



## PREFACE.

I must be allowed to say a few words in explanation of the contents of this little volume, which is truly what its name sets forth — a book of commonplaces, and nothing more. If I have never, in any work I have ventured to place before the public, aspired to *teach*, (being myself a learner in all things,) at least I have hitherto done my best to deserve the indulgence I have met with; and it would pain me if it could be supposed that such indulgence had rendered me presumptuous or careless.

For many years I have been accustomed to make a memorandum of any thought which might come across me — (if pen and paper were at hand), and to mark (and remark) any passage in a book which excited either a sympathetic or an antagonistic feeling. This collection of notes accumulated insensibly from day to day. The volumes on Shakspeare's Women, on Sacred and Legendary Art, and various other productions, sprung from seed thus lightly and casually sown, which, I hardly know how, grew up and expanded into a regular, readable form, with