

therefore, I am obliged to take glances over collateral history, as seen from his point of view and influencing his plans, and to narrate distant transactions apparently disconnected with his concerns, but eventually bearing upon the great drama in which he was the principal actor.

I have endeavored to execute my task with candor and fidelity; stating facts on what appeared to be good authority, and avoiding as much as possible all false coloring and exaggeration. My work is founded on the correspondence of Washington, which, in fact, affords the amplest and surest groundwork for his biography. This I have consulted as it exists in manuscript in the archives of the Department of State, to which I have had full and frequent access. I have also made frequent use of "Washington's Writings," as published by Mr. Sparks; a careful collation of many of them with the originals having convinced me of the general correctness of the collection, and the safety with which it may be relied upon for historical purposes; and I am happy to bear this testimony to the essential accuracy of one whom I consider among the greatest benefactors to our national literature; and to whose writings and researches I acknowledge myself largely indebted throughout my work. W. I.

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