

PREFACE.

THE JESUIT'S LETTERS.

Some Letters, supposed to have been written by, and to, an Irish Jesuit, during his residence in the United States of America.

THE letters here published, were bought at a bookseller's stall in the street, in Antwerp, for the humble consideration of a French crown. They were tied up together in an envelope, on which was written "Letters from America." From internal evidence, and as a more saleable designation, they have been denominated "The Jesuit's Letters." They are given to the world by the American editor, precisely as he has been assured they were found in manuscript, without any encroachments upon their disposition or matter. Where ** occur, the words were carefully marked out with a pen, beyond the possibility of restoration. The same method had been pursued to conceal the names; but with less success: for though it cannot be pretended that they are unquestionably reclaimed, yet great pains have brought them nearly to light; and, it is believed, those herein prefixed are almost, if not quite, the same that were subscribed to the originals. This, however, is a matter of no great moment, as it can hardly be doubted the names are fictitious, and therefore they afford no clew to the correspondents.

The purchaser from the bookseller at Antwerp, was not an American, and had not the patience, though well acquainted with the English language, in which they are written, to decypher the whole MS.; but he explored enough to awaken a common curiosity to know something of the authors. With this view, he returned to the stall, and inquired of the bookseller, from whom he obtained the papers; but could collect nothing more, than that a mendicant, some weeks before, offered them for sale, and parted with them readily for three livres.

Their existence came accidentally to the ears of an American, travelling in Flanders, to whom, on his expressing a wish to have them, they were courteously presented by the purchaser; and from whom we received them for publication.