

P R E F A C E.

THE adoption of the federal government marks the chief division in the history of the United States. The period which leads to that epoch has within itself perfect unity and completeness. The narrative which has been carried forward to this broad line of demarkation is therefore now laid before the public in a compact form after a revision by its author, which must be his last.

Each one of the several parts into which the long period naturally arranges itself has its special universal interest. The formation in the New World of a people of European origin with a political life of its own was the most pregnant event of the seventeenth century. This subject is brought to its conclusion in the present volume.

The epoch which will trace the young American states from the British revolution of 1688 far into the eighteenth century asserts its claim to a world-wide character, though of a different nature. The wars of religion were ended, and material interests swelled the sails of the age. The striving for commerce, which in those days meant a monopoly of commerce, absorbed the great nations of the earth; and a monopoly of commerce meant the establishment or the acquisition of dependent colonies. After the death of William III., who would have watched over the