

*Richard* P R E F A C E.

3

termining for themselves. And I am extremely happy that the general approbation already given of it by the Reviewers (who must be allowed to be competent judges) joined to that of an impartial Publick, have crowned my labours with a success that has more than exceeded my most sanguine expectations.

On my first view of Mr. Buchanan's essay towards establishing this *Standard* in question (in which the sounds of words are expressed by varying their orthography) reflecting on the disadvantages which must accrue to youth who make use of it, to learn the pronunciation of the English, I began to consider that a more rational method was practicable; and that a work of this nature might not only be calculated to convey to the reader the *true* pronunciation of words, but that it might also comprise the qualities and requisites essential to other dictionaries. My intention and plan of the work, being communicated to persons of learning and judgment, I was persuaded to persevere, until, at my leisure hours from business, I had brought it to the state in which you now find it.

That the standard of our language can never be fixed by a rational division only of the words into syllables, without certain characters denoting the different sounds of the vowels and consonants, will instantly appear, by the slightest inspection into the *Key* to this work, where you will find them arranged in all their variations. Mr. Sheridan, indeed, in his *Lectures* on the art of reading prose, promised shortly to present the public with a rhetorical grammar and pronouncing dictionary; but, unluckily, this work has not yet made its appearance.—This celebrated author, taking a cursory view of the low state to which oratory is reduced, after ranking the whole body of clergy as schoolboys, schoolmasters as blockheads, and his cotemporary authors no better than *old women*, says, “Nothing can be a stronger proof of  
“ the gross errors into which literary men fell, in their several grammars  
“ and treatises upon this subject, than that the best of them have mistaken  
“ diphthongs for simple sounds, and simple sounds for diphthongs; compound  
“ consonants for single, and single for compound; —nay, what is still more  
“ extraordinary,