

ii *P R E F A C E.*

high notions of his genius are not now entertained in many places, or amongst many persons; and, as we often see in in other particulars, his works are now as much degraded below their real value, as they were formerly exalted above it; so that a candid reader, who had never perused any of them, would naturally conclude, from the general nature of the human mind, that the truth must be found between the two opposite opinions, and that he neither merited the unlimited praise which has been bestowed on him, or deserved the contempt with which he has been treated. It cannot be supposed that an author, who professed to treat of every thing which is an object of human knowledge, and even to exhaust every subject that could come under the examination of human reason, should not have made many mistakes: but on the other hand, it would
be