

## PREFACE.

The study of American Ethnology has always been fettered by the want of anything like reliable grammars and dictionaries, and while compelled to rely on scanty and erroneous vocabularies must ever remain in its infancy. Yet a vast number of tribes were the scenes of missionary labors of zealous and educated men who carefully studied the language of their flocks and have left behind them grammatical treatises and dictionaries more or less complete, the value of which in a philological point of view over the random words taken down in a few hours by a traveller, must be too apparent to need any discussion or proof. It is time that ethnologists should appeal for the Algonquin to some better authority than La Hontan, for Huron to something more full than Sagard. Many works have fallen into my hands which I deem it important to the cause of science to put within the reach of scholars; and the present volume will be a specimen of this Library of American Linguistics. The encouragement of a few will enable me to carry out the plan, and on them I rely, promising to perform my task of editing with all possible fidelity to the original.

The original manuscript of the present volume is preserved in the Mazarin Library at Paris, and is supposed to be of the close of the seventeenth century. It is apparently the work of one of the Jesuit Fathers whose missions in New York extended from the middle of the seventeenth to the close of the first decade in the succeeding century.