

P R E F A C E.

I N the present work I have undertaken to perform two duties, which in English literature have been usually kept distinct, that of a translator and that of a philological commentator. Though there does not seem any reason in the nature of the case why a scrupulous attention to the text and an appreciation of the poetry of an author should exclude each other, it would appear to be a fact that in this country the two are rarely found together. In Germany the case is different: there is by no means so broad a line of demarcation drawn between them; and publications professing to exhibit both are very frequently to be seen. The explanation of this fact obviously is, that there both philology and poetry, in its widest sense, are subjects of very general interest; each is felt to have some national value, and a wish naturally arises among writers and readers to include both in one comprehensive view; while with us neither can be said to excite any great measure of thoughtful attention, so as to enter in any real extent into public education, and thus both are alike left to small classes of students, who, jealous of their own art, are slow to perceive its bearing on any other. However, though sufficiently connected, in my judgment, to admit of being handled in a single work, each of them involves many matters peculiarly its own: and on some of these it is here the place to say a few words.

It will not of course be expected that I should enter into a review of those who have preceded me in translating the