

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

JOHN TANNER, whose life and adventures are detailed in the following pages, is now about fifty years of age. His person is erect and rather robust, indicating great hardiness, activity, and strength, which, however, his numerous exposures and sufferings have deeply impaired. His face, which was originally rather handsome, bears now numerous traces of thought and passion, as well as of age; his quick and piercing blue eyes, bespeak the stern, the violent, and unconquerable spirit, which rendered him an object of fear to many of the Indians while he remained among them, and which still, in some measure, disqualifies him for that submissive and compliant manner which his dependent situation among the whites renders necessary. Carefully instructed in early youth, in all those principles and maxims which constitute the moral code of the unsophisticated and uncorrupted Indian, his ideas of right and wrong, of honourable and dishonourable, differ, of course, very essentially from those of white men. His isolated and friendless situation, in the midst of a community where the right of private warfare is recognized as almost the only defence of individual possessions, the only barrier between man and man, was certainly in the highest degree unfavourable to the formation of that enduring and patient submissiveness, which, in civilized societies, surrenders so great a share of individual rights to the strong guardianship of the law. Accordingly, to a correct sense of natural justice, he unites a full share of that indomitable and untiring spirit of revenge, so prominent in the Indian character. The circumstances into which he has been thrown, among a wild and lawless race, have taught him to consider himself, in all situations, the avenger of his own quarrel; and if, in the better regulated community into which he has been recently