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VOLUME I.

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HISTORY
OF
THE UNITED STATES,

FROM

THE DISCOVERY OF THE AMERICAN CONTINENT TO
THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

BY GEORGE BANCROFT,

FORMERLY AMBASSADOR AT THE COURT OF ST. JAMES'S.

IN SEVEN VOLUMES.

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P R E F A C E.



I HAVE formed the design of writing a History of the United States from the Discovery of the American Continent to the present time. As the moment arrives for publishing a portion of the work, I am impressed more strongly than ever with a sense of the grandeur and vastness of the subject; and am ready to charge myself with presumption for venturing on so bold an enterprise. I can find for myself no excuse but in the sincerity with which I have sought to collect truth from trust-worthy documents and testimony. I have desired to give to the work the interest of authenticity. I have applied, as I have proceeded, the principles of historical scepticism; and, not allowing myself to grow weary in comparing witnesses, or consulting codes of laws, I have endeavoured to impart originality to my narrative, by deriving it from writings and sources which were the contemporaries of the events that are described. Where different nations or different parties have been engaged in the same scenes, I have not failed to examine their respective reports. Such an investigation on any country would be laborious; I need not say how much the labour is increased by the