

PREFACE TO COLUMBIAN EDITION.

that important period—its patriotism, singleness of purpose, high motives of conduct and devotion to principle—must plainly appear to every thoughtful reader. The example of the patriot fathers may well furnish to their descendants the motives and inspiration requisite to right citizenship in the greatest of republics.

In history not everything is accomplished at one stroke. Our War of Independence did not suffice for the nationality of the United States. That came afterwards, by trial stages, by attraction and repulsion, by the growth of many things and the decay of some, and finally by the ordeal of the greatest war of modern history.

It was needed that a considerable period should elapse between the founding and the completion of our national structure. Room must be afforded for the abatement of old antagonisms and the death of hurtful prejudices. Opportunity must be given for the birth and development of new sentiments to which our fathers were strangers. Space must be had for the spread of this strong Anglo-American race, and for the obliteration of that localism with which it had been hampered in the beginning.

Our War for the Union carries still in the memories of men the bruises of the battlefield. That struggle made for itself a great memory in the world, and marked the limitation which the civilized life of man drew at last around some of the most grievous abuses of ancient times. It was in this furnace that African slavery perished; out of it came new concepts of the rights of man and the blessings possible under a purified and enlarged democracy.

Nor should we fail to reflect upon the great period which has now elapsed since the close of our civil conflict. More than one-fourth of our whole national career, measured from the foundation of the Republic, lies this side of Appomattox! During this period an increment of twenty-seven millions of souls, or forty per cent. of the whole, has been added to our population. A continent has been reclaimed and organized into great States; the foundations have been laid with seeming security for the greatest nationality in the world. We have made a way for posterity, as our fathers made a way for us.

It is fitting that all this should come vividly to the recollection in the Columbian year. The occasion of the international celebration in the most American and most marvellous of all cities may well invite all classes of readers to a review of the history of their country. I have endeavored in the following pages to recite the story in a manner befitting the year. It has been my aim to include all the essentials of the narrative, omitting only so much as may be spared without marring the outline of the whole. I do not flatter myself that the work has been perfectly done, but may claim to have spared no effort to make this one-volume history of our country worthy of the theme and of the great public, into whose hands I cordially deliver the result of my labor.

J. C. R.

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