

P R E F A C E .

THIS volume contains undoubtedly the oldest grammatical or lexicographical treatise on the language of the Mohawks; and although but few of that tribe now reside in the State, the Mohawks occupy a most important place in our early history, and undoubtedly decided the sovereignty of New-York, and with it of most of North America. The History of the Five Nations, *Hotinonsionni* as they called themselves, has been imperfectly written by COLDEN, and will hereafter afford a subject for a noble work.

The Iroquois left no monuments on our soil : their language is their real monument. The Jesuit missionaries, who, from the days of the devoted Jogues to the close of the seventeenth century, when the cruel act of Bellomont prohibited any further attempts to christianise them, labored among the tribes, studied the various dialects with the care and ability of educated men. Chaumcnot wrote a Huron grammar and works in Onondaga, Carheil in Cayuga, and Bruyas in Mohawk.

The present volume is one of the works of the last named, and was written evidently in the latter part of the seventeenth century, and most probably on the banks of the Mohawk. It is a closely written manuscript of 146 pages, which has been long preserved in the Mission House at Caughnawaga or Sault St. Louis near Montreal, adding to the interest of the room where Charlevoix and Lafitau wrote.

The grammatical sketch is rather a series of notes. The main work, the *RACINES AGNIERES*, or Mohawk Radical Words, comprises the primitive words of the language, arranged in five conjugations, with derivatives from each word, and examples in many cases of great importance as explaining the manners, habits and ideas of the people. Except in strict alphabetical arrangement, it is a very full Mohawk Dictionary, written in Latin, but with the meaning of the words in French.