

> SELECT DOCUMENTS FOR QUEEN ANNE'S REIGN DOWN TO THE UNION WITH SCOTLAND. 1702-7



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SELECTED
AND EDITED BY

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PREFACE

AVING undertaken to lecture on the first years of Queen Anne's reign as a Special Subject for the Cambridge Historical Tripos, I was at once confronted with the fact that nearly all the contemporary authorities which it would be necessary for students to have in their hands, were either out of print, or were on the point of going out of print. Moreover they were widely scattered in a number of different books. The Cambridge University Press has overcome these difficulties by consenting to issue this book of Select Documents. A few transcripts, hitherto unpublished, from the British Museum MSS have been added.

I have made no selections from Burnet's History of his own Time, because it can be found in nearly every College or other Library of any pretension. Moreover, it should be read in extenso for the relative period, to obtain a general view of "how it appeared to a contemporary"; it is less valuable for detailed study as an authority for the facts of Queen Anne's reign. When possible it should be read in those nineteenth-century editions which reproduce at the foot of the page the comments of Dartmouth, Hardwicke, Onslow and Swift.

There is, I think, very little in this volume of selections of which the general drift and import will not be clear to any student of the period who has read such excellent introductions to the subject as Leadam's Political History of England (Longman), vol. IX, chaps. I-V; Atkinson's Marlborough (Heroes of Nations Series); Julian Corbett's England in the Mediterranean, vol. II, chaps. XXVII—XXXII; Hume Brown's History of Scotland, vol. III, chaps. II and III; and Keith Feiling's History of the Tory Party, chaps. XIII—XIV.

The six Sections into which I have divided the documents here printed, naturally keep the domestic history separate from the diplomatic and military-naval operations. But the intimate connection between home and foreign affairs is indicated in Section v, the Marlborough correspondence, which serves as a supplement to Section II (Home Politics) and Section IV (Blenheim).

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Both the Marlborough correspondence here printed and the modern works which I have just mentioned make clear the dependence of the successful conduct of the war on the triumph of the "moderate" or "coalition" policy at home. Viewed in that light, the quarrel between Lords and Commons over the Occasional Conformity Bill appears something more than a passing phase of the ceaseless wrangle of Church and Dissent, Tory and Whig. And the departure of Rochester from office in 1703 and of Nottingham in 1704, leaving Marlborough supreme in the State, appears as something more important than an incident in the rivalry of ambitious noblemen. For on these things depended the carrying out of Marlborough's grand schemes of combined naval, military and diplomatic strategy, to wrest back the control of the world from Louis XIV and his grandson the King of Spain, and to restore the independence of the State system of Europe. For Rochester scarcely wished to see the war carried on with vigour anywhere on land, and Nottingham believed that we should concentrate our military efforts on Spain.

So too the Scottish Union, immensely important and beneficial as it proved to be to both countries in the course of succeeding generations, was passed primarily as a war measure. The immediate object in view was to remove the grave possibility of Scotland declaring the Pretender as King on the death of Anne, even if the demise of the crown should occur in the middle of the war with France.

The struggle to reduce "the exorbitant power of France" was involved in the struggle to maintain the Protestant Succession in the person of Anne, and after her, in the House of Hanover designated to the succession by the Act of Settlement of 1701. Louis XIV, by acknowledging the Pretender as King of England on the death of his father James II in September 1701, had made the English dynastic question one of theissues of the war. Another issue was the right of the English merchants to trade with South America, and with the States of the Mediterranean basin which the new Franco-Spanish Alliance was closing to us. A third was the independence and safety of the Low Countries in particular, and of Europe in general, when the French troops were in actual



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occupation not only of Spain but of Flanders, Italy and Bavaria. A "universal monarchy" seemed on the very point of being set up.

Indeed when Anne came to the throne in 1702 the situation seemed almost desperate. The independence of Europe seemed already lost, and the independence of England, symbolized by the Protestant Succession, did not seem likely to survive. It was saved by the genius of Marlborough and the good sense displayed by Queen Anne and by the English people. The turning-point in the struggle was Blenheim. That battle saved Vienna and central Europe from falling under French control, and broke the prestige of the French arms. The work was completed two years later when Flanders was reconquered at Ramillies, and Italy at Turin, and when the Treaty of Union with Scotland secured the unity of the island on the basis of the Protestant Succession. Simultaneously, the establishment of English sea power in the Mediterranean, symbolized first by the capture and then by the heroic defence of Gibraltar, was a further proof that the young eighteenth century was destined to be controlled by other forces than a supreme French despotic system.

The credit for effecting this great work of deliverance between 1702 and 1706 rests with the "moderates" of English politics—Anne herself, Harley as Parliamentary manager behind the scenes, Godolphin as paymaster, Marlborough as the great executant. It is perhaps good upon the whole that England should be governed by the alternating supremacy of two rival parties. At least it has been found the line of least resistance for carrying on Parliamentary government in normal times. But there are great exceptional cases, as for instance in the crisis of a dangerous foreign war. And such a

case was found in the opening of Anne's reign.

The "moderate" domestic policy of the Marlborough Ministry, bent only on winning the war, had more unqualified support in the House of Lords than in the House of Commons, at least till the general election of 1705. One of the most interesting and most hotly contested constitutional issues of the time was the degree to which the House of Lords could act as a brake upon the House of Commons. In the Lords



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parties were evenly balanced, and on several occasions in the reigns of William, Anne and George I, the Lords checked the partisan action of the Lower House which was alternately strong Whig and strong Tory. This restraining action of the House of Lords came into play early in Anne's reign on the question of the Occasional Conformity Bill (Section 11 below). At any other time the measure might have been passed, as indeed it was passed in 1711. But in 1702-4 it was felt by many who did not disapprove of the principle of the Bill that it was inimical to national unity to do anything to alienate the Dissenters and the city of London at the most dangerous crisis of the war. For that reason the moderate Tories came to join with the Whigs against the strongest provisions of the Bill. And it was in the House of Lords that the "moderates" found their stronghold.

The action of the House of Lords in this and other matters was of great assistance to the Queen and her Ministers early in the reign, when they were endeavouring to lay the restless spirit of faction in order to conduct the war with vigour and success. After the war had been substantially won at the end of the year 1706, the tendency of English Parliamentary life towards the two-party system reasserted itself, and first the Whigs and then the Tories took charge of the later fortunes of Queen Anne. It can hardly be said by the most ardent partisans that either the Whig Ministers of 1708–10 or the Tory Ministers of 1710–14 did so well by the country as the "Marlborough group" between 1702 and 1706.

I acknowledge the kindness of Lord Crawford and of the family of the late Charles Butler in expressing their willingness that I should reprint from the Roxburghe Club text the large quotation from the *Memoirs* of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik. I am similarly grateful to the goodwill of Mr Craster and of the *English Historical Review* in the matter of Lord Orkney's Letter on Ramillies; and to the Secretary and Council of the Royal Historical Society in the matter of the Torrington *Memoirs* on the capture of Gibraltar.

[Students will note the difference between the New Style [N.S.] and Old Style [O.S.] of reckoning dates. Until 1752

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the English at home always used the Old Style, eleven days behind the New Style of Gregory XIII's Calendar which was current in all continental countries except European Russia. Our soldiers in Flanders and Germany sometimes used the Old Style, more often the New. Our sailors on service at sea, as for instance at the taking of Gibraltar, often used the Old Style familiar at home. The clearest method was to use both, and to say that the battle of Blenheim was won on Aug. 2/13 or Aug. 2–13.]

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