

PREFACE TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

THE following work of M. DE TOCQUEVILLE, has attracted great attention throughout Europe, where it is universally regarded as a sound, philosophical, impartial and remarkably clear and distinct view of our political institutions, and of our manners, opinions and habits, as influencing or influenced by those institutions. Writers, reviewers and statesmen of all parties have united in the highest commendations of its ability and integrity. The people described by a work of such a character, should not be the only one in Christendom unacquainted with its contents. At least so thought many of our most distinguished men who have urged the publishers of this edition, to reprint the work and present it to the American public. They have done so in the hope of promoting among their countrymen a more thorough knowledge of their frames of government, and a more just appreciation of the great principles on which they are founded.

But it seemed to them, that a reprint in America of the views of an author so well entitled to regard and confidence, without any correction of the few errors or mistakes that might be found, would be in effect to give authenticity to the whole work, and that foreign readers especially, would consider silence under such circumstances as strong evidence of the accuracy of its statements. The preface to the English edition, too, was not adapted to this country, having been written, as it would seem, in reference to the political questions which agitate Great Britain. The publishers therefore applied to the writer of this, to furnish them with a short preface and such notes upon the text as might appear necessary to correct any erroneous impressions. Having had the honor of a personal acquaintance with M. DE TOCQUEVILLE, while he was in this coun-