Domestic history of the American Revolution

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DOMESTIC HISTORY

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AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

BY

MRS. ELLET.

ILLUSTRATED.

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PREFACE

The design and plan of the present work are entirely new. Its object is to exhibit the spirit and character of the Revolutionary period; to portray, as far as possible in so brief a record, the social and domestic condition of the times, and the state of feeling among the people, with something of the services and experience of a class not usually noticed among those whose names live in historical remembrance. With this view, a short and comprehensive narrative of the successive events of the war is interspersed with domestic details and anecdotes illustrative of the state of the country at various intervals.

My researches during some years past in collecting authentic materials for "The Women of the American Revolution," have brought to light many interesting incidents connected with the war, so strikingly characteristic of the times, that they should not be suffered to pass into oblivion. These are sparingly used, because more of them would have swelled the volume to an unsuitable size; and all that possessed merely a
personal interest have been excluded. It has also been found necessary to omit the minor details of military movements, which form the bulk of almost every history of the war. This omission, I think, will prove an advantage. The most attentive reader of history seldom retains in his memory more than the prominent incidents, losing sight of minute and complicated particulars as soon as he rises from his studies; it may be questioned, therefore, whether it be not useless to perplex the learner with a multitude of details comparatively unimportant. I cannot help believing, too, that a really better idea of the Revolution may be obtained from anecdotes that exhibit the spirit which was abroad among all classes, and which prompted to action, than from the most accurate transcript of the manœuvres by which different battles were lost and won, and the most precise statement of the number engaged, or of killed and wounded on either side. Accordingly I have given in general merely the date and locality of the principal battles, with the names of the leaders who were most conspicuous.

Wherever account is given of individual experience, it is for the purpose of showing what many did or suffered. An inadequate conception of the character of that heroic age of the Republic is afforded by general tradition, and it is only by collating such authentic records of individual action and endurance as have been preserved, that a correct idea may be formed. The great Duke of Marlborough once said he had learned English history from the dramas of Shakspeare; and we all