

P R E F A C E.

THE Mohawk Valley in which Sir William Johnson spent his adult life (1738-1774) was the fairest portion of the domain of the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy. In this valley I lived nine years, seeing on every side traces or monuments of the industry, humanity, and powerful personality of its most famous resident in colonial days. From the quaint stone church in Schenectady which he built, and in whose canopied pews he sat, daily before my eyes, to the autograph papers in possession of my neighbours ; from sites close at hand and traditionally associated with the lord of Johnson Hall, to the historical relics which multiply at Johnstown, Canajoharie, and westward, — mementos of the baronet were never lacking. His two baronial halls still stand near the Mohawk. I found that local tradition, while in the main generous to his memory, was sometimes unfair and even cruel. The hatreds engendered by the partisan features of the Revolution, and the just detestation of the savage atrocities of Tories and red allies led by Johnson's son and son-in-law, had done injustice to the great man himself. Yet base and baseless tradition was in no whit more unjust than the sectional opinions and