

FOREWORD

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My acquaintance with Munroe Smith began in 1882 when as a student in the Law School and the newly established School of Political Science at Columbia, I heard his lectures on Roman Law. Later on, in 1883, I was appointed lecturer on Administrative Law in the new School of Political Science and from that time on until 1913 was thrown into almost daily contact with him. The members of the faculty of the School were all comparatively, some very, young men. We all were enthusiastic in our endeavors to make the new experiment a success, and to no one more than Munroe Smith belongs the credit for the reputation and influence which subsequently attached to the School.

One of the ventures which we entered upon was the Political Science Quarterly. This journal was started in 1886. It was agreed by all of us that Munroe Smith was the man who should become Managing Editor. And no happier choice could possibly have been made. The accurate scholarship and finish of literary expression which characterized even his college years had become emphasized as he had grown older. Indeed his desire that everything that was published in the Quarterly should be both correct and properly expressed was so great that he gave of his time without stint to attain the only result with which he would be satisfied. Yet withal he was so tactful and kindly in his criticism that anyone who had the benefit of his suggestions could not help feeling that a favor had been conferred upon him, and was far from having any of that resentment which so commonly attaches to criticism. I was one of those who frequently had the benefit of his suggestions. I owe him a debt which I never repaid, and as I look back on our life together

at Columbia I can never recall an instance when I felt anything but gratitude to him although in not a few cases his criticism was anything but superficial.

Munroe Smith's intellectual attitude was not exclusively critical. He was himself a productive and accurate scholar. But the years which he devoted to the editorship of the *Political Science Quarterly* — years of tireless and conscientious work which came at a time when his productive capacity was at its greatest — seriously handicapped him in his productive work.

Munroe Smith wrote a number of books, principal among which were "Bismarck and German Unity," "Out of Their Own Mouths," and "Militarism and Statecraft." He studied in Germany just after the Franco Prussian War when Bismarck's figure towered over all Europe. No wonder that such a character made a deep impression upon the young American student. He read almost everything that was written about Bismarck. It is not surprising that his contribution to an understanding of Bismarck's life and work became almost a classic in its field. The "Militarism and Statecraft" was in large measure the attempt to show how Bismarck would have acted in the 1914 crisis. The conclusion reached is aptly set forth in the title.

But Munroe Smith's main contributions to the studies which he loved are to be found in the articles which he wrote. Many of them are devoted to comparatively small portions of a large subject. His knowledge was encyclopedic, but he had no ambitions to thresh old straw. Indeed his methods of work were inconsistent with the production of *magna opera*, certainly in the sense of size. His desire for absolute accuracy made it impossible for him to place great reliance on the conclusions of others. His insistence on perfection made it necessary for him to go over and over again what he had written in the hope of improving what he had done. I remember he told me once that every time he sat down to write a little critical devil perched upon his shoulder and kept insisting upon changes. Another time he said that he

thought no one could attain perfection in prose unless he also wrote verse, that the habit developed in writing verse of searching for the right word was invaluable when the writing of prose began. Munroe Smith did himself write verse although little of his verse has been published.

In closing this very inadequate sketch of Munroe Smith I can not refrain from saying how much his death affected me. Thirty or more years of intimate companionship, the love of a student for a teacher to whom a great debt has remained unpaid, the admiration of a colleague for work which is now finished all make it a privilege as well as a duty to record in this poor way my impressions of his life and his work, as well as my affection for a man of remarkable sincerity, of unusual kindness, and of great ability. He has gone, it is true, but the work which he did will go on. He not merely contributed to the advancement of his chosen subject. He played as well an important part in the reorganization of higher education in the United States which began fifty years ago.

