

P R E F A C E.

IN the following pages the attempt has been made to place before the public in a convenient and accessible form the results of the life-long labors in the field of aboriginal research of the late Henry R. Schoolcraft. The extensive and valuable materials collected by him with so much patience and assiduity were published some years ago by the United States government, and they form a body of reliable data concerning the Indian tribes within its borders such as does not elsewhere exist. By a careful process of elimination and condensation the six bulky quartos of the original work are now reduced to two portable volumes, without, it is believed, impairing the value of the work to the general reader. Some portions have been largely rewritten, in order that the fruits of recent investigations into the origin, language, and antiquities of the Indians might be incorporated in it, and the historical outlines, general and tribal, have been filled up by the introduction of prominent events which had been omitted. The Introduction, presenting at one view the past and present status of the Indian, the portions of the work that include an account of the present condition of the tribes, and the chapters containing the history of the last thirty years, are the work of the editor.

Few persons have enjoyed greater advantages for obtaining a thorough knowledge of Indian life and character, or have, during a long residence among the Indians, more zealously improved their opportunities for studying their habits, traditions, and history, than the author of the "Archives of Aboriginal Knowledge," which forms the basis of the present work.

Henry Rowe Schoolcraft was born in Watervliet, N.Y., March 28, 1793, and died in Washington, D.C., December 10, 1864. His first American ancestor settled in Albany County in the reign of George II., and taught school. The change of his name, which was originally Calcraft, is no doubt attributable to this latter fact. He spent his childhood and youth in the picturesque valley of Norman's Kill, and entered Union College in 1807. His poetical talent was early developed, and "Geehale" and "The Iroquois," anonymously published, became a part of the poetical literature of the country. A strong taste for the natural sciences also manifested itself, which, in 1817, led him to make his first visit to the Mississippi, the true source of which, in Itaska Lake, he discovered in a second expedition in 1832, an account of which he published in the following year. In 1819 he published "A View of the Lead-Mines of Missouri," and was appointed geologist and mineralogist to an expedition