
T H E

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION.

WHEN I consider what veneration is shewn to Antiquity, how often it happens (to omit other instances) that an immense price is given by the curious for a fragment of an old statue, either to adorn their cabinets, or to serve as a model for statuaries to copy after in works of that kind; and what pains those artists take to come up to their pattern: on the other hand, when I observe that the great and illustrious examples of several ancient Kingdoms and Republics which are recorded in History, that the noble deeds of former Kings, Generals, Citizens, Legislators and others, who have consecrated their labours to the service and glory of their country, are now rather admired than imitated, and indeed, so far from being followed by any one, that almost every body is indifferent about them to such a degree, that there seem to be hardly any traces left amongst us of the virtue of the Ancients, I cannot help being both surprized and concerned at it; and so much the more, when I have taken notice, that in civil differences, as well as in the various maladies that are incident to mankind, we always have recourse to such decisions and prescriptions as have been handed down to us from our Ancestors. For, in fact, the Civil Law is nothing more than a collection of determinations and decrees, that have been made by ancient Lawyers, which being now digested into due order and method, serve as precedents to direct our magistrates at this day in the distribution of justice. And what is the knowledge of Medicine, but the result of former experience delivered down from the Professors of it in old times; and by which our Physicians at present regulate their practice? But in forming a Republic, in supporting a State, in governing a Kingdom, in disciplining an Army, in conducting a War, in extending an Empire, there is now neither Prince,