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American History told by Contemporaries



VOLUME I

ERA OF COLONIZATION

1492-1689

The XXX Co.

American History told by Contemporaries

VOLUME I

ERA OF COLONIZATION

1492-1689

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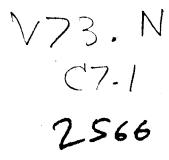
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Preface

A GENIAL reviewer has said of a book intended to aid students to a convenient use of the material of American history: "they hausmannize the wilderness that their students may sip coffee in an ample boule-This work likewise aims to make broad the highways for those who would visit their forefathers. It is an attempt to combine two objects not easily harmonized: first, to put within convenient reach of schools, libraries, and scholars authoritative texts of rare or quaint writings in American history, contemporary with the events which they describe; and, in the second place, to give, in a succession of scenes, a notion of the movement and connection of the history of America, so that from this work by itself may be had an impression of the forces which have shaped our history, and the problems upon which they have worked. The limitations of space, however, make it imperative to clip and gouge most of the pieces selected; and explanations and connections must be omitted. Nevertheless the author believes sincerely that a half-loaf baked in the oven of the times, is better than all the spiced buns of modern writers, for carrying to the mind a flavor of the life which our ancestors lived, and the motives which guided them; he hopes that the reader may find in these lively, human, brief extracts, the real spirit of his countrymen.

A few words should be said on the principles of selection and arrangement. First of all, pains have been taken to use the first authoritative edition of each work in English; and a faithful translation of pieces in foreign languages. Next, the copy is meant to be exact. A mighty historian like Sparks may correct the spelling and grammar of his ancestors; lesser men had better leave the corrections to the reader.

viii Preface

Words not easily recognized are, however, repeated in modern dress in brackets. Next, the quotations are meant to be exact, all omissions being indicated, and the place where the extract was found being noted at the end.

No effort has been made to select writers especially for their literary value; and where there are two equally credible authorities on the same subject, that one is usually chosen who does not appear elsewhere in the volume. Nevertheless, no reader can fail to admire the literary crispness and sparkle of men like John Smith, William Bradford, John Hammond, Sir William Berkeley, Gabriel Thomas, and Dankers and Sluyter. There has not been space for long accounts of the writers, such as will be found in Tyler's History of American Literature, and in the introductions to special editions; but a few words are prefixed on each person, and a few references are added intended to lead to other sources, and to secondary works.

In making up this volume the difficulty has not been to find suitable extracts, but to choose out of the wealth of material; doubtless much has been left out that would have been as interesting as anything which here appears: it is the editor's hope, however, that nothing has been admitted that has not a distinct significance, and that as many elements of Colonial history are here presented as the space allows.

The uses to which such a volume may be put in schools and elsewhere are set forth at large in the *Practical Introduction* below. The editor's thought is that it may be an adjunct to the regular text-book teaching, may serve as material for topical study, and may open up to readers the field of delightful narratives in which American history abounds. Almost no constitutional documents are included: they are to be found in many collections; and they have not the persuasive power of the writings addressed by men to men.

An acknowledgment is due to the Harvard College Library for its generous grant of special privileges without which the book could hardly have been prepared.

ALBERT BUSHNELL HART.

CAMBRIDGE, May 1, 1897.

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