

P R E F A C E.      iii

be very unreasonable to admit, that so great a part of the learned world as have paid implicit obedience to his dictates, should have been entirely governed by fashion and prejudice, without once daring to use their own reason, in examining into the truth of the system they adopted: so that would we acquire a just standard of the merit of this celebrated philosopher, we must abate something from what is said of him, both by his admirers and his despisers.

If any one should wonder from whence such strong prejudices on each side could possibly arise, and how it could happen, that the same works, at different times, should be considered by different persons, of nearly equal abilities in other respects, as containing either nothing at all valuable, or almost every thing, it may, I think, be thus accounted for: whenever there is