

P R E F A C E.

"I HATE A Preface!" Such will probably be the reader's exclamation on opening this volume. I will, however, pursue the subject a little farther in the form of a dialogue.

Author. "I entirely agree in your dislike of a Preface; for a good book needs none, and a dull book cannot be mended by it."

Reader. "If, then, you coincide in my opinion, why write a Preface? Judging from appearances, your book is long enough without one!"

A. "Do not be too severe; it is precisely because the road which we propose to travel together is of considerable extent, that I wish to warn you at the outset of the nature of the scenery, and the entertainment you are likely to meet with, in order that you may, if these afford you no attraction, turn aside and seek better amusement and occupation elsewhere."

R. "That seems plausible enough; yet, how can I be assured that the result will fulfil your promise? I once travelled in a stage-coach, wherein was suspended, for the benefit of passengers, a coloured print of the watering-place which was our destination; it represented a magnificent hotel, with extensive gardens and shrubberies, through the shady walks of which, gayly attired parties were promenading on horseback and on foot. When we arrived, I found myself at a large, square, unsightly inn by the sea-side, where neither flower, shrub, nor tree was to be seen; and on inquiry, I was informed that the print represented the hotel as the proprietor intended it to be! Suppose I were to meet with a similar disappointment in my journey with you?"

A. "I can at least offer you this comfort; that whereas you could not have got out of the stage half way on the road without

much inconvenience, you can easily lay down the book whenever you find it becoming tedious; if you seek for amusement only, you probably will be disappointed, because one of my chief aims has been to afford you correct information respecting the habits, condition, and character of the North American Indians and those bordering on their territory. I have introduced, also, several incidents founded on actual occurrences; and some of them, as well as of the characters, are sketched from personal observation."

R. "Indeed! you are then the individual who resided with the Pawnees, and published, a few years since, your *Travels in North America*. I suppose we may expect in this volume a sort of *pot-pourri*, composed of all the notes, anecdotes, and observations which you could not conveniently squeeze into your former book?"

A. (*looking rather foolish*). "Although the terms in which you have worded your conjecture are not the most flattering, I own that it is not altogether without foundation; nevertheless, gentle reader—"

R. "Spare your epithets of endearment; or, at least, reserve them until I have satisfied myself that I can reply in a similar strain."

A. "Nay, it is too churlish to censure a harmless courtesy that has been adopted even by the greatest dramatists and novelists from the time of Shakspeare to the present day."

R. "It may be so; permit me, however, to request, in the words of one of those dramatists to whom you refer, that you will be so obliging as to

'Forbear the prologue,
And let me know the substance of thy tale!'

The Orphan.

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