

P R E F A C E.

WHEN this work was commenced, a little more than twelve years ago, the main object in view was the collection of the widely scattered data bearing upon the phytogeography of the region, in order to ascertain to what extent the phenomena agreed with, or deviated from, those obtaining in the Animal Kingdom, and also to supply as complete a synopsis of the flora as possible, so that its general character, relationships, and connections might be critically elaborated. Nevertheless, it was hoped that it would at the same time prove a substantial and useful contribution to Systematic Botany; and as the work proceeded greater attention was bestowed upon this branch of the subject, so that ultimately it grew far beyond the dimensions originally laid down. As this great task was undertaken by one person, it was necessary to keep it within limits as narrow as were consistent with the aim in view, to ensure a reasonable prospect of its being completed. A critical determination of the vast amount of material in the Kew Herbarium alone was out of the question, to say nothing of the supplemental collections in other establishments; yet it was difficult to decide where to draw the line. At first it was thought practicable to include the named materials at Kew, the British Museum, and Paris—the first forming a wide and trustworthy basis for genera, and largely also for species, resulting from the labours of Bentham and Hooker, in connection with their now happily completed invaluable ‘*Genera Plantarum*’; but this plan had to be abandoned in consequence of the risk of confusion arising from diverse determinations in the various herbaria; and it was decided not to attempt doing more than could be accomplished at Kew. This course has been adversely criticised, but having intentionally and purposely thus curtailed the scope of the work, such criticisms call for no further reply. Considering that, for obvious