

far-off ocean of the past—yet still possessing a mind and genius almost wholly their own. To judge such a people by the European standards of religion, philosophy and taste, is evidently wrong, and likely to lead to false conclusions. Whoever has studied a new language, must have felt that he has become acquainted with a new, and before unknown, region of thought; how original, then, and how different from our own, must be the mind, soul and character of a people, who have grown up by themselves, shaping out, in isolation from all the rest of the world, and in utter ignorance of all but themselves, their own manners, customs and institutions! In analyzing such a race, we should study facts—abstain long from theory, and constantly be on our guard against bringing them up to be measured by the artificial rules established in our own minds.

Yet, despite these various sources of error, the philosophic spirit of the present day is making rapid strides towards a just view of the subject. The labors of Stevens and Catherwood have made the public familiar with facts heretofore known only to the curious; and the sketches of Catlin have enabled us to see the present tribes of the west, not as the pencil of fancy, but as that of truth would portray them. These and other circumstances have revived the interest felt in the aborigines of this continent, and this is taking place at a period when facts, and not theory, are demanded by the public. Under influences like these, the time cannot be far remote when the means of duly estimating the American race shall be finally obtained.

In the present volume, as before stated, it is our purpose to do something towards the diffusion of truth on the subject in question, and, at the same time, we wish to direct attention to the true mode of studying the original Indian character. Whether we wish to understand the savage tribes of the north, or the more civilized nations that once flourished in Mexico and Peru, we must take facts, and not fancy, as our guide.