

ever hidden from the curiosity of mankind. The RED MEN, it is true, had not, when first visited by Europeans, any history of themselves, either *written* or *traditional*, which could throw any light on their national affairs. With regard to oral tradition, which consists of recitals made by the first men to their children, of whatever happened worthy of notice during their lifetime, so that these recitals are multiplied in every generation, and transmitted down to posterity, without the assistance of writing, we must candidly acknowledge that the Indians were found to be miserably destitute, even of this errant vehicle of knowledge. Hence, amidst the clouds which envelop the history of this ill-fated race, we are furnished by themselves with nothing but uncertainty. We shall not then, venture to affirm, on their testimony, either what is true or what is false, or seek for certainty among such uncertain authorities. On the contrary, our witnesses are of the most unimpeachable character, while the testimony of travellers of undoubted veracity, and missionaries no less distinguished for their learning than religious zeal, who dwelt for many years in the north-eastern regions of Asia, and among the Indian tribes of North America, shall form our principal guides in this inquiry.

In the absence, therefore, of written or traditional history, however erroneous the latter may frequently prove, but neither of which the Indians possessed, it seems to us, that there cannot be a more rational way of arriving, with any degree of accuracy and certainty, at the original source, whence, in the remoteness of time, those numerous and powerful tribes first migrated to the Western Continent, than to offer a faithful comparison of the Indians with the Asiatics, in religion, language, manners, habits and customs.