

PREFACE.

LET any one who thinks it an easy task attempt to cover the French discovery and occupation of the middle west, from Marquette and Jolliet to the pulling down of the French flag on Fort Chartres, vivifying men, and while condensing events, putting a moving picture before the eye. Let him prepare this picture for young minds accustomed only to the modern aspect of things and demanding a light, sure touch. Let him gather his material — as I have done — from Parkman, Shea, Joutel, Hennepin, St. Cosme, Monette, Winsor, Roosevelt — from state records, and local traditions richer and oftener more reliable than history; and let him hang over his theme with brooding affection, moulding and remoulding its forms. He will find the task he so lightly set himself a terribly hard and exhausting one, and will appreciate as he never before appreciated the labors of those who work in historic fields.

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