

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AT WORK

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The League of Nations at work by Arthur Sweetser

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THE
LEAGUE OF NATIONS
AT WORK

BY
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Of the American Peace Commission and the Provisional
Secretariat of the League of Nations

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PREFACE

I feel it is owed to those who chance to read this little book to preface it with a few personal words. For in a subject so controversial as the League of Nations the public has the right to know with what purpose and with what authority a writer presumes to ask its attention.

It so happens that I have had access to facts which I believe throw an entirely different interpretation upon the League than that almost universally held, as I saw the League at birth in Paris when a member of the American Peace Commission; saw it under development in London as a member of the Provisional Secretariat; and finally saw it in its first world conference in Washington as a member of the staff of the International Labor Conference.

The genesis of this little book lay in a series of articles written for the *New York Evening Post* at that very extraordinary moment when nine Americans out of every ten took it for granted

that because the United States had failed to ratify the Treaty the League did not exist. To those who knew the facts it appeared not only unwise but perhaps positively dangerous for a democracy so intelligent and so vitally concerned with world affairs as the United States to overlook entirely a federation of almost all the other nations of the world.

And I am convinced that almost no one, either friend or foe, understands what the League actually is. Its friends are tempted to exaggerate it as a panacea for all world ills; its enemies to misrepresent it as a superstate. It is in fact neither, but on the contrary a new link in the chain of human relationships made imperatively necessary by the annihilation of distance as a barrier between states.

It has been a constant effort all through the preparation of these pages to present only plain, hard, concrete facts, in the conviction that the average busy reader is satiated with the flood of generalities about the League and the brotherhood of man. Opposed to this is a very earnest and almost universal desire to know the true facts as they exist today.

This little book comes from a friend of and a believer in the League. I cannot be blind, therefore, to the fact that it may be partial. I sincerely hope not, for I have struggled constantly against that danger. If I have failed, I crave indulgence on the ground of over-zealousness stimulated first by warmth of feeling because a subject so vital to America is so little understood and so grossly misrepresented, and second because there cannot be obliterated from the background of my mind even the slight glimpses of war as I happened to see it during Von Kluck's dash on Paris in those so quickly forgotten days of 1914.

ARTHUR SWEETSER.