

P R E F A C E.

THERE is scarcely anything of so much importance to a community, as a suitable SPELLING BOOK; it exerts an influence peculiarly its own, whether in regard to first impressions, or the formation of character and conduct. The sentiments acquired at school are generally retained through life.

During a residence of nearly twenty years in Canada, the compiler of the following pages often had occasion to notice the great diversity of elementary books in use, and how exceedingly inappropriate many of them were to the object for which they were professedly designed. At the present time this diversity is not diminished; and it cannot be denied that, in different sections of the country, those of United States' origin are the most numerous. While Spelling Books from England are to *us* necessarily defective, not being suited to our scenery and other localities, those of a foreign origin are liable to more serious objections.

It is very generally acknowledged, that our system of popular instruction is exceedingly inefficient; but, were it otherwise, the evil alluded to is one of great magnitude, and is in itself sufficient to excite regret in the mind of every individual possessed of any degree of *true* patriotism.