

PREFACE.

ALTHOUGH a Preface, when an Introduction has been given, may appear too much like going on to “more last words,” yet an apology may be found in an author’s anxiety to acquit himself on every ground connected with the nature and character of his publication: in the course of which many things may arise that require explanation.

There are hopes, fears, and wishes to be expressed; in doing this, it is no easy task to steer between the extremes of presumption and servility—few writers could now be found to approach the tribunal of an intelligent and discerning public in the following strain:—

“ My fears are lighter than my expectations ; I wrote to please myself, and I publish to please others : and this so universally, that I have not wished to rob the critic of his censure, or my friend of the laugh. * * *
 * * * * I have learnt, that where the writer would please, the man should be unknown. An Author is the reverse of all other objects, and magnifies by distance, but diminishes by approach. His private attachments must give place to public favour ; for no man can forgive his friend the ill-natured attempt of being thought wiser than himself.” *

This may now be considered a curiosity in literature, and it exhibits a perfect contrast to the inflated Dedications and pompous Prefaces of the period in which it appeared.

* Preface to “ Fables for the Female Sex,” fourth edition : London, printed for T. Davies, in Russell Street, Covent Garden, and J. Dodsley, Pall Mall, 1671.

In the volume now presented to the Public, my part is little besides that of having projected the work, and furnished the designs. It is to the kind contributors who have so amply and ably illustrated the subjects of my pencil, that I must attribute any success that may attend the work; and to them I embrace this opportunity of returning my most grateful acknowledgments.

Of the motives of some for concealing their names, it does not become me to speak; though it is hardly possible but in many instances they may be recognised. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

In the etchings I have endeavoured to show the way in which a certain class of writing may be embellished, without incurring the expense of those laboured and highly finished engravings, which, while they exhibit the talents and taste of our native ar-

tists, in many instances exclude the works they ornament from general purchase.

On the part of the Publisher, every thing has been done to render the volume worthy the attention of the Public, in all that regards the typographical department.

That I have my hopes and fears on the present occasion, I will not deny; and though time and experience have done much to damp the ardour of the one, and to diminish the effect of the other, yet still I retain enough of deference for public opinion, to render me solicitous with respect to the result.

R. D.