

PREFACE.

I SCARCELY recollect how early in life my desire to visit our North American colonies originated; their separation from the mother country was then a comparatively recent event; the war which led to it had been as popular in Great Britain as its results were held at the time to be disastrous to the empire at large; many families who had emigrated from Scotland poor, either dissatisfied with the new state of things in the colonies, or from their invincible love of home, were returning from time to time, to close the evening of a life of industry and frugality in their native land, with the competence it had procured.

These causes combined to keep the colonies and their affairs more or less on the *tapis* in Scotland; and we were accustomed to hear the merits of Washington, Franklin, and other American statesmen of that day, discussed by parties who had known them personally.

A long interval has elapsed since the time to which I allude; the colonies in question have advanced from comparative youth to a vigorous manhood.

In the meantime, finding myself in possession of that leisure which was denied me at an earlier season, and