

## INTRODUCTION TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

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The republication of this valuable work has been undertaken partly on account of the high favour with which it has been received in England, but chiefly in consideration of its intrinsic value, arising from the felicitous adaptation of the plan to a want that has been long and generally felt, and from the judgment and fidelity manifested in its execution. The idea of giving in a single work, of no very formidable dimensions, and at a price which brings it within the reach of very moderate circumstances, a sufficient outline of the world's whole history, and similar outlines of the history of every nation, is so obviously judicious and appropriate as to require no eulogium. Every person who cares at all for the acquisition of useful knowledge, must desire to possess such a general knowledge of past events, not only in his own country but in all countries, as shall enable him to understand the perpetually recurring allusions that are found in almost any course of general reading; because for want of such understanding there is always a serious diminution both of pleasure and profit, even in the perusal of such works as are designed chiefly for amusement. For instance, most of Sir Walter Scott's novels are founded upon history, and abound with references to historical events and personages, a want of some acquaintance with which detracts seriously from the interest and delight they are so well qualified to awaken and so of most other works belonging to the better class of what is called light literature. But the difficulty has been to obtain this general knowledge without going through many books, requiring a greater expenditure of time and money than most persons are able or willing to afford; and to obviate such difficulty has been the purpose of Mr. Maun-

der. His plan has the merit of completeness, and is undoubtedly the best that could have been desired. He gives first a general sketch of ancient and modern history—a rapid and comprehensive bird's-eye view, as it were, of the rise and progress of nations, the most important incidents of their career, and their relations to each other; and after this he takes up the nations separately, furnishing a concise digest of all that it is important or desirable to know concerning each, and thus affording a sort of key to the changes and events that were more briefly indicated, rather by their results than by their incidents, in the general sketch or outline.

near 1861.

District of New York.

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