

P R E F A C E.

IT has been frequently remarked that the productions of distant countries have received a much larger share of attention than those objects by which we are more immediately surrounded; and it is certainly true, that while numerous and costly illustrations have made us acquainted with the Ornithology of most other parts of the world, the Birds of Europe, in which we are, or ought to be, most interested, have not received that degree of attention which they naturally demand. The present work has been undertaken to supply this deficiency, and I cannot but feel highly gratified that a number of concurring circumstances have enabled me to carry my intentions into effect with comparative facility, and I hope to the entire satisfaction of the whole of the subscribers; this I am induced to believe is the case from the patronage with which the work has been honoured since its commencement.

My reasons for undertaking a work comprising the Ornithology of the whole of Europe are sufficiently obvious: in the first place, no publication of a similar kind had been completed, although several had been commenced; and secondly, a work exclusively confined to the British Fauna would never be perfect for any length of time, owing to the frequent accession of other species from various European localities; besides which I was desirous of rendering my work interesting to the continental ornithologist as well as to those of our own country. I have used my best exertions to render it as perfect as possible up to the present time, for which purpose I have visited nearly all the continental collections with the view of examining personally every bird before figuring it; but should additional species reward the zeal and ardour with which natural history is now cultivated (which I doubt not will be the case), I propose to publish them from time to time in the form of a Supplement, and by this means keep the work as nearly complete as possible. I have omitted a few of the species enumerated in the lists of continental authors, in consequence either of my never having met with specimens of the