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The Senate and the League of Nations, by Henry Cabot Lodge

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Senate and the League of Nations. By Henry Cabot Lodge. Pp. 424. New York, Scribners. Price \$4.00.

The above title is somewhat of a misnomer. The title should be "Lodge versus Wilson". The first chapter on the "Beginning of the Wilson Administration," etc., is an attempt to show that Senator Lodge's earlier relations with President Wilson were friendly. He then proceeds to indicate in successive chapters on "Mexico," "The Lusitania," etc., how he gradually came to distrust the President. He insists repeatedly that he never had any personal hostility to Wilson. "Methinks he doth protest too much."

The book is essentially a defense of Henry Cabot Lodge and an attack on Woodrow Wilson. Apart from two chapters on "The League of Nations" and "The League in the Senate," there is very little that can be regarded as real contributions to our knowledge of the great debate. Chapter X constitutes a convenient reference for the Lodge Reservations. There are nearly two hundred pages of appendices—almost as much as the text—of which the White House conference of August 19, 1919 consumes eighty pages. With the exception of several of Senator Lodge's own speeches, most of the matter published by way of appendix is readily accessible elsewhere and the space might well have been devoted to a summary or an analysis of the Senate debate.

If this volume contributes little to our historical or political knowledge, it does, however, throw considerable light on psychology—the psychology of Mr. Lodge.

This persistent, mean-spirited attempt to expose Wilson's shortcomings and impugn his motives throws a lurid light on Lodge's own petty weaknesses and pitiable state of mind, so that one is tempted to exclaim: "Oh, shades of Henry Adams and Theodore Roosevelt! What do you think of your former friend, Henry Cabot Lodge?"

The most amusing illustration of Lodge's mode of attack occurs on pp. 220-221. It appears that Mr. Wilson was unquestionably a man of ability, but he was not a scholar in the true sense of the term. This is shown by the fact that the Senator has noticed but one classical allusion in any of Wilson's writings or speeches; and an examination of this sole allusion reveals the horrifying fact that, according to Wilson, "Hercules needed the touch of mother earth;" whereas every school boy knows that the reference should be to Antæus. The delicious point Senator Lodge makes is that "it seems incredible that Mr. Wilson should have made a blunder of this sort, which not only would be impossible to a scholar but, one would think, impossible to an education man."

It also appears that, unlike Senator Lodge, Mr. Wilson rarely makes a literary quotation. This would seem to indicate that he was not a widely-read man. He was not without a sense of humor, but not "sufficient to give him assurance of not mistaking his own relation to the universe. He had, however, a very keen sense of what was for his own political interest." Mr. Wilson was a "master of the historical use of idealism," and had a "selection of phrases which he used very skilfully." He was "extremely practical and always had in view some material and definite purposes which would result, if successful, possibly in benefit to the world, certainly in benefit to himself."

It can hardly be said that this work will enhance Senator Lodge's reputation or place him in a more favorable light in the eyes of the historian or of posterity.

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