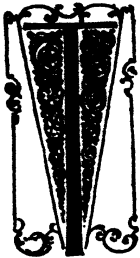


INTRODUCTION.



THIS is not a war history. It does not propose to take the reader to every well-fought field during a four-year's conflict, from Manassas to Appomattox and tell him how battles were lost and won. Of histories of that character we have had many. Some of them have been made into text-books and used in the public schools of the country, serving no purpose save that of filling the minds of the young with prejudices and distorted facts ; while others, written by the actors in the great events which they record, have their value alike to the North and the South, and will always be bright and luminous. Nor does this book aim to show the character of the events that led up to a great contest in which a peaceful people suddenly found themselves involved ; or to point out the vast social, political and constitutional changes brought about by the war — that is the task of the philosopher, the statesman, and the thinker.

This is a round, unvarnished tale of a few hundred heroes from a border State, who stepped bravely to the front when their rights of manhood, of freedom and of citizenship, under what should be one protecting flag, enfolding all in its embrace, were threatened. Their identity was lost in the great gathering ; no herald ever blew his trumpet in the market-place or on the housetops and told the story of their deeds to an assembled people, their statues do not stand in any national Walhalla, crowned with the laurel — they were born, they lived, they fought, they died — that was all. And so this book seeks to rescue them from the oblivion into which in coming years they might fall, to tell of their self-sacrifice and their heroism ; in short, to be a simple story of four years in the lives of true and brave-hearted men.

And yet, to make the story rounded and complete, and to give a reason for the position which they took and the sacrifices which they made, it is necessary to go back a little way and speak briefly of the causes which led up to the great struggle, and how, when the blast of war sounded in their ears, these men never hesitated, but stood on the side of justice and liberty.

On the 6th of November, 1860, Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States, and it was felt that a great crisis had come at last, that slavery agitation had reached its climax, that the South, politically, was overwhelmed, and that it stood practically alone. And yet with all this, the people of the Cotton States were far from being agreed as to the wisdom and expediency of secession,