

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE AMERICAN EDITION.

THE publishers of this edition are enabled, by the purchase of casts from the plates of the original edition, to issue a book minutely and exactly corresponding with the volume printed in Edinburgh. Having been requested by them to furnish an introduction to their edition, I do so, because the dictionary appears to have been compiled upon sound principles, and with judgment and accuracy. It has the merit, too, of combining much more than is usually looked for in the dictionaries of small size, and will, I believe, be found excellent as a convenient manual for general use and reference, and also for various purposes of education.

It would plainly be inappropriate to introduce here elaborate prefatory matter in a work that has been prepared with much unpretending scholarship and good sense, and perhaps the best use it is within my ability to make of a few introductory pages, will be to give them to some miscellaneous suggestions and selections, intended in some degree to show for what reason and in what manner our language should be studied, and the help that may be found in this volume

Our English language is spreading fast and far over the world, by British colonization and American settlement, and wherever it goes, there goes along with it the voice of the Christian church, and of that law and that literature which are the joint inheritance and possession of all who speak the tongue. It becomes then a great trust, bringing with it the duties and responsibilities of a trust, to every one to whom the English language is his mother speech. It needs must, therefore, be a care and a study. It is a subject which especially, now and here, we must take heed to; for the high-wrought activity of our times is, almost