



Prefatory Note

In historic value this volume is equal to, if it does not surpass, any one of the series which has preceded it. It comprises the eight years of our history from March 4, 1841, to March 4, 1849, and includes the four years' term of Harrison and Tyler and also the term of James K. Polk. During the first half of this period the death of President Harrison occurred, when for the first time under the Constitution the Vice-President succeeded to the office of President. As a matter of public interest, several papers relating to the death of President Harrison are inserted. A number of highly interesting vetoes of President Tyler appear, among which are two vetoing bills chartering a United States bank and two vetoing tariff measures. During President Tyler's Administration the protective tariff act of 1842 was passed; the subtreasury law was repealed; the treaty with Great Britain of August 9, 1842, was negotiated, settling the northeastern-boundary controversy, and providing for the final suppression of the African slave trade and for the surrender of fugitive criminals; and acts establishing a uniform system of bankruptcy and providing for the distribution of the sales of the public lands were passed. The treaty of annexation between the United States and the Republic of Texas was negotiated, but was rejected by the Senate.

During the Administration of President Polk Texas was finally annexed to the United States; Texas, Iowa, and Wisconsin were admitted into the Union; the Oregon boundary was settled; the independent-treasury system was reenacted; the Naval Academy was established; acts were passed establishing the Smithsonian Institution and creating the Department of the Interior; the war with Mexico was successfully fought, and the territory known as New Mexico and Upper California was acquired. The acquisition of territory by Mr. Polk's Administration added to the United States California and New Mexico and portions of Colorado, Utah, and Nevada, a territory containing in all 1,193,061 square miles, or over 763,000,000 acres, and constituting a country more

than half as large as all that held by the Republic before he became President. This addition to our domain was the next largest in area ever made. It was exceeded only by the purchase by President Jefferson of the Louisiana Territory, in which was laid so deep the foundation of the country's growth and grandeur. If our country had not already attained that rank by the acquisition of the Louisiana Territory, the further additions made by Mr. Polk's Administration advanced it at once to a continental power of assured strength and boundless promise.

JAMES D. RICHARDSON.

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