

**THE POLICY OF ENGLAND AND FRANCE
IN REFERENCE TO THE ANNEXATION OF
TEXAS, CHAPTER XVIII OF THE
ANNEXATION OF TEXAS, PP. 382-413,
ACCOUNT OF THE SOURCES PP. 471-476**

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IN REFERENCE TO

THE ANNEXATION OF TEXAS

CHAPTER XVIII OF THE ANNEXATION OF TEXAS

BY

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TO THE MEMORY OF

DR. GEORGE PIERCE GARRISON

AND TO

ALL THOSE OTHER SCHOLARS WHOSE INVESTIGATIONS HAVE
THROWN LIGHT UPON THE HISTORY OF TEXAS

THIS VOLUME IS WITH GREAT RESPECT

INSCRIBED

PREFACE.

The annexation of Texas, it can justly be said, was a very interesting, important, complicated and critical affair. It involved issues and consequences of no little moment in our domestic politics. It gave us an area greater than England and France together, with a port that ranks very near the head of our list, and paved the way for the acquisition of San Francisco and our far Southwest. It led to our greatest and most brilliant foreign war. It extinguished a nation that might have become a strong and unfriendly rival and might have caused the disruption of the Union. It removed an excellent opportunity for certain leading European powers to interpose in the affairs of this continent and in particular to embarrass the development of the United States. It presented a field of battle on which our diplomats and those of England, France, Mexico and Texas waged a long and intricate struggle with all their skill and with a full determination to succeed; and it brought these five nations to the verge of war. Such an episode would appear to merit a detailed study, especially since very different opinions regarding it still prevail; and as the author, while gathering data for a history of our Mexican War, found many essential materials for a thorough treatment of the subject, he has felt under obligation to complete and present them.

As the footnotes indicate, the monograph is based almost exclusively (with the exception of certain preliminary matters) on first-hand sources, though all previous works of any importance on the subject have been fully examined. Use has been made of substantially all the diplomatic papers—American, British, French, Mexican and Texan—bearing upon the question, and also, as may be seen by the account of the Sources in the Appendix, a rather large amount of other valuable material both manuscript and printed, such as executive and legislative documents, letters, speeches, diaries and periodicals. All discoverable sources of information, indeed, have been examined. In this way a closer approach to completeness has been attainable, and at the same time it has been possible to avoid errors into which a writer depending upon a portion of the data would not infrequently fall without even suspecting danger.

Secondly, by making a painstaking study of public opinion in the countries chiefly concerned it has been feasible to ascertain the causes which controlled or influenced official action in certain important cases. Thirdly, attention has been paid to a number of subsidiary topics which throw a strong light upon the subject. Such are the British designs with reference to slavery in Texas and the United States, the political condition of northern Mexico at this period, the possibilities before Texas as an independent nation, the danger to the United States involved in her permanent nationality, the scheme of a new confederacy, the status and influence of the annexation issue in the politics of this country, and several others. Fourthly, the desire has been to avoid leaving the matter, as it is easy to do when using first-hand sources, in such a condition that the reader could not see the forest for the trees. And finally a strong and long-continued effort has been made to secure not only completeness but accuracy. Of course perfection has not been reached, however, and it is hoped that all mistakes may be pointed out. The truth of history is surely more important than a writer's dream of an impossible inerrancy, and serious criticism, based upon knowledge, is co-operation of a most useful kind.

Those who were pleased to commend the style of the author's latest work, *Our Struggle for the Fourteenth Colony*, may feel surprised that the present volume is so different. It seems to him clear, however, that one's manner of writing should depend on one's subject and object. In the former case his dominant theme was the early, impulsive stage of a popular revolution in the name of Liberty, and his principal business was to recount the out-door proceedings—often peculiarly dramatic and exciting—of ardent and frequently somewhat crude young men; whereas at present his concern is with diplomats and statesmen pursuing with dignity and deliberation their profoundly studied lines of policy. The earlier book, in order to make the extraordinary facts entirely comprehensible to minds quite unfamiliar with such a state of things, endeavored to place its readers in the thick of events and impart in some degree a sense of the agitation and enthusiasm of the time, to which end a vivid and rather highly colored style, answering to the character of the persons and events presented, seemed appropriate and even necessary; but now one is occupied with complicated intellectual efforts of a high order, which are best viewed from an

elevation and a distance; and these require only to be made known as clearly, calmly and unobtrusively as possible.

The footnotes cover all the statements of the text except a few matters of common knowledge, but of course a fact once proved is not proved again. To some readers the number of references will seem unnecessarily great, and so they appear to the author himself. But as almost every foot of the ground is controversial, the percentage that could safely be omitted is rather small, and the saving would hardly justify the abandonment of a complete and logical system for one of the opposite character. In order not to fill the page with annoying figures, the references—standing in the order of the statements they support—are grouped by paragraphs, and an indication of the bearing of the reference is given when this is not obvious. Naturally in some cases a citation confirms more than a single sentence, and it should be remembered, too, that for reasons of convenience the first page of a document is the one specified unless there is a particular occasion for doing otherwise. To carry such a body of figures with perfect accuracy through the processes of compiling, revising, copying and printing is extremely difficult, especially as the author's attention is liable to be diverted momentarily from the mathematics to the meaning of the citation; but it can be said that unsparing pains have been taken to ensure correctness, and that a trained historical worker has gone over the entire work of verification independently.

While engaged on this investigation at the Public Record Office, London, the author was so fortunate as to have for neighbor Dr. Ephraim Douglass Adams, the fruit of whose researches, covering to a small extent the same ground as this volume, has recently been offered to the public. As it fell to the present writer in another place to view that monograph, *British Interests and Activities in Texas*, in the manner which it invited by describing itself as "purely technical," he will only say here—though it does not need to be said—that anything coming from such a source deserves very careful attention, and express the hope that all concerned with Texan history will read the book. One cannot help wishing that Professor Adams's investigations had extended to the Texan, Mexican and American archives. Mention must also be made of an interesting and valuable work by Dr. Jesse S. Reeves, entitled *American Diplomacy under Tyler and Polk*, based largely on documents which he as well as the present writer was permitted to examine at the State