

PREFACE TO THE FOURTH VOLUME.

HAVING now reached another stage in our labours, namely, the commencement of the Fourth Volume of the Canadian Magazine, and having the satisfaction to find that the farther this work progresses, the more extensive is the support with which it is honoured, a brief remark or two, upon publications of the kind, may not at this time be considered as inapplicable.

Many writers of eminence have expressed their unequivocal testimony in favour of periodical publications; indeed the only argument which has ever been adduced against them is drawn from the fact of their having been prostituted by designing characters to propagate sentiments against the bonds of religious and political connections of the first importance. But such is the case with every human institution: and to argue against any thing from the abuses to which it may be made subservient; is equally unjust as the denunciation of the whole because some have been improperly applied.

Periodical publications are the germs of historical details. They catch events as they rise, note them at the moment with a strict adherence to fidelity of relation; because, the periodical writer will be afraid to deviate from truth, well knowing that, a detection and immediate refutation would follow from the knowledge of contemporaries, in whose minds every passing event is freshly stamped. Besides the writer who lives at the moment the performance is going on, can perceive and appreciate the secret motives of many an actor and place these in their proper light: which the future historian who only judges of the act by its effects cannot do. From these causes periodical publications furnish to the future compiler of history, data upon which he may proceed, superior in fidelity to oral tradition, equal in varacity to official documents and guide him in his inferences with more certainty than could be obtained from any other source.

But it is not for the future historian alone that such publications are useful. They are the epitomes of the literature, arts and sciences of the days in which they appear. They form the test book as it were of the sen-