

P R E F A C E.

THE European settlements on the river Mississippi comprehend Louisiana, part of West Florida, and the country of the Illinois. Five years residence as an engineer in those countries, during which time I was chiefly employed in surveying and exploring their interior parts, and an acquaintance with the principal inhabitants, enables me to speak with at least as much authority as any author who has hitherto wrote on the same subject.

Louisiana is no longer the same as in the time of Pere Hennepin ; and all other authors that I have read on this subject rather abound with Indian stories and *talks*, than with useful information.

Father Charlevoix made so rapid a progress through those countries, that the greatest part of what he advances must be from the doubtful information of others, and not from his own personal knowledge. Neither is the reader recompensed by the small quantity of pure ore he can extract from that mass of dross, in the elaborate accounts of Le Page du Pratz.

It may be thought extraordinary that I have confined my accounts to the banks of the Mississippi, and not touched on the other parts of West Florida, which may be supposed equally interesting.

This work was originally wrote at the request, and for the perusal only, of the secretary of state for the colonies ;