

P R E F A C E.

ter, and not only unimproved, but unimproveable chiefly from this defect. Others speak of it, as fruitful, pleasant, and having very fine rivers. Complaints are made of its shores, as difficult and dangerous, embarrassed with rocks and shoals, and without so much as tolerable ports. In opposition to these, we find it celebrated for a fine beautiful country towards the sea, into which several large rivers fall, at the entrance of which are many large and fertile islands, and both in them and the continent, several safe and very commodious havens. The variations are as great, in reference to the worth, as in regard to the face of this extensive peninsula; if we rely on some writers, it is a poor barren despicable tract, which scarce deserves the protection it has met with. Yet as good judges, and who had equal opportunities of being acquainted with it, alledge, that it is capable of various kinds of cultivation, that there are incontestible marks of its containing rich mines, and that there is a profitable pearl fishery upon the coast. The inhabitants also have been painted in the most different colours, as ignorant, brutish, and irreclaimable by some, and