

only person living who can inform us of them. But he may be assured that captives and other travellers have witnessed customs and ceremonies, which, together with their performers, have passed away also. And there is another view of the matter. Many a custom, as it existed fifty or a hundred years ago, has become quite a different affair now. From these reflections it is easy to see what an endless task it would be to describe *all* of the manners and customs of a single tribe of Indians, to say nothing of the thousands which have been and still exist.

These observations have been thrown out for the consideration of such as may be looking for some great work upon Indian manners and customs, to comprehend all they have been taught to expect, from those who have, perhaps, thought no deeper upon the subject than themselves. When the reader shall have perused the following narratives, I doubt not he will be convinced of the truth of what has here been delivered.

This is truly an age of essay writing, and we have them in abundance upon every thing and nothing, instead of facts which should be remembered. If a new work upon travels or history appears, we shall doubtless be delighted with descriptions of elegant scenery and splendid sketches about general matters, but arise from its perusal about as ignorant of the events of the history we desire as before. Compositions of this descriptive form no part of these pages.

I have on other occasions stood out boldly in favor of the oppressed Indian, and I know that a book of INDIAN CAPTIVITIES is calculated to exhibit their character in no very favorable light; but the reader should remember that, in the following narratives, it is not I who speak; yet I believe that, with very small allowances, these narratives are entirely true. The errors, if any, will be found only errors of judgment, which affect not their veracity.

A people whose whole lives are spent in war, and who live by a continual slaughter of all kinds of animals, must necessarily cultivate ferocity. From the nature of their circumstances they are obliged always to be in expectation of invasion; living in small communities, dispersed in small parties of five or ten upon hunting expeditions, they are easily surprised by an enemy of equal or even a lesser force. Indians, consequently, are always speaking of strange *Indians* whom they know not, nor do they know whether such are to appear from one direction or another. When New England was first settled, the Indians about Massachusetts Bay were in a miserable fright from fear of the Tarratines; skulking from copse to copse by day, and sleeping in loathsome fens by night, to avoid them. And all the New England Indians were in constant expectation of the Mohawks; and scarce a tribe existed in any part of the country who did not constantly expect to be attacked by some other. And such was the policy of those people that no calculation could be made upon their operations or pretensions, inasmuch as the honor of an action de-