diplomat, to function as a nascent Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. The arrangement marked creation in the Department of State of the system of geographic bureaus. These today constitute the foundation upon which the entire bureaucratic structure in Foggy Bottom rests. The system still had a long way to develop in 1907. Phillips and his colleague worked together crowded behind a screen in Wilson's office.<sup>70</sup> Willard Straight had in Washington two friends in Wilson and Phillips, in positions to support his scheme of Manchurian development.

In January, while Rockhill was in Washington, Congress took up the question of remitting the unused portion of the Boxer Indemnity. The views of the Minister to China, who had negotiated the original Boxer Protocol, were no doubt solicited. Ever since his discussions with Roosevelt and the Chinese Minister in Washington in 1905, he had promoted the idea of using the money to educate young Chinese in the United States. To do so, Rockhill thought, would not only support China's efforts to develop and modernize, it would promote Sino-American friendship. It would create for China a growing cadre of educated people in influential positions who understood the United States, an advantage for both countries. The spirit of reform that Rockhill had noted on arrival in 1905 was still abroad in the land and fostered by young Chinese in positions of power who possessed degrees from American and European universities. When Rockhill departed Washington in February, however, Congress had not yet acted on the remission proposal.

En route back to Peking, he took a side trip to visit the two Viceroy's in Nanking and Hankow in southern China as he had done when travelling to Peking in 1900. The American Vice-Consul in Hankow, reporting on the visit, commented that he was more impressed than ever by the high regard the Chinese obviously felt for the American

Minister. He wrote,

*with [Rockhill's] knowledge of the language, people, and the country, official China everywhere extends to him such treatment which for frankness, sincerity, and respect, has heretofore never been surpassed.*<sup>71</sup>

Rockhill arrived back in Peking in April, and immediately created a stir by sending a cable to Washington opposing a proposed visit to China by Roosevelt's Great White Fleet of eighteen battleships that had departed the United States the previous December on a cruise around the world. Roosevelt's principal purpose in sending the fleet on the cruise, it was widely believed, was to impress the Japanese with American naval power and thereby dissuade Japan from further expansion in Asia. In China, the prospect of the visit generated excitement among both the Chinese and the foreign community, and the Chinese government extended a formal invitation for the fleet to call at a Chinese port.

Rockhill's opposition to a fleet visit that was warmly welcomed by the Chinese themselves caused puzzlement. But the Chinese government's enthusiastic acceptance of the idea was precisely the reason Rockhill questioned its wisdom. He feared that a highly-publicized visit by a powerful fleet of American battleships would send the wrong signal to the Chinese, leading them to believe that the United States would strongly defend the Open Door in Manchuria, even with force if necessary. Rockhill and everyone in Washington knew the United States would not. A compromise was finally reached, and a visit took place in late October and early November. Only half the fleet made the visit, while the other half steamed to the Philippines to hold target practice, and it visited Amoy in central China rather than the port in Shantung, near Manchuria, originally chosen for the visit.

On May 25, Congress passed a Joint Resolution to remit the unused portion of the Boxer Indemnity back to China. The amount was calculated to total nearly \$12 million. In current terms, that sum would be worth about twenty times more. The Resolution directed that the money be used 'in such manner as the President shall deem just'. Elihu Root cabled the good news to Rockhill and directed him to discuss with the Chinese what should be done with the money. The Chinese had already proposed to use it for educational purposes, a use Rockhill and the American government endorsed.<sup>72</sup>

In a diplomatic note dated July 14, the Chinese expressed their gratitude for the remission and left to the United States the decision how the money would be used. In the note they announced their intention to send one hundred students to the United States for higher education each year for four years, and fifty students every year thereafter 'throughout the period of the indemnity payments'. The problem of the Boxer Indemnity appeared to be finally solved. Other countries which also discovered they had surplus Indemnity funds did not see fit to follow the American example until several years later, in some cases not until the 1920s.

In the spring of 1908 when Rockhill returned to Peking, Willard Straight was contemplating his future. He decided that after his tour of duty in Mukden ended in the summer, he should return for another assignment. His relations with Rockhill had warmed, and his plans with Tang were progressing. Before returning to the United States on leave, he decided he should see more of his Manchurian domain than he had yet had a chance to see. He wanted to be able to speak knowledgeably with Harriman and other



prospective investors about the area. He obtained permission from Washington to make an extensive tour of the three provinces of Manchuria. On May 7, he departed Mukden on what became a fascinating and often grueling three-month journey.

While Willard Straight was making his extraordinary tour of Manchuria, Rockhill was making an even more extraordinary journey to western China. Its origin can be traced to 1904 when the British government in India, alarmed at rumors of growing Russian influence in Tibet, sent an armed expedition into the country. After several pitched battles with the Tibetans, the British force occupied Lhasa, prompting the Dalai Lama and his court to flee the country. They went north to exile in Urga, the capital of Mongolia. In 1907, they moved to Kum Bum, the Tibetan lamasery Rockhill had visited during his two trips to Tibet. A short time later, they moved to Wu-tai-shan, another great Buddhist center in the western Chinese province of Shansi.

Soon after his arrival in Peking in 1905, Rockhill received a visit by two lamas who brought presents and a letter from the Dalai Lama in Urga. The Dalai Lama had heard of Rockhill's visits to Tibet and of his ability to speak Tibetan, and he wanted to make contact with the American. Rockhill sent a reply, and the two men kept in contact.

The Dalai Lama's situation after fleeing Lhasa in 1904 was difficult and uncertain. The British controlled a portion of Tibet south of Lhasa. After their armed expedition withdrew in 1904, they left an occupation force in the Chumbi valley, the route that linked India with Lhasa. It remained until 1908. Nevertheless, Britain officially regarded the whole of Tibet as part of the Celestial Chinese Empire. Much of the country, including Lhasa, was considered controlled by China with the tacit approval of Britain. The Dalai Lama was revered in China as a very holy Buddhist spiritual leader, but the Chinese did not wish to recognize his temporal power. He, in turn, could not decide whether he should end his exile and return Lhasa, and he was unsure what reception he might receive if he went to Peking. Perhaps he thought that by establishing a relationship with an influential Western official, known to be friendly and concerned about Tibetan culture, and who was respected by the Chinese, he would strengthen his position with that Western power which might intercede for him with the Chinese.

Soon after he arrived back in Peking in April 1908, Rockhill received a visit by one of the lamas who had visited him in 1905. The man came with another letter and presents from the Dalai Lama. Rockhill suggested that since the Dalai Lama was at Wu-tai-shan, comparatively near Peking, Rockhill might visit and give thanks for the gifts. The Tibetans enthusiastically agreed. In June, accompanied by one young officer from the Legation, Thomas Haskins, and a train of mules carrying supplies, the Minister set out from Peking for Wu-tai-shan. The journey was grueling. Rockhill walked most of the way, sometimes making as much as twenty miles a day. After his return to Peking, he wrote to William Phillips, 'Not so bad for a man who hardly ever takes any exercise here, is it?'<sup>73</sup>

The Dalai Lama surprised the American visitor. Expecting a sallow, bent, other-worldly ascetic, Rockhill was presented to a bright-eyed, vigorous young man of thirty-three dressed in a satin gown of Imperial yellow. They first spoke through an interpreter, one of the Tibetan abbots, who translated from Tibetan to Chinese. But the Dalai Lama had heard that Rockhill spoke his language, and soon they spoke directly in Tibetan, without an interpreter. They chatted then for a half-hour, and Rockhill returned the next day

for another visit that lasted 1½ hours. The Tibetan leader asked for advice on a number of questions, including whether he should return to Lhasa. Rockhill assured him that the British harbored no territorial designs against Tibet and urged the Tibetan leader to cultivate friendly relations with them. He gave assurance of the friendship of the United States. The visitors departed Wu-tai-shan laden with gifts. One was a large, embroidered tanka of Tsongkapa, the founder of the Dalai Lama's Yellow Hat Sect. This tanka was later given to the Library of Congress by Rockhill's widow (see Frontispiece). The other gifts included a gilt Buddha and a ceremonial scarf for the American president.

Rockhill sent the gifts to Roosevelt with a twelve-page, personally typewritten letter, giving a detailed account of the meeting. He wrote in the usual understated, restrained Rockhillian prose. But at the conclusion, the conservative scholar could not contain his feelings of jubilation:

*I felt a deeper and more complete satisfaction with two interviews with the mysterious potentate and incarnation of the god Shenrezig than would anyone who had not, like myself, given so many years of their life to Tibet. To be seated talking familiarly with the Talé Lama, with one of his abbots standing behind me, with His Holiness' fly flapper keeping the flies off my head, and he seeing my teacup was filled with hot tea, asking me to open a correspondence with him, to be his councillor and friend; it was all too extraordinary. I could not believe my eyes and ears.*<sup>74</sup>

Roosevelt, as Rockhill anticipated, was fascinated by the incident. He shot back a reply:

*I think that is one of the most interesting and extraordinary experiences that any man of our generation has had. There has been nothing like it, so far as I know. Really, it is difficult to believe that it occurred! I congratulate you, and I congratulate the United States upon having the one diplomatic representative in the world to whom such an incident could happen.*<sup>75</sup>

Roosevelt passed a copy of the letter to Lord Bryce, the British Ambassador in Washington, because of the discussion recounted in it bearing on Britain's relations with Tibet. Bryce sent it on to London where the Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, expressed his appreciation of the American Minister's reassuring statements to the Tibetans about British policy.<sup>76</sup>

Today, the Dalai Lama is often regarded as one among many spiritual leaders in the world, though one of few to have been given a Nobel Prize. The current Dalai Lama, in exile from Tibet, has visited the United States, been received in Washington by members of Congress, and interviewed by the world press. He has become a popular figure worldwide, and his public meetings are often overflowing. He is no longer a mysterious figure in a remote, mysterious land. But in 1908, hardly anyone from the West had ever laid eyes on a Dalai Lama. Rockhill was almost certainly the first American to do so. While Tibet is no longer the blank space on world maps as it had been when Rockhill made his two journeys of exploration, it was then still largely unknown to Westerners. Roosevelt's enthusiastic response to Rockhill's report was not simply an artificial overreaction to a friend's excited account of a personal adventure. Rockhill's meeting was, indeed, an interesting and extraordinary experience in 1908. Nothing like it had ever taken place until then.

In late September, the Dalai Lama went to Peking for the celebration of the Empress

Dowager's seventy-fifth birthday and stayed several weeks. Rockhill met him twice and conferred several times with one of his senior advisors. The visit prompted delicate maneuvering among the Tibetans, the Chinese, the British, and the Russians over the status of Tibet and the Dalai Lama. The upshot of the visit was to confirm that the Tibetan leader was a revered spiritual figure in China, but that the Chinese intended to control Tibet, though they had not budged to help when the British had invaded. Rockhill closely followed 'this curious episode, this glimpse into pure Asiatic politics' and wrote a long letter to Roosevelt about it.<sup>77</sup>

Meanwhile, Willard Straight cut short his tour of Manchuria. He received a cable from Washington, forwarded from Mukden, containing orders for his transfer back to Washington and asking that he return as soon as possible. Mystified, he hurried back to Mukden, arriving on July 30. He stayed only two weeks to wind up his affairs. He obtained from Tang Shō-yi a written agreement, signed by relevant Chinese officials, to arrange a \$20 million loan to establish a fund for Manchurian development. Straight's self-imposed assignment was to get the signatures of American financiers on the paper. He was given a big farewell party by Tang at which many toasts were drunk to the success of Sino-American cooperation in Manchurian development.

Straight departed Mukden in the middle of August and returned to the United States via the Trans-Siberian Railroad and Europe. He carried Tang's agreement in a pouch suspended by a cord around his neck. In Washington, he learned from William Phillips the reason for his sudden transfer. E.H. Harriman felt ready to begin operations in Manchuria, and he had been lining up support through his investment firm of Kuhn, Loeb and Company. Other powerful financiers, including Jacob Schiff and J.P. Morgan, had expressed interest. Harriman decided that Willard Straight was a key player and should be in Washington to coordinate all activity. One word from Harriman to Elihu Root was sufficient to bring Straight back from Mukden. Dollar diplomacy was at work.

Straight was assigned to work with Phillips in the new Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, but his position was unusual. His principal responsibility was not entirely official: to work with Harriman and other Wall Street figures to finalize the Manchurian loan. Elihu Root made clear to him the position of the Department of State. It did not oppose the scheme being pursued by Straight and Harriman, Root explained, but neither did it extend any official approval or support. Straight's enthusiasm was not dampened. He immediately set about arranging several meetings with Harriman in New York to get things started.

Events in China appeared to be conspiring to promote Straight's plans. The Chinese government decided to send a special envoy to the United States to express gratitude for the remission of the Boxer Indemnity. The man chosen was Tang Shao-yi. His American background made him a logical choice, but probably of greater importance was his long, close association with Yuan Shih-kai. He was regarded as Yuan's protégé, and that may have been the principal reason for his selection.

Yuan Shih-kai's power had been growing steadily. He had played a crucial role in foiling the plot to overthrow the Empress Dowager during the Hundred Days of Reform in 1898 and thereby earned the Old Buddha's gratitude. As much as anyone, he filled the shoes of Li Hung-chang. He replaced Li as governor of Chih-li Province, the

metropolitan area surrounding Peking. In October 1907, he was appointed head of the Foreign Ministry. By 1908, he had become one of the most powerful men in China. Yuan was regarded as a friend of the United States. As Governor of Shantung Province, he had tried to suppress the Boxers, and as Governor of Chih-li he had taken vigorous steps to end the boycott of American goods. Rockhill wrote reports to Washington describing Yuan and his activities in very laudatory terms.

Tang Shao-yi's officially-stated mission was to express China's gratitude for the Boxer Indemnity remission. The Edict announcing his assignment was issued on July 23, before Willard Straight departed Mukden. Tang and Straight agreed that they would take advantage of Tang's presence in the United States to promote the Manchurian loan proposal. On July 2, George Marvin told J.O.P. Bland that while Tang was in the United States, he planned to obtain the loan by using the remitted Indemnity funds as security.<sup>78</sup>

Rockhill knew of Tang Shao-yi's plans for a Manchurian loan before Tang departed for the United States. Tang told him about it as early as April 1908. Rockhill thought the idea was unwise, and he told both Tang and Root so more than once. On April 28, he reported to Root that Tang had assured him the remitted Indemnity would be used only for educational purposes.<sup>79</sup> He also told Root that he considered Tang's loan plan 'perfectly impracticable'.<sup>80</sup> He predicted that, based upon the Chinese government's handling of its finances for decades past, the money would be frittered away on current expenses and impractical schemes. Within a few years, it would be gone with little or nothing to show for it. When he learned that Tang wanted to use the remitted Indemnity funds to secure the loan, he wrote to William Phillips that using the Indemnity for educational purposes would be 'an infinitely more valuable return for the money than the wildcat schemes it would be employed in by the "Manchurian Bank"'.<sup>81</sup>

Some scholars have argued that Tang's plan to use the remitted Indemnity as security for his loan became an official proposal by the Chinese Government that Tang carried with him to the United States. That argument appears to be questionable at best. The proposal to use the money for education had originated with the Chinese themselves, and they knew in the summer of 1908 that Washington regarded the matter as settled. Tang himself said different things to different people. He assured Rockhill the education plan would go forward, but he continued to collaborate with Willard Straight on the loan proposal. He no doubt planned to make soundings in Washington about using the remitted Indemnity for his loan. If he was able to obtain the official backing of the Chinese government for his scheme, it was apparently withdrawn before he departed on his trip. George Morrison, who became privy to most of the gossip swirling around Peking, in early July told J.O.P. Bland that 'This scheme has been abandoned and it is clearly understood that all the Indemnity money will be used to educate Chinese students in the U.S.'<sup>82</sup>

In any event, Tang's plans were doomed to failure before he arrived in Washington, because events in China suddenly and dramatically overshadowed his mission. They placed him in an uncertain, even dangerous position, exploded the dreams in which he and Straight had so hopefully indulged, and started a series of shock waves that would reverberate across China and the world for decades to come.

Tang departed China in September and spent a few weeks in Japan. By the middle of November, he was in Honolulu, preparing to proceed to Washington. On November

14, news flashed around the world that the Emperor Kuang-hsu had died in Peking. Twenty-four hours later, another bulletin announced the death of the Empress Dowager.

The two deaths so nearly coincidental immediately spawned a spate of rumors in the Chinese capital. According to one, the Empress Dowager, knowing she was dying, had the Emperor murdered to prevent him from assuming power. Another rumor claimed that the Emperor, knowing he was dying, had arranged the murder of the Empress Dowager. Still another said that the crafty Yuan Shih-kai, in a bold bid for power, had arranged to have both of them murdered. What is certain was that a three-year-old boy, Pu-yi, became the Emperor Hsuan-tung, and Prince Chun, the child's father who was Kuang-hsu's brother, took over the reins of power as Regent.

Kuang-hsu had been an enemy of Yuan Shih-kai ever since Yuan played a leading role in foiling the coup against the Empress Dowager in 1898 and thereby assured the destruction of Kuang-hsu's reform program. It was widely believed that Kuang-hsu on his deathbed had extracted from his brother a promise that when Prince Chun became Regent, he would depose—some stories said behead—Yuan Shih-kai. The new Regent's opposition to Yuan was well known, so a sudden change in Yuan's fortunes was considered imminent.

In Honolulu, Tang did not hear about the two deaths, because there was not yet an underseas telegraph cable to link Hawaii with the outside world. He heard the news only when he arrived in San Francisco on November 22. He must have immediately realized his own position was suddenly changed. With his powerful patron in Peking in danger of being deprived not only of his power but perhaps of his life, Tang's future was likewise in jeopardy. His authority as an emissary of the Chinese government became a question mark.

Tang's hopes for an American loan received another crippling blow on November 30, the day he arrived in Washington. Elihu Root and Baron Takahira, the Japanese Minister in Washington, chose that day to sign a paper that became known as the Root-Takahira Agreement. It was a rather vaguely-worded statement that committed the two countries to nothing much, specifically. Its importance lay in their joint commitment to maintain the status quo in Asia. The Chinese correctly interpreted the document as signifying that the United States attached more importance to relations with Japan than with China. They realized that the United States was more concerned about forestalling any Japanese moves against the Philippines than in maintaining the Open Door in Manchuria. The fact that it was signed on the day the special Chinese envoy arrived in Washington was regarded by the Chinese as significant, signaling that the agreement was intended to send a message to China. Actually, it would have been signed earlier, but when Root learned of Tang's approaching arrival in Washington, he insisted that the signing be postponed, so the Chinese special ambassador could be informed of it before the ceremony took place.

In Washington, Tang went about fulfilling his mission. He called on the President at the White House on December 2 and delivered the letter from the Emperor—now dead, of course—which expressed gratitude for the Indemnity remission. He had a long meeting with Root. He mentioned his loan idea and even broached the idea of a much larger loan, in the hundreds of millions of dollars, for development throughout China. Root listened politely but noncommittally. Willard Straight from within the Department

of State had been working to smooth the way for Tang. On December 11, Root wrote to Straight that he should provide Tang with 'all proper assistance' to enable him to meet American bankers and financiers. But, the Secretary went on, 'The State Department has no wish or authority to involve the United States in any obligation either legal or moral with reference to such a loan.'<sup>83</sup>

As he went about his official business in Washington, Tang must have kept one ear constantly cocked toward Peking, alert to what might be happening to Yuan Shih-kai. He was said to appear apathetic and preoccupied.

In early January, the Prince-Regent ordered the axe to fall, figuratively, in Peking. Yuan Shih-kai was stripped of his power, and the plans of Tang and Willard Straight received their final *coup de grace*. The Chinese announced that Yuan suffered from 'a disease of the feet'. Being unable to move about freely, he had resigned his official posts to look after his health, the announcement stated. Tang was summoned back to Peking. He rushed through a hurried visit to New York, where he had one brief meeting with Harriman, but he could make no commitments about anything and was reluctant even to discuss the loan. On January 8, Rockhill cabled that the Foreign Ministry had informed him that Tang had no authority to do anything beyond present the Emperor's letter. Tang hurried back to China via Europe. His Manchurian loan scheme was dead.

The educational plan for the Indemnity remission went forward, and in January, the first remission payment was made. The first students went to the United States later in the year. In 1911, Indemnity funds were used to establish Tsing Hua College in China as an institution to prepare students for study in the United States. In 1925, the United States remitted the remaining balance of the Indemnity, about \$6.1 million, [current value about ten times that amount] to China, and the funds were used to establish The China Foundation for the Promotion of Education and Culture to administer the scholarship program. More than a year after Tang Shao-yi's hurried return to China, Willard Straight commented on the episode in his diary after he briefly encountered Tang in Tientsin. Tang and his patron, Yuan, were still very much out of power. Straight wrote that Tang attached importance to the signing of the Root-Takahira Agreement as a reason for his failure to arrange a loan:

*When I told him that the Japanese called him an adroit diplomat in stirring up all this row, as the results of his mission to the U.S., he sighed and said that they were better than he. They had secured the interchange of notes by the time he arrived. That was a bad business. As I think it over now, I am sure that Tang had something big up his sleeve and that his reluctance to discuss the Loan and his apathy when he arrived were due to his feeling that he had been forestalled, that he had never been given a chance. This, like the Korean withdrawal, was a terrible diplomatic blunder to be laid at the door of T.R.*<sup>84</sup>

The death of the Empress Dowager was the cause of Tang's failure to a much greater degree than the Root-Takahira Agreement, but that was not the real significance of her passing. Less than three years after her death, the Manchus abdicated and the 350-year-old Ching Dynasty ended. Many contemporary observers marked the beginning of the final disintegration of the Manchu Empire from the death of Old Buddha. J.O.P. Bland in 1912 wrote a book that traced the events of the last years of the Ching Dynasty and reviewed with distaste the first months of its successor republic. He had personally played

a role in some of those events, and he had viewed all of them from a ring-side seat in Peking, so he knew whereof he wrote. In 1912, he took a less baleful view of Tzu Hsi than he had when he collaborated with Edmund Backhouse to write their famous study published in 1910.

*Loyalty to her person and enthusiasm for her genius inspired for two generations the untiring efforts of China's foremost soldiers and statesmen in upholding the Dragon Throne ... For fifty years, hers was the brain, hers the strong hand, that held in check the rising forces of disintegration; and when she died, it required no great gifts of divination to foretell the approaching doom of the Manchu.*<sup>85</sup>

In mid-January, soon after Yuan Shih-kai's fall from power, Rockhill joined the British Minister in an extraordinary call upon Prince Ching to inquire about (but obviously intended to protest) Yuan's removal. Their demonstration of support was not enough to rescue him, and he remained in eclipse. Yuan was not yet finished with the game of power in China, however, and he and Rockhill were to be in close contact again.

William Howard Taft, as expected, had been elected in November to succeed Roosevelt. On the day after the election, Rockhill wrote a letter to extend congratulations to the president-elect and, following custom, to submit his resignation. He mentioned that if the new president might wish to appoint him to another diplomatic assignment, his preference would be Constantinople.<sup>86</sup> During his visit to Washington on leave the previous winter, he had probably lobbied for that post. However, when a decision was announced in the spring, he was assigned to St Petersburg. Technically, it represented a promotion from the rank of Minister to Ambassador.

Newspapers speculated that Rockhill was given this assignment because the 'vexing problem' of railroads and finance in China would loom importantly for the new administration, and since Russia was deeply involved in these matters, someone like Rockhill with experience in China was needed in St Petersburg. Hippisley, who was on a visit to Baltimore, wrote to Rockhill that the American press said he possessed a 'special aptitude' for dealing with questions likely to arise over Manchuria.<sup>87</sup> William Phillips wrote from the Department of State:

*I know that, personally, you preferred Constantinople, but I think you will be complimented to hear the reasons why the Secretary wished you to go to Petersburg. He believes that by far the most important post and where we have real problems to overcome.*<sup>88</sup>

Henry Adams, who had seen Rockhill only rarely in recent years when the Minister was on leave in the United States, wrote to his sister, 'Rockhill's promotion quite agitated us, but it is made more perplexing by wonder how he will live. He can't!'<sup>89</sup> The cost of living for a diplomat in St Petersburg was bound to be much greater than in Peking. A generous rent allowance was arranged to make it possible for him to accept the assignment.

One of Rockhill's last official acts in Peking was to represent the United States at the funeral of the Emperor Kuang-hsu in early May. As doyen of the diplomatic corps, he led the group into the hall where the ceremony took place. He reported that it was carried out in a suitably dignified and solemn manner.<sup>90</sup> It was a peculiarly appropriate occasion for this foreign diplomat, who had devoted so many years of his life to China, to discharge one of his last official responsibilities in China. It was the last funeral of an

emperor in China.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry hosted a farewell dinner in early June, an unprecedented gesture to a departing foreign diplomat. On June 13, he was received in a formal audience by the Prince-Regent. Henry Fletcher, who would assume charge of the Legation when Rockhill departed, accompanied the Minister.<sup>91</sup> Fletcher wrote to his sister, 'I have become very fond of the Rockhills ... I shall miss them a lot.'<sup>92</sup> On June 18, Bland stopped by the Legation to say farewell. He found the Minister, still at heart a Tibetanist, in a more or less typical Rockhillian situation.

*Went to see Rockhill. He was busy with a lot of picturesque but scruffy old lamas. They gave him gifts amongst which was a lot of Tibetan incense, of which he gave me a big bundle ... Had a chat with Mrs. Rockhill and wished them all prosperity.*<sup>93</sup>

The Rockhills departed Peking on June 20. Bland was among the large crowd at the railroad station to bid them goodbye.

*At 8:30 saw Rockhill off at the station. Great gathering. Interesting to note the difference of the morning air on the night owls and the early-to-beds. Mrs. R. looked fit as a fiddle. Mrs. Burnett looked as if the sun was a personal enemy.*<sup>94</sup>

From Tientsin they sailed to Japan where they boarded the *Tenyo Maru* at Yokohama for the voyage to San Francisco. On his last day in Peking, Rockhill wrote in the diary he had begun to keep, 'Can my work in China be at an end? I pray it be not terminated entirely.'<sup>95</sup>



## Chapter 11

### Ambassador to Russia: St Petersburg, 1909-1911

The Rockhills spent only a few weeks in the United States, part of the time with Edith's parents at their beautiful home, The Lindens, in Litchfield. Their departure was delayed slightly to enable them to attend a dinner hosted by Huntington-Wilson to meet the Minister-designate to China, Charles R. Crane. He was a businessman who had never visited China. Huntington-Wilson wanted to give him an opportunity to learn about the country from the government's foremost expert on China. Instead, Crane spent the evening delivering a monologue about himself. As events turned out, he did not go to Peking. He proved to be indiscreet in discussing sensitive matters, and he gave a confidential document to a journalist who published its contents. He was in San Francisco, about to board a ship for China, when the Secretary of State recalled him to Washington and cancelled his assignment.<sup>1</sup>

In London, Rockhill had lunch with Valentine Chirol and the Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, who asked Chirol to arrange the lunch so he could discuss conditions in China with Rockhill. Rockhill explained the chaotic condition of the country's finances and stressed the need for a common effort among the Powers to persuade China to put its financial house in order. The three men agreed the Chinese financial situation was 'precarious', and steps must be taken immediately to avoid a disaster. Grey emphasized Britain's desire to work closely with the United States in China. Chirol found that his two guests 'liked each other', and he considered his luncheon's 'results most satisfactory'.<sup>2</sup>

The Rockhills continued on a leisurely tour of Europe. In Paris, they visited Henry Adams.<sup>3</sup> They arrived in St Petersburg on September 14. Rockhill learned he could not present his credentials, because the Tsar was vacationing in the Crimea. Since he could not officially take over as ambassador, the First Secretary, Montgomery Schuyler, continued to serve as *Chargé d'Affaires* for three months.

Rockhill spent his first weeks supervising the move of the Embassy into new quarters permitted by the generous rent allowance he had been given.<sup>4</sup> The idea was to combine living quarters, rooms for entertaining, and office space in the same building. Although the allowance may have been generous by Department of State standards, it permitted the Americans to occupy only an undistinguished building on a side street. The Chancery offices occupied the ground floor, salon rooms the second, and the living quarters the top floor. The American Embassy could not compare with the establishments of most European countries, which occupied palaces facing the Neva River. The British Embassy was housed in a vast red palace across the river from the Fortress of St Peter and St Paul. It reputedly was so huge that no one had yet counted all its rooms.<sup>5</sup>

The Rockhills learned that the winter season in St Petersburg was one long round of balls, formal dinners, evenings at the ballet or opera followed by champagne suppers, soirées, receptions, teas—all the social delights that Rockhill hated and could not afford to offer as lavishly. In the cavernous ballrooms of great palaces, women glittering with

diamonds waltzed with men bedecked with royal and imperial decorations. The daughter of the British Ambassador who arrived a year after the Rockhills, Meriel Buchanan, later described the sort of unrelenting and expensive social activity that occurred in the Russian capital during the years the Rockhills spent there:

*There were theatricals and tableaux vivants, there was a ball where all the dresses had to be black or white, there was a 'Bal Rosé' where all the dresses had to be pink, there was a ball at the Shouvaloff Palace where everybody had to wear coloured wigs, there was a ball at Countess Kleinmichel's with a big Persian quadrille, there was a masked fête at the skating rink.*<sup>6</sup>

The British Ambassador when Rockhill arrived in St Petersburg was Sir Arthur Nicholson. His son, Harold, who went on to his own distinguished career as a diplomat and author, has described a typical dinner at the British Embassy, one of a kind that took place 'night after night':

*The porter would don a gold-laced uniform and a huge beadle hat. He would thump with a golden mace upon the floor as the guests arrived. They would stream up the scarlet staircase between a double row of hired footmen standing like zanies in their powder and state liveries. The guests themselves were only a degree less gorgeously arrayed. The women carried tiaras on their heads ... the men wore diamond stars upon their breasts, and their shirtfronts were slashed by blue or scarlet ribbons affixed invisibly but magnificently to their braces. There were orchids and printed menu cards stamped with the royal arms in gold; and much expensive food and much expensive wine and a discreet hum of affable conversation.*<sup>7</sup>

Besides the endless round of social events, the Ambassador and his wife had to suffer being received in audience individually by the members of the Imperial family, a string of formal calls that continued for months. Meriel Buchanan described this boring custom:

*Indefinitely our audiences seemed to continue, becoming in time somewhat monotonous, with always the same procedure of reception, of a few moments' waiting in some gilded anteroom, of a ceremonious opening of doors, a series of courtesies, ten minutes' conversation, more courtesies, more opening and shutting of doors, of servants in gold-braided liveries helping one on with coats and fur boots, the grey horses pawing the ground impatiently, starting off at last with a tremendous clatter.*<sup>8</sup>

Meriel Buchanan accurately described the American Embassy building as 'a very poor one', and she wrote that the Embassy 'never played a very important part in Society', because 'the Ambassadors, all of them, [lacked] just sufficient *savoir faire* to make them a social success'.<sup>9</sup> There can be little doubt that, at least in the case of the Rockhills, the Ambassador's lack of a large fortune also influenced her judgment. Since her father remained as British Ambassador until after the outbreak of the 1917 revolution, Miss Buchanan had a chance to observe not only Rockhill but several of his successors. Rockhill probably would not have been upset to learn he was not regarded as a success in the social circles of St Petersburg. His diary is studded with acid comments about social events he attended, including some he hosted himself. After a dinner at the German Embassy, he wrote, 'Stupid dinner. I'm glad it's over.'<sup>10</sup> After more than one vapid social gathering he wrote, 'stupider, stupider, stupider!'

An air of fear and apprehension hung over the gaiety in the Russian capital.<sup>11</sup> The

abortive revolution of 1905 was four years in the past, but its reverberations continued to haunt the Russian ruling class. The Tsar and his family almost never visited their capital, and on the rare occasions when they did, they were heavily guarded. The magnificent Winter Palace stood empty and dead looking, the drapes drawn in all the windows. There was a pervasive fear of terrorist bombs. Conversations at social events tended to dwell morbidly on the prolonged absence of the Imperial family from St Petersburg's social life and on the need for precautions against terrorists.

The Prime Minister, Peter Stolypin, who had ruthlessly suppressed revolutionary activity with wholesale executions after taking office in 1906, was regarded as a prime target for a terrorist bomb. In August 1906, terrorists bombed his home in an assassination attempt that killed twenty-five people and wounded thirty, including Stolypin's two children. The target of the attempt was himself unhurt. Foreign diplomats tended to be chary of being in Stolypin's immediate vicinity in public places. In 1911, he was murdered while attending a performance at the Kieff Theatre. Between February 1905, and May 1909, more than 1,400 provincial governors and other officials were murdered by terrorists.

Despite the chronic fear of bombs and assassination, and the atmosphere of approaching doom, the Russian rulers continued to regard Russia as a special land immune to the changes that were sweeping the rest of the world and destined to be ruled autocratically by the Tsar and his descendants forever. The attempt to create representative government in the wake of the 1905 revolution had produced a Duma, or national assembly, that had twice been dissolved by the Tsar. In 1909, it was both unrepresentative of the Russian population and lacking any real power. The Tsar, despite his prolonged absence from his own capital and his increasing isolation from the country at large, continued to regard himself as the absolute ruler of Russia whose powers admitted of no checks by other people or institutions. He continued to press for consolidation of Russian hegemony in such far-away places as Manchuria and Central Asia. Few members of the diplomatic corps enjoyed their assignments in St Petersburg, and many sought transfers as soon as they could arrange them.

Rockhill soon discovered that the newspapers had been right in forecasting that he would be concerned with railroad building in China. Through the winter months into the spring, he devoted much of his official attention to the question of railroads in Manchuria. The man who was largely responsible for making the question important for an American ambassador in Russia was his old friend, Willard Straight.

On June 9, Straight resigned from the Department of State to accept a position, at probably several times his government salary, with E.H. Harriman's investment firm, Kuhn, Loeb and Company. Despite the collapse of Tang Shao-yi's Manchurian loan scheme, great financial plans for China, greater than Tang's, were being concocted in the United States and Europe, and Willard Straight was in the middle of them. He was not yet thirty years old.

An American Group of four leading banks—First National, National City, J.P. Morgan and Company, and Kuhn, Loeb and Company—was formed to seek cooperation with a consortium of banks in Britain, France and Germany to build a system of railroads in central and southern China. Called the Hukuang Railroad Scheme, it was the largest railroad project yet undertaken in China. It included completion of the infamous

Hankow-Canton line from which these same banks had reaped such a handsome profit when J.P. Morgan sold the American China Development Company to the Chinese. The Hukuang project was originated by European banks, and Americans were initially excluded. But Taft demanded that American firms be permitted to join, because the scheme seemed to offer such a potential for profit. Straight was hired by the American Group to coordinate activities with the Europeans and the Chinese.

He went immediately to Europe where he was also charged by Harriman to carry out a 'personal and confidential' mission for the American millionaire. Harriman had decided, apart from the American Group, to buy the Chinese Eastern Railroad from Russia. He planned then to approach Japan again to gain control of the South Manchurian Railroad. If Japan was again uncooperative, he would build a parallel line to link China with the Trans-Siberian Railroad. He was reviving his dream of an around-the-world transportation network. Harriman was negotiating with the Russians in Paris. Straight was hired to assist him and to pursue in Peking the possibility of obtaining a railroad concession for Harriman in Manchuria.

Harriman's plans were supported by a change in American foreign policy introduced by the Taft Administration. Derisively finally dubbed 'Dollar Diplomacy' by its critics, it sought, Taft explained, 'to substitute dollars for bullets' and combine 'idealistic humanitarian sentiments' with 'legitimate commercial aims' in foreign affairs. 'The theory that the field of diplomacy does not include in any degree commerce and the increase of trade relations,' Taft stated, 'is one to which [Secretary of State] Mr. Knox and this Administration does not subscribe.'<sup>12</sup> The new Administration ended the long-standing policy of the American government to stay clear of private business in foreign affairs. It sought rather to use business as a tool of diplomacy. According to Taft's biographer, "Every diplomat a salesman" might, to a degree, have been a slogan of the Taft years.'<sup>13</sup>

Willard Straight played an important role in persuading the new Administration to embrace the new policy. In a speech about its application in Asia, he stated his conviction that the new policy was 'the financial expression of John Hay's 'Open Door' policy ... which makes of international finance a guaranty for the preservation, rather than the destruction of China's integrity ... A far-seeing Administration has inaugurated a new policy, the alliance of diplomacy, with industry, commerce and finance.'<sup>14</sup> Not surprisingly, Rockhill viewed the new policy in a completely different light. The previous August, when he was in Washington before departing for St Petersburg, he had written to Hippisley, 'The government here has conceived the ridiculous idea that it can start a great commercial boom in China. My remarks on the situation in China fall on very unwilling ears, no one will listen to me.'<sup>15</sup>

The new Secretary of State, Philander Knox, like so many of his predecessors, was a successful lawyer with no diplomatic experience. He had helped form the Carnegie Steel Corporation and had served as Attorney-General under Theodore Roosevelt. James Bryce, the author of the classic study, *The American Commonwealth*, served as British Ambassador in Washington during the Taft Administration. He wrote of Knox that he 'gave the impression of having cared little, known little, or thought little of foreign politics until he became a minister'.<sup>16</sup> Taft, unlike his predecessor, took little interest in foreign affairs and left their management in the hands of his Secretary of State. Unlike the thorough Elihu Root, Knox was given to snap judgments based often upon limited

or more than usually incomplete information. His tenure as Secretary of State is not remembered for its diplomatic triumphs, but he did take an interest in the department he headed. Under him, the scope of the civil service reforms and reorganization begun by Elihu Root was expanded and their pace intensified.

The first of Willard Straight's projects to collapse was Harriman's purchase of the two Manchurian railroads. Harriman died on September 10 1909, and no one else—except, perhaps, Willard Straight—fully understood what he had been up to. The bankers in New York were reluctant to become involved in Manchuria, at least not without official backing. 'No one in New York knew precisely what Mr. Harriman had in mind,' Straight wrote. 'No one was capable of carrying through his scheme. The directing genius was gone.'<sup>17</sup>

The bankers approached the Secretary of State for support of a proposal to build a railroad from Chinchow, on the northern shore of the Gulf of Pechli, north across the whole of Manchuria to Aigun on the Amur River which marked the border separating Manchuria from Russia. It had been Harriman's fall-back plan if he could not buy the South Manchurian Railroad from Japan. The bankers' proposal blossomed, in Dollar Diplomacy, into a major diplomatic initiative by Secretary Knox to 'neutralize'—sometimes called 'internationalize'—all the Manchurian railroads. The man who dreamed up the idea was Willard Straight who wrote of it in his diary, 'It's mine, after all's said and done, and was started when I lunched with Mr. Schiff one day at the Lawyers' Club in New York.'<sup>18</sup>

Straight's idea proposed that the Chinese Eastern Railway and the South Manchurian Railway be purchased from Russia and Japan, respectively, by China. Straight's American Group of banks and their European counterparts involved in the Hukuang railroad scheme would arrange the financing for the purchase by China. The two railroads would be operated on China's behalf by an international board. The plan depended upon support by Britain and France to persuade Russia and Japan to sell the railroads.

The Chinchow-Aigun Railroad would be built as a joint Anglo-American undertaking. Whether it was intended to be part of the neutralization proposal, or a separate proposal to be undertaken simultaneously, or offered as an alternative if Russia and Japan refused to sell their railroads, was never clear. The Department of State marshaled all its forces for a major diplomatic effort in several world capitals to gain agreement for the railroad neutralization plan, and Willard Straight plunged ahead with the Chinchow-Aigun Railroad project. He went to China and toward the end of October, he was able to obtain a preliminary agreement from Chinese officials in Mukden for construction of the railroad north across Manchuria.

So within weeks of Rockhill's arrival in St Petersburg, he found himself involved in the Manchurian railroad neutralization project. His task was to persuade Russia to sell the Chinese Eastern Railway to China. He liked the idea, because it would return two important railroads to China's ownership, if not its immediate control. He noted that it was 'a good scheme if it can be carried through'.<sup>19</sup> He told Knox that Russia might be interested in the idea, and his reason for thinking so was not simply that he himself was attracted to it.

Even before Rockhill's arrival in St Petersburg, the Embassy had reported to Washington that Russia, suspicious of Japan's intentions in Manchuria, was hinting of a

willingness to cooperate with the United States to block the Japanese. In the autumn of 1909, both Rockhill and Montgomery Schuyler sent reports along these lines. Washington withheld a definite response, but the Ambassador was told his attitude 'should be receptive'. Also encouraging was the fact that the Chinese Eastern Railway had been losing money for years. E.H. Harriman had become involved in negotiations with Russia to buy the railroad, because he had heard about the railroad's financial troubles, and his early feelers about buying it had met with an encouraging response. Rockhill thus had reason to advise Knox that a proposal to buy the railroad might meet with a positive response in St Petersburg.

But the recently-arrived ambassador did not yet know that opinion within the Russian government as to what should be done with the Chinese Eastern Railway, and what should be Russia's policy toward Japan, was sharply divided. A strong faction within the government advocated seeking closer relations with Japan, opposed selling the railroad, and therefore did not particularly favor cooperation with the United States in Manchuria. The leader of this faction was the man with whom Rockhill would have to negotiate: the Russian Foreign Minister, Count Alexander Izvolsky.

Izvolsky was a small, nervous man with a pointed beard and a foppish manner. Fluent in both French and English, he was often mistaken for a Frenchman. According to Harold Nicholson, 'One's first impression was not favourable.' Nicholson came to know Izvolsky well, and his description of the Russian diplomat is sharply observant:

*He was obviously a vain man, and he strutted on little lacquered feet. His clothes, which came from Saville Row, were moulded tightly upon a plump but still gainly frame. He held himself rigidly with stiff shoulders. He wore a pearl pin, an eye glass, white spats, a white slip to his waistcoat. His face was well cared for, but pasty and fattening, with loose and surly lips ... His voice was at once cultured and rasping. He left behind him, as he passed onwards, a slight scent of violette de parme.*<sup>20</sup>

Izvolsky believed that Russia should hold on to the Chinese Eastern Railway and should seek closer ties with Japan. He feared that Japan might otherwise seek to make common cause with China against the West and thereby jeopardize Russia's position in Manchuria.

An abiding belief in Russia, which always affected its policies in Asia, was the need to guard against the 'yellow peril', the migration of hordes of Chinese and Japanese westward toward Russia. Rockhill on several occasions assured Izvolsky that the likelihood of China and Japan ever becoming allies against the West was very remote. Izvolsky suspected that the United States entertained political designs on Manchuria, despite its constant reiteration of support for the Open Door, so he was suspicious of anything he heard from the American ambassador about Manchuria. Any American initiative to protect or strengthen China's position in Manchuria therefore was, in Izvolsky's view, probably intended to weaken Russia there. The Ministry of Finance might wish to shed the money-losing Chinese Eastern Railway, but the Ministry of Foreign Affairs viewed the question from a different perspective. As Foreign Minister, Izvolsky was in an excellent position to influence the Tsar and others toward his point of view.

The story of the Knox proposal to neutralize the Manchurian railroads and build the Chinchow-Aigun Railroad is a tangled and often murky tale that dragged on through several months of futile negotiating. As an important initiative by one of the world's

Great Powers, it stimulated a staggering amount of diplomatic correspondence, both open and secret. It is, of course, only one chapter in the much longer and equally murky tale of the international struggle to control Manchuria carried on over the first four decades of the twentieth century.

Knox's first step was to present his proposal to Britain on November 6. This was a tactical error. The countries whose agreement he needed were Russia and Japan, not Britain. Britain had a formal alliance with Japan and was growing friendly to Russia as it tried to maintain the balance of power in Europe in the face of an increasingly bellicose Germany. In 1907, Britain and Russia signed a convention to remove friction between them in Central Asia and Tibet. Britain was unlikely to agree to Knox's proposal unless Russia and Japan did so first. Moreover, the British were unlikely to put any pressure on those two countries to sell their railroads in Manchuria. Britain's area of principal interest in China was the Yangtze valley, not Manchuria, which it had already acknowledged as an area of special interest to Japan and Russia.

The British response to Knox's overture was therefore predictably cool. Sir Edward Grey advised Knox to hold the neutralization proposal in abeyance until the future of the massive Hukuang railroad scheme became clearer. As for the Chinchow-Aigun Railroad, he suggested to Knox that Britain and the United States jointly propose that China gain Japan's agreement before proceeding further.

Despite the distinct coolness of the British reaction, Knox went ahead, and in December presented the proposal to the other countries involved: China, Germany, France, Japan, and Russia. On January 6, the Department of State issued a public statement to explain the initiative. It expressed confidence that Russia and Japan would agree.

Rockhill presented the proposal to Izvolsky on December 20. They subsequently met several times to discuss it. Rockhill made as strong a case as he could for the proposal and for Russian cooperation with the United States in preference to Japan. When he presented the neutralization proposal, he withheld information about the Chinchow-Aigun Railroad project. He had understood from his exchanges with Washington in November in preparation for his presentation that it was intended as an alternative to the neutralization proposal, not a part of it. Moreover, Britain had not agreed to what was planned as a joint Anglo-American project. However, when the Knox initiative was presented in Tokyo and the other capitals, construction of the Chinchow-Aigun Railroad was included, and Izvolsky soon heard about it. He concluded that Rockhill and the United States were guilty of double-dealing, and his suspicions about American intentions in Manchuria were reinforced, or so he repeatedly said.

During a meeting on December 25, Izvolsky told Rockhill he had heard about the Chinchow-Aigun project, and he expressed surprise that Rockhill had not included it in the neutralization proposal he had presented to Izvolsky. Rockhill cabled for instructions. He had earlier urged that the Russians be informed, but had been told to withhold the information until the British agreed. This time, he was told that he 'need not conceal the fact' that a preliminary contract to build the railroad had been signed with China and that it 'will be supported diplomatically by the United States and Britain'.<sup>21</sup> With those instructions in mind, he met again with the Russian Foreign Minister on December 27, but found him implacably hostile. Rockhill wrote in his diary, 'I had a heated conversation of an hour with Izvolsky, but it amounted to nothing.

For some unknown reason, he likes to lash himself into a fury with me.<sup>22</sup>

A few weeks later, in an effort to allay Russian suspicions, Knox told the Russian ambassador in Washington that the American ambassador in St Petersburg had misunderstood his instructions when he withheld information about the Chinchow-Aigun project.<sup>23</sup> Blame for the mix-up could probably be shared by both Washington and the St Petersburg Embassy, but the final outcome of the railroad neutralization episode probably would have been no different even if it had not occurred. During the next several months, Izvolsky protested repeatedly that the United States had not shown good faith by withholding the information. His repetition suggested that, for Izvolsky, the mix-up gave Russia a convenient excuse to oppose the Knox proposal.

Rockhill made more vigorous efforts on behalf of Knox's plan than did the American ambassador in Tokyo. Izvolsky commented on Rockhill's persistence in a letter sent in December to the Russian ambassador in London. The German ambassador in St Petersburg sent a report to Berlin that mentioned Rockhill and included information about Izvolsky's views, which the Russian minister had revealed to the German diplomat. Izvolsky was impressed by Germany's growing power, and he did all he could to placate the Germans including taking the German ambassador into his confidence. The German also reported that Sir Arthur Nicholson derided the Knox plan as unrealistic and unlikely to be accepted by Russia.<sup>24</sup>

Rockhill was on unfamiliar ground in an assignment he neither sought nor wanted. Dealing with Tsarist Russians was different from dealing with the Chinese, and he had had to plunge into negotiations about an important issue on which it was becoming clear that American and Russian views differed greatly. His instructions from Knox lacked clarity and precision. The endless round of empty socializing in St Petersburg had become a boring burden. It is not surprising, given Rockhill's personality and temperament, that he became unhappy and even more irascible than he had been in Peking. In December, he wrote to Henry Fletcher in Peking:

*This is a d—d poor, uninteresting place. There is not a man in the diplomatic corps here who likes it, so far as I can learn. Don't you ever take it if it is offered to you.*<sup>25</sup>

On January 11, he was finally able to present his credentials to Tsar Nicholas II. Accompanied by Montgomery Schuyler, he was presented to the Russian ruler at Tsarkoe Selo, the Tsar's retreat outside St Petersburg. They had a half-hour's conversation. Rockhill brought up the subject of Manchuria, obviously the most important and contentious issue between the two countries. To judge from Rockhill's report to Knox, the Tsar's end of the conversation consisted mostly of platitudes and conventional observations. The conversation ended with the Tsar saying he was in complete agreement with the American Ambassador.<sup>26</sup> The Tsar probably was, in fact, inclined favorably toward the American proposal that he sell the money-losing Chinese Eastern Railway. Kaiser Wilhelm thought he was.<sup>27</sup> Thus, the possibility apparently still existed in early January that Russia might accept Knox's proposal, despite Izvolsky's opposition, British coolness, and Japanese overtures to St Petersburg.

Despite the apparent possibility of American success in its Manchurian policy, Rockhill was becoming thoroughly fed up with the obnoxious Foreign Minister and with life in St Petersburg. The unhappiness that had been building since his arrival in September



came to a head in January in a letter to Dr Edward T. Williams who had served as Chinese Secretary in the Legation in Peking under Rockhill. He was working in Washington with Phillips and Huntington-Wilson in the Far Eastern Bureau. Rockhill had apparently heard a rumor that the American Ambassador in Tokyo was seeking a transfer, and he asked Williams to find out if it was true. He had in mind a swap of ambassadors between St Petersburg and Tokyo. If he could not go back to Asia, he hinted to Williams, he would rather resign than stay in Russia. His letter was dated January 12, the day after his audience with the Tsar. Williams replied on February 8.

*I have kept your letter entirely confidential, as you requested. My inquiries therefore have been limited to the report that Mr. O'Brien was inclined to leave Tokyo. I can find no confirmation here at all of such a desire on his part. He has apparently not mentioned it here, or, if he did, it was not taken seriously ... I trust you will not think of resigning. You are too much needed in the service and opportunity for a transfer may occur at any time. I sympathize with your desire to get back to the Orient, and hope it may be gratified. You are so well equipped for the Far East and understand the oriental mind so well that an exchange with Tokyo, to my thinking, would be a fine thing.<sup>28</sup>*

A few days later, Montgomery Schuyler, who had been transferred back to Washington, also wrote to the unhappy ambassador, apparently in an effort to raise his spirits. He assured Rockhill that 'The Department proposes to back you up absolutely in the whole Manchurian matter.' He explained that the Russian Foreign Minister was well-known to several people in Washington who 'consider him capable of anything unfriendly to the United States ... The Department looks for no improvement in Russo-American relations until Izvolsky is entirely 'eliminated' from the situation.'<sup>29</sup> Rockhill's woes were compounded by an attack of gout, an affliction that had bothered him on occasion in China. Rich foods, emotional strain and chilling are among the accepted causes for gout. Rockhill began to wear a sling to hold his tender left arm.

The opposition of Russia and Japan to the Knox initiative, despite the Tsar's apparently sympathetic attitude, and the growing cooperation of the two countries in opposing the initiative, were becoming clearer every day. In almost daily messages to Knox during the last half of January, Rockhill reported that during several meetings, Izvolsky emphasized Russia's opposition. On January 24, he wrote,

*In previous despatches, I have had occasion to refer to the remarks frequently made to me by the Minister for Foreign Affairs that the policy of the United States in Manchuria was driving Russia into the arms of Japan and that we were encouraging an aggressive policy on the part of China.<sup>30</sup>*

In early February, the Ministers of Russia and Japan in Peking presented diplomatic notes to China that made official their refusal to sell their railroads. The notes were so similar in tone and even phraseology that it was obvious the two countries had consulted in drafting them. The Manchurian railroad neutralization proposal was dead. But the Chinchow-Aigun Railroad was not, or so Willard Straight and the Department of State decided. They continued to pursue it, despite Rockhill's reports of Izvolsky's repeated and increasingly vehement statements of opposition. By the middle of February, his relations with Izvolsky had become so strained that Knox suggested to Rockhill that 'So far as possible, confine yourself to written communications with the Minister for Foreign

Affairs, in order not to subject yourself needlessly to further discourtesy.' Knox even raised the possibility that Rockhill might seek an audience with the Tsar 'for the purpose of expressing to his Imperial Majesty the great surprise and regret of the President' that the proposal to build the railroad was 'for some unknown reason so unsympathetically received by the Minister for Foreign Affairs'.<sup>31</sup> Apparently, there was no audience with the Tsar.

Legally, building a railroad in Manchuria was no concern of Russia or Japan. Manchuria was part of China, and China could grant a concession to build a railroad without reference to either country—legally. The reality was that Manchuria was controlled jointly by Russia and Japan. Moreover, the main purpose of the Chinchow-Aigun Railroad would be to link up with the Chinese Eastern Railway and thereby with the Trans-Siberian and Europe. Russia legally owned the Chinese Eastern Railway, so its approval was needed for the link-up. In April, just before departing Peking where he had spent the winter, Willard Straight reported to the bankers in New York, 'China will do nothing about the Chinchow-Aigun Railway until we attempt at least to remove the Russian objections.'<sup>32</sup>

In June, Straight was sent to St Petersburg by his banker employers for talks with Russian officials (Rockhill was on leave in the United States). The Russians were evasive and the talks inconclusive, but Straight clearly sensed their opposition to American policy in Manchuria. He reported that Izvolsky was 'disagreeable and petulant. He evidently endeavored to irritate me. His attitude seemed anti-American.'<sup>33</sup> Less than three weeks later, Russia and Japan signed a formal agreement pledging to maintain the status quo in Manchuria. The news of the signing frightened China who withdrew her approval of the Chinchow-Aigun Railroad.

American diplomacy in Asia had achieved precisely the opposite of what the United States for years had sought to achieve in Asia. It had driven Russia and Japan together and strengthened their hold on Manchuria. E.H. Harriman had realized the need to keep the two countries separated and isolated if his plan to obtain the railroads was to succeed. Contemporary observers at the time, and historians since, have described the diplomacy of the Taft Administration over Manchuria as naïve, clumsy, and blundering. As early as January 15, 1910, the *Times* of London summed up the reaction of many European leaders to Knox's railroad neutralization project:

*[The European Powers] are constrained to look upon that project as Utopian—so Utopian that most European statesmen, we imagine, must feel considerable surprise that it should have been put forward and made public by the responsible Minister of one of the greatest World Powers without the customary 'sounding' beforehand of the two governments whose interests it so directly affects.*

In other words, American foreign policy had been taken over in Washington by a rank amateur whose bumbling was causing surprise in the foreign ministries of Europe. As early as the previous December, many diplomats saw signs of a developing rapprochement between Russia and Japan prompted mainly by the Knox proposal. On December 11, Izvolsky in a cabinet meeting in St Petersburg had succinctly summed up Russia's view of the situation:

*If we reject the American proposal, we will call forth a temporary cooling off of American friendship, but America will not declare war on us for this and its*

*fleet will not arrive in Harbin, while in this connection, Japan is considerably more dangerous.*<sup>34</sup>

Surprised and critical European diplomats decided that the United States put blind faith in such abstract principles as the Open Door and expected other countries to formulate their policies according to such principles rather than the protection of their own vital interests. The United States, they concluded, did not understand how policies pursued by European countries in Asia impinged upon the balance of power in Europe and were formulated by those countries with that consideration uppermost in mind. Most importantly, the United States had pursued an aggressive policy, in the sense of taking bold initiatives, in a part of the world not of vital interest to the United States but considered vital to those countries whose interests were affected by the American actions. John Hay and Theodore Roosevelt recognized that the United States could take no bold actions in Manchuria that ran counter to Russian and Japanese aims, because the United States would never be willing to back up such actions with force, and every other country knew that it was not willing to do so. Knox and Taft, in accepting and giving official support to Willard Straight's ideas, apparently did not grasp this fundamental truth.

The difference between the Realpolitik of Roosevelt, who was not a lawyer, and the legalistic idealism of Taft and Knox was underscored by letters exchanged among them about Japan and Manchuria. In the waning months of his presidency, Roosevelt wrote a long letter to Knox, then Secretary of State-designate, to remind him of the importance of cordial relations with Japan. Roosevelt was worried about the adverse effect of American oriental exclusion laws on relations with Japan, but his basic point was the importance of cultivating friendly relations with the most powerful country in Asia.<sup>35</sup> In December 1910, Roosevelt had been out of office almost two years. Worried about the failure of American policy in Manchuria, he wrote a letter to Taft about Japan:

*It is ... peculiarly in our interest not to take any steps as regards Manchuria which will give the Japanese cause to feel, with or without reason, that we are hostile to them, or a menace ... I utterly disbelieve in the policy of bluff, in national and international no less than in personal affairs, or in any violation of the old frontier maxim, 'never draw unless you mean to shoot.' I do not believe in our taking any position anywhere unless we can make good; and as regards Manchuria, if the Japanese choose to follow a course of conduct to which we are adverse, we cannot stop it unless we are prepared to go to war, and successful war about Manchuria would require a fleet as good as that of England, plus an army as good as that of Germany.*<sup>36</sup>

Knox drafted a reply for Taft's signature. It was a lawyer's brief that invoked observance of treaty provisions and rights of ownership under international law to demonstrate that the United States had done nothing to which Japan could object:

*We have no desire or intention to interfere with any legitimate purpose of Japan in Manchuria ... Nor have we given Japan at any time just cause to think that we wished to interfere ... Why the Japanese need Manchuria any more than does China, which owns<sup>37</sup> it now, or why it is any more 'vital' to them than to China is not apparent.*

The writers held beliefs about how foreign policy should be managed that were like

parallel lines, unable ever to meet no matter how far they were followed.

When news of the Russo-Japanese agreement was announced, Willard Straight hurried back to New York for a meeting with his banker employers. They were a divided and angry group. They were divided over whether to continue their activities in China, which so far had consumed large sums for expenses but offered not even a glimmer of profits. They were angry with the Department of State, which the bankers decided had been using them and their financial support to pursue the Department's political aims in Asia. Straight privately thought he had probably made his last trip to China and would have to look for other employment.<sup>38</sup>

After a good deal of debate, the bankers did decide to stay involved in China. They informed the Secretary of State, however, that they 'would be under no obligation to seek or accept contracts which aroused the irreconcilable opposition of other Powers'.<sup>39</sup> Their decision was affected by a request submitted by China to the United States on September 22—at the prompting of the Secretary of State—for a large loan to reform the Chinese currency system. For years, every Western observer in China had argued for reform of the primitive Chinese currency system as a necessary prerequisite for economic development, so this request could not be faulted as unnecessary or unlikely to produce useful results.

A loan of \$50 million [worth about twenty times that in today's \$] was agreed upon, and it would include funds for development in Manchuria. Then that amount was too large to float in the United States alone, and the bankers told Knox that European banks involved in the Hukuang railroad loan would have to be included. Willard Straight was sent off to Europe where he made arrangements for participation by the British, French and German bankers. Then he pushed on to China to negotiate with the Chinese about both the Hukuang and the Currency Reform loans.

En route from Europe to Peking in November, he stopped in St Petersburg to see Rockhill. In a letter to his fiancée, Dorothy Whitney, he described the meeting:

*I found him a most charming man, as I always knew I should, once I was no longer his subordinate. I didn't have it out, but I shall some day, and I think we shall be very good friends. I am quite willing to admit my own unruliness, but I insist that he did not stand for progress. Had he had his way, we would never have been where we are.*<sup>40</sup>

Straight's unflagging optimism, so nearly extinguished by the debacle of the Manchurian railroad neutralization project and the all-but-certain demise of the Chinchow-Aigun Railroad scheme, was rekindled by the American bankers' decision to continue their involvement in China with the big Hukuang Railroad Loan and the big, new Currency Reform Loan. With renewed zeal, he charged into Peking where he spent a hectic winter courting Chinese officials to promote his financial projects and to persuade them to accept the European banks in a consortium to float the Currency Reform loan.<sup>41</sup>

Early in the year, when Knox's railroad neutralization scheme was beginning to come apart, an important change had occurred in Rockhill's staff. Montgomery Schuyler was replaced as First Secretary by Post Wheeler who arrived with his wife in early 1910 via the Trans-Siberian Railroad from Tokyo. Wheeler claimed to be the first person admitted to the Foreign Service by the new examination system installed by Roosevelt and Root in 1906. His standing in the competition may have been helped by the fact that 'Uncle



Plate 6 Thomas Haskins, c. 1900 (see p. 167)



*Plate 7 The American Embassy at St Petersburg during Rockhill's tenure*

Joe' Cannon, the powerful Speaker of the House of Representatives, was his wife's cousin. Wheeler had worked for several years as a journalist, and he was older than most of the other candidates who entered the service on the bottom rung. His first post of assignment had been Tokyo.

Wheeler arrived in St Petersburg to find his new boss, the Ambassador, unhappy with his assignment, frustrated by his fruitless and unpleasant meetings with Izvolsky, worried about the financial drain of living in St Petersburg, in pain from gout in his arm, and altogether not an easy man to work for. Wheeler had met Rockhill twice before, in Washington and in Peking when he and his wife had visited China on leave from their post in Tokyo. Apparently, those encounters had been friendly, though brief. But in St Petersburg, Wheeler found Rockhill sunk in a dark and misanthropic mood, nursing his painful left arm in a sling and eager to get away to a spa in Europe for rest and treatment. As soon as the new man had a chance to get settled and introduced to appropriate Russian officials and members of the diplomatic corps, the suffering Ambassador took leave to go away for medical treatment. He returned a few weeks later, still in pain from the gout with his arm still in a sling. Wheeler, who had already suffered some sharp put-downs from Rockhill, took one look at the returned Ambassador and decided, 'the barometer was down'.<sup>42</sup>

Rockhill's 'angularity of character' was noted by many people who knew him, even those who wrote admiringly of his professional knowledge and skill. At official social functions, Wheeler also saw the smooth professional.

*At the Embassy's few official dinners, he showed himself an urbane and distinguished host, of faultless manners and with a fund of anecdote, drawn largely from early travels in little-known Tibet, that charmed his guests.*<sup>43</sup>

But Wheeler's portrayal of Rockhill in his memoirs is the most negative to be found in any memoirs or letters.

*I have known a score of Ambassadors and seen them at work and play ... exceptional men of ripe judgment and vivid personality ... Rockhill was sui generis. Good-looking and imposing, he furnished the Department with dispatches that might still be models for rising diplomats. But he was short of kindly qualities ... Rockhill's approach was cold, his manner satiric and sneering when it was not brusque and overbearing. He had no friends among his colleagues. He was indifferent to the problems of the men under him and had never a courteous word for those whom he considered his inferiors. By and large he counted tourists as insects, to be brushed off and, if of negligible influence back home, swatted. Personal letters of inquiry to him went into the wastebasket.*<sup>44</sup>

He called Rockhill 'the most un-American American I have ever seen in public office', and claimed he once heard the Ambassador declare to two Englishmen, 'that he wished to God he had been born anywhere but in the United States'. Wheeler added, 'He was not alone in that wish.' He even implied that Rockhill, presumably in a rage, once attacked his Swiss valet so savagely that he injured the man's back and caused him to run away from the Embassy, leaving all his clothes behind.<sup>45</sup>

Wheeler's memoirs should be read with a critical eye, however. They were written jointly with his wife, Hallie Erminie Rives, a novelist. The two took turns writing alternative chapters in the first person and lavishing praise on the other co-author. Written in an often-flippant style, full of anecdotes and *bon mots* designed to show the authors as sophisticated cosmopolites, the memoirs portray two personalities bound to clash with the introverted Rockhill. Wheeler's diplomatic career extended into the 1930s and included service as Minister to Paraguay and to Albania. But he was apparently in hot water much of the time, and he and his wife must have made many enemies. He has harsh things to say about many others of his Foreign Service colleagues, notably William Phillips who apparently became his particular *bête-noir*. The memoirs are one long diatribe against the Department of State and its 'inside clique' of venal officers and Secretaries of State, all plotting against the Wheelers. 'Department files,' the Wheelers claimed, 'are steeped in poison and falsehood.'<sup>46</sup>

Not surprisingly then, the Wheelers' often unreliable memoirs can be objectively classed as they had characterized the Department files. For example, they claim that when Huntington-Wilson resigned from the Department at the end of the Taft Administration, he told them he had had a clash with Knox—with whom Wilson had uniformly close and cordial relations—and that his resignation was due in part to William Phillips's machinations. Huntington-Wilson himself gives a very different account. Mrs Wheeler claimed that William Phillips told her in London 'that Rockhill was the hardest chief in the Service to work under, that he was a crank, had mental indigestion and gout to boot ... He, Phillips, had had him too long in Peking and simply had to get himself transferred.'<sup>47</sup>

In his memoirs, William Phillips says he decided he should seek a transfer to

Washington in order better to prepare himself for a diplomatic career.<sup>48</sup> As for Rockhill's feelings about Phillips, which presumably affected how he treated Phillips, Rockhill expressed nothing but praise. In his confidential annual report on the efficiency of the officers under his supervision, written in January 1907, he wrote his presumably candid opinion of Phillips:

*The Second Secretary of the Legation, Mr. William Phillips, has continued to deserve my warmest praise for his conscientiousness and ability in the discharge of his duty. It is with the most sincere regret that I see him leaving this Legation, but I do not think that he could stand much longer the climate of Peking, especially after the severe illness he had just after his arrival here in 1905 [a bad case of typhoid].*

He closed the report with an unusual reiteration of his high regard for Phillips.

*My regret [at the departure of John Coolidge, the First Secretary] is made the more keen by the early departure of Mr. William Phillips, of whom I dare not say any more to the Department than I have already written. Although the Legation will miss him greatly, I sincerely trust that he may remain in the service of the Department, as he is too valuable and promising a man to lose.*<sup>49</sup>

Phillips remained a friend of Rockhill until Rockhill's death, and he represented the Department of State at his former chief's funeral. Neither he nor Huntington-Wilson mentions the Wheelers even once in their memoirs.

As usual, Edith was a contrast to her husband, even to the Wheelers. Friendly and helpful, she was a perfect ambassador's wife. As in Peking, she offset to some extent her husband's surliness. Even the Wheelers found her worthy of praise. 'Mrs. Rockhill's at-homes and occasional soirees were perfectly carried out,' wrote Mrs Wheeler. 'She was an admirable Chiefess and a social favorite.'<sup>50</sup>

Her soirées were popular and attracted guests from the upper levels of St Petersburg society. Several American women were married to members of the Russian aristocracy, including the granddaughter of Ulysses S. Grant, and they often were among the guests. Celebrities who were visiting the Russian capital often appeared. Rockhill tried to avoid these affairs as best he could, usually making only a brief appearance. But on one occasion, one of the guests was Elinor Glyn, the popular English novelist, who was spending several weeks in St Petersburg doing research for a novel (which became *His Hour*, one of her best, and published in 1910). Glyn fascinated the Ambassador who lingered to chat with her. He obtained from her a photograph which he put in a place of honor on his desk, to the astonishment of the staff (at least, according to the Wheelers).<sup>51</sup> Since Elinor Glyn was writing what was then considered daringly erotic material, this questionable information may be merely another of their attempts at calumny.

In the summer of 1910, the first anniversary of Rockhill's arrival in St Petersburg was approaching, and he wanted out. In March, Edith returned to the United States, she too 'fed up with Russia' according to George Marvin who was working in Paris for J.P. Morgan and saw her off at Cherbourg.<sup>52</sup> On April 26, her husband departed St Petersburg for three months' leave in the United States. In Washington, he discussed with Philander Knox his desire for a transfer. He explained that he was having trouble making ends meet in the expensive Russian capital, despite the special rent allowance. Knox responded that he 'would not fail to consider the request as soon as an opportunity offered'.<sup>53</sup> But



suddenly arranging an unscheduled transfer of one of the Department of State's most senior officials, both in terms of rank and length of service, from one of the most senior and important posts in the diplomatic service, was not easy.

When his leave ended, the Ambassador returned to his post, but his conversation with the Secretary had apparently made an impression. Early in the autumn, Knox approached Huntington-Wilson after a routine meeting in the Secretary's office to pass along a message from President Taft. Would Huntington-Wilson be interested in an assignment to St Petersburg as Ambassador? Huntington-Wilson was deeply engaged in implementing reforms that Knox, and Elihu Root before him, had introduced in the Department of State. Knox let him know that the Secretary preferred that Wilson stay on in Washington to complete his work. Wilson was tempted by the offer of a major ambassadorship, but decided to decline. Perhaps he also had his eye on another post. He stayed in Washington, and Rockhill, at least for the present, stayed in Russia.<sup>54</sup>

In early December, Rockhill sent Knox a letter to inquire about the possibility of a transfer to Tokyo or Constantinople, explaining that he had heard from friends that the Ambassadors in those posts were seeking transfers. He reminded Knox of his promise the previous summer to arrange a transfer for Rockhill as soon as an opportunity arose. He explained that in January, he was expected to host his 'court reception', a formal function held when an ambassador presented his credentials. Rockhill had not held his reception the previous winter when he arrived in St Petersburg, because the Russian court had been in mourning due to the death of a member of the Imperial family. He was now expected to hold his delayed function a year later. He explained that if he were about to be transferred, it would not be proper to hold the reception.<sup>55</sup> He probably not only hoped desperately for the transfer, he also was seeking an excuse to avoid holding the reception. Apparently, the answer from Washington was not encouraging, because he hosted his big reception on January 30.

The 'court reception' was a St Petersburg ritual that most foreign diplomats hated. The ambassador and his wife who were the host and hostess had nothing to do with choosing the guests or making any of the arrangements, because it was completely arranged by the protocol office of the Russian court. The host and hostess were simply expected to appear at the appointed hour and stand for hours receiving guests.

More than 3,500 invitations were issued for Rockhill's reception, and it was attended by 1,000 guests who included the cream of Russian society, the Russian aristocracy, and the enormous diplomatic corps in St Petersburg. It was deemed a huge success, one of the largest such gatherings in the Russian capital in recent memory. A press report said it 'attracted an unprecedented number of the oldest families in Russia who were seen outside the court for the first time since the [1905] revolution'.<sup>56</sup>

Rockhill and his staff, in court dress which meant knee-breeches and stockings, stood in one corner receiving guests, while Edith, dressed in a white satin gown and wearing a diamond tiara and diamond necklace, and Daisy in a blue gown with silver embroidery, stood in the opposite corner doing the same thing. They probably stood, bowing or curtsying and shaking hands, for hours. The strain of the ordeal was not lessened by the requirement to observe the strict and intricate protocol that governed the proper mode of address and relative precedence of all the Granddukes, Archdukes, Counts,

and other titled personages, and their wives, in the hierarchy of European aristocracy. The host probably stood praying all the while that his transfer would come through soon.

During his years in Washington, Peking and St Petersburg, Rockhill had continued his scholarly pursuits, conducting extensive research into aspects of Chinese and Tibetan history and writing scholarly treatises. In 1902, Sarat Chandra Das's book about his Tibetan travels was published. Rockhill had edited it and written an introduction which paid handsome tribute to Sarat Chandra as a Tibetan explorer. Several more of Rockhill's publications had appeared since then. Rockhill did not write for a general audience. His books were intended for scholars and specialists. Some of his writings were published in Europe, and usually were not widely reviewed because they appealed to a restricted readership. Some became standard reference works.

Two publications appeared in 1904. *An Inquiry Into The Population of China* was published by the Smithsonian and dealt with a question of increasing interest to everyone concerned with China: the relationship of the country's large and increasing population to its modernization. In the same year, the Government Printing Office in Washington published *Treaties and Conventions With or Concerning China and Korea, 1894-1904*. Rockhill took the Sino-Japanese War as a watershed event in China's modern history and traced its foreign relations since then. The book was significant in containing the texts of the treaties by which the Great Powers sought to divide China into spheres of influence. In 1908, a supplement was published updating it to that year. One of the junior diplomatic officers who worked for Rockhill in St Petersburg, J.V.S. MacMurray, building upon Rockhill's work, in 1919 published a compilation of all the treaties and agreements until then. It has been the standard reference work on the subject. Acknowledging his debt to his former chief, he dedicated the work to Rockhill.

In 1905, *China's Intercourse With Korea From The XVth Century to 1895* appeared. In 1910, *The Dalai Lamas of Lhasa And Their Relations With The Manchu Emperors of China, 1644-1908* was published. Both of these books were published in Europe. All these publications were works of formidable scholarship; some issued in more than one volume. They reflected wide polyglot reading and painstaking research.

While in St Petersburg, Rockhill finished a translation of a thirteenth-century manuscript by a Chinese writer, Chau Ju-kua, entitled *Chu Fan Ch?* (*Description of Barbarous Peoples*). It recounted information that the author gathered from Arab traders from south and southeast Asia, Africa, and Europe while he served as an inspector of foreign trade in Fukien. A German professor who came to Columbia University, Friedrich Hirth, had begun a translation in the early 1890s, but had not finished it. Rockhill somehow learned about the work, and after writing to Hirth, began to work on it in 1904. Apparently, Hirth did much of the translation, while Rockhill reviewed and checked the translation, provided explanatory notes, and wrote a long introduction. The introduction was a major work of scholarship in itself. It reviewed in detail China's relations with the outside world since the time of Alexander the Great, based upon an exhaustive review of documentary sources in many languages. When it was nearly finished and about to be sent to the printer, Rockhill wrote to Hippisley, 'I shall miss it awfully, it has been my amusement for so long ... I have had lots of fun with it.'<sup>57</sup>

The book was published by the Imperial Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg in

1911 with the title, *Chau Ju-kua: His Work On The Chinese And Arab Trade In The Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*. Rockhill was unhappy with the way the book looked. He told Hippisley, 'It has many blemishes; it was no easy matter to print a book in English in St. P. and I am a bad proof-reader.'<sup>58</sup> The *Times Literary Supplement* in London nevertheless in its review said that it was 'a work that bears on every page evidence of patient, scholarly and sympathetic research ... The book deserves many readers.'<sup>59</sup> Surprisingly, this rather esoteric product, published obscurely in Russia, attracted attention in the United States. The *New York Times* published a full page of highlights, and the *New York Sun* said,

*It is not long ago that it was asked with a sneer, 'who reads an American book?' The change is strongly accentuated by the fact that one of the most valuable treasures of Chinese literature has been rescued from forgetfulness by two Americans and that the results of their labors of translation and critical editing have been given to the world by the Imperial Academy of Sciences of St. Petersburg.*

On January 30, the same day he stood for hours in the receiving line at his court reception. Rockhill sent a long message to Washington setting forth in detail his views on American policy toward Russia, especially in relation to Asia. The context was a long-standing, ongoing problem over travel by American Jews to Russia. For several years, American Jews had, from time to time, complained that their entry into Russia on American passports, and their freedom to travel around the country, were restricted as compared with other Americans. They accused the Russian government of extending its infamous repression of Russian Jews to Americans. The problem had existed before Rockhill arrived in St Petersburg, and it would continue after he departed. Next to railroads in Manchuria, he probably devoted more attention to it than any other issue.

The issue produced strong domestic political repercussions in the United States, especially when the influential financier, Jacob Schiff, wrote letters of complaint to the President and the Secretary of State. Russia denied that it was guilty of anti-Semitism aimed at Americans. In the face of apparent Russian intransigence, some members of Congress threatened retaliation by unilaterally abrogating a commercial treaty with Russia, signed in 1833, that governed travel and immigration between the two countries. Knox asked Rockhill for his assessment of the effect such an action would have on Russian-American relations, especially in Asia. He possibly knew what the response would be, since status quo is so beloved by diplomats. Rockhill accepted the opportunity to lay out his views in detail.

He judged that abrogating the treaty would simply irritate the Russians and would not solve the problem of travel by American Jews in Russia (if such a problem existed; Rockhill's investigations had not convinced him that the Russian government itself, as a matter of policy, was discriminating against Americans). Despite his personal unhappiness in St Petersburg and his dislike of Russian officials, he argued that maintaining 'the sympathetic cooperation of Russia is of supreme importance'. 'For the realization of our policy of Chinese sovereignty and equally of opportunity in Manchuria and Mongolia,' he wrote, 'such cooperation is an essential condition.'<sup>61</sup>

He pointed out that Russian and American interests in Asia would both benefit if further Japanese encroachments could be blocked. The other European Powers

subordinated their policies in Asia to their more important concerns in Europe. Russia, with interests in Asia greater than any other European Power, was the only European Power with Asian interests important for their own sake. Russia therefore was a natural ally of the United States in Asia. Rockhill argued that Russian policy in Asia 'is not aggressive but cautiously defensive', while 'Japan has an almost immediate need of expansion upon the mainland of Asia ... At this critical juncture, Russia is reconsidering her relation to Far Eastern questions, and hesitating between a policy of coercion and one of cooperation with the United States.'<sup>62</sup>

The 1833 treaty was abrogated by an overwhelming vote in Congress, so Rockhill's diplomatic arguments were not persuasive. The implications of his arguments for other aspects of American policy were also ignored, as the United States continued to pursue 'Dollar Diplomacy' in China and Manchuria and thus continued to fuel Russian suspicions about American intentions.

In December 1910, Rockhill and Hippisley exchanged letters about the current situation in China in which they agreed they both had 'grave misgivings' about its future. Since the correspondence occurred less than a year before revolution broke out, it is especially interesting. The Regent, Prince Chun, was proving to be extraordinarily weak, the two China Hands agreed, and they worried about 'the possibility, even the probability, of a popular leader of demagogic type springing up in the country' and seizing power. Rockhill expressed scorn for American policy. 'We never go beyond "moral support";' he wrote. 'We do not show that we understand world politics the least little bit.' A few months later, after his long-awaited transfer from St Petersburg was announced, he wrote to Hippisley, with more than a trace of bitterness and sarcasm:

*The people in Washington have their own ideas as to the way of carrying out our present policy(?) in the Far East; they do not want or care for my views on things Chinese. They understand them much better than I do. Personally, I think we are making a miserable mess of things in China, and instead of being leaders—as we might be—we are led, so I am glad I am out of it.*<sup>63</sup>

In Peking in December of 1910, Willard Straight entertained no such doubts about American policy, but he was having a hard time nonetheless. His hectic winter was turning into a season of discontent, as difficulties arose over both the Hukuang Railroad Loan and the Currency Reform Loan. Chinese policy on railroad-building was torn by debate and indecision. The country's transportation system badly needed railroads, but the central government and the provinces were divided as to which level of government should be responsible for building them. Provinces had always enjoyed considerable autonomy in managing local affairs, and provincial officials considered railroad-building a local affair. There was strong popular feeling against allowing any more foreign capital into the country, but the government knew that foreign capital was essential if more railroads were to be built. In the resulting paralysis of policy, Straight could make no progress on the Hukuang Loan.

For the Currency Loan, the bankers in New York insisted that a foreign advisor, i.e., an American, be appointed by the Chinese government to handle the loan expenditures in China. Rockhill agreed that the United States should retain control of how the loan was used. He told Hippisley, 'I contend that if a Financial Advisor with effective control and the right to memorialize directly the Throne and to appear before the Grand Council

is not appointed, not a cent should be lent to China.<sup>64</sup> He wrote to Bland, 'I hear from Washington that our Government is determined to get ... control or to refuse all assistance financially to China. I hope it is true.'<sup>65</sup> The tottering Manchu government refused to accept a foreign advisor, and the Currency Loan continued to hang fire.

Straight's letters and diary record the harrowing winter he spent in Peking. On January 5, he wrote to New York, 'It is ... almost as impossible for you to appreciate, as it is for me to describe, the atmosphere of pettiness and suspicion which prevails here, where everyone more or less is spying on everyone else. It is the storm center of world politics.' By January 29, he foresaw defeat: 'I confess, abjectly ... that I am pretty darned well licked.' By February 15, he felt 'sometimes so sort of stretched that I almost think I'm going to snap like a guitar string'.<sup>66</sup>

Besides internal disagreement and objections to the terms of the foreign bankers, another reason for the Chinese temporizing that was driving Willard Straight crazy was that Japan and Russia were making clear their suspicions about the two loans. They were especially suspicious about the provision in the Currency Loan to use part of the money to finance development in Manchuria. Straight was aware of the problem. On January 15, he wrote to New York:

*Both the Russian and Japanese Ministers have been to the Wei-Wu-Pu [Foreign Ministry] and have stated that if China made any loan with political significance, (i.e. the Currency Loan) their governments wanted Russian and Japanese bankers to participate, and that if any foreign advisor was appointed, Russia and Japan wanted one also.*<sup>67</sup>

Straight continued to press for his two loans, and with the coming of spring came success. The central government took control of all railroads, breaking the deadlock on the Hukuang Loan but arousing widespread and growing hostility in the Yangtze valley where much of the Hukuang system would be built. With the huge Currency Reform Loan dangling so temptingly before it, the Chinese government finally capitulated and agreed to accept a foreign financial advisor. On April 15, the Currency Loan contract was signed, followed by the Hukuang contract on May 20. Straight wrote in his diary, 'The [Currency] loan was signed today without any further quibbling ... Dollar diplomacy is justified at last.'<sup>68</sup> He wrote to J.P. Morgan, 'It is the first visible result of the new politics of Secretary Knox ... and will, I feel sure, justify to the Group the wisdom of its venture in China.'<sup>69</sup>

His expression of triumph was premature. On April 24, Rockhill forwarded to Washington the text of an editorial published in the semi-official Russian newspaper *Novoe Vremya*. The suspicions it expressed were felt, he explained, 'by Russians generally, inclusive of official circles',

*Why are the Chinese to receive at once a million pounds for the necessities of Manchuria? Will it not be spent in strengthening the army—perhaps the construction of strategical railways like the Aigun line? Why is the first payment made for the needs of Manchuria? And why is the loan guaranteed for the most part ... by income from Manchurian monopolies? In a word, will not this money in the hands of the mandarins serve to incite them to make dangerous experiments in connection with the neighboring possessions of Russia and Japan?*<sup>70</sup>

The newspaper kept up its drum-fire of criticism of American actions in subsequent

weeks, calling Willard Straight 'the American financial Napoleon' and describing the Currency Loan as 'a renewal in disguise of the plan of the American Secretary of State Knox for the neutralization of Manchuria'. It forecast that 'The best lands in Manchuria will be under the control of the American agricultural machine trust.'<sup>71</sup> It was becoming obvious that Japan and Russia would not allow the two loans to materialize without a fight.

Nevertheless, Willard Straight departed Peking on May 25 feeling jubilant though in a state of nervous exhaustion. The trip to London by train took two weeks, and he slept most of the way. He would spend the summer in Europe and New York working out the final details of the two loans with the bankers. He would also find enough time away from his business affairs to get married.

In February, a formal evaluation of Rockhill's service as Ambassador to Russia had been written in Washington. It is the earliest such report in his government personnel file and was apparently one of the regular routine reports that had been initiated for all diplomatic officers as part of the reform movement toward building a career diplomatic service based upon merit. The system of geographic bureaus was in place, and this report was written by the chief of the Near Eastern Division.

*As far as my observation goes, Ambassador Rockhill's administration of the Embassy at St. Petersburg has been most excellent. I believe that he has done much to place our Embassy in St. Petersburg on the plane that it should properly occupy ... His political reports are always timely, clear and to the point. I consider him a very strong man in handling all important diplomatic negotiations with the exception, possibly, of those in which the commercial side of the question is predominant.*<sup>72</sup>

In other words, Rockhill was not an enthusiastic supporter of Dollar Diplomacy, the current shibboleth of the American Diplomatic Service.

On April 13, Rockhill's long-awaited appointment to Constantinople was announced. It is not readily apparent why he so coveted that particular post of assignment. He had, of course, visited the city several times during his tenure as Minister to Greece, but there is no evidence that he took any particular interest in Turkey or the Near East in general. A few months after the announcement, he wrote to Hippisley:

*Thanks for your congratulations on my appointment to Constantinople. I am delighted to go there. It is again the East, and it is much easier—cheaper — to live there than in Russia. I hated being obliged to be constantly on the alert to make ends meet.*<sup>73</sup>

Perhaps he wanted a post close to his family, and Constantinople was the nearest that was not prohibitively expensive. His mother, now of advanced years, was living in Switzerland and was in poor health (she was probably going blind). Dorothy was living in France, and signs may have begun to appear that her marriage was breaking up.

Edith, perhaps accompanied by Daisy, departed St Petersburg in May. Daisy went only as far as Switzerland to visit her grandmother. Edith continued on to the United States to visit her family in Litchfield. She and Rockhill had agreed to meet in Paris on August 1 for the trip to Constantinople. In mid-June, Rockhill presented his letter of recall to the Tsar. On June 24, he departed St Petersburg aboard a train bound for Switzerland. In Geneva, he was met at the station by Daisy and his mother.<sup>74</sup>

## Chapter 12

## Ambassador to Turkey: Constantinople, 1911-1913

Rockhill spent almost a month with his mother in Switzerland. He wrote to Hippisley from the Hotel Metropole in Geneva, 'It's awfully slow here for me ... but the old lady likes seeing me—and virtue must be its own reward.'<sup>1</sup> On July 20, he went to Paris to see Dorothy. Edith joined him on August 1 for the journey to Constantinople. They arrived in the Turkish capital on August 6.

Constantinople had probably changed but little since Rockhill's visits twelve years earlier when he served as Minister to Greece. As they rolled into the city aboard the *Orient Express*, they passed through the walls of ancient Byzantium and passed close to the shore lined with wharves. They could see a forest of slender minarets piercing the sky as the train, slowing, passed masses of unpainted wooden hovels. They swung around a great curve by the Golden Horn and arrived in colorful Stamboul. The streets swarmed with people in the costumes of a hundred nationalities. Women both veiled and unveiled were to be seen; some being carried in beautifully inlaid sedan chairs. Horses, oxen, donkeys clogged the narrow streets. It all resembled a scene out of the *Arabian Nights*.<sup>2</sup>

By the summer of 1911, the Ottoman Empire had been the 'Sick Man of Europe' for decades. Like the Manchu Emperor in Peking, the Sultan in Constantinople ruled a decayed and corrupt empire in constant danger of collapse. Unlike the Manchu Empire, the heart of which was ethnically homogeneous China, the Turks ruled a patchwork of ethnically and linguistically diverse peoples, many of whom were mortal enemies of each other and all of whom sought the first available opportunity to throw off the yoke of, to them, the Terrible Turk.

The Empire stretched from Yemen, on the shores of the Arabian Sea, to Albania on the Adriatic. It thus lay squarely astride Britain's lifeline through the Suez Canal to its largest and richest colonial possession, the jewel in the British imperial crown, India. For generations, British statesmen had struggled with 'The Eastern Question'. What would happen in the volatile Balkans and the equally volatile Fertile Crescent on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean—which held the holy lands of Christians, Jews and Muslims—if the tottering Ottoman Empire collapsed? Would another Power, perhaps hostile to Britain, fill the resulting power vacuum and interfere with Britain's link to India? Would a major war among the Great Powers break out because of efforts to fill the vacuum? The Bosphorus was the only route for the Russian Black Sea Fleet to reach the Mediterranean and beyond. Britain, always sensitive to naval matters connected with another Great Power, was super-sensitive about control of the Bosphorus.

Britain's diplomats, like the others, preferred a known status quo to an unpredictable change. Britain had worked to shore up the Ottoman Empire and maintain its territorial integrity, as it had worked to prevent the break-up of China, but the ramshackle Empire was besieged on all sides. The European portion of the Turks' empire included both

Muslims and Christians. Russia considered itself the protector and perhaps the liberator of its fellow Orthodox Christian Slavs under Turkish rule. Austria-Hungary sought to move south through the Balkans and add Turkish territory to its own patchwork empire. The Greeks, Turkey's historic enemies, eyed Salonika and its surrounding territory. Italy looked greedily across the Adriatic toward Albania. In the summer of 1911, the Sultan was striving desperately to retain control of an empire that was beginning to crumble.

When Rockhill arrived in Constantinople, the most immediate problem he faced was a familiar one: a failing American railroad concession. In June, just before his departure from St Petersburg, he had received a letter from Knox in which the Secretary relayed a message from Taft about Rockhill's activities in his new post. The President, Knox wrote, insisted 'that the Embassy's energies be constantly directed to the real and commercial, rather than the academic interests of the United States in the Near East'.<sup>3</sup> Dollar Diplomacy continued in the ascendancy in Washington.

The immediate context of Knox's letter was about efforts by the Ottoman American Development Company to gain a railroad concession in Turkey. When Rockhill arrived in Constantinople, the company's prospects looked dim at best. In Washington, its difficulties were attributed to obstruction by Germany, because the Americans' plans would interfere with Germany's dreams of building a Berlin-to-Baghdad railroad. The company's problems probably also arose from the same financial peccadilloes that caused the demise of the American China Development Company.

Within weeks of Rockhill's arrival, the venture collapsed, so he was not unduly bothered by it. But he did not forget that his knuckles had been rapped to remind him of his Dollar Diplomacy responsibilities, and he wrote to J.V.S. MacMurray, the head of the Near East Division in the Department of State who had served under Rockhill in St Petersburg:

*This collapse is not encouraging for the Embassy to attempt to take up with the Ottoman Government the subject of any further participation of American financial or industrial enterprise in this country. The Department is very anxious, I know, to extend our relations here; but how the devil are you going to do it if nobody in America, I mean in the business world, is willing to give to the extension of our interests in this country either time or trouble or even to pledge to keep good faith with the people here in case something is given them. I trust that you, in your wisdom, will give me full instructions as to how I am to act here, because I really don't see what we are to do in the matter of carrying out the wishes of our country.*<sup>4</sup>

Despite the President's exhortations, no new American commercial enterprises were initiated in Turkey during Rockhill's stay.

Meanwhile, the indefatigable Willard Straight spent the summer in Europe and New York, working out details on both of his loan projects with the bankers of the Four Power Consortium. A conference in London in late July produced satisfactory agreement all around.

On September 7, 1911, Straight was married in Geneva to Dorothy Whitney. The new Mrs Straight was a Standard Oil heiress whom Straight had met in China. Her uncle, Oliver Hazard Payne, had been one of John D. Rockefeller's early partners. He served as treasurer of Standard Oil and was, after Rockefeller himself, the company's



largest shareholder. Dorothy Straight's father, William Whitney, was a famous corporate lawyer who had served as Secretary of the Navy under Grover Cleveland.<sup>5</sup> Straight had married into the world of New York society. Dorothy Straight's brother, Payne, was married to John Hay's daughter, Helen. The Rockhills must have attended their wedding in Washington in February 1902. It was one of the highlights of that social season attended by the President, the entire Cabinet, and Henry Adams, among the hundreds of guests. Payne and Helen Whitney's son—John Hay's grandson and Willard Straight's nephew by marriage—was christened John Hay Whitney, the famous Jock Whitney who became president of the New York Stock Exchange, the publisher of the *New York Herald-Tribune*, and a millionaire sportsman.

The newlyweds had only a short time for a honeymoon in Italy before they set out for China. Straight, brimming with confidence, looked forward to putting the final touches to his two loans. They arrived in Peking on October 11. The next day, Dorothy Straight wrote to a friend, 'All Peking is in a wild state of excitement over the Revolution in Hankow ... The diplomats here in Peking are scared to death ... Everyone generally is in a blue funk.'<sup>6</sup>

On October 10—the date later celebrated in the Republic of China as 'Double Ten', the country's National Day—an outbreak occurred at Wuchang across the Yangtze River from Hankow. It signaled the beginning of the revolution that would, within four months, topple the Manchu dynasty and dissolve the government with which Straight's hard-won agreements had been made. In Peking, George Morrison rode up and down Legation Street telling everyone he met that the end of the Manchu Dynasty was at hand.<sup>7</sup> Willard Straight, by contrast, with the wish father to the thought, decided, 'It is all nonsense ... there has not been enough trouble to warrant all this terrible fright in Peking.'<sup>8</sup> Ironically, activity in the Yangtze valley in connection with the Hukuang railroad project was one of the sparks that ignited the outbreak.

The incident at Wuchang was not a completely spontaneous occurrence. The revolutionaries had been planning an uprising for months. An attempt to start a revolution in Canton in the spring had been suppressed. The revolutionary movement then laid plans for an uprising in the Yangtze valley where there was strong resentment against the Peking government's takeover from the provinces of all railroad building authority. The Wuchang incident occurred by accident before the scheduled beginning of the revolution. But a spark having been struck, the uprising against the Manchus took fire.

The revolution spread rapidly from the central Yangtze valley through southern China, always the source of opposition to the Manchus, and to the treaty ports. In Shanghai, the formation of a new rebel government was announced, headed by Wu Ting-fang, the Cantonese former Minister to the United States who had been humiliated by the Empress Dowager in front of Alice Roosevelt. Later, he became Foreign Minister to Sun Yat-sen, the acknowledged leader of the revolutionaries.

By early November, the situation appeared so ominous for the ruling Manchus that the Regent, Prince Chun, begged his old enemy, Yuan Shih-kai, to return to the government and promised him unlimited powers. Yuan agreed, providing a National Assembly was created, thereby creating a constitutional monarchy. The first steps toward establishing a constitutional monarchy had been taken even before the death of the

Empress Dowager, and Prince Chun agreed to Yuan's terms. He was appointed Premier on November 8.

During succeeding months, Yuan maneuvered skillfully and subtly to maintain his official position, which derived from the Manchus and their government in Peking, while seeking accommodation with the increasingly powerful revolutionaries in the south. The real source of his power was the northern Beiyang army, which he himself had created and equipped, and whose commanders were more loyal to him personally than to the government.

Yuan dispatched Willard Straight's old friend, Tang Shao-yi, to the south to negotiate with the revolutionaries. Their splintered forces were uniting under the leadership of Sun Yat-sen who returned to China from the United States at the end of December. Tang's opposite number heading the revolutionaries' negotiating team was Wu Ting-fang. The revolutionaries demanded an end to the Manchu Dynasty and creation of a republic. Yuan assented, provided he became president of the new republic. Sun Yat-sen reluctantly agreed. The abdication edicts, drafted by Yuan himself, were promulgated on February 12, and the 350-year-old Ching Dynasty fell. An imperial system that had survived for more than two millennia ended as Yuan Shih-kai took power as President of the Republic of China. However, the boy-emperor, Pu-yi, and his court continued to live in the Forbidden City for years thereafter.

Willard Straight watched these developments from Peking where there was bewilderment, spasms of panic, and general paralysis of the government but no real revolutionary activity. Conditions remained more or less normal except on one occasion when mutinous elements of Yuan's Beiyang army invaded the city and engaged in an orgy of destruction and looting. The soldiers probably acted at Yuan's instigation as part of his jockeying with the revolutionaries. The revolutionaries wanted the government of the new republic moved south to Nanking, their power base. Yuan used the brief outburst of mutiny in the army as an excuse to keep his government in Peking, his power base.

The Straights made a trip to Shanghai and went on for a brief visit to the Philippines and Korea, but returned to Peking in time for the Manchu abdication. With Yuan Shih-kai and Tang Shao-yi in power, Straight sought to renew his loan agreements. Yuan wanted to convert the Currency Reform Loan into an even larger 'Reconstruction Loan' to keep his shaky government afloat, and he approached Straight about the idea. Straight dealt with his friend, Tang, in this brief, doomed effort. Rockhill would have been interested to learn—perhaps he did learn—that Straight's dealings with Tang convinced him that Tang was guilty of bad faith, and their last meeting just before Straight departed China was 'hot and stormy'.<sup>9</sup>

In the wake of the Manchu abdication and the creation of a government of questionable authority, there was little that Straight could accomplish in China until a semblance of normalcy was restored. His banker employers were reluctant to invest money in China until the situation was sorted out. They summoned Straight back to New York, and he departed Peking for the last time on March 29, 1912. He never returned to China.

The Four Power Consortium continued to explore possibilities of extending loans to Yuan's government, and Willard Straight continued his involvement, working in New

York. But a change of administrations in the United States in March 1913 finally put an end to American involvement in loans to China. Woodrow Wilson abandoned Taft's Dollar Diplomacy and refused to lend official support to the American Group of bankers. Wilson announced the reversal of policy in a statement issued on March 18, barely two weeks after taking office. It came to Straight and the bankers like a bolt from the blue. 'We are still so stunned by the announcement made by the President on Tuesday last that we have not quite recovered our equilibrium,' Straight wrote to Bland on March 26.<sup>10</sup>

Rockhill heard the news in Constantinople. To judge from his reaction given in a letter to Bland, his views on the proper relationship of commerce and foreign policy had undergone a change and more nearly agreed with Straight's than they had when the two men were together in China. He wrote to Bland:

*What do you think of the volte-face of the new U.S. government? ... My own view is this: as much as I regret it, I think that if the U.S. is not prepared to accept the responsibilities which may rest on her by a recognition of the axiomatic proposition that in the Far East ... commerce, politics and finance form a trinity which cannot be dissociated, it (i.e., the U.S.) had better sit tight at home and cook in its own juice.*<sup>11</sup>

His view of the policy reversal may have been influenced by the strong aversion he felt toward the new Wilson Administration. 'As to hoping to be able to render "greater, more truly friendly" service to China when we are "out of the ring",' he told Bland, 'that is only the pipe dream of men absolutely ignorant of existing conditions, not only in China, but anywhere outside of Lincoln (Nebraska) or the campus of Princeton (New Jersey).'

<sup>12</sup>

The cautious American bankers were reluctant to risk any large sums of money without official backing in a country in political and economic turmoil, and they pulled out of the Chinese loans. On April 26, the European banking consortium, without American participation, signed a Reorganization Loan agreement with China. Despite more than five years of nerve-racking effort, endless negotiating, and tens of thousands of miles of travel, Willard Straight saw his dream of an American commercial empire in Asia dissolve like a burst soap bubble.

Historians' assessments of Straight and his activities in China have varied tremendously. Straight's friend and biographer, Herbert Croly, admired him to the point of adulation. Croly's book is one long paean of praise, and he describes the period in Straight's life from 1907 to 1912 as 'years of positive achievement in China'.<sup>13</sup> Others, however, while admitting Straight's many admirable talents, have judged him a failure as a diplomat and empire-builder in China.<sup>14</sup>

In Constantinople, Rockhill followed news of the revolution in China with avid interest, mainly through reports by Morrison and others published in the *Times*. On November 2, 1911, he wrote a letter full of questions to Morrison.

*I am deeply interested in what is going on in China - a revolution in more senses than one. What will Yuan Shih-kai do? I wonder if he will be up to the exigencies of the moment! ... I read your telegrams with keenest interest ... Tell me who among the younger men is the coming man in China. The country is badly in want of a good crop of fairly able men.*<sup>15</sup>

Morrison replied in late January with a long letter commenting on the fast-moving events he was witnessing. 'Things are in a critical condition,' he wrote.

*You never saw such a condition as Peking is in now ... Yuan Shih-kai has had a very hard time. He has shown qualities of high order, but the people are becoming impatient of the delay caused chiefly by the weakness and vacillation of the princes, of whom he has been the main prop ... [but] I see no reason why Yuan Shih-kai should not still become master of the situation.*<sup>16</sup>

Like most of his fellow old China Hands, Rockhill believed that the creation of a republic in China would be a big mistake. In early February, he read a report in the *Times* about a talk given in London by J.O.P. Bland on 'China: Its Present and Future' at a gathering in the home of William Phillips who had been transferred from Washington to serve as First Secretary in London. Bland argued that 'In the present state of the Chinese people's development, the idea of a republican form of government is preposterous.'<sup>17</sup> On February 10, two days before the formal abdication of the Manchu Emperor, Rockhill wrote to tell Bland that he agreed as to 'the impossibility of eliminating the monarchical basis from Chinese polity ... It seems to me the whole thing—fabric—would tumble down in ruins if the sovereign is removed from it.'<sup>18</sup>

As interested and informed as he might be about the momentous events in China, Rockhill as Ambassador to Turkey, of course, had no official connection with them. However, his tenure in Constantinople was not a time of boredom and official inactivity, as his tour of duty in Athens had been. Throughout almost the whole of the time he spent in Constantinople, Turkey was at war in a series of conflicts that stripped the Sultan of what remained of his European empire.

The Turko-Italian War was followed by the First and the Second Balkan Wars.<sup>19</sup> As their names suggest, the causes of the clashes were as complicated and obscure as were their outcomes. Americans in 1912 and 1913 read confusing headlines about war and politics in some of the same little-known places their grandchildren and great-grandchildren would read about in the 1990s: Bosnia, Serbia, Macedonia. The wars are no more than footnotes in history books today, overshadowed by the great conflict that immediately followed them. But historians have called them, 'the prologue to World War I'.

Italy declared war on Turkey on September 27, less than two months after Rockhill arrived in Constantinople. Italy coveted the Turkish province of Tripoli in North Africa and would have liked to acquire Albania, just across the Adriatic. Both Turkish provinces were closer to Italy than to Turkey. There was little Turkey could do to defend far-away Tripoli, and the war went against the Turks from the beginning. They had to fight indigenous Arab guerrillas as well as the Italians. Italy also occupied the island of Rhodes in the eastern Mediterranean and several Turkish-held islands in the Aegean Sea. The Italians, however, had no desire to drive Turkey into total defeat, and once they gained control over Tripoli, Rhodes and the other islands, they agreed to peace negotiations. A peace treaty, signed on October 12, 1912, confirmed Turkey's loss of Tripoli and Rhodes to Italy.

In late April, an incident in Smyrna, prompted by the war, brought Rockhill into disagreement with his superiors in Washington. The incident was minor in itself, but

the disagreement it produced is a textbook example of what often happens in diplomacy or military operations when headquarters, far from the scene of action, ignores the recommendations of its own experienced man in the field.<sup>20</sup>

A merchant ship, the *Texas*, flying the American flag, entered the harbor at Smyrna. Turkey was at war, and its harbors were mined and defended by coastal artillery batteries. The ship ignored several warning shots from the Turkish batteries and steamed into a minefield. It struck a mine, blew up, and sank with considerable loss of life. The captain, a Greek subject, was fished half-conscious from the water by the Turks and thrown into prison for causing the deaths of several subjects of the Ottoman Empire.

The American Consul-General in Smyrna, an excitable man named George Horton, reported the incident to Rockhill while demanding that the Turks release the unfortunate captain into his custody. Horton argued that although the captain was not an American citizen, he had commanded an American ship, so the United States should have jurisdiction over him. The Turks refused. Rockhill told Horton to hold off his demands until all the facts could be verified, and he reported the matter to Washington.

A team of two Americans, one a naval officer, investigated and confirmed that the captain had been responsible for losing his ship through negligence and poor judgment. Investigation also established that legal ownership of the ship was in dispute. Although it flew the American flag and was owned by an American citizen, its previous ownership and transfer of title made its legal nationality under international law uncertain.

Horton strongly urged that the United States nevertheless demand that the captain be surrendered to his custody, because he was convinced that the ship was American. Rockhill recommended to Washington that the United States not press for the captain's release. His recommendation was based upon practical rather than legal grounds.

*The Department can be sure that the Turkish government will categorically deny our jurisdiction in the matter, and it has the advantage over us of its custody of the Captain. Where our right is not clear, it is better not to make the claim than to make it and then withdraw it.*<sup>21</sup>

He echoed Teddy Roosevelt's 'old frontier maxim': never draw your gun unless you are going to shoot.

Washington overruled him, saying 'we should not surrender our rights' by admitting that Turkey had jurisdiction over the captain. When Horton learned of the decision, he could not refrain from expressing his feelings of gratification: 'The support of the Department in this matter has caused me the liveliest satisfaction.'<sup>22</sup>

Rockhill had made his recommendation, had been overruled, and had received his instructions to press for the captain's release. Ever the professional, he sent notes to the Turkish Foreign Ministry and met several times with the Foreign Minister to demand the captain's release. He was careful to reserve all rights for the United States and to say and do nothing that would, even tacitly, admit the Turks' right to jurisdiction.

The matter dragged on through the summer into the autumn, with Turkey stoutly and repeatedly maintaining its right to deal with the captain. He was brought to trial, to Horton's consternation. Rockhill had to caution the angry Consul-General not to send the Consulate's Dragoman to represent the United States as an observer at the trial, because to do so would be a tacit admission of Turkey's right to try him. The captain was

found guilty and, in November, sentenced to eighteen months in prison. The outcome of the long wrangle produced nothing for the United States except, perhaps, a loss of prestige in Turkey. For Rockhill, any feelings of satisfaction in being able to say to his superiors, 'I told you so,' were probably matched in Washington by feelings of resentment. These often arise, focussed toward the person unable to accomplish what was wished, and in a position to say, 'I told you so.'

In April, at about the time the Texas incident occurred, a prominent American visiting Peking was having conversations with George Morrison, Yuan Shih-kai and others about Rockhill. Charles W. Eliot had retired the year before after serving more than forty years as president of Harvard University. He was appointed a member of the governing body of the recently-founded Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He visited Peking while on a 'round-the-world tour.

The Carnegie Endowment was eager to help the struggling new Chinese government, and Eliot had several meetings with officials of the Republic of China including Yuan Shih-kai and Tang Shao-yi who was serving as Premier of the Cabinet. He urged the government to appoint foreign advisors and experts to assist the government's departments to organize their chaotic affairs, especially in finance. The Carnegie Endowment was prepared to help by nominating advisors, Eliot explained. He particularly urged that Rockhill be appointed advisor for foreign affairs.

In a letter to Tang Shao-yi, he followed up conversations with Tang to urge cooperation with the Carnegie Endowment to identify and appoint advisors. He wrote:

*I understood during my recent visit to Peking that the present government has full knowledge of very few men competent to serve as foreign advisors. Indeed, I heard the name of only one person whom the Chinese and foreigners would alike regard as competent and altogether desirable as advisor to the President and his Cabinet. That name was William W. Rockhill ... I feel a strong conviction that the President and Cabinet should now make two announcements without consulting any foreign government or minister as follows: (1) We propose to invite William W. Rockhill to the service of the Chinese Government as General Advisor, and (2) we propose to ask the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace to select the numerous foreign experts whom the Chinese Government is conscious it needs.*<sup>23</sup>

Morrison had strongly recommended Rockhill to Eliot. But even before Eliot's visit, Rockhill had been offered an appointment as an advisor and had turned it down.<sup>24</sup>

On May 4, Morrison wrote from Peking urging Rockhill to accept the appointment. He recounted his conversation with Eliot:

*I urged very strongly indeed your claims to this appointment ... I told him you had refused this appointment, but that I thought that if the Chinese attached to the post an adequate salary, you would be glad to come back to China, a country to which you are bound by such strong ties. I have been quite disinterested in speaking about this, although it is known that I am a great personal friend of yours and one of your most sincere admirers. I would rejoice if you could come back here.*<sup>25</sup>

Rockhill must have given much thought to Morrison's appeal. On June 2, he wrote a carefully phrased reply. He thanked Morrison for holding 'such a good opinion of me'. He confirmed that he was 'heart and soul interested in China' and that he would 'under

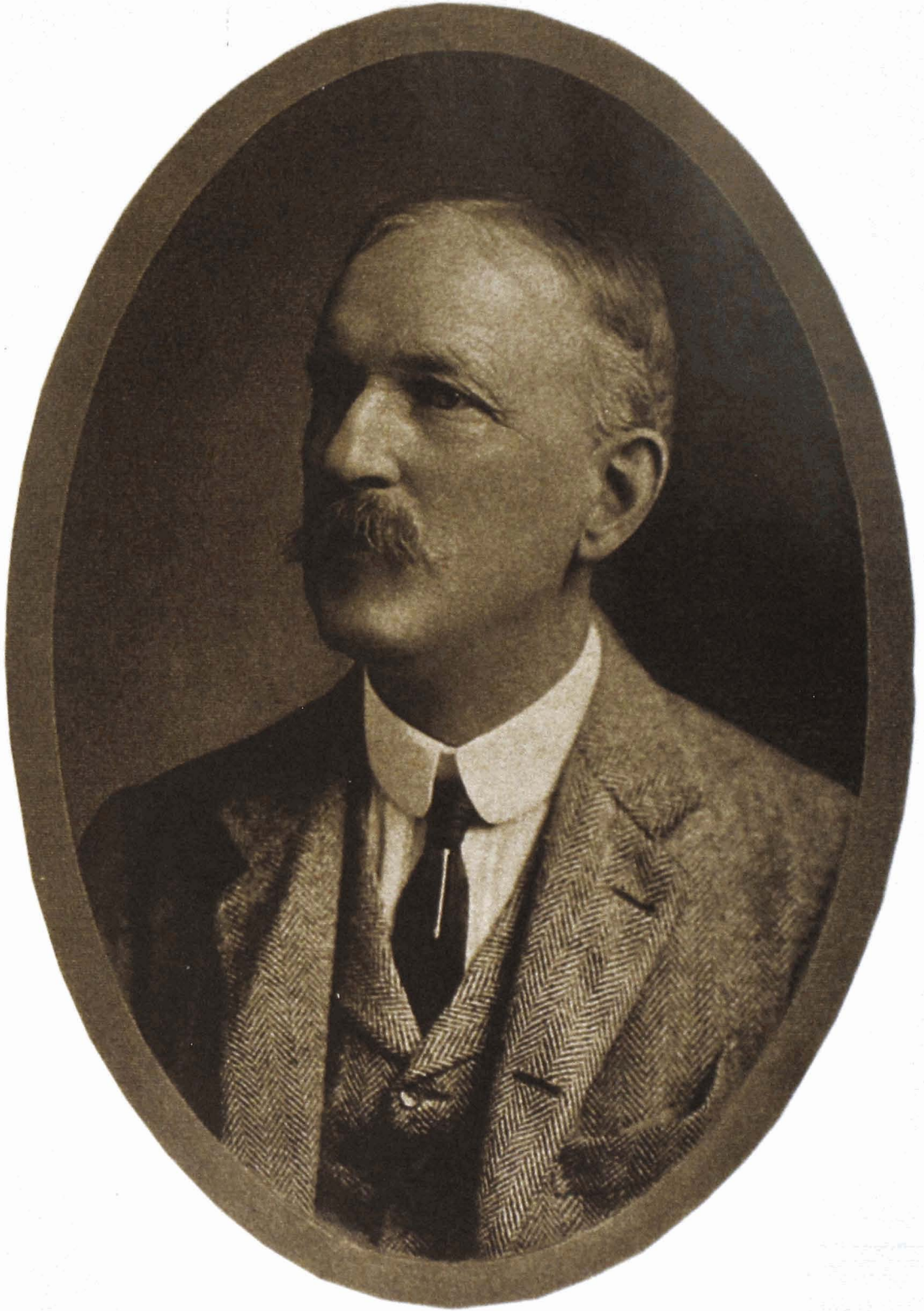


Plate 8 Rockhill at age 57

Plate 9 Rockhill's signature, found on the back of Plate 8

proper conditions' be delighted to 'lend my poor assistance' to its government. But he reviewed the current condition of the Chinese government:

*Hardly yet established, not recognised by any of the Treaty Powers, up to its neck in financial troubles in which the President and his Cabinet are ruled by an Advisory Council which seems to be the real governing body, with no men of tried ability but lots of spectacled frock-coated young dreamers of universal and immediate reform, etc. etc.*<sup>26</sup>

Under such conditions, he feared that an advisor would have no real role. 'Until a permanent government is established and recognised,' he told Morrison, 'it seems useless to discuss the matter, however pleasing it may be to me.' But he did not shut the door completely.

*However, I do not wish you to think that I am at all disposed to put the matter aside definitely, or that, under certain conditions, I would not consider it, but I venture to believe that the time has not yet come, but I shall be delighted to consider the suggestion when it has.*<sup>27</sup>

His reluctance may have been due in part to another consideration. In the United States, it was becoming increasingly apparent that Theodore Roosevelt would contest Taft for the Republican presidential nomination. Roosevelt had long since broken with his self-chosen successor over several issues, including foreign policy. He was being urged by many prominent Republicans to seek the nomination, because to all appearances, the popular former president had an excellent chance of winning both the nomination and the election. Although he had served almost two full terms as president, he had been elected only once. He therefore would not violate the traditional two-term limit set by George Washington if he ran again.

With Roosevelt in the White House again, it was not unreasonable for Rockhill to think that he might be in line for appointment to a high-level position, perhaps Secretary of State. George Morrison had once written to him years earlier, 'Someday when you are Secretary of State, as you surely will be, I will ask to be transferred to Washington.'<sup>28</sup>



On August 1, Morrison himself was appointed an advisor to the Chinese president. The newspaper reports said several other people were being considered for appointment as foreign advisors, notably Rockhill. Whether he received a second offer is uncertain. The London *Daily Telegraph* reported that he was offered an appointment, but nothing came of it.<sup>29</sup> In any event, he stayed on in Constantinople.

On October 8, ten days before the Turko-Italian War ended, Montenegro declared war on Turkey. Encouraged by the obvious weakness Turkey had shown in the war with Italy, the Montenegrins sought to throw off Turkish rule. Five days later, Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece presented a joint note to Turkey demanding reform in Turkish provinces in Europe. Turkey's reply was to declare war on Bulgaria and Serbia on October 17. Greece declared war on Turkey the following day, and the First Balkan War was underway.

Each of the four allies had its own war aims, but all sought to slice off for themselves pieces of Turkey's European dominions. The number of combatants was considerable. Turkey put perhaps a half-million men in the field, while the four allies together mobilized more than twice that number. There was fighting in the west around Lake Scutari and in southern Macedonia where Greece sought to annex territory around Salonika. The main theater, however, was in Thrace.

Bulgaria invaded Turkey and soon pushed to within a few miles of Constantinople. The Turks, in panic and disorder, took cover behind a prepared defense line at Chatalja, less than fifty miles from Constantinople. Rockhill reported there was fear and even panic in the capital. The members of the diplomatic corps held several meetings to devise measures to protect their embassies and the nationals of their countries if the city were overrun. Machine-guns were mounted on the roof of the German Embassy. Battleships belonging to several of the Great Powers rode at anchor off Constantinople, ready to evacuate the Europeans and Americans if the city fell. The United States sent two armored cruisers to join fourteen warships of the other Powers in Turkish waters. The Bulgarians nearly broke through the Turkish defenses, but they were exhausted and their ranks decimated by heavy casualties and cholera. Drenching autumn rains forced them to break off their attack.

The Rockhills had planned to take home leave in October, but cancelled their plans when war broke out. The American Embassy provided help for the Turkish Red Crescent Society, and perhaps 200 wounded soldiers were under the care of three American surgeons at a Turkish hospital. Rockhill wrote to Hippisley that 'It is wonderfully interesting to be here.' He cautioned that newspaper accounts of the situation were exaggerated. 'The stories which reach us through the English and French papers of the terribly dangerous situation here are fudge,' he told Hippisley. 'The place is panicky—it gets so as easily as Shanghai.'<sup>30</sup>

An armistice was arranged on December 3 in preparation for a peace conference to convene in London. Salonika had been captured by Greece, and much of the rest of Thrace was occupied by Bulgaria. However, despite the allies' successes, the results of the fighting were inconclusive.

With the armistice putting a halt to the fighting, the Rockhills returned to the United States in mid-December for their delayed home leave. Rockhill no doubt wanted to find out what the future might hold for him. Taft had defeated Roosevelt's challenge for

the Republican presidential nomination the previous summer. Roosevelt bolted the party and ran for president on the third-party Progressive, or Bull Moose, ticket. He polled more votes than Taft in the election, and between them, they received a substantially larger number of votes than the Democratic ticket. But the split in the Republican vote caused by Roosevelt's ill-considered adventure gave the election to Woodrow Wilson who was elected with 41 percent of the popular vote but a landslide in the Electoral College. A Democrat would occupy the White House for the first time since Grover Cleveland surrendered the presidency to McKinley in 1897.

Out of power for sixteen years, the Democrats included many rich, powerful, influential men seeking appointed office, and many of them wanted to be appointed ambassadors. If they were to be accommodated, many incumbent ambassadors would have to step down. When the election results were announced in November, Rockhill submitted his resignation to the president-elect, as custom dictated. Of course, that did not mean that he wanted to leave government service. The man likely to be appointed Secretary of State was William Jennings Bryan, but in December, Wilson was parrying questions about his choice. Bryan's appointment would not be announced until February. So when Rockhill returned to Constantinople early in 1913, he had been unable to learn anything definite about his own prospects to stay in government. They did not, however, appear promising.

Daisy was not with her father and step-mother, probably because of the war. She was staying with Dorothy in Paris. She wrote with fair regularity to her 'dearest father' with news of her life in Paris with her sister. Her letters mentioned with increasing frequency a young man named Gilbert whom she had met. He was Gilbert von Seditz, an officer in the Austrian navy who wanted to leave the navy and was trying to arrange to join a bank. Daisy wrote about Gilbert with increasing warmth, finally revealing that they wished to marry, and she asked for her father's blessing. Rockhill apparently was opposed at first, but Gilbert visited him in Constantinople and made an excellent impression. 'A very nice young naval officer,' Rockhill told Hippiusley. 'He is poor but a hard worker.'<sup>31</sup> Daisy and Gilbert were married in June 1913.<sup>32</sup>

The peace negotiations in London broke down in January, and fighting resumed on February 3. The tide was totally against Turkey, and the First Balkan War, second phase, essentially ended in late March with the fall of Adrianople to a combined Bulgarian-Serbian army. Peace negotiations were again convened in London.

The war caused widespread suffering for the Turks, and Edith became active in volunteer relief work. A small village, San Stefano, between Constantinople and the Turkish defense lines that had almost been overrun in November, became a 'cholera camp', filled by trainloads of sick soldiers evacuated from the front. Two American missionary women, both nearly seventy years old, worked for weeks taking care of the hordes of stricken soldiers in the cold, miserable village.<sup>33</sup> Edith visited them and organized an appeal for contributions to support them and ease conditions in the crowded, squalid camp. She wrote to her family, 'I am like a stormy petrel—wherever I go, there seems to be some great conflict, either beginning or still continuing, or lately over.'<sup>34</sup> When she departed Turkey the following summer, Sultan Murad II conferred upon her the ribbon and star of the Order of Chefahat in recognition of her humanitarian services during

the war.<sup>35</sup> The National Society of the Red Cross awarded her its gold medal.

A treaty to end the war was signed in London on May 30 after Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary, issued a veiled threat to all parties that they would have to leave London if they failed to reach an agreement within a reasonable time. But the treaty did not satisfy the victorious allies who fell to squabbling among themselves over the spoils of the war. The Second Balkan War began when fighting erupted on July 1 between Bulgaria on one side, and Serbia and Greece on the other. The Bulgarians were immediately driven back by their former allies. Rumania, which had not been involved in the first war, saw an opportunity for spoils and attacked Bulgaria from the north on July 10. Besieged on two fronts, the Bulgarian defenses collapsed. Turkey, seizing the opportunity presented by the Bulgarian defeat, reoccupied Adrianople. A treaty ending the fighting, except between Turkey and Bulgaria, was signed in Bucharest on August 10. The Turks and Bulgarians signed a treaty at Constantinople on September 29.

Weeks before the treaty was signed in Constantinople, Rockhill's connection with events in Turkey came to an end. He and Edith returned to the United States, arriving in New York on August 9. He was met by reporters at the pier, but refused to be interviewed, saying there was nothing about the situation in the Balkans he could 'with propriety' discuss.<sup>36</sup> They went immediately to Litchfield to await news of their future under the new administration.

As Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan was an outspoken 'spoilsman', arguing that appointed offices should be given to deserving Democrats to replace officials appointed by Republicans. A widespread dismissal of ambassadors and ministers was underway. On August 21, he wrote a letter to Rockhill that must have echoed many other letters he was sending to American envoys overseas.

*'Although not unmindful of your long and distinguished career in the foreign field and at home,' he wrote, 'through certain exigencies the President now desires me to inform you of his acceptance of your resignation of the office of American Ambassador to Turkey.'*<sup>37</sup>

Rockhill was directed to return to Turkey at the end of his leave to present his letter of recall. There was no mention or even hint of another assignment.

Rockhill had served under both Republican and Democratic presidents, and he had never taken part in partisan politics. He was the closest thing then possible to what today would be called a career Foreign Service Officer. But there was not yet a career service, and he was identified with the Republicans who had been in power so long. He was an obvious target for a rabidly partisan politician like Bryan. Henry Fletcher, who had moved from Peking to serve as Minister to Chile, was another casualty of Bryan's partisanship. Of the approximately forty chiefs of American diplomatic missions in 1913, twenty-nine were dismissed within six months of Woodrow Wilson taking office. The wholesale dismissals were the subject of critical editorials in many newspapers.<sup>38</sup>

The Rockhills spent their leave in Litchfield with Edith's widowed mother (her father had recently died). Rockhill had to begin again thinking about his future. He and Edith would return to Constantinople in the autumn where they would arrange packing and shipment home of their belongings, and he would present his letter of recall. Then, for the first time in twenty years, since he returned from his second Tibetan expedition, he

would be faced with the need to find employment. He thought about a trip to Asia. He wanted to investigate the changes wrought by the revolution in China. Russia had taken effective control of Mongolia. The republican government under Yuan Shih-kai continued to look shaky and in constant danger of collapse. Rockhill may have wondered whether he might again be offered appointment as an advisor to Yuan.

On August 31, he wrote to Morrison in Peking to tell him of his dismissal. He explained his need to find a new position, adding that it was 'not an easy task for a man of my age, for what knowledge and experience I have is of little use except in government'. He explained that he had 'one or two schemes' he was considering, but the one he liked best was a trip to Asia to visit Mongolia, China and Japan and write a series of articles about his impressions. He told Morrison, 'I am greatly disturbed over the present policy (or rather lack of policy) of the U.S. as regards China and the Far East.'<sup>39</sup>

On October 1, he wrote to Bland in England to tell him that the Rockhills would be in London for a few days in October and hoped to see their old friend. He asked if Bland thought the *Times* might be interested in buying the series of articles he planned to write about Mongolia and China. He explained he could not pay for the trip from his own pocket, and payment for the articles would help pay expenses. 'I would love to have something of mine published in that paper,' he wrote.<sup>40</sup> Apparently, the newspaper was not interested, because it did not publish any articles. However, he was able to interest the American Asiatic Association, which had recently created an Asiatic Institute devoted to the study of Asia. The new Institute agreed to sponsor his trip and publish his articles in its magazine.

On October 9, the Rockhills sailed from New York aboard the *Adriatic* and arrived in Liverpool on the 18th. After a few days in London where they visited Bland, they crossed the channel and continued on to Vienna where they saw Daisy and Gilbert on the 26th.<sup>41</sup> On October 30, they arrived back in Constantinople. On November 20, he presented his letter of recall to the Sultan, and the following day they were guests of honor at a reception organized by the American community in Constantinople. On November 25, the former Ambassador and his wife, private citizens for the first time since their marriage, departed Constantinople bound once again for the familiar environs of eastern Asia.<sup>42</sup>

## Chapter 13

## In the Aftermath of Revolution: Mongolia, Peking and Litchfield, 1913-1914

The seemingly endless conifers and birches of eastern Europe slipped monotonously past their train windows as they rattled and swayed north from Constantinople into Russia. They paused briefly in St Petersburg and arrived in Moscow on December 1. The forests gave way to the grass of the steppes as they headed eastward into Mongolia. Their destination was Urga, the capital of Mongolia. This was Rockhill's first visit to the northern portion of Mongolia, and he was curious to see a part of Asia new to him.

Long a part of the Chinese Empire, which it had once dominated under Genghis Khan, Mongolia had passed under the control of Russia in the wake of the Chinese revolution. But trade with China continued to dominate the country's economy. Actually, Mongolia was a sweeping expanse of steppe, desert, and mountains inhabited by nomadic and agricultural clans, the whole of it under the effective control of no single authority. After spending a week in Urga, Rockhill decided that the ostensible Russian control of the country sat very lightly upon it. Conditions appeared normal and quiet. The Russians' principal objective was to forestall a massive migration of Chinese into Mongolia, the same objective driving Russian policy in Manchuria. Rockhill summed up his impressions of the political situation as it was molded by the imperatives of their policy:

*Russia's action in Mongolia is without doubt purely defensive; begun with hesitation, it has been followed with some misgivings, but in all its stages it has been in perfect conformity with the general policy in Eastern Asia pursued for the last six years, and which is based on the profound and general belief among all classes in the yellow peril.*<sup>1</sup>

From Urga they travelled to Harbin, Manchuria, then south to Mukden and on to Peking where they arrived January 17. As had always been the case when Rockhill returned to Peking after a lengthy absence, many changes had occurred since he had been there in 1909. The revolution, of course, had produced profound changes, but even during the year and a half since he declined the offer of appointment as advisor to the government, events had moved rapidly.

In the summer of 1912, when Rockhill had been offered the appointment by Yuan Shih-kai, Yuan was serving as the Provisional President of the Republic of China, and a National Advisory Council was charged with making arrangements for the election of a national parliament. In September, the Council passed a bill calling for elections, which were held in December. They were the first elections ever held in a country that had lived for more than 2,000 years under emperors wielding absolute power. Not surprisingly, voter turnout was abysmal. Even in sophisticated, westernized Shanghai, less than 14,000 of the 53,000 registered voters actually cast ballots.<sup>2</sup> The revolutionary party of Sun Yat-sen, the Kuomintang, won a majority of seats in the 500-member parliament, but many of its members proclaimed allegiance to more than one party.

The Kuomintang was far from being a united party devoted to a single philosophy, and the new National Assembly could accomplish little. Even impartial observers

sympathetic to Chinese attempts to develop democracy admitted that this first parliament immediately lapsed into hopeless deadlock and squabbling. One respected Chinese historian later described the Kuomintang at this time as 'a motley crowd'.<sup>3</sup> Many assembly members were young graduates of foreign universities, recently returned to China, who had brought back theories of Western-style parliamentary democracy that they wanted to put into practice immediately—the 'spectacled, frock-coated young dreamers' to whom Rockhill had referred so contemptuously in a letter to Morrison. Rockhill's own impression of the parliament was unpromising:

*The Parliament [was] mainly composed of very young, western-educated, idealists who knew nothing of China and were still intoxicated with the political and social theories they had heard of but very imperfectly understood in the schools from which they had but recently come, together with a certain number of the old type of Chinese who knew nothing but the China of the past.*<sup>4</sup>

Yuan Shih-kai was born in Honan in northern China not far from Peking, while the Kuomintang was dominated by southerners, mostly Cantonese. That difference alone might account for the animosity and suspicion that existed between them. It was a certainty that the efficient, authoritarian Yuan and the idealistic, often impractical Kuomintang members of the Assembly would clash. By the summer of 1913, open conflict broke out in several provinces between forces loosely controlled by the Kuomintang and Yuan's army. It was a period later called 'The Second Revolution of 1913'. The revolutionaries could not stand up to Yuan's disciplined forces, and the revolt collapsed by the end of August. Yuan's hand had been immeasurably strengthened the previous spring by the Reorganization Loan of \$125 million granted by the Five-Power Consortium of European banks, the loan the American bankers had refused to take part in because of Woodrow Wilson's withdrawal of official backing.

On October 6, Yuan was elected President for a term of five years. He formally took office on October 10, the second anniversary of the outbreak of revolution, in a ceremony held in the Tai-ho-tien where Manchu emperors had been crowned. On the same day, the Republic was granted formal diplomatic recognition by all the Powers except the United States. The Wilson administration had previously formally recognized Yuan's government more than five months earlier on May 3, less than two months after taking office and six weeks after withdrawing official support for the Reorganization Loan. Wilson and his Secretary of State, Bryan, did not like Dollar Diplomacy, but they were impressed by the establishment of a republic in China with all the trappings of democracy. When they assumed office, they were already prepared to recognize it. The United States had thus become the first of the Powers to do so.

Yuan had neither forgotten nor forgiven the attempt the previous summer to oust him by force, and he was determined to end the deadlock created by the conflict between him and the National Assembly. On November 4, he issued an order to dissolve the Kuomintang and expel its members from the National Assembly. The Assembly could not then muster a quorum, and it was adjourned. An Advisory Conference of seventy-one remaining members, mostly friends and supporters of Yuan, was convened in December to advise the president until a new parliament could be elected.

In December, the military and civil governors of the provinces sent a petition to Yuan requesting that the National Assembly be dissolved. 'The Government has no

rules to follow, the people no laws to obey, the state of the country is more precarious than in the past,' they stated. 'We are now surrounded by the foreign powers and the country is in a state of bankruptcy. This is not a time for discussion of theories; if we cannot manage our own affairs, there will soon be others who will.'<sup>5</sup> The Assembly was dissolved by proclamation of the President on January 12, five days before the Rockhills arrived in Peking. Arrangements were begun for election of a new assembly. But until such time as a new parliament could be elected and convened, Yuan Shih-kai ruled, in effect, as an absolute and military dictator of China. With the National Assembly dissolved, he was answerable to no other elected or appointed person or government body except, perhaps, the Beiyang army, and it remained devotedly loyal to him personally.

Yuan was a complex personality not easy to fathom. He had never been outside China, except to Korea, and he spoke no language except Chinese. But he sought advice from foreign advisors and looked abroad for ideas and models on which to pattern his rule in China. He lived in one of the Manchus' palaces, surrounded by the trappings of Imperial China. When a new foreign ambassador presented his credentials, Yuan received him in one of the immense state rooms of the palace, dressed in a bemedalled Western-style military uniform and surrounded by a coterie of similarly uniformed and bemedalled generals. He thus openly flouted the traditional Chinese custom of holding professional military leaders in low regard. But in private, he always wore traditional Chinese clothing, and his life-style was austere, unlike the sybaritic atmosphere of the Manchu court.<sup>6</sup>

The events of the previous eighteen months in China confirmed in Rockhill's mind what he and other old China Hands had been saying since the revolution broke out. China could not yet be governed effectively as a republic, they argued. Republican government differed too radically from the method of governance China had followed for thousands of years. Rockhill was more convinced than ever that only a single, strong ruler, functioning with absolute power like an emperor, could bring order to the growing political and economic chaos gripping China. The best arrangement—the one most congenial to most ordinary Chinese, he believed—would be a restoration of the emperor. If that was politically impossible, as it appeared to be in 1914, Yuan Shih-kai, a man he knew well, was in his opinion the only person on the Chinese political landscape capable of taking command of the government and restoring order to the country.

Rockhill's single, overriding belief, repeated often, was that China must draw upon its own history and traditions to devise its own solutions to its problems. It should seek freedom from interference by the Powers, and it should be wary of importing customs and forms of government from the West. Rockhill's judgment, based on history and his knowledge of the East, was that a sudden change from imperial absolutism to a truly democratic system was inevitably unworkable in China.

The American Minister to China in January 1914, was Dr Paul Reinsch. Appointed by Woodrow Wilson, he had arrived in Peking in October, just in time to witness the dismissal of parliament and the assumption of absolute power by Yuan. Reinsch came from the academic world. He had been a professor of political science at the University of Wisconsin and the author of a book entitled *Intellectual Currents in the Far East*, published in 1911. It apparently was not the product of any long first-hand acquaintance with Asia.

Reinsch was an ardent proponent of democracy, and he believed the United States offered the model of governance that the Chinese aspired, and should aspire, to emulate. He applauded the Chinese experiment in democracy since the revolution, and he deplored Yuan Shih-kai's dissolving of the National Assembly and seizure of power. In other words, Reinsch and Rockhill were on totally different wavelengths in their attitudes to what was happening in China. J.O.P. Bland, like many others who disagreed with Reinsch, respected the former professor's scholarly accomplishments and his sincerity. But Bland considered Reinsch too idealistic and out of touch with the realities of China. Bland wrote of 'Professor Reinsch—always an optimistic and sympathetic observer of Chinese Republicanism,' which was not a compliment when coming from Bland.<sup>7</sup>

Reinsch hosted a dinner for the Rockhills soon after their arrival in Peking, and he quickly decided that his guests of honor were hopeless old fossils yearning nostalgically for a return to the bad old days of Imperial China.

*Throughout our first conversation at dinner, Mrs. Rockhill affected a very reactionary view of things in China, praising the Empire and making fun of all attempts at modernization. One would have thought her not only a monarchist, but a believer in absolutism of the old Czarist type. A woman so clever can make any point of view seem reasonable.*

Her husband seemed to Reinsch only slightly less out of touch with current realities.

*Rockhill did not express himself so strongly, but he was evidently also filled with regret for the old days in China which had passed. While we were together receiving guests at a dinner I was giving Mr. Rockhill, some of the young Foreign Office counsellors appeared in the distance, wearing conventional evening clothes. 'How horrible,' Mr. Rockhill murmured, quite distressed. Not perceiving anything unusual to which his expression of horror could refer, I asked, 'What?' 'They ought to wear their native costume,' he answered; 'European dress is intolerable on them, and it is so with all these attempted imitations.'*<sup>9</sup>

As soon as Rockhill arrived in Peking, reports circulated that he would be appointed an advisor to the government. A reporter for the *Peking Daily News* interviewed him a week after his arrival and asked him about the rumors. He shrugged them off. 'You already have too many advisors,' he replied, 'and there is no need for any more. Advisors cannot aid you in the solution of your fundamental problems, which must be solved by yourselves.' He put in a plug for Yuan Shih-kai. 'I have known your president for twenty-five years,' he told the reporter. 'I have great respect for his administrative ability, for his statesmanship and his patriotism.'<sup>10</sup>

At least one American was already serving as an advisor to Yuan Shih-kai's government. Dr Frank Goodnow had come to Peking, under an arrangement made by Charles W. Eliot and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, to help the Chinese draft a constitution. When he completed his assignment in China, he was appointed President of Johns Hopkins University. Goodnow had been watching the developments in Peking for several months, and he had formed opinions that agreed, more or less, with Rockhill's.

On February 8, Minister Reinsch hosted a dinner attended by Rockhill, Goodnow and others at which the situation in China was discussed. Goodnow offered a detailed explanation of his views:



*Here is a hitherto non-political society which had vegetated along through centuries held together by self-enforced social and moral bonds, without set tribunals or formal sanction. Now, it suddenly determines to take over elections, legislatures, and other elements of our more abstract and artificial Western system. I incline to believe that it would be infinitely better if the institutional changes had been more gradual, if the system of representation had been based rather on existing social groupings and interests than on the abstract idea of universal suffrage. These political abstractions as yet mean nothing to the Chinese by way of actual experience ... I am inclined to look to concentration of power and responsibility in the hands of the President for more satisfactory results.<sup>11</sup>*

Reinsch thought that Goodnow's remarks, and similar views expressed by other guests, 'took a rather pessimistic tone'. Rockhill thought Goodnow's remarks were exactly appropriate. He wrote in his diary that night, 'ablest man was certainly Goodnow. Reinsch [is] too idealistic, a common fault of Americans.'<sup>12</sup>

Reports of Rockhill's appointment continued to appear. The *New York Times* on January 23 repeated a report from St Petersburg that he had been appointed, and on February 18, the newspaper said Rockhill and Yuan had discussed conditions for an appointment. But on February 24, another report from Peking claimed that Rockhill had again declined the offer.

His public denials may have been prompted by developments in Washington. The Counselor at the Department of State had resigned. It was a position only recently created, and there was speculation about the qualifications it required. A report in the *New York Times* said that President Wilson wanted 'the best authority on international law' but someone who also had extensive diplomatic experience. Political affiliation would not be a consideration, the newspaper report said. Rockhill was mentioned as a leading candidate along with Henry White.<sup>13</sup> A report a few days later said 'inquiries' about Rockhill were being made. But this report also said that a Democrat was wanted and wondered whether Rockhill's original appointment to the Department of State in 1893 by a Democratic administration qualified him as a Democrat.<sup>14</sup>

Several letters protesting the appointment, prompted by the newspaper reports, arrived at the White House. In 1897 and again in 1900, news reports of Rockhill's possible appointment as Minister to China had sparked protests from missionaries. This time, the protests recalled his involvement with the problems of American Jews in Russia and complained that he had downplayed the problems and done little to correct them.<sup>15</sup> Whether the protest letters had any effect is uncertain, but Rockhill did not receive the appointment as Counselor. For several weeks, however, the news from Washington must have led him to believe that he was being seriously considered for the position.

Actually, he had discussed with Yuan Shih-kai the possibility of an appointment as advisor to the Chinese government soon after his arrival in Peking. They had their first meeting on January 20, three days after Rockhill arrived.<sup>16</sup> The President's son, Yuan Yuan-tai, wanted Rockhill to serve, and he persuaded his father to invite the American to dinner and offer him the position. They met again on February 11.<sup>17</sup>

Rockhill was invited by Yuan to name his own terms. He asked for a salary, because he would not be able to accept any other employment if he was to provide really useful assistance to China. Yuan agreed to \$1,000 a month. Rockhill specified that he be

permitted to reside in the United States and make periodic visits to China. Perhaps most importantly, he insisted that no contract be drawn up, so either he or Yuan could terminate the arrangement at any time if either of them found it to be no longer worthwhile. Yuan agreed to all terms. On April 28, the *New York Times* reported from Peking that Rockhill had accepted an appointment as an advisor and would soon return to the United States.

In subsequent newspaper interviews, Rockhill stressed that he had no relationship with the government of China. He was in a personal relationship with Yuan Shih-kai as an advisor to the president, he explained.

Not surprisingly, Minister Reinsch considered Rockhill's appointment a mistake by the Chinese. In fact, he thought it was 'a scandal'.<sup>18</sup> Rather more surprisingly, George Morrison apparently agreed with him. Morrison had not seen Rockhill for a couple of years at least, and when they met in Peking in early 1914, Morrison apparently thought Rockhill had aged a great deal and was unfit to serve in an important position.<sup>19</sup> Morrison himself was having a difficult time as an advisor to the Chinese government. His problems had begun soon after his appointment in 1912. His advice was seldom heeded; perhaps because of the political tightrope that Yuan Shih-kai was forced to walk in order to retain his power in the political and economic turmoil that had descended upon China. It may be that Morrison's own difficulties and frustrations colored his view of others serving as advisors.

Rockhill agreed to work for a man whose image in history is unflattering, if ambiguous. Yuan Shih-kai is usually portrayed as an unscrupulous schemer who trimmed his sails to suit the prevailing political wind and who was perfectly willing to throw anyone, even a close associate, overboard if he thought that doing so would advance his own interests. If he followed one constant guiding star, his detractors claim, it was political expediency. He is portrayed as consumed by personal ambition. Shortly before his death, he attempted, unsuccessfully, to restore the Dragon Throne and place himself upon it as the founder of a new imperial dynasty. The move has earned him censure and ridicule. Chinese historians have usually portrayed Yuan as successively betraying the Manchus, the revolution, and the republic to amass and retain personal power. He is singled out as the person most responsible for creating the conditions that produced decades of warlordism, civil war, and political chaos in China.

But even Yuan's detractors acknowledge that he was an accomplished administrator, a skillful organizer, an astute politician, and an effective leader. As a military commander, he took personal interest in his troops and took pains to see that they were paid regularly, actions few Chinese military commanders bothered to take. Rockhill in 1914 was not alone in considering Yuan the last, best hope to rescue China from chaos. Frank Goodnow, Yuan's American advisor on constitutional law, submitted a report that argued that a monarchy was more appropriate for China than a republic. Yuan interpreted it as implying that Yuan ought to declare himself emperor. In 1914, many people—both foreign and Chinese, including many former revolutionaries—while perhaps not favoring a restoration of the monarchy, nevertheless considered Yuan the only viable alternative to a complete breakdown of order in China.

The Rockhills departed Peking in March and spent the whole of April visiting Hankow, Shanghai and Canton. Rockhill gathered information and impressions from both Chinese

and non-Chinese. He found conditions quiet and more or less normal, but there was an obvious lack of faith in the ability of the government in Peking to solve China's problems.

On May 7, he sent a memorandum to Yuan Shih-kai to report his impressions and offer his advice. He focussed on the need for Yuan's government to put its financial house in order, to redeem the inflation-ravaged paper money in circulation, charter a private bank free of political influence, and win the confidence of wealthy Chinese so the government could borrow money in China rather than rely on foreign loans. He cited Alexander Hamilton's work as the first American Secretary of the Treasury that put the young United States on a firm financial footing and thereby provided the foundation for subsequent American growth and prosperity.<sup>19</sup> While in Shanghai, he also completed a long article about current conditions in China that was published in the June issue of the *Journal of the American Asiatic Association*. An article about Mongolia, written earlier, had appeared in the May issue.

In the middle of May, he delivered two speeches in Shanghai, at the annual banquet of the American University Club and at a special meeting of the Saturday Club, a meeting place for prominent Chinese and foreign businessmen. His subject on both occasions was 'The Present Situation in China'. He emphasized his support for Yuan Shih-kai and his government, and he expressed optimism about the economic prospects of the country. As he had done in Peking in dinner conversations and newspaper interviews, he ridiculed the idea, which was widely held, that China was on the verge of bankruptcy. The country was too vast and too rich to go bankrupt, he argued. The precarious financial condition of the government was due to the burden of the indemnities China had been forced to pay to Japan in 1895 and after the Boxer uprising. He made a plea for 'fair play for the Chinese'. The American Consul-General in Shanghai thought Rockhill was 'ultra-optimistic' in his views of current economic conditions as did most of the British community in Shanghai who consistently expressed pessimism about China's future under Yuan Shih-kai.<sup>20</sup>

The Rockhills departed Shanghai on May 15 aboard the *Empress of Russia*. They arrived back in the United States in early June and went immediately to Litchfield. They had begun construction there of a house which was to be their permanent home. It was sited about a half-mile west of the village green at a point where the road from the village green dipped downhill, so they named it Edgehill. While the house was under construction, they stayed with Edith's widowed mother at her home, The Glebe. Mrs Perkins's own elegant furnishings and family heirlooms were supplemented by the Rockhills' mementos and art treasures from the orient. In the library was a rug made from the skin of a tiger Rockhill had shot in China years before. On the mantelpiece were three photographs of Yuan Shih-kai flanked by two melon-shaped Chinese vases.<sup>21</sup>

When they arrived in the United States, they found waiting for them two letters from Dorothy. In the first letter, written from Paris, she broke the sad news of her impending divorce from Joseph Hoppin. Life with him, she explained, had simply become unbearable. 'We have parted on the most amicable terms,' she hastened to add, 'and there will be no scandal.' The divorce would be granted quickly in France, so it would be over before any news that might arouse gossip could reach the United States. 'I would like so much to know about you and what being an advisor means,' she wrote. 'I can't tell you how glad I am that China has appreciated you if America hasn't.' She

explained she was about to depart Paris for Vienna to attend Daisy at the birth of her first child.<sup>22</sup>

In her second letter written from Vienna, she reported the birth of Daisy's first child, a girl, on May 28. The baby was named Dorothy Anna Caroline Antonia thus honoring her aunt and her maternal grandmother and great-grandmother. Both Daisy and her daughter were doing fine, Dorothy reported.<sup>23</sup>

In August, the Rockhills were able to move into Edgehill. The house was filled with Chinese and Tibetan art treasures—bronzes, porcelains, hangings, ceramics—and hundreds upon hundreds of books.<sup>24</sup> On August 8, Mary Perkins Quincy, a cousin of Edith with whom she had travelled as a girl in Egypt and the Near East, hosted a reception for her cousin at the Litchfield Lawn Club. The Rockhills and others in Litchfield were not indifferent to the war that broke out in Europe in August. On September 5, Edith organized a lawn fête to benefit the Red Cross. It attracted 1,300 people and raised \$4,000 [worth about \$65,000 in 1999 dollars<sup>25</sup>].

On August 4, Rockhill wrote a long letter to Bland who had written in June from London to ask about Rockhill's impressions of the situation in China. In his speeches in Shanghai, Rockhill had specifically taken issue with published statements by Bland that China faced partition and was not capable of governing itself. He responded to Bland's letter with cautious optimism.

*I am hopeful. This state of mind is the result of my personal investigation into the situation and of the policy being followed which is along sane and fairly progressive lines, well-suited to the country as it does not involve the sudden introduction of too-essentially western conceptions or theories, and should therefore be readily appreciated by the mass of the people, and of easier and more successful application than if borrowed bodily from abroad.*

He emphasized his belief that Yuan Shih-kai offered the best hope for progress toward stability:

*The one great difficulty which I fear will for years to come stand in the way of creating useful representative bodies in China is the absolute absence among the people, high and low, of any intelligent interest in public affairs. If this cannot be awakened, there will be no possibility of founding a representative government of any kind. Can it be? Yuan must go slow until this is ascertained. Will it be in his time? I doubt it. All he can do, it seems to me, is to insure peace and order and a fairly efficient and fairly honest officialdom; quite a big enough task even for Yuan, but, inshallah, it can be done, and he is the only man who can do it. Conclusion: support Yuan's government.*

He explained that he planned another visit to China in the autumn, and he hoped to return to the United States via Europe 'if the war is over by that time'.<sup>26</sup>

Bland responded toward the end of August with the cynicism that so often marked his attitude toward events in China.

*You know my views about Yuan Shih-kai and the chances of his evolving a decent ... government in China ... As regards Yuan himself and his alleged devotion to the Constitution ... you know, my dear Rockhill, as well as I do, that this is face-pidgin and in accordance with immemorial precedents of Chinese statecraft on the good old autocratic lines. You, of course, are a Republican and an American by accident of birth ... you have got to profess admiration for local self-government, provincial assemblies and all the other good things in which*

*good Americans profess to believe, though you know, just as I do, that salvation cometh not from them for Yellow men or for White.*

Yuan had established his power by 'bribery, bloodshed and the gentle arts of assassination', Bland charged. He would remain in power 'just as long as the money holds out'. But the Irishman's final, cynical conclusion agreed in a strange way with Rockhill's ideas. 'Let us re-establish the Dragon Throne,' he wrote. 'Put Yuan upon it, or anyone else you choose, and let him proceed to issue Imperial edicts, handing out flapdoodle in the old, sweet way.'

On October 8, Rockhill made a quick visit to New York to have lunch with Willard Straight who was serving as President of the American Asiatic Society. Straight invited him to speak at a gathering of the Asiatic Society before he departed for China. Their conversation apparently ranged over past years when they were together in China, and Straight must have expressed some contrition about his brashness as a young consul in Mukden. The following day, he wrote to Rockhill to confirm his appearance at the Asiatic Society and added:

*I hope you entirely understood my reference to the old days at the close of our conversation. The matter has been on my mind a good deal and I had intended to speak to you about it before. Now that it has been said, I feel considerably relieved as it cleans my plate, which is always a good thing.*<sup>27</sup>

In October, letters arrived from both Dorothy and Daisy. Dorothy wrote from Paris to describe changes in the city under wartime conditions. Virtually all the foreign residents had fled, and the city had an empty, grim atmosphere. She expressed admiration for the sense of purpose and determination exhibited by the French people to persevere and prevail in their struggle with Germany.

Daisy wrote from Vienna where she was living with her infant daughter. Her husband, Gilbert, had not resigned his naval commission, and when war broke out, he was assigned to sea duty aboard an Austrian warship. Life in the wartime Austrian capital was not easy. Shortages were already beginning to occur, and a resident alien like Daisy, although she was the citizen of a neutral country, was regarded with suspicion. Daisy asked her father to send some money so she could make a contribution to the Austrian Red Cross and thereby, she hoped, allay some of the suspicion that people obviously felt toward her. The two letters were the last Rockhill received from his daughters.<sup>28</sup>

In early November, Rockhill went to New York for his appearance as guest of honor at the Asiatic Society. Willard Straight presided, and among the guests at the head table were Horace Allen and Dr Edward T. Williams. In his remarks, Rockhill reviewed the situation in China and repeated the conviction he had expressed in his speeches in Shanghai that the United States should support Yuan Shih-kai and his efforts to establish a strong central government. It was his last public statement of his views about China.<sup>29</sup> Several weeks later, after Rockhill's death, Straight mentioned the dinner in a letter to Henry Fletcher:

*We had dinner with [Rockhill] on November 12. He was in fine form, but had been failing for some time, I think. His mind didn't move as well as it had, and he fumbled every now and then for ideas.*<sup>30</sup>

The Rockhills departed for China soon after the speech in New York. On the transcontinental train journey, one of their fellow passengers was John W. Foster, the former

Secretary of State. He and Rockhill spent many hours discussing China.<sup>31</sup> On November 28, Rockhill and Edith sailed from San Francisco aboard the *Chiyo Maru*.

Only a day or two out of port, he began to suffer from what was diagnosed as a severe cold. It grew worse as the ship neared Hawaii. When the *Chiyo Maru* docked in Honolulu on December 4, he was taken to a hospital, too ill to continue the voyage. In the hospital, symptoms of cardiac weakness were detected, and his condition worsened to become critical. He died at 1:00 a.m. on Tuesday, December 8, 1914.

The body was cremated, and Edith took the ashes back to Litchfield for burial. The funeral was held on January 2 in St Michael's Episcopal Church in Litchfield. Among the mourners was the Minister of China to the United States, and William Phillips came up from Washington to represent the Department of State. The urn containing Rockhill's ashes was buried in the Litchfield East Cemetery. Willard Straight sent a letter of condolence to Edith. 'Your husband,' he wrote, 'occupied a unique position and particularly at this time might have done work that would have modified the course of history.'<sup>32</sup>

Obituaries appeared in newspapers all over the United States when he died. During succeeding months, longer eulogies appeared in several scholarly publications. Alfred Hippisley wrote a warm commemoration published in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* in Britain. John W. Foster, writing for *The Chinese Students' Monthly*, recalled the recent train journey he had made with Rockhill and wrote:

*The world is deprived of the services of one of the most useful and accomplished men of his generation ... we can only conjecture how far his great talents and his long and varied experience would have contributed to the reorganization and salvation of [China].*<sup>33</sup>

Two eulogies, both in *T'oung-pao*, at that time probably the most prestigious international orientalist journal, are particularly worth noting. One was by Henri Cordier, the journal editor, full of admiration for Rockhill's work, and included a long bibliography. The second, with additions to the bibliography, was written by Berthold Laufer, a scholar at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago. *T'oung pao*, published in Leiden, had carried several of Rockhill's writings over the years. Laufer was a scholar of Chinese civilization, and when he died in 1934, was widely regarded as the leading Sinologist in the United States. He and Rockhill had become acquainted in 1897 when Laufer was a twenty-two-year-old, newly-anointed Ph.D. at the University of Leipzig. He wrote to Rockhill seeking help and advice, thereby initiating a friendship that lasted until Rockhill's death. Laufer's remembrance is a poignant summing-up that catches the essence of Rockhill's life:

*Mr. Rockhill was a man of extreme modesty and seldom talked about himself or his achievements. He received no honors from this country, but, indeed, he craved none. It is decidedly to his credit that he was never chosen by a university for an honorary degree. It is painful to think that at the end of his life, his diplomatic services were valued more highly by China than by his own government.*<sup>34</sup>

## Endnotes

### Prologue

1. Gertrude O'Donnell, 'A Man, A Woman and a Tree From China.' *Waterbury Republican* (Connecticut), January 15, 1984.
2. Allain White, *The History Of The Town of Litchfield, Connecticut, 1720-1920* (Litchfield: Enquirer Print, 1920), p. 171.
3. WWR to Bland, March 29, 1913. Bland Papers.
4. *Saturday Evening Post*, January 27, 1900. Clipping in Edith Rockhill Papers.

### Chapter 1

1. The backgrounds of the Rockhill, Claypoole and Ogle families are given in several documents in the Rockhill Papers.
2. The marriage record is in the Maryland State Archives in Annapolis.
3. Warfield, *The Founders of Anne Arundel and Howard Counties, Maryland*, p. 249. The Bel Air manor house now sits in the middle of a housing development built after World War II by the Levitt company. It has recently been restored to look as it did in the 18th century.
4. Varg, *Open Door Diplomat*. Based upon Dorothy Larkin manuscript, p. 6. pp. 16-39
5. 1860 Census, National Archives.
6. Rockhill's school record is in the Rockhill Papers.
7. Division Archives, Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre, Vincennes.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.

### Chapter 2

1. I have drawn mainly on Porch, *The French Foreign Legion*.
2. Division Archives, Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre, Vincennes.
3. Ibid.
4. Rockhill Papers.
5. Dorothy Larkin Manuscript in Varg, p. 7.
6. Various deeds and mortgages are in the records of the Howard County Courthouse in Ellicott City, Maryland. Glenelg today is a private school. The house probably looks much as it did when Rockhill lived there, except for some of the rooms used as classrooms.
7. The household is listed in the 1880 census for Colfax County, New Mexico. National Archives.
8. Dorothy Larkin Manuscript, quoted in Varg, *Open Door Diplomat*, p. 9.

9. Williams to WWR, May 26, 1881. Rockhill Papers.
10. Whitney Papers.
11. Dorothy Larkin Manuscript, quoted in Varg, *Open Door Diplomat*, p. 10.
12. WWR to Whitney, August 17, 1883. Whitney Papers.
13. Whitney to WWR, September 24, 1883. Rockhill Papers.
14. WWR to Whitney, February 27, 1884. Whitney Papers.
15. Both letters are in the Whitney Papers.
16. Ibid.
17. WWR to Whitney, April 13, 1884. Whitney Papers.

### Chapter 3

1. Wilson, *China: Travels And Investigations In The Middle Kingdom*, p. 104.
2. Ibid., p. 102.
3. Denby, *China and Her People*, p. 20.
4. Ibid., p. 23.
5. Reinsch, *An American Diplomat in China*, p. 16.
6. Hutchison, James L. *China Hand*, p. 26.
7. Wilson, *China: Travels And Investigations In The Middle Kingdom*, p. 161.
8. Scidmore, *China: The Long-Lived Empire*, p. 146.
9. Ibid., p. 144.
10. Denby, *China and Her People*, p. 33.
11. WWR to Wilson, February 12, 1897. Wilson Papers.
12. Hippiisley's background is given in Wright, *Hart And The Chinese Customs*, p. 785, note 73.
13. Quoted in Griswold, *The Far Eastern Policy of the United States*, p. 64.
14. I have drawn upon Bland and Backhouse, *China Under the Empress Dowager, Vare, The Last Of The Empresses and Seagrave, Dragon Lady*
15. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1884*, p. 89.
16. Ibid., pp. 64-80
17. WWR to Denby, September 7, 1887. Rockhill Papers.
18. Quoted in Tansill, *The Foreign Policy of Thomas F. Bayard, 1885-1897*, p. 125.
19. Unpublished Hippiisley memoir, Hippiisley Papers.
20. Text is in the Rockhill Papers with no indication where it appeared.
21. Unpublished Hippiisley memoir, Hippiisley Papers.
22. Denby, *China and Her People*, p. x.

23. Dorothy Larkin Manuscript. See Varg, *Open Door Diplomat*, p. 13.
24. Das to WWR, September 13, 1899. Rockhill Papers.
25. Das to WWR, February 6, 1886. Rockhill Papers.
26. WWR, 'An American in Tibet.' *Century Magazine*, November, 1890, p. 4.
27. The incident is recounted in the Hippisley unpublished memoir, Hippisley Papers.
28. Wilson, *China: Travels And Investigations In The Middle Kingdom*, p. 215.
29. WWR to William Whitney, January 18, 1886. Whitney Papers.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. See Harrington, *God, Mammon and the Japanese* for an account of Allen in Korea and his contacts with Rockhill.
33. WWR to Bayard, February 5, 1887. Cited in Ibid., pp. 128-9.
34. WWR to Bayard, December 20, 1886. Department of State Records.
35. Gilmore, *Korea From Its Capital*, pp. 82-90.
36. Quoted in Sands, *Undiplomatic Memoirs*, p. 29.
37. The incident is related in Varg, *Open Door Diplomat*, p. 12, drawing upon the Dorothy Larkin Manuscript. Sir Robert Hart thought she had typhoid. See Fairbank, Brunzel and Matheson, ed. *The I.G. In Peking* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), vol.1, ltr. no. 635.
38. Trubner to WWR, February 4, 1887. Rockhill Papers.
39. Denby to WWR, January 14, 1887. Rockhill Papers.
40. Quoted in Young, 'Politics In The Aftermath Of Revolution', p. 21. Pethick made several slighting comments about Denby in letters to General Wilson. Wilson Papers.
41. Quoted in Varg, *Open Door Diplomat*, p. 13, drawing upon Dorothy Larkin Manuscript.
42. Quoted in WWR to Denby, September 2, 1887. Rockhill Papers.
43. Ibid.
44. Denby to Bayard, February 9, 1888. Department of State Records, National Archives.
45. Quoted in WWR to Bayard, July 5, 1888. Rockhill Papers.
46. WWR to James H. Wilson, October 22, 1887. Wilson Papers
47. Bayard to WWR, June 21, 1888. Rockhill Papers.
48. Ibid.
49. WWR to Bayard, July 5, 1888. Rockhill Papers.
50. Bayard to WWR, July 7, 1888. Rockhill Papers.
51. Quoted in letter from Henry Cabot Lodge to Theodore Roosevelt, August 8, 1895. In *Lodge*, vol.1, p. 159. pp. 90-107
52. WWR to William Whitney, September 2, 1888. Whitney Papers.
53. WWR to Langley, December 6, 1888. Smithsonian Archives.

#### Chapter 4

1. Rockhill, *The Land of the Lamas*, p. 4.
2. I have drawn upon Rockhill's extensive writings and upon Hedin, *Through Asia*.
3. Rockhill, *The Land of the Lamas*.
4. Rockhill, *The Land of the Lamas*, p. 2.
5. Rockhill, *The Land of the Lamas*.
6. Rockhill, *The Land of the Lamas*.
7. Ibid.
8. Pethick to James H. Wilson, October 13, 1888. Wilson papers.
9. Rockhill, *The Land of the Lamas*, p. 7.
10. Ibid., p. 65.
11. Ibid., p. 93.
12. Ibid., p. 97.
13. Ibid., p. 99.
14. Ibid., p. 136.
15. Ibid., p.161.
16. Ibid., p.164.
17. Ibid., p. 223
18. Ibid., p. 271.
17. Ibid., p. 316.
20. Rockhill, 'Driven Out of Tibet,' *Century*, April, 1894, p. 877.
21. WWR to Hippisley, August 23, 1889. Rockhill Papers.
22. WWR to Hippisley, December 17, 1889. Rockhill Papers.
23. Ibid.
24. Richard W. Gilder to WWR, November 8, 1889. Rockhill Papers.
25. Charles Sprague Sargent to WWR, December 8, 1892. Rockhill Papers.
26. WWR to H.E. Scudder, March 22, 1895. Rockhill Papers.
27. WWR to Hippisley, December 17, 1889. Rockhill Papers.
28. Craig Biddle, a judge. In Rockhill Personnel File, OPM.
29. The Attorney-General of Maryland; *ibid*.
30. In a letter to her father dated February 17, 1884, Henry Adams's wife, Clover, listed 'Mr and Mrs Rockhill' among the guests expected for dinner. See Chalfant, *Better in Darkness*, p. 873, note 31. Rockhill was in the United States around that time



- to seek a diplomatic appointment to Peking. However, in a letter to William Whitney from Summit, New Jersey, dated February 27, Rockhill wrote that he had 'just arrived from Switzerland'.
31. Adams to Lucy Baxter, February 16, 1890. Levenson, Vol. III, p. 224. pp. 112-29
  32. Levenson et al. *The Letters of Henry Adams*, Vol. III, p. 228.
  33. Griscom, *Diplomatically Speaking*, p. 17.
  34. Levenson et al. *The Letters of Henry Adams*, Vol. III, p. 241.
  35. WWR to Hippisley, January 6, 1891. Rockhill Papers.
  36. WWR to Hippisley, May 2, 1891. Rockhill Papers. Also, *Berkeley Springs News*, May 8, 1891.
  37. *The New York Times*, October 19, 1891.
  38. *Atlantic Monthly*, May, 1892, p. 691.
  39. Heiden, *Through Asia*, vol. I, p. 11.
  40. Box 108, Smithsonian Archives.
  41. WWR to G. Browne Goode, June 3, 1891. Ibid.
  42. Mason to Goode, June 10, 1891. Ibid.
  43. Ibid.
  44. Goode to Langley, June 12, 1891. Ibid.
  45. WWR to Samuel Langley, November 4, 1891. Ibid.
  46. Rockhill, 'Driven Out of Tibet.' p. 877.
  47. Ibid., p. 878.
  48. Ibid., p. 879.
  49. Ibid., p. 880.
  50. Ibid., p. 882.
  51. Ibid.
  52. Ibid.
  53. Ibid., p. 883.
  54. Ibid. p. 886. pp. 129-50
  55. Rockhill, 'Diary of a Journey Through Mongolia and Tibet in 1891 and 1892.' p. 168.
  56. Ibid., p. 145.
  57. Ibid., p. 221.
  58. Rockhill, 'Driven Out of Tibet.' p. 888.
  59. Ibid., p. 891.
  60. Caroline Rockhill to Mrs. Ward, July 24, 1892. Houghton Library.
  61. Dorothy Larkin Manuscript, quoted in Varg, p. 19.
- Chapter 5**
1. *Berkeley Springs News*, December 16, 1892.
  2. Neither his government personnel file nor his personal papers contain any document, e.g. letters of recommendation, to indicate how he obtained the appointment.
  3. Dennett, *John Hay*, p. 198.
  4. Quoted in Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, p. 395.
  5. *The New York Times*, May 30, 1893, p. 2.
  6. Churchill, 'Memoir of William W. Rockhill', p. 131.
  7. *The Geographical Journal*, May, 1894 (Vol. III, No. 5), pp. 358-88. Included are the texts of several rather lengthy comments made by members of the audience.
  8. WWR to Wilson, April 10, 1894. Wilson Papers.
  9. WWR to Hippisley, October 30, 1894. Rockhill Papers, pp. 150-167
  10. Ibid.
  11. Levenson et al. *The Letters of Henry Adams*, Vol. IV, p. 282.
  12. Foster, *American Diplomacy in the Orient*, p. 296; *The New York Times*, December 21, 1901. J.O.P. Bland in his writings several times mentions that Pethick kept a very detailed diary throughout his years in China, but it mysteriously disappeared on the day he died. See, for example, Bland, *Li Hung-chang*, p. 170.
  13. Levenson et al., *The Letters of Henry Adams*, Vol. IV, p. 154.
  14. Morison, ltr.
  15. Morison, ltr 535; see also Wister, *Roosevelt: The Story of a Friendship*, p. 40. *Atlantic Monthly*, December, 1887, p. 725.
  16. Eggert, *Richard Olney*, p. 173.
  17. Thayer, *The Life And Letters Of John Hay*, Vol. 2, p. 187.
  18. Roosevelt to WWR, February 12, 1896. Morison, ltr 619.
  19. Roosevelt to WWR, February 17, 1896. Ibid., ltr 621.
  20. Rodzinski, *The Walled Kingdom*, p. 230. See also Bland, *Li Hung-chang*, p. 182.
  21. Quoted in Eggert, *Richard Olney*, p. 275.
  22. Adams to Mabel Hooper, February 11, 1897. Levenson et al., Supplement Vol. I, 1897, p. 6.
  23. WWR to Wilson, February 23, 1897. Wilson Papers.
  24. Ibid.
  25. The correspondence between Pethick and Wilson, in which they constantly urge each other to maintain secrecy, can be found in the Wilson Papers. One letter from Pethick is signed 'The Man in the Moon' and marked 'Burn This'. For a good account of the incident, see Young, *The Rhetoric of Empire*, pp. 26-30. pp. 167-75
  26. The Wilson Papers contain the extensive correspondence between Wilson and Rockhill in 1897 about diplomatic appointments including Wilson's hopes for his own.

27. The letters are in Rockhill's Personnel File, OPM.
28. Ibid.
29. WWR to Wilson, April 14, 1897. Wilson Papers.
30. Morison, ltr 717.
31. WWR to Wilson, April 29, 1897. Wilson Papers.
32. Quoted in Leech, *In the Days of McKinley*, p. 152.
33. Morison, ltr 738.
34. Rockhill's Personnel File, OPM.
35. Young, *The Rhetoric of Empire*, p. 69.
36. Caroline Rockhill to Wilson, July 8, 1897. Wilson Papers.
37. Morison, August 8, 1897.
38. Morison, ltr 773.
39. Morison, ltr 767.

### Chapter 6

1. WWR to Sherman, October 27, 1897. Department of State Records.
2. WWR to Sherman, November 17, 1897. Ibid., pp. 175-88
3. WWR to Wilson. Wilson Papers.
4. See, for example, Clyde, *The Far East*, Griswold, *The Far Eastern Policy of the United States*, and Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism 1890-1902*.
5. *North American Review*, January, 1898, pp. 32-39.
6. Ibid., February, 1898, pp. 129-41.
7. Thayer, *The Life And Letters Of John Hay*, Vol. II, p. 244.
8. Quoted in Mattox, *The Twilight of Amateur Diplomacy*, p. 182.
9. Hay Papers.
10. Levenson et al., *The Letters of Henry Adams*, Vol. IV, p. 562.
11. Ibid., p. 568.
12. Adams to Charles Milnes Gaskell. Ibid., p. 570.
13. Ibid., p. 576.
14. Adams to Elizabeth Cameron, May 3, 1898. Ibid., p. 578.
15. Adams to Elizabeth Cameron, May 5, 1898. Ibid., p. 578.
16. Adams to John Hay, May 5, 1898. Ibid., p. 581.
17. Adams to Lomax Hooper, April 26, 1898. Ibid., p. 572.
18. Adams to WWR, June 12, 1898. Ibid., p. 600.
19. WWR to Wilson, August 17, 1898. Wilson Papers.
20. Dorothy Larkin Manuscript quoted in Varg, p. 23.
21. Ibid.
22. WWR to Hay, August 11, 1898. Hay Papers.
23. Levenson et al, *The Letters of Henry Adams*, Vol. IV, p. 610.
24. Adams to Anna Cabot Mills Lodge, August 24,

1898. Ibid., p. 643.
25. Hay to Whitelaw Reid, November 13, 1898. Thayer, *The Life And Letters Of John Hay*, Vol. II, p. 191.
26. Ibid., pp.188-213
27. Hay to G.P. Fisher, July 2, 1902. Ibid., p. 193.
28. WWR to Hay, October 26, 1898. Hay Papers.
29. Adams to WWR, December 22, 1898. Levenson et al., *The Letters of Henry Adams*, Vol. IV, p. 642.
30. Adams to Elizabeth Cameron, February 19, 1899. Ibid., p. 690.
31. Adams to WWR, February 16, 1899. Ibid., p. 688.
32. Rockhill Personnel File, OPM.
33. See Vivian, 'Four Missing Men.'
34. WWR wrote a brief article entitled 'The Bureau of the American Republics' which appeared in January, 1902, p.1652.
35. Quoted in Varg, *Open Door Diplomat*, p. 24.
36. Adams to Elizabeth Cameron, May 3, 1899. Levenson et al., *The Letters of Henry Adams*, Vol. IV, p. 716.
37. Adams to John Hay, May 4, 1899. Ibid., p. 718.

### Chapter 7.

1. Hay Papers.
2. Denby to Sherman, December 11, 1897. The full text is quoted in Dennis, *Adventures in American Diplomacy, 1896-1906*, p. 202.
3. Scidmore, *China: The Long-Lived Empire*, p. 2.
4. Quoted in Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism 1890-1902*, p. 677. See Spence, *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* pp. 202-18 for an extensive and excellent account of Kang Yu-wei's remarkable career.
5. Kang Yu-wei, 'The Reform Of China and the Revolution of 1898', p. 184.
6. Dennett, *John Hay*, p. 286. Langer *The Diplomacy of Imperialism 1890-1902*, p. 684, also uses the image of riding two horses to describe British policy. It apparently can be traced to a speech by Sir Charles Dilke in Parliament on June 9, 1899.
7. Quoted in Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism 1890-1902*, p. 684.
8. WWR to Hippisley, October 13, 1899. Rockhill Papers.
9. Roosevelt to WWR, June 22, 1899, Roosevelt Papers.
10. Quoted in Griswold, *The Far Eastern Policy of the United States*, p. 65.
11. Hay to Adams, August 5, 1899. Hay Papers.
12. Hippisley to WWR, copy enclosed with WWR to Hay, August 3, 1899, Hay Papers. The Open Door

exchange among Hippisley, Hay and WWR has been traced in several scholarly studies in varying degrees of detail.

13. WWR to Hay, August 3, 1899. Hay Papers.
14. WWR to Hippiisley. Rockhill Papers.
15. Ibid.
16. Hay Papers.
17. Rockhill Papers.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid., pp.218-30
23. Both the letter and the memorandum are in the Hay Papers.
24. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1899*, p.128.
25. Lo Hui-min. *The Correspondence of G.E. Morrison*, Vol. 1, p. 527.
26. *The New York Times*, November 4, 1899.
27. Ibid., November 10, 1899.
28. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1900*.
29. WWR to Hay, December 19, 1899. Hay Papers.
30. Hay to Tower, January 22, 1900. Quoted in Dennett, *John Hay*, p. 293.
31. Roosevelt to WWR, June 22, 1899, Roosevelt Papers. Conger to Hay, December 7, 1900. Department of State Records.
32. Kennan, *American Diplomacy 1900-1950*, p. 26.
33. Ibid., p. 41.
34. *The New York Times*, January 16, 1918.
35. Quoted in Richard W. Van Alstyne, 'The Open Door Policy,' p. 711.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, p. 39.
39. See, as one of many possible examples, Griswold, *The Far Eastern Policy of the United States*, p. 77.
40. Quoted in Thayer, *The Life And Letters Of John Hay*, Vol. 2, p. 226-7.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid., p. 229.
43. Levenson et al., *The Letters of Henry Adams*, Vol. V, p. 72.
44. Roosevelt Papers.
45. Text is in the Rockhill Papers.
46. 1900 Census Report, National Archives.
47. *Geographical Journal*, Vol. 17, p. 298.
48. *The Nation*, July 12, 1900.
49. Levenson et al., *The Letters of Henry Adams*, Vol. V, p. 137.
50. *Forum*, May, 1899, p. 328.
51. Ibid., p. 341.

52. Conger to Hay, December 14, 1899. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1900*, p. 142.
53. Quoted in Dennis, *Adventures in American Diplomacy, 1896-1906*, p. 217.
54. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1901*, Appendix, p. 12.
55. Fleming, *The Siege at Peking*, p. 15.
56. Hay Papers.
57. Ibid.
58. Quoted in Fleming, *The Siege at Peking*, p. 22.
59. Hay Papers.
60. Morison, ltr 1787.
61. WWR to Roosevelt, July 14, 1900. Rockhill Papers.
62. Rockhill Personnel File, OPM.
63. Quoted in Thayer, *The Life And Letters Of John Hay*, Vol. 2, p. 237.
64. Hay Papers.
65. *The New York Times*, July 25, 1900, pp. 250-262

#### Chapter 8.

1. WWR to Hay, August 26, 1900. Hay Papers.
2. Ibid.
3. WWR to Hay, September 6, 1900. Hay Papers.
4. WWR to Hay, August 26, 1900. Hay Papers.
5. WWR to Hay, September 6, 1900. Hay Papers.
6. Ibid.
7. William Martin to Hay, September 6, 1900. Hay Papers.
8. WWR to Hay, October 1, 1900. Hay Papers.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Dennis, *Adventures in American Diplomacy, 1896-1906*, pp. 232-3.
12. WWR to Hay, October 3, 1900. Hay Papers.
13. Quoted in Thayer, *The Life And Letters Of John Hay*, Vol. 2, p. 247.
14. WWR to Hay, October 1, 1900. Hay Papers.
15. WWR to Hay, October 3, 1900. Hay Papers.
16. Edith Rockhill Papers.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1901*, Appendix, p. 43.
20. Edith Rockhill Papers.
21. Ibid.
22. WWR to Hay, December 19, 1900. Hay Papers, pp. 262-82
23. Kelly, *A Forgotten Conference*, p. 73.
24. WWR to Hay, Hay Papers.
25. Hay Papers.
26. Quoted in Beale, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power*, p. 187.

27. Ibid.
  28. Hay Papers.
  29. Quoted in Dennis, *Adventures in American Diplomacy, 1896-1906*, p. 243.
  30. Ibid.
  31. Ibid.
  32. Hay Papers.
  33. Ibid.
  34. WWR to Hay, February 8, 1901. Hay Papers.
  35. Ibid.
  36. Ibid.
  37. Edith Rockhill Papers.
  38. Ibid.
  39. Nicholson, p. 171.
  40. Lo Hui-min, *The Correspondence of G.E. Morrison*, Vol. 1, p. 379. Rockhill's openness with the *Times'* correspondent apparently sparked complaints by American news organizations back in the United States that he was not equally open with American newsmen. He was gently taken to task by Roosevelt. See Roosevelt to WWR, August 6, 1906. Morison ltr 3992.
  41. Morrison to Liang Shih-yi, July 12, 1915. Lo Hui-min, *The Correspondence of G.E. Morrison*, Vol. 2, p. 444.
  42. WWR to Hay, March 20, 1901. McKinley Papers.
  43. Hay Papers, pp. 282-306
  44. Ibid.
  45. Ibid.
  46. McKinley Papers. July 18, 1901.
  47. Edith Rockhill Papers.
  48. WWR to Hay, May 25, 1901. Hay Papers.
  49. WWR to Hippisley, July 6, 1901. Rockhill Papers.
  50. Edith Rockhill Papers.
  51. Varg, *Open Door Diplomat*, p. 215.
- Chapter 9**
1. Newspaper clipping without source. Edith Rockhill Papers.
  2. Adams to Elizabeth Cameron, February 2, 1902. Levenson et al., *The Letters of Henry Adams*, Vol. V, p. 324.
  3. WWR to Hippisley, August 16, 1902. Hippisley Papers.
  4. Adams to Elizabeth Cameron, August 13, 1902. Levenson et al., *The Letters of Henry Adams*, Vol. V, p. 323
  5. Bland, *Li Hung-chang*, p. 309.
  6. Conger to Hay, February 5, 1902. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1902*, p. 205.
  7. *Journal of the American Asiatic Association*, April, 1902, p. 112.
  8. Ibid.
  9. Ibid.
  10. WWR to Hay, December 31, 1901. Hay Papers, pp. 306-20
  11. Ibid.
  12. The text is in the Rockhill Papers.
  13. Adams to Elizabeth Cameron, January 13, 1903. Levenson et al., *The Letters of Henry Adams*, Vol. V, p. 437. The position in Japan was, of course, Minister. Lloyd Griscom was appointed.
  14. Hay to Roosevelt, May 12, 1903. Hay Papers.
  15. Hay to Roosevelt, April 28, 1903. Hay Papers.
  16. Quoted in Beale, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power*, p. 179.
  17. WWR to Hay, July 23, 1903. Hay Papers.
  18. Ibid.
  19. WWR to Hay, August 3, 1903. Hay Papers.
  20. *The New York Times*, August 11, 1903.
  21. Roosevelt to Taft, September 3, 1903. Morison, ltr 2790.
  22. Hay to Roosevelt, July 13, 1903. Roosevelt Papers. This letter was published, with the names removed, in Hay (Clara), Vol. 2, p. 273.
  23. Adams to Elizabeth Cameron, May 8, 1904. Levenson, Vol. V, p. 583.
  24. WWR to Wilson, October 27, 1896. Wilson Papers.
  25. Quoted in Harrington, *Harrington, God, Mammon and the Japanese*, p. 313.
  26. Ibid., p. 314.
  27. Allen's papers are in the New York Public Library. An account of the episode, based upon Allen's diary, is given in Harrington, *God, Mammon and the Japanese*, pp. 314-6. WWR gave George Morrison a brief account after he arrived in Peking in 1905. He said Roosevelt ended the conversation by saying, 'None of the statements made by you, Mr. Allen, seem to be supported by facts.' Lo Hui-min, *The Correspondence of G.E. Morrison*, Vol. 1, p. 314.
  28. Quoted in Harrington, *God, Mammon and the Japanese*, p. 318.
  29. Quoted in Harbaugh, *The Life and Times of Theodore Roosevelt*, p. 283.
  30. Roosevelt to WWR, May 18, 1905. Morison ltr 3526.
  31. Hay diary, December 23, 1904. Hay Papers.
  32. WWR to Hay, January 19, 1901. Hay Papers.
  33. Hay diary, December 23, 1904. Hay Papers.
  34. Morrison to WWR, December 20, 1904. Lo Hui-min, *The Correspondence of G.E. Morrison*, Vol. 1, p. 279.
  35. Chirol to Satow, December 31, 1904. Ibid., p. 282.

36. Hay diary, January 3, 1905. Hay Papers. On December 13, Roosevelt, Hay and Adams jointly nominated Rockhill for membership in the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. Levenson et al., *The Letters of Henry Adams*, Supplement Vol. 2, 1904, p. 22.
37. Phillips, *Ventures in Diplomacy*, p. 14.
38. WWR to Wilson, March 13, 1905. Rockhill Papers.
39. *Journal of the American Asiatic Association*, June 1905, p. 71. pp. 330-48
- Chapter 10**
1. WWR to Secretary of State, July 6, 1905. Department of State Records, pp. 353-64.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Panikkar, *Asia and Western Dominance*, p. 150.
4. I have drawn mainly on Feuerwerker, 'The Foreign Presence in China.'
5. Phillips, *Ventures in Diplomacy*, p. 17.
6. *Ibid.*, p.18.
7. Quoted in Varg, *Open Door Diplomat*, p. 3. Phillips's papers are at the Houghton Library, but they unfortunately contain nothing from his years in China.
8. Phillips, *Ventures in Diplomacy*, p. 18.
9. Huntington-Wilson, *Memoirs of an Ex-Diplomat*, p. 136.
10. WWR to Hay, July 1, 1905. Hay Papers.
11. WWR to Roosevelt, July 7, 1905. Roosevelt Papers.
12. Malone, 'The First Remission of the Boxer Indemnity', p. 66.
13. *Ibid.*
14. See Beale, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power*, pp. 200-211; also Braisted, 'The United States and the American China Development company'.
15. Quoted in Beale, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power*, p. 208.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 209.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 210.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 211. pp. 348-68
19. *Journal of the American Asiatic Association*, December, 1914, p. 326.
20. See Warner, *The Tide At Sunrise*.
21. Morison, ltr 3635.
22. Morrison to Chirol, May 17, 1907. Lo Hui-min, *The Correspondence of G.E. Morrison*, Vol. I, p. 412.
23. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1905*, p. 207.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 209.
25. Morison ltr 3635.
26. Quoted in Jessup, *Elihu Root*, Vol. II, p. 46.
27. WWR to Secretary of State, September 27, 1905. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1905*, p. 227.
28. Noted in Vagts, *Deutschland und die Vereinigten Staaten in der Weltpolitik*, Vol. 2, p. 1250.
29. Phillips, *Ventures in Diplomacy*, p. 23.
30. *The New York Times*, August 22, 1905. Alice Roosevelt does not mention the incident in her memoirs, and it has been charged that the report was a figment of the imagination of a journalist desperate for a story.
31. Longworth, *Crowded Hours: Reminiscences*, p. 91.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 99. See also Coolidge, *Random Letters From Many Countries*, pp. 282-5, for an account of the visit.
34. Longworth, *Crowded Hours: Reminiscences*, p. 99.
35. WWR to Rodgers, September 18, 1905. Rockhill Papers, pp. 368-85
36. *The New York Times*, October 12, 1905. p. 5. Rockhill mentioned the incident in a letter to Hippisley, saying, 'As there is not a word of truth in it, I do not feel particularly worried about it. The squealing of some newspapermen who did not get to the audience given Miss Roosevelt.' WWR to Hippisley, December 26, 1905. Hippisley Papers.
37. Phillips, *Ventures in Diplomacy*, p. 29.
38. Quoted in Varg, *Open Door Diplomat*, p. 71.
39. Phillips, *Ventures in Diplomacy*, p. 29.
40. Egan, 'William Woodville Rockhill', p. 358.
41. Phillips, *Ventures in Diplomacy*, p. 30.
42. Quoted in Jessup, *Elihu Root*, Vol. II, p. 107.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
44. *Washington Post*, January 7, 1906.
45. Quoted in Beale, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power*, p. 244.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 245.
47. WWR to Hippisley, March 29, 1906; WWR to Hippisley, April 21, 1906. Hippisley Papers.
48. Bland diary, Bland Papers.
49. Bland, *Recent Events*, p. 307.
50. Quoted in Croly, *Willard Straight*, p. 84.
51. Straight to Roosevelt, October 5, 1906. Straight Papers.
52. Morgan to Straight, April 23, 1907. Straight Papers.
53. Croly, *Willard Straight*, pp. 219-23. pp. 385-401
54. Straight to WWR, June 14, 1907; WWR to Straight, June 20, 1907. Straight Papers.
55. Straight to Morgan, October 13, 1907. Straight Papers.
56. Straight to Bland, May 10, 1908. Straight Papers.

57. Quoted in Croly, *Willard Straight*, p. 235.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 236.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 500.
60. Morrison to Chirol, April 5, 1907. Lo Hui-min, *The Correspondence of G.E. Morrison*, Vol. 1, p. 403.
61. Gale, *Salt For The Dragon*, p. 15.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
63. Bland, *Recent Events*, p. 215.
64. WWR to Root, November 28, 1905. Rockhill Papers. See also Coolidge, *Random Letters From Many Countries*, pp. 287-8, for an account of the incident.
65. Kennan, E.H. Harriman, Vol. 2, p. 25.
66. Fletcher to 'Uncle Watson', June 26, 1907. Fletcher Papers.
67. Bland Diary, Bland Papers.
68. Quoted in Croly, *Willard Straight*, p. 250.
69. Straight to Morgan, October 13, 1907. Straight Papers.
70. Phillips, *Ventures in Diplomacy*, p. 33.
71. Albert Pontius to Secretary of State, April 12, 1908. Department of State Records.
72. Documents about the Indemnity remission are in Foreign Relations of the United States, 1908, pp. 64-75.
73. Quoted without source in Varg, *Ventures in Diplomacy*, p. 92.
74. WWR to Roosevelt, June 30, 1908. Roosevelt Papers.
75. Roosevelt to WWR, August 1, 1908. Roosevelt Papers.
76. Roosevelt to Bryce, August 3, 1908, Morison ltr 4826; Roosevelt to Bryce, September 7, 1908, Morison ltr 4877; Roosevelt to WWR, September 7, 1908, Morison ltr 4878.
77. WWR to Roosevelt, November 8, 1908. Roosevelt Papers.
78. Bland Diary, Bland Papers.
79. WWR to Root, April 28, 1908. Department of State Records.
80. *Ibid.*
81. WWR to Phillips, August 1, 1908. Department of State Records.
82. Bland Diary, Bland Papers.
83. Root to Straight, December 11, 1908. Root Papers.
84. Quoted in Croly, *Willard Straight*, p. 276.
85. Bland, *Recent Events*, p. 66.
86. WWR to Taft, November 5, 1908. Taft Papers.
87. Hippisley to WWR, June 2, 1909. Rockhill Papers.
88. Phillips to WWR, April 27, 1909. Rockhill Papers.
89. Adams to Anna Cabot Wells Lodge, August 12, 1909. Levenson et al., *The Letters of Henry Adams*, Supplement, Vol. 2, 1909, p. 18.
90. WWR to Secretary of State, May 6, 1909. Department of State Records.
91. An 'Order of Ceremonies' is contained in the Fletcher Papers which gives a detailed, step-by-step plan for the ceremony. It carries a hand-written note by Fletcher, 'This ceremonial was carried out.' pp. 420-429
92. Fletcher to 'Emily', May 23, 1909. Fletcher Papers.
93. Bland Diary, Bland Papers.
94. *Ibid.*
95. Rockhill Diary, June 20, 1909. Rockhill Papers.

### Chapter 11

1. Huntington-Wilson, *Memoirs of an Ex-Diplomat*, p. 205.
2. Chirol to Morrison, August 27, 1909. Lo Hui-min, *The Correspondence of G.E. Morrison*, Vol. 1, p. 518.
3. Rockhill diary, August 30, 1909. Rockhill Papers.
4. Rockhill diary, September 27 and October 12, 1909. Rockhill Papers.
5. Wheeler, *Dome of Many-Colored Glass*.
6. Buchanan, *Diplomacy and Foreign Courts*, p. 155.
7. Nicholson, *Sir Arthur Nicholson*, p. 245.
8. Buchanan, *Diplomacy and Foreign Courts*, p. 141.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 145.
10. Rockhill diary, November 25, 1909. Rockhill Papers.
11. I have drawn upon the Wheeler and Buchanan memoirs and the Nicholson biography. Also on Crankshaw, *The Shadow Of The Winter Palace*, and Grew, *Turbulent Years*, Vol.1, pp. 38-60.
12. Quoted in Pringle, *The Life and Times of William Howard Taft*, Vol. 2, p. 678.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 679.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 682.
15. WWR to Hippisley, August 2, 1909. Hippisley Papers.
16. Quoted in Pringle, *The Life and Times of William Howard Taft*, Vol. 2, p. 688.
17. Quoted in Croly, *Willard Straight*, p. 309.
18. Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 320.
19. Rockhill diary, November 10, 1909. Rockhill Papers.
20. Nicholson, *Sir Arthur Nicholson*, p. 216.
21. Knox to WWR, December 27, 1909. Department of State Records.
22. Rockhill diary, December 26, 1909. Rockhill Papers.
23. Zabriskie, *American-Russian Rivalry In The Far East*, p. 163.
24. Reid, *The Manchu Abdication And The Powers*, pp. 83-87.

25. WWR to Fletcher, December 21, 1909. Fletcher Papers.
26. WWR to Secretary of State, January 12, 1910. Department of State Records.
27. Reid, *The Manchu Abdication And The Powers*, p. 85.
28. Williams to WWR, February 8, 1910. Rockhill Papers.
29. Schuyler to WWR, February 15, 1910. Department of State Records.
30. Rockhill to Secretary of State, January 24, 1910. Department of State Records. Quoted in Zabriskie, *American-Russian Rivalry In The Far East*, p. 162.
31. Zabriskie, *American-Russian Rivalry In The Far East*, p. 163.
32. Quoted in Croly, *Willard Straight*, p. 325. pp. 444-57
33. Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 326.
34. Quoted in Zabriskie, *American-Russian Rivalry In The Far East*, p. 160.
35. Roosevelt to Knox, February 8, 1909. Knox Papers.
36. Quoted in Reid, *The Manchu Abdication And The Powers*, p. 182.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 183.
38. Croly, *Willard Straight*, p. 339.
39. Quoted in Zabriskie, *American-Russian Rivalry In The Far East*, p. 171.
40. Quoted in Croly, *Willard Straight*, p. 366.
41. Zabriskie, *American-Russian Rivalry In The Far East*, p. 172.
42. Wheeler, *Dome of Many-Colored Glass*, p. 377.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 378.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 377.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 379.
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Ibid.*, p. 377.
48. Phillips, *Ventures in Diplomacy*, p. 32.
49. Rockhill to Secretary of State, January 17, 1907. Rockhill Personnel File, OPM.
50. Wheeler, *Dome of Many-Colored Glass*, p. 378.
51. *Ibid.*
52. Bland to Straight, March 21, 1910. Bland Papers.
53. WWR to Knox, December 3, 1910. Rockhill Personnel File, OPM. pp. 457-71
54. Huntington-Wilson, *Memoirs of an Ex-Diplomat*, p. 231.
55. WWR to Secretary of State, December 3, 1910. Rockhill Personnel File, OPM.
56. *The New York Times*, January 31, 1911. There is an account of the event by Edith Rockhill's cousin, Mary Perkins Quincy, who was visiting the Rockhills, in Edith Rockhill Family Papers.
57. WWR to Hippisley, December 3, 1910. Hippisley Papers.
58. WWR to Hippisley, July 9, 1911. Hippisley Papers.
59. *The Times Literary Supplement*, May 9, 1912.
60. Text is in the Rockhill Papers.
61. Schiff to Knox, November 20, 1911. Knox Papers.
62. WWR to Secretary of State, January 30, 1911. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1911*, p. 16.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
64. WWR to Hippisley, December 3, 1910; Hippisley to WWR, December 15, 1910; WWR to Hippisley, July 9, 1911. Hippisley Papers.
65. WWR to Bland, November 21, 1910. Bland Papers.
66. Quoted in Croly, *Willard Straight*, pp. 378-90.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 382.
68. Quoted in Croly, *Willard Straight*, p. 401.
69. *Ibid.*
70. Quoted in Zabriskie, *American-Russian Rivalry In The Far East*, p. 176.
71. Zabriskie, *American-Russian Rivalry In The Far East*, pp. 176-8.
72. Rockhill Personnel File, OPM. pp. 471-85
73. WWR to Hippisley, July 9, 1911. Hippisley Papers.
74. Rockhill diary, June 25, 1911. Rockhill Papers.

## Chapter 12

1. WWR to Hippisley, July 9, 1911. Hippisley Papers.
2. See Griscom, *Diplomatically Speaking*, p. 130.
3. Knox to WWR, June 17, 1911. Rockhill Papers.
4. WWR to MacMurray, November 6, 1911. Rockhill Papers.
5. See Mark Hirsch, *William Whitney: Modern Warwick* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1948).
6. Quoted in Croly, *Willard Straight*, p. 412.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.* p. 447.
10. Straight to Bland, March 26, 1913. Bland Papers.
11. WWR to Bland, March 13, 1913. Bland Papers.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Croly, *Willard Straight*, p. 554. Croly also quotes a long, perceptive assessment of Straight's personality by Bland, *Recent Events and Present Policies in China*, pp. 552-3.
14. See Kahn, 'Willard Straight and the Great Game of Empire', p. 335; Pringle, *The Life and Times of William Howard Taft*, Vol. 2, p. 681; Clyde, *Far East*, p. 395.
15. WWR to Morrison, November 2, 1911. Lo Hui-min, *The Correspondence of G.E. Morrison*, Vol. 1, p. 644.

16. Morrison to WWR, January 24, 1912. Lo Hui-min, *The Correspondence of G.E. Morrison*, Vol. 1, p. 707.
17. *The Times*, January 30, 1912.
18. WWR to Bland, February 10, 1912. Bland Papers.
19. For a concise but complete account of all three wars, see Woods, 'First And Second Balkan Wars'.
20. The documents exchanged in the incident are in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1913*, pp. 1310-1339.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 1316.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 1323.
23. C.W. Eliot to Tang Shao-yi, May 1, 1912. Lo Hui-min, *The Correspondence of G.E. Morrison*, Vol. 2, p. 24.
24. WWR to Hippisley, October 6, 1912. WWR refers to an offer made by Morrison, apparently before the Eliot visit.
25. Morrison to WWR, May 10, 1912. Lo Hui-min, *The Correspondence of G.E. Morrison*, Vol. 1, p. 805, note 1.
26. WWR to Morrison, June 2, 1912. *Ibid.*, p. 805.
27. *Ibid.*
28. Morrison to WWR, August 26, 1905. Lo Hui-min, *The Correspondence of G.E. Morrison*, Vol. 1, p. 342.
29. *The New York Times*, August 13, 1912.
30. WWR to Hippisley, November 10, 1912. Hippisley Papers.
31. WWR to Hippisley, May 6, 1913. Hippisley Papers.
32. Daisy's letters about meeting and becoming engaged to Gilbert von Scheditz are in the Rockhill Papers.
33. *The New York Times*, May 5, 1913. pp. 498-509
34. Quoted in 'Deming-Perkins Family Memorial,' Edith Rockhill Papers.
35. The decoration is on display at the Litchfield Historical Society.
36. *The New York Times*, August 9, 1913.
37. Bryan to WWR, August 26, 1913. Rockhill Personnel File, OPM.
38. Stuart, *The Department of State*, pp. 226-9.
39. WWR to Morrison, August 31, 1913. Lo Hui-min, *The Correspondence of G.E. Morrison*, Vol. 2, p. 213.
40. WWR to Bland, October 1, 1913. Bland Papers.
41. Rockhill diary, October 26, 1913. Rockhill Papers.
42. *Ibid.*, November 25, 1913.
3. Li Chien-nung, *Political History of China, 1840-1928*, p. 290.
4. Rockhill, 'Conditions in China in 1914 as Viewed from Peking', p. 143.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
6. For an assessment of Yuan Shih-kai's personality and character, see Young, 'Politics In The Aftermath Of Revolution', pp. 225-8.
7. Bland, *Recent Events*, p. 85.
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19. WWR to Yuan Shih-kai, May 7, 1914. Rockhill Papers.
20. Sammons to Reinsch, May 14, 1914. Department of State Records.
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27. Straight to WWR, October 13, 1914. Rockhill Papers.
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29. *Journal of the American Asiatic Association*, December, 1914, p. 324.
30. Straight to Fletcher, December 22, 1914. Fletcher Papers.
31. Foster, 'The Death and Services Of William Woodville Rockhill', p. 198.
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