

irreligion, are left in the hands of all classes of people, to the great prejudice of morals and piety, only because nothing better is brought forward to replace them.

If in the review which I shall make of all the works relating to my subject any escape me, it will be, ordinarily, because it was impossible or inexpedient to draw them from the obscurity in which they are buried ; and my silence will be the only criticism they merit. Should I, however, omit any that deserve not to be forgotten, I will repair the fault as soon as I am notified. Thus, if these latter ages are justly reproached with an unbridled license in writing, better fitted to establish in the mass of mankind an utter Pyrrhonism in history, than to instruct those given to such reading, and better fitted to degrade the heroes who have filled the New World with the fame of their exploits and their virtues, by the fables introduced, than to give them the immortality so justly their due ; a remedy to such disorder will be found in this work, and those who come after us will be better enabled, than men have been till now, to render justice to all.

I may perhaps be asked, if I flatter myself that I shall be able to carry out so vast a design, for which the longest life would seem too short. To this I reply, that the nature of this work does not require that all the constituent parts be of the same hand ; that it will not suffer from diversity of style ; that this very diversity has its attractions, and all that is required is, that the same plan should be followed—a thing easily done. The same nearly may be said of this enterprise as of the discovery of America. The worst was done when it was once begun. There is then every reason to believe that it will be continued after me, and that if I have the advantage of suggesting the idea, those who succeed me will have the glory of perfecting it.

It only remains to warn the public as to the expense inevitable in the execution of such a project, that the price of the volumes may not shock them. In the first place, neither maps nor plans should be spared, and I am persuaded that this point will find no gainsayers. Nothing is more necessary in history, of which geography and chronology are the two eyes—especially in treating of countries not sufficiently known. In the second place, all the curious things furnished by natural history, will be engraved, but only when we are sure of accurate models. In fine, the different styles of costumes and arms among so many different nations, their religious ceremonies and customs, furnish much that readers will be pleased to see drawn to the life ; but all shall be retrenched that would merely add useless expense to the volumes.