

Politicking in Acid

“Henry Cabot Lodge,” by John A. Garraty (Alfred A. Knopf, 431 pp. \$6), a dispassionate biography of the chief architect of American isolationism after World War I, draws heavily on heretofore unavailable material. Professor George E. Mowry of the University of California at Los Angeles, who reviews it here, is the author of “Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement.”

By George E. Mowry

SINCE his death in 1924 Henry Cabot Lodge has been connected in the public memory almost totally with his defeat of the Treaties of Versailles and Woodrow Wilson's League of Nations. A longtime member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and after 1918 its chairman, perhaps no man throughout the first quarter of the twentieth century had more of a sustained impact upon American foreign policy. Together with such as Theodore Roosevelt, John Hay, and Elihu Root, Lodge was a sizable force in foreign policy during the McKinley and Roosevelt Administrations, when so many dominating principles of empire and foreign relations were revised. Lodge refused to become Taft's Secretary of State in 1909; he substantially broadened the scope of the Monroe Doctrine in the corollary that still bears his name; he was seriously mentioned for the Republican Presidential nomination in 1916, and four years later he was one of the tiny group of politicians who were responsible for the nomination of Warren G. Harding.

So bitterly personal was that struggle between Lodge and Wilson, so partisan the political relations between Republicans and Democrats, and so important the results for later events, that few biographers have approached the subject with any real degree of objectivity. A critical and balanced biography of Woodrow Wilson has still to be written, although Arthur Link's fine study of Wilson's earlier years gives a full promise for one in the future. The same could be

said until recently for Henry Cabot Lodge. The biographies by Bishop William Lawrence and Charles S. Groves, appearing a year after Lodge's death, are both very brief and very partial. The one long biography published in 1944 by Karl Schriftgiesser is, on the other hand, written from the viewpoint of a liberal and an internationalist, and is very hostile. All three works, moreover, suffered from the unavailability of the Lodge manuscripts. Opened to scholars some years ago, and now unfortunately closed again, these manuscripts have been thoroughly used by John A. Garraty for his “Henry Cabot Lodge.”

Professor Garraty's study probably will not be liked by either the rabid pro-Lodgeites or the more zealous Wilsonians—which is to say that it is an honest, scholarly attempt to get at the truth of an exceedingly complex man in an even more complex situation. One of the most interesting aspects of the chapters on the League fight are the long and valuable comments of Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., taking issue with the author about

his grandfather. In one notable footnote continuing through two and one-half pages, Ambassador Lodge, at the request of Mr. Garraty, has set down a comparison between his grandfather's views on the organization of peace in 1918 and the current ideas on this subject as expressed mainly in the United Nations Charter. The resulting principles are very close. Yet this reviewer would like to point out, as Professor Garraty modestly has not, that the situations in 1918 and 1946 were not identical and that perhaps the more unified world of 1918 had a much better chance for a powerfully ordered world peace than did the chaotic and divided civilization of 1946.

TO DEVOTE so much space to the League issue is unfair to Professor Garraty's excellent book, for he has not neglected the other important aspects of Lodge's career. But here it would seem that Mr. Garraty has undervalued Lodge's importance to American foreign politics and overvalued Lodge the person. Henry Cabot Lodge was one of the best informed statesmen of his time, he was an excellent parliamentarian, and he brought to bear on foreign questions a mind that was at once razor sharp and devoid of much of the moral cant that was so typical of the age. If American foreign policy has been errant, as George F. Kennan suggests, because it has so often been directed toward impossible moral goals, that was not the fault of Henry Cabot Lodge.

Yet when all of this is said, Lodge never made the contributions he should have made, largely because of Lodge the person. He was opportunistic, selfish, jealous, condescending, supercilious, and could never resist calling his opponent's spade a dirty shovel. Small wonder that except for Roosevelt and Root, most of his colleagues of both parties disliked him, and many distrusted him. Mr. Garraty suggests most of these qualities, but he does not emphasize their important relationship to Lodge's political career. Perhaps that would have been easier had the author used the wealth of manuscript material in the collections of Lodge's contemporaries. Like so many biographers, Mr. Garraty has relied almost entirely upon the manuscripts of his subject. And, as in the writing of diplomatic history from the archives of one country alone, this process gives a one-dimensional focus that often distorts the approach to truth.



The Sargent portrait of Henry Cabot Lodge.



Stanley Baldwin with his wife and daughter. "The tree blossomed."

The Old Master of Commons

"Stanley Baldwin," by G. M. Young (*British Book Centre*, 266 pp. \$4.50), is an "authorized biography" of the British Prime Minister from 1933 to 1937. Here it is reviewed by Lindsay Rogers, professor of public law at Columbia.

By Lindsay Rogers

THEY HATE ME SO, wrote Stanley Baldwin in 1940 after the fall of France, and he stayed away from London because the police feared that his appearance there would cause a hostile demonstration. Yet three years before, at the coronation of George VI, the then Prime Minister "almost divided the cheering with the royal pair themselves." The change of opinion had come about because of the belief that Baldwin, as Prime Minister, failed from 1933 to 1937 to educate the British electorate on the necessity of rearmament and that he even kept from Parliament full information on the extent to which Hitler had been successful in substituting guns and planes for butter.

G. M. Young and Lord Baldwin were friends and the latter asked "somewhat languidly" whether the former would care to write his Life. Mr. Young agreed, and it occasionally appears that he may have done so in a "languid" fashion as well. The result is an "authorized life," but the opposite of the conventional and frequently dull Life and Letters of a

British Statesman. In some subjects Baldwin took no interest at all. When the cabinet discussed foreign affairs he would say, "Wake me up when you have finished that," and try to get a nap. He kept no diary, rarely wrote a letter on politics, and circulated no memoranda to his colleagues. Sir Winston Churchill could not have written his magnificent volumes on two world wars if he had been so taciturn vis-à-vis his secretaries, his colleagues, and potentates and princes.

This life is partly Boswellian in character, for Mr. Young spent extended periods with Baldwin when he lived in retirement. Space is apportioned rather loosely. There are only nine pages on Baldwin before he entered Parliament in 1908, at the age of forty-one, and proceeded to demonstrate—although not until the end of the war—that he would be an exception to Wilberforce's rule that men did not succeed in the House of Commons unless they entered it before they were thirty.

Not long ago *The Times Literary Supplement* quoted Sir Harold Nicolson (who wrote lives of Dwight Morrow and George V) as saying that a good biography should encourage people "to believe that man's mind is in truth unconquerable and that character can triumph over the most hostile circumstances, provided only that it remain true to itself." By this test Mr. Young's biography is not a good one. Few "authorized" authors have been so harsh on their subjects. Considering the place that Baldwin

took in the public eye and the fact that he had the trust and affection of a whole people, Mr. Young thinks that at the time of the general election in 1935 the Prime Minister should have said to himself: "Make the sacrifice, resign. Tell the world that the task to which you set your hand is accomplished; that you are a man of peace and that we are entering on a Passage Perilous where other gifts are needed. You will startle the world; you will dismay the country. But that dismay is the shock they need. The most frantic pacifist never called you a warmonger, and if you released from office, discharged from party, say 'Arm', even pacifists will listen."

But in one respect Baldwin did Great Britain a great service and Mr. Young does not overemphasize its importance. In 1924 and again in 1929 Baldwin wanted Labour to form minority governments to prepare them for the time when they would have a majority in the House of Commons. Thus, a good many Labour ministers had had ministerial experience before Mr. Attlee formed his Cabinet in 1945. And Baldwin had prepared the Conservative Party to oppose but not to be irreconcilable. Of the Prime Minister one of his supporters cruelly said, "If he is a Gladstonian Liberal, let him lead the Liberals. If he is a Socialist, Labour would no doubt be glad to have him. But he cannot lead the Conservatives as a mixture of both." That is just what Baldwin did and he prevented the two great British parties from turning into Guelphs and Ghibellines.

To many readers it will come as a surprise to learn that Baldwin took first rank as an orator. Mr. Young justifies this high opinion by many quotations from speeches. Given the fact of Baldwin's eloquence, it is fortunate that the pages which are his biographer's own do not present a sharp contrast. On the other hand, it is unfortunate that Mr. Young makes his debut to the generality of American readers with this biography. He is an accomplished historian and essayist—sometimes a little precious, but urbane, felicitous and literate. His "Gibbon" and "Charles I and Cromwell" are admirable pieces of work. This biography is not without admirable qualities, but it leaves a good many questions unanswered. Lord Beaverbrook was wrong when he said that Baldwin was not "of prime ministerial timber." The tree blossomed—when he caused the breakup of Lloyd George's coalition in 1922, in the preparations of the General Strike of 1926, and in the abdication crisis. The trouble was that sometimes the tree seemed to be dead.