

INTRODUCTION.

1. **I**T is the duty, and ought to be the pleasure of age and experience to warn and instruct youth, and to come to the aid of inexperience. When sailors have discovered rocks or breakers, and have had the good luck to escape with life from amidst them, they, unless they be pirates or barbarians as well as sailors, point out the spots for the placing of buoys and of lights, in order that others may not be exposed to the danger which they have so narrowly escaped. What man of common humanity, having, by good luck missed being engulfed in a quagmire or quicksand, will withhold from his neighbours a knowledge of the peril without which the dangerous spots are not to be approached?

2. The great effect which correct opinions and sound principles, imbibed in early life, together with the good conduct at that age, which must naturally result from such opinions and principles; the great effect which these have on the whole course of our lives is, and must be, well known to every man of common observation. How many of us, arrived at only forty years, have to repent; nay, which of us has not to repent, or has not had to repent, that he did not at an earlier age, possess a great stock of knowledge of that kind which has an immediate effect on our personal ease and happiness; that kind of knowledge upon which the cheerfulness and the harmony of our homes depend!

3. It is to communicate a stock of this sort of knowledge, in particular, that this work is intended; knowledge, indeed, relative to education, to many sciences, to trade, agriculture, horticulture, law, government, and religion; knowledge relating, incidentally, to all these; but, the main object is to furnish that sort of knowledge to the young which but few men acquire until they be old, when it comes too late to be useful.

4. To communicate to others the knowledge that I possess has always been my taste and my delight; and few, who know anything of my progress through life, will be disposed to question my fitness for the task. Talk of rocks and breakers and quagmires and quicksands, who has ever escaped from amidst so many as I have! Thrown (by my own will, indeed) on the wide world at a very early age, not more than eleven or twelve years, without money to support, without friends to advise, and without book-learning to assist me; passing a few years dependent solely on my own labour for my subsistence; then becoming a common soldier, and leading a military life, chiefly in foreign parts, for eight years; quitting that life after really, for me, high promo-