
INTRODUCTION.

THE researches of learned botanists for more than a century past have shown how highly the North American Continent is favoured in its vegetable kingdom. But their object seems to have been rather the progress of botanical knowledge, and the embellishment of European gardens, than an acquaintance with the properties of the American plants and with the uses of the forest trees. This, on the contrary, was the end which I had particularly in view in my travels in the United States in 1807; and the work which I offer to the public is the fruit of my inquiries.

Before entering into any details concerning the plan which I have adopted, it should be remarked that the species of large trees are much more numerous in North America than in Europe : in the United States there are more than 140 species that exceed 30 feet in height, all which I have examined and described; in France there are but 30 that attain this size, of which 18 enter into the composition of the forests, and 7 only are employed in building.