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POLITICAL NOTES

Our Present Critic

Edward Mandell House of Austin, Texas, (Colonel by the grace of a former Governor of that state, who made him his aide-de-camp without asking permission) sailed for Europe a few days ago. Shortly after his departure, *Foreign Affairs*, the excellent quarterly published by the Council on Foreign Relations, Inc., an organization connected with the Williamstown Institute of Politics, in the interests of international understanding, published an article under his name, entitled *The Running Sands*.

Dealing with the relationship of America and Europe and what might have been had this country not voltefaced from the League, the article exhibited some interesting sidelights on Mr. House's late intimacy with Woodrow Wilson.

The article said in part: "As far as his approach (President Wilson with the League) to the Senate was concerned, in my judgment, the President's purpose was impeccable but his manner unfortunate. . . . He might have been a little less yielding at Paris and a little more yielding at Washington if he had realized that the situation was no longer wholly in his hands. . . . On the other hand the result would probably have been the same, for the Senate were plainly waiting to deal him a mortal blow. . . . The United States, after having risen to heights of courage and idealism in its entry and prosecution of the War, has gone to the opposite extreme in the making of peace. For taking this course history will probably be even less sparing of us than our present-day critics. . . . The League is a God-sent haven for such states as Ireland."

Of the Ruhr: "Had Governor Cox been elected President in 1920, the French would not be in the Ruhr in 1923. . . . The real cause (of the controversy) is the fear of Frenchmen that when Germany is in condition to pay she will also be in condition to discontinue payment and, should it suit her plans, to invade France again."

Colonel House



Leaving these trenchant remarks behind him, "the sphinx in the soft felt hat" departed. Colonel House, although a keen observer, does not often set down his observations, especially about men. He might well be called a Boswell without a pen. In his youth, according to the well known story in the *Mirrors of Washington*, he went to Hopkins School in New Haven, intending to enter Yale. But when his friend Morton (son of the Democratic Governor of Indiana) failed to pass the entrance examinations for Yale, young House followed his friend to Cornell.

At the Baltimore Convention in 1912, House made friends with Wilson. Later he came into the limelight with Wilson and departed from it with Wilson, although their intimacy ended some time earlier over the question of Shantung. House in his eagerness to please all parties at the Peace Conference was willing to give Shantung to Japan.

It is not entirely unfair to call Mr. House a Boswell. He has a very kindly nature and a genuine liking for men—especially great men. And he has always shone by reflected light. Following Wilson's retirement, House, too, went into obscurity.

On May 18 of last year he sailed for Europe to study political conditions. He studied "in France, Switzerland and England." On August 28 Lloyd George told him at breakfast that Great Britain would pay her debts to the United States. On September 15 Colonel House arrived back in Boston.

He next engineered Clemenceau's *Tour of the Hebrides*—the trip of the ex-Premier of France to America in defense of the League. House cabled Clemenceau before the latter sailed from France that it would be no use to discuss the League. Clemenceau cabled back that there would be no use in coming unless he discussed the League. So Clemenceau came on his own terms but placed his trip entirely in the hands of Colonel House.