

of the present work. Although they appear to have entertained no thought of these people being descended from an European or an Asiatic race, yet their observations tend in some instances to illustrate the subject which is now before us. Those remarks are the more valuable, because they came from observation, and without any thought of the use that would afterward be made of them; and because they were made at the early period when the Americans retained more of their original character. In an enquiry like the present, some notion of the origin of the people is of great importance, because the enquirer will then have his mind directed to those traits of character which support his position; whereas, without it he may pass many of them by unobserved, for the want of perceiving their bearing on the point in view: and this was no doubt the case with the first settlers in America. They did not see the points of resemblance which we are now seeking for, because they had no conception of their existence, and their minds and their whole attention were turned to very different objects.

I may be lead astray in a contrary course. The man who thinks he is in possession of some new and valuable thought, and is desirous of establishing the proof of it, may exercise the energies of his mind to make all that occurs bend to support his opinion; in this way facts may be misrepresented or distorted for the express purpose of supporting an hypothesis. It may happen that circumstances will be detailed in this volume which have this character; for I shall not withhold even slight symptoms of resemblance which bear upon the point in question: