

PART I.—THE PAST.

INTRODUCTION.

"Come, bright improvement ! on the car of time,
And rule the spacious world from clime to clime ;
Thy handmaid Art, shall every wild explore,
Trace every wave and culture every shore."

—Campbell.

Four centuries have not yet rolled away since the continent of North America was first trodden, at least in modern times, by the foot of civilized man. The "majestic repose" of nature reigned from the shores of the broad Atlantic to those of the broader Pacific. Wild men and beasts roamed through the interminable forests which waved, in solemn grandeur, over valley, plain, and mountain. No human voices were heard among these solitary wastes, save the Indian's dread war-whoop when savage tribes met each other in deadly conflict ; or the melody of their soft and silvery voices, when the celebration of festal or religious rites, called for milder accents. But a change came. The daring Columbus guided his gallant ships over the waves of an unknown ocean to these uncultured shores, and made the grandest discovery of all adventurers who ever sailed in search of distant lands. Since that time to the present, the "pale faced" nations have been extending their proud conquests and achievements, slowly and intermittently at first, but with giant strides at length, until now, they nearly

"Fill the land."

and the once powerful tribes of red men are almost

"Driven into the western sea."

The prediction of Irving is already in part fulfilled, and will continue to receive fulfillment as age succeeds to age, even down to the end of time.

Says that inimitable writer, "Various nations and tongues and languages will fill America with the renown of Columbus and bless his name to the latest posterity."

In no period of the world's history have greater changes taken place than those which have been produced within the last four hundred years ; and in these changes this "western world," including that portion of which the present volume mainly treats, has borne the most eventful part. A continent, far greater in superficial area than the whole of Europe, has