

## P R E F A C E.

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IT is not our intention to dwell on the importance of the subject treated in the following pages. We shall leave it to the reader to consider that we cannot hope to charm him with a narrative like that of Vasari, copious, varied, relieved by lively local tints, and mellow with age;—nor captivate him with a sketch as curt and light as that of Lanzi. We believe that the history of Italian art has received such valuable additions from a direct comparison of extant works among each other, and from the discovery of documentary evidence in archives hitherto inaccessible or unsearched, that no new edition of Vasari, even with the completest commentary, would satisfy the demands which may justly be made upon writers of the present day. That these demands will be satisfied we do not pretend to anticipate. The volumes now offered to the public are however an honest—an earnest effort to that end.

We shall not enter into the considerations which dictated the form into which the work has become compressed. We shall not attempt to recapitulate