

PREFACE.

pended on the manner in which it was executed. No credit was obtained by open combat, but he that could ensnare and smite an unsuspecting enemy was highly to be commended.

It must have very often happened that the people surprised knew nothing of any reason why they were so dealt with, and the injury for which they suffered may have been committed by their ancestors long before they had existence; and the only sure means a tribe had to avert retaliation was extermination! Hence the perpetual warfare of these people.

As there are a few other collections of Indian Narratives of a similar character to this, it may be necessary to advertise the reader that such are *similar* in title only; for in those collections the compilers speak *for* their captives, whereas, in *this*, they speak for themselves. Those collectors have not only taken upon themselves to *speak for* their captives or heroes, but have so abridged the majority of their narratives that the perusal of them only gives dissatisfaction even to the general reader. Mr. McClung's "Sketches of Western Adventure" is a work of thrilling interest, but its value is entirely lost in particular instances from the above considerations. Dr. Metcalf was earlier, and set out right, but looked back with his hand to the plough. I know of no others worthy of notice.

As several prominent narratives may be looked for in this collection without success, such as those of Hannah Duston, Rev. John Williams, &c., it will be proper to apprise the reader that those, and many others, are contained in the Book of the Indians.

I did not design to notice the works of others, in Indian history, in this introduction; but accidentally falling upon some acts of pre-eminent injustice to my former labors, committed by several compilers, whose works, from their peculiar point of emanation, or ostentatious external attractions, are calculated to fix in the minds of their readers wrong impressions in respect to the sources whence they have drawn their information, I could not, in justice to myself, let them pass without a notice. For an author to spend many of his best years in the most laborious investigations to bring out a train of facts upon an important inquiry, which, in all probability, no other would ever have taken the pains to have done, from the peculiar nature and difficulty of the undertaking, or situation of the materials out of which he had brought them, and then to see them, no sooner than produced, transferred to the pages of others without even a demand for them upon their author, is matter of which I complain, and, to say the least, is too barefaced a piracy even for this age of freebooting in matters of literature. Had the author of the Book of the Indians been dead, leaving but a single copy of his work behind, and that an unpublished manuscript, some of the compilers, to whom I allude, could scarcely have been freer in their use of it without the hope of detection. No charge is