

POEMS AND DRAMAS  
OF  
GEORGE CABOT LODGE

VOLUME I



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## INTRODUCTION

My intimate friendship with George Cabot Lodge lasted for a quarter of a century. It began when I first saw him, a handsome, striking-looking boy, of great promise, at Nahant in the Spring of 1884; it did not end when I last saw him, on the 4th of March, 1909, at Washington, when he came through the blizzard to say good-bye. He was then in the still vigorously growing maturity of his powers, in the midst of a performance which more than made good his early promise and which was itself the promise of performance greater still.

Of all the men with whom I have been intimately thrown he was the man to whom I would apply the rare name of genius. He was an extraordinary student and scholar; he walked forever through the arch of the past experience of all the great minds of the ages. Any language which he cared to study was his, and he studied every language which held anything he wished. I have never met another man with so thorough and intimate a knowledge of so many great literatures, nor another man who so revelled in enjoyment of the best that he read. He never read for any reason except to find out something he wished to know, or, far more frequently, to gratify his wonderful love,

his passion, for high thought finely expressed. A great poem, a great passage in prose, kindled his soul like a flame. Yet he was unaffectedly modest about the well-nigh infinitely wide knowledge, as deep as it was wide, in which his being was steeped. It seemed as if he did not realize how very much he knew. He never made any show of it; unless it came out incidentally and naturally no one ever knew of it; indeed he was really humble-minded in the eager simplicity with which he sought to learn from others who had not even a small fraction of his hoarded wealth of fact and thought.

He was more than a book-man. He loved his friends, he loved the life of human interest, and the throbbing pulse-beat of cities. He loved also the breath of the open; and he knew the joy which comes in the strife of hardy adventure. As a boy and young man he was a bold and good rider; he was equally at home hunting alone on the vast Western plains, and, also alone, wild fowl shooting in the dangerous winter seas off the New England coast. His combination of idealism and bodily prowess made it inevitable that he should strain every nerve to get into the Spanish War. He came of fighting stock; his forefathers had fought in every great American War; kinsfolk of his were to be in this one; and he simply could not stay out. He went into the Navy as an ensign and served as captain of a guncrew. He made an admirable officer,

training his men with unwearied care, and handling them with cool readiness under fire. He belonged to the gallant brotherhood of the men who have written and fought, the brotherhood whose foremost figures number, among many, many others, Cervantes at Lepanto, Sydney in the Low Countries, Koerner, the man of sword and song, in the war for German freedom. But here again what young Lodge did seemed to him so natural that, so far as his friends could tell, he never even thought of it afterwards. It was to him a matter of course that he should serve when his country called, just as a generation before young Shaw and young Lowell went forth "to dare, and do, and die at need" when the nation girded her loins for triumph or ruin.

To him was given the greatest of all blessings, the love of wife and of happy children; and his delight in the house where he was husband and father in no way dimmed his delight in the house where he was son. He cared little for the perfunctory part of social life; but no man was ever more beloved by his friends, by the men and women to whom his soul was open.

It is not my province to more than touch on his writings. His first volume of poems showed extraordinary strength and originality, and an extraordinary wealth of thought and diction. Indeed at first there was almost too great strength and wealth; the depth and wide play of the thought were obscured by the

very brilliance of the way in which it was set forth. But with each succeeding volume his mastery over his own strength grew. In his last volume, "The Soul's Inheritance," he had fairly begun to come into his own. He had begun to find adequate expression for the teeming wealth of his mind, for his surging, thronging passions, for "the high and haughty yearning" that burned within his soul. He cared only to do his very best; he demanded only the right to be measured by the loftiest standards, to be judged by the keenest and most serene minds; he could be swayed from the course he had marked out as little by love of general approval as by love of gain itself, — and in his case this is the strongest statement that can be made, for no man lived more incapable of mixing sordid alloy with the gold of his work.

In abounding vigor, his task well begun and stretching far ahead, his veins thrilling with eager desire, his eyes fronting the future with dauntless and confident hope, he stood on life's crest; and then death smote him, lamentable, untimely.

He lived detachèd days;  
He servèd not for praise;  
For gold  
He was not sold;

Deaf was he to world's tongue;  
He scornèd for his song  
The loud  
Shouts of the crowd.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.