

P R E F A C E.

I LEFT England fully determined against writing a book of travels, nay, I would not even keep a Journal during our wanderings, lest I should be tempted to jot down, and ultimately to publish, my impressions of the society and institutions in those countries which it was our good fortune to visit ; but since our return to England, friends, to whose better judgment I am bound to defer, have pressed me so strongly to print the letters which I had written during our excursion, that I have consented to do so, after adding somewhat, to give them the usual narrative form, and dividing them into chapters. This will account for the familiar tone of the Work, and for occasional repetitions.

For the politician or philosopher these pages will, I fear, have little or no interest ; written familiarly to relatives and friends at home, their staple is the gossip of travel ; and if they amuse that large class to whom gossip is welcome, and tend in any way to strengthen kindly feelings in the breasts of my English readers toward the people from whom their wandering countrywoman received so much and such constant courtesy and hospitality, I shall not regret giving to the world this Work.

BELVOIR CASTLE, 1851.