

All these various incentives to action, are nearly or quite beyond our inspection. Yet it is in the contemplation of such only, that Indian history can be truly estimated; for all these particulars throw their lights and shades across and into the portraiture of this most singular people. It could hardly be expected, that they, who suffered from the fearful revenge of the red man, who saw, as it were, the scalping-knife gleaming around the head of a beloved wife, or child, or friend, or who felt the arrow quivering in their own flesh, or who heard the war-whoop ringing terrifically on the domestic quiet of their habitation, — it could hardly, indeed, be expected, that such persons should be as truthful or impartial as if they had been called to record scenes of a more peaceful and grateful kind. Without, therefore, doing the early writers the injustice of supposing that they mean to misrepresent facts, — yet, in glancing over their descriptions of perfidy, plots, murders, cruelties, and revenge, we must remember that the red man had no one of his race to record for him his history, and be candid and just in our judgments, where there may often be not a little to extenuate, if not wholly to excuse from blame.

Let us also bear in mind one remarkable fact, that, in their first intercourse, the reception extended to the Europeans by the Americans was confiding and hospitable, and that this confidence and hospitality were generally repaid with treachery, rapine, and murder. This was the history of events for the first century, till at last the red men, over the whole continent, learned to regard the Europeans as their enemies, the plunderers of their wealth, the spoilers of their villages, the