

design, as I was undoubtedly the first artist who ever set out upon such a work, designing to carry his canvass to the Rocky Mountains; and a considerable part of the following Letters were written and published in the New York Papers, as early as the years 1832 and 1833; long before the Tours of Washington Irving, and several others, whose interesting narratives are before the world.

I have, as yet, by no means visited *all* the tribes; but I have progressed a very great way with the enterprise, and with far greater and more complete success than I expected.

I have visited forty-eight different tribes, the greater part of which I found speaking different languages, and containing in all 400,000 souls. I have brought home safe, and in good order, 310 portraits in oil, all painted in their native dress, and in their own wigwams; and also 200 other paintings in oil, containing views of their villages—their wigwams—their games and religious ceremonies—their dances—their ball plays—their buffalo hunting, and other amusements (containing in all, over 3,000 full-length figures); and the landscapes of the country they live in, as well as a very extensive and curious collection of their costumes, and all their other manufactures, from the size of a wigwam down to the size of a quill or a rattle.

A considerable part of the above-named paintings, and Indian manufactures, will be found amongst the very numerous illustrations in the following pages; having been, in every instance, faithfully copied and reduced by my own hand, for the engraver, from my original paintings; and the reader of this book who will take the pains to step in to "CATLIN'S NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN GALLERY," will find nearly every scene and custom which is described in this work, as well as many others, carefully and correctly delineated, and displayed upon the walls, and every weapon (and every "Sachem" and every "Sagamore" who has wielded them) according to the tenor of the tales herein recited.

So much of *myself* and of my *works*, which is all that I wish to say at present.

Of the INDIANS, I have much more to say, and to the following delineations of them, and their character and customs, I shall make no further apology for requesting the attention of my readers.

The Indians (as I shall call them), the savages or red men of the forests and prairies of North America, are at this time a subject of great interest and some importance to the civilized world; rendered more particularly so in this age, from their relative position to, and their rapid declension from, the civilized nations of the earth. A numerous nation of human beings, whose origin is beyond the reach of human investigation,—whose early history is lost—whose term of national existence is nearly expired—three-fourths of whose country has fallen into the possession of civilized man within the short space of 250 years—twelve millions of whose bodies have fattened the soil in the mean time; who have fallen victims to whiskey, the small-pox and the