

PREFACE.

TO MY READERS:

It has been frequently urged upon me, by perhaps too partial friends, that "my long residence of exceeding sixty years in the place," (coming here when it was yet almost in its infancy, when there were yet still living a goodly number of its original settlers, with many of whom, from my familiarity with their language and customs, being descended from the same nationality, I had soon become on intimate terms) gave me facilities not, perhaps, possessed by any other one to the same extent, to prepare, so far as it could be done with the scant materials at command for the purpose, what had long been a *desideratum* not easily supplied, viz., an authentic history of St. Louis during its French and Spanish days, its origin and progress.

In compliance with that oft preferred request, and in furtherance of my own views on the subject, I submit to you, as the result of my long researches and investigations in that field, the following pages, with the simple observation that however deficient they may prove as a literary effort, they will at least possess the merit of authenticity and reliability; and, I flatter myself, will establish beyond controversy many facts heretofore vague and obscure, connected with the early history of our place.

I am well aware of the difficulty of eradicating from the minds of the majority of mankind their preconceived