

The Epistle to the Reader.

if the Endeavours of ingenious and industrious Men had not been much cumbred with the learned but frivolous use of uncouth, affected, or unintelligible Terms, introduced into the Sciences, and there made an Art of to that Degree, that Philosophy, which is nothing but the true Knowledge of Things, was thought unfit or incapable to be brought into well-bred Company, and polite Conversation. Vague and insignificant Forms of Speech, and Abuse of Language, have so long passed for Mysteries of Science: And hard or misapply'd Words, with little or no meaning, have, by Prescription, such a Right to be mistaken for deep Learning and height of Speculation, that it will not be easie to persuade either those who speak, or those who hear them, that they are but the Covers of Ignorance, and hindrance of true Knowledge. To break in upon this Sanctuary of Vanity and Ignorance, will be, I suppose, some Service to humane Understanding: Though so few are apt to think, they deceive, or are deceived in the Use of Words; or that the Language of the Sect they are of, has any Faults in it, which ought to be examined or corrected, that I hope I shall be pardon'd, if I have in the Third Book dwelt long on this Subject; and endeavoured to make it so plain, that neither the inverteatness of the Mischief, nor the prevalency of the Fashion, shall be any Excuse for those, who will not take Care about the meaning of their own Words, and will not suffer the Significancy of their Expressions to be enquired into.

I have been told that a short Epitome of this Treatise, which was printed about two Years since, was by some condemned without reading, because innate Ideas were denied in it; they too hastily concluding, that if innate Ideas were not supposed, there would be little left, either of the Notion or Proof of Spirits. If any one take the like Offence at the Entrance of this Treatise, I shall desire him to read it through: and then I hope he will be convinced, that the taking away false Foundations is not to the prejudice, but advantage of Truth; which is never injur'd or endanger'd so much, as when mixed with, or built on Falshood.

One thing more I must advertise my Reader of, and that is, That the Summary of each Section is printed in Italick Characters, whereby the Reader may find the Contents almost as well as if it had been printed in the Margin by the side, if a little allowance be made for the Grammatical Construction, which in the Text it self could not always be so ordered, as to make perfect Propositions, which yet by the Words printed in Italick, may be easily guessed at.

T H E