

P R E F A C E.

was found the quantity of land within the tropics in *north* and *south* latitude was nearly equal ; hence it occurred to me, that not only the *geographical*, but even the *philosophical* description might be had *nearly* true, by a new projection of the globe, in which at once the comparative quantity of land in the two hemispheres should appear ; at the same time that all the known countries should maintain their reciprocal situations, size, and figure.

This was by describing the globe in *three* parts instead of *two*, as had been *hitherto* attempted. As the polar projection is for all geographical purposes sufficiently true, from the pole to 30 deg. of latitude, two circles contain, on a polar projection, the parts of the north and south hemispheres from the poles to 30 deg. And as the plain chart is also near enough the truth from the equator to 30 deg. the tropical regions extending from the equinoctial to 30 deg. on each side of the line, are described on a slip, the length whereof is equal to the circumference of the polar part.

The Historical Collection is almost entirely a *literal* translation, which was preferred to a more polished style, lest any deviation from the expression of the original should introduce ambiguity, or render the authenticity suspected. Where the meaning appeared doubtful, or not emphatically expressed, the original passage is generally inserted at the bottom of the page.

This plan of giving a *literal* translation, was, at *least*, as disagreeable to me in writing, as it will be to the reader in his perusal : I am not insensible that the *undress* and uncouth sound of a *literal* translation is enough to frighten *all* readers except the *very few* who take up a book *merely* for information ; but it was to these *few* I have devoted my labours ;