

**THE DIPLOMACY OF
THE REVOLUTION: AN
HISTORICAL STUDY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649562671

The Diplomacy of the Revolution: An Historical Study by William Henry Trescot

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WILLIAM HENRY TRESHOT

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BY
WILLIAM HENRY TRESCOT.

NEW YORK:
D. APPLETON & CO., 200 BROADWAY.
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TO THE
HONORABLE RICHARD RUSH.

DEAR SIR—

I THINK I can fairly hold you somewhat responsible for the venture I make in publishing the following pages, and will not, therefore, apologize for asking you to resume your old functions, and present me at the Court of that Public Opinion which is certainly, in our day, the most powerful of sovereigns. At any rate, I am sure there is no one to whom I could with more propriety dedicate this volume, than to one of whom it has been said eloquently, but not extravagantly, by an eminent Senator, that in the course of an unusually long and important diplomatic career he "never said a word that was improper, nor betrayed a thought that might peril his country's fortune."

I know, moreover, that nowhere could I find a juster appreciation of my motive, nor a kinder criticism of my imperfect performance. Permit me then, my dear sir, to inscribe your name here, in acknowledgment of that valuable and pleasant intercourse which warrants me, I trust, in signing myself,

Truly and respectfully, your friend,

WILLIAM HENRY TRESCOT.

P R E F A C E.

THIS volume is literally what it pretends to be—an Historical Essay, not a History. My object has been, at a time when the influence of our foreign policy is beginning to govern largely the fortunes of the country, to ask attention to the spirit and character of those negotiations which secured us a place in the world. I have stated facts with care, and drawn conclusions with caution; but the general impression of these pages must of course justify itself.

The best of diplomatic histories is undoubtedly the record of the negotiations themselves, but as the mere diplomatic correspondence of the Revolution—that is, the communications of the foreign ministers of the United States with Congress—takes up twelve goodly octavo volumes, besides requiring for its comprehension a wide field of contemporary history, it is certain that very few, whatever interest might be felt on the subject, would have either time or inclination to master their own conclusions. This is, therefore, simply an effort to render more familiar to the public mind an important and interesting period of the country's history. It would have been easy to have made a larger book: the labor of this, such as it is, has been to condense its material into the fewest possible pages.

In concluding, I must express my great obligations to Mr.

Sparks, the eminent president of the University of Cambridge, for the kindness with which he allowed me to consult his invaluable MS. collection of documents relating to the early diplomatic history of the United States. I only wish that I felt any confidence that I had acknowledged my obligations, by using them to the most advantage for a subject, which I would be glad if this volume would provoke him to rescue from the hands of so incompetent a guardian as myself.

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