

P R E F A C E.

IN accordance with a general practice which, in many instances, however, would be 'more honoured in the breach than in the observance,' I lay before the reader this Preface, apologising for its appearance by the explanation that it is in the nature of an Introduction describing the objects and scope of the work.

To write a preface is not only a general, but an ancient, practice, as I was reminded lately when perusing a translation of a curious old book, 'The Visions of Dom Francisco De Quevedo Villegas,' 'made English,' in 1696, by Sir Roger L'Estrange, a famous man of letters contemporary with Dryden, who gives certain reasons for following the custom of writing a preface, which certainly display great candour on his part. 'This preface,' says L'Estrange, 'is merely for fashion sake, to fill a space, and please the stationer, who says 'tis neither usual nor handsome to leap immediately from the title-page to the matter.'

Far other is my object in writing these introductory lines. Briefly, it is to point out that though Travels by Sea and Land have filled countless volumes, no com-