

the city, without the remotest prospect of again contributing to my amusement.

I had fully resolved—I opened my views to my friends and relations, but got not one advocate or abettor. I tried fairly and faithfully, but it was in vain to reason with those whose anxieties were ready to fabricate every difficulty and danger that could be imagined, without being able to understand or appreciate the extent or importance of my designs, and I broke from them all,—from my wife and my aged parents,—myself my only adviser and protector.

With these views firmly fixed—armed, equipped, and supplied, I started out in the year 1832, and penetrated the vast and pathless wilds which are familiarly denominated the great “Far West” of the North American Continent, with a light heart, inspired with an enthusiastic hope and reliance that I could meet and overcome all the hazards and privations of a life devoted to the production of a literal and graphic delineation of the living manners, customs, and character of an interesting race of people, who are rapidly passing away from the face of the earth—lending a hand to a dying nation, who have no historians or biographers of their own to pourtray with fidelity their native looks and history; thus snatching from a hasty oblivion what could be saved for the benefit of posterity, and perpetuating it, as a fair and just monument, to the memory of a truly lofty and noble race.

I have spent about eight years already in the pursuit above-named, having been for the most of that time immersed in the Indian country, mingling with red men, and identifying myself with them as much as possible, in their games and amusements; in order the better to familiarize myself with their superstitions and mysteries, which are the keys to Indian life and character.

It was during the several years of my life just mentioned, and whilst I was in familiar participation with them in their sports and amusements, that I penned the following series of epistles; describing only such glowing or curious scenes and events as passed under my immediate observation; leaving their early history, and many of their traditions, language, &c. for a subsequent and much more elaborate work, for which I have procured the materials, and which I may eventually publish.

I set out on my arduous and perilous undertaking with the determination of reaching, ultimately, every tribe of Indians on the Continent of North America, and of bringing home faithful portraits of their principal personages, both men and women, from each tribe, views of their villages, games, &c. and full notes on their character and history. I designed, also, to procure their costumes, and a complete collection of their manufactures and weapons, and to perpetuate them in a *Gallery unique*, for the use and instruction of future ages.

I claim whatever merit there may have been in the originality of such a