

TO THE READER.

IN the spring of 1810, I landed at New Madrid in Upper Louisiana, and proceeded from thence by land to St. Genevieve, with the intention of settling myself in some part of the territory as a lawyer. But finding after a short residence, that prospects of success in that part of the world, were not such as I could have wished, I resolved to employ the time I should remain there, in making observations and remarks on such things as appeared most worthy of attention. I was in a short time, pleased with the employment, which drew me into a more extensive research than I had at first contemplated, and gave rise to a degree of earnestness in a pursuit, to which I had before been almost a stranger; my studies having been chiefly directed to abstract subjects, to history, belles lettres, and to those in some way connected with my profession.

In the winter of 1811, I published at St. Louis, the capital of Upper Louisiana, a series of essays descriptive of the country, many of which were reprinted in periodical papers in the states, and spoken of in terms of approbation. It were needless to declare how gratifying this was to my feelings, or, as the reader will choose to think, to my vanity. In the heyday of youth, when the mind is filled with romantic conceits, there is nothing so pleasant as this taste of fame. It is however, sometimes productive of dangerous effects, for where this first manifestation of applause, does not intoxicate the brain and paralyze the energies, causing the infatuated being to believe, that he has already arrived at the highest degree of earthly honors, it is apt to confirm one in that pursuit, where accident may have crowned him with success.—Hence, I have been in no small danger of becoming an author, perhaps an indifferent one: a professed author in our country, alas! is pitiable indeed. A mere abstract man, without any degree of importance, or consequence, attached to him; he is not ranked as having any employment in the state, ecclesiastical, civil, or military, and necessarily takes up his abode next door to starvation. It has been supposed by some of my friends who read my essays in the public prints, that I had in reality relinquished my profession, and that I was wandering about the