

and solemn reference to the duty of those who have "the words of eternal life" to apply them to the wretched condition of the red man, who is, perhaps, with all his ignorance, quite as well prepared to receive them as many of those who are already wise in their own eyes. The very degradation and misery in which he lives, and of which he is not unable to perceive some of the causes, prepare him to welcome the instruction which promises better things. Evils which are covered up under the smoothness of civilization, stand out in all their horrible deformity in the *abandon* of savage life; the Indian cannot get even one gleam of light, without instantly perceiving the darkness around him. Here, then, is encouragement to paint him as he is, that the hearts of the good may be moved at his destitute and unhappy state; to set forth his wants and his claims, that ignorance may no longer be pleaded as an excuse for withholding, from the original proprietor of the soil, the compensation or atonement which is demanded at once by justice, honor, and humanity.

Authentic pictures of Indian life have another and a different value, in a literary point of view. In the history and character of the aborigines is enveloped all the distinct and characteristic poetic material to which we, as Americans, have an unquestioned right. Here is a peculiar race, of most unfathomable origin, possessed of the qualities which have always prompted poetry, and living lives which are to us as shadowy as those of the Ossianic heroes; our own, and passing away—while we take no pains to arrest their fleeting traits or to record their picturesque traditions. Yet we love poetry; are ambitious of a literature of our own, and sink back dejected when we are convicted of imitation. Why is it that we lack interest in things at home? Sismondi has a passage to this effect:—

"The literature of other countries has been frequently adopted by a young nation with a sort of fanatical admiration. The genius of those countries having been so often placed before it as the perfect model of all greatness and all beauty, every spontaneous movement