THE INTIMATE PAPERS OF
COLONEL HOUSE
VOLUME III
COLONEL HOUSE AND PRESIDENT WILSON IN SEPTEMBER 1917
THE INTIMATE PAPERS OF COLONEL HOUSE

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VOLUME III
INTO THE WORLD WAR
APRIL 1917—JUNE 1918

"The most urgent problem we have to solve is bow...Govern-
ments set at opposite ends of the world can effect the close
co-operation which is undoubtedly necessary if the war is to
be quickly and successfully ended."

SIR WILLIAM WISEMAN TO COLONEL HOUSE, Sept. 26, 1917

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Preface

The two concluding volumes of The Intimate Papers of Colonel House begin with the entrance of the United States into the World War and end with Colonel House's attempt to secure some compromise on the basis of which the Senate might ratify the Versailles Treaty, including the Covenant of the League of Nations. Their central theme is American participation in the war and the Peace Conference, in so far as the papers of Colonel House shed light on the American effort and Wilsonian policies. Readers of the two preceding volumes will remember that Colonel House, although not an office-holder, occupied a special position in relation to Wilson's administration at the time the United States became a belligerent. He had been chosen by the President as his personal representative and sent on three separate missions to the European Governments in 1914 and the two following years. As Wilson's representative, he had come in close contact with European leaders during the period of American neutrality.

It was natural that, during the war, President Wilson should look to House for advice on every matter that touched American relations with the Allies and especially on all problems of war aims. He selected him as chief of the organization for preparing the American case at the Peace Conference, appointed him head of the American War Mission to Europe for the co-ordination of military and industrial efforts, asked him to draft a constitution.
for a league of nations, and again sent him to Europe as American representative on the Supreme War Council when it arranged the armistice with Germany. At the Peace Conference House was Commissioner Plenipotentiary and, because of his intimate personal relations with European statesmen, was constantly used by the President to conduct the most delicate negotiations. During Wilson's absence from Paris and his illness, the President selected him to take his place on the Supreme Council.

In view of the position held by House and the care with which he and his secretary, Miss Denton, preserved all letters and memoranda, it is obvious that his papers, including the diary which he never failed to keep, provide historical material of the utmost value. The reader of these volumes, however, should be especially on his guard against two misconceptions. The papers here published represent a very small proportion of the large collection which Colonel House deposited in the Library of Yale University. If any attempt had been made to reproduce the substance of the numerous and complicated problems which were brought to House's attention—diplomatic, naval, military, economic—and upon which lengthy memoranda were written, the book would have been extended into a whole library of volumes. Exigencies of space have compelled omission of reference to all but the most significant problems. Even in the case of the most vital subjects the extracts from letters, cables, and diary deal largely in generalities. This is partly due to the fact that neither House nor any single individual could himself have gone deeply into the purely technical matters involved in the complex problems of the war; the function of Colonel House was essentially that of a diplomat, seeing that the right people got
together to work out these problems. On the other hand, it has been necessary to omit numerous technical memoran­da which, if published, would effectually disprove the assumption that his work was in any sense superficial.

It is equally important for the reader to remember that, despite the range of House's activities, these volumes are not intended to constitute a history of the American effort in the war. They are not, in fact, published as history, but as the raw material for history. Their purpose is not to convey any definite historical conclusion nor to enforce any historical judgment, but rather to show what Colonel House did and how he came to do it. It is for the historian of the future to determine where he and others were right and where wrong. The papers are presented for what they are worth, unchanged, as they were written. They are pre­sented with emphasis upon House's own point of view, for otherwise they would not be intelligible, but always with the realization that the historian may take another point of view. Furthermore, the reader should bear in mind that these volumes concern Colonel House and are not intended to describe the activities of others except where they happened to touch his own. Colonel House is the central figure in the book, not because of any desire to over-emphasize the importance of the political rôle he played, but simply because the book is based upon his papers. If all those closely connected with the administration of President Wilson would tell the story of their own activities, following the example of Secretary Lansing and Secretary Houston, the scholars who ultimately write the definitive history of the time would find their task greatly facilitated.

C. S.

Yale University,
August 1928.
NOTE OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

EVERY effort has been made to check the accuracy of Colonel House's papers by comparison with those of the statesmen with whom he was in correspondence. Each account of an important conversation recorded in the diary has been laid before those with whom he was in conference wherever they survive, and full opportunity has been given for comment in case of misunderstanding. It has also seemed wise to publish at length the letters and cables of British and French statesmen, whenever they are necessary to an explanation of the nature of House's activities. In these volumes, as in the two preceding, care has been taken to secure complete authority for the publication of every letter and memorandum.

I am deeply indebted to those who, by granting permission for the publication of documents and, in some cases, by adding their own comments, have increased the historical value of the volumes and made possible a complete picture of the work of Colonel House. I take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to Sir William Tyrrell, the Marquess of Reading, the Earl of Balfour, Viscount Grey of Fallodon, Viscount Cecil of Chelwood, Mr. Lloyd George, Sir Eric Drummond, Sir Horace Plunkett, the literary executors of Lord Northcliffe, Sir George Sutton, Mr. Montague Ellis, Sir Campbell Stuart, M. Georges Clemenceau, Ambassador Jusserand, Marshal Pétain, M. André Tardieu, M. André Chéradame, M. Ignace Paderewski, Ambassador Aimaro Sato, Ambassa-
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I am particularly grateful to those who have read and criticized all or parts of the manuscript. Responsibility for the final form of the volumes rests upon my shoulders entirely; but the number of errors and in felicities would have been vastly increased except for the suggestions of the following: Mr. Gordon Auchincloss, Mr. Ackerman, Mr. Bonsal, Dr. Bowman, Mr. Frazier, Mr. Gregory, Mr. Breckinridge Long, Mr. J. J. Lyons, Professor Douglas Johnson, President S. E. Mezes, Mr. David Hunter Miller, Mr. Albert Bigelow Paine, Sir Horace Plunkett, Mr. A. D. Howden Smith, Sir Campbell Stuart, Mr. Henry Wickham Steed, Ambassador Brand Whitlock, Mr. Robert W. Woolley.

To Mr. Andrew Keogh and the authorities of the Yale University Library I am indebted for the care of the
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House Collection, and to Miss Frances B. Denton for invaluable assistance in the arrangement and elucidation of documents. The completion of these volumes would have been impossible except for the untiring labour of Miss Helen M. Reynolds, assistant to the curator of the House Collection, upon whose close familiarity with the documents and judgment in their use I have been constantly dependent both in the construction and the revision of the manuscript. Finally, if there is any merit in the literary form of the book, credit must be assigned to the suggestions and criticism of my wife, who has read and reread every page of the manuscript and proof.

C. S.

Yale University,
August 1928.
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