

PREFACE.

A NEW WORLD has been discovered, which has been receiving inhabitants from the old, more than three hundred years. A new empire has arisen, which has been a theatre of great actions and stupendous events. That remarkable discovery, those events and actions, can now be accurately ascertained, without recourse to such legends, as have darkened and disfigured the early annals of most nations. But, while local histories of particular portions of America have been written, no attempt has been made to give even the outline of its entire history. To obtain a general knowledge of that history, the scattered materials, which compose it, must be collected, and arranged in the natural and lucid order of time. Without such arrangement, effects would often be placed before causes; contemporary characters and events disjoined; actions, having no relation to each other, confounded; and much of the pleasure and benefit, which History ought to impart, would be lost. If history however, without chronology, is dark and confused; chronology, without history, is dry and insipid. In the projection therefore of this work, preference was given to that species of historical composition, which unites the essential advantages of both.

It has been uniformly my aim to trace facts, as much as possible, to their source. Original authorities therefore, when they could be obtained, have always had preference. Some authors, of this character, wrote in foreign languages; and this circumstance may be an apology for the occasional introduction of passages, that will not be generally understood. While originals possess a spirit, which cannot be infused into a translation, they recite facts with peculiar clearness