

PREFACE.

In the publication of this work, which was composed chiefly for the use of my own scholars, I am influenced by a thorough conviction and experience of its utility.

Its object is to remove the greatest obstacle to the acquirement of the French language, by fixing indelibly in the memory *the genders of the French nouns*; without a perfect knowledge of which, it is impossible to speak that language with even tolerable propriety.

French is now learned by almost every class of the British youth, and its importance duly appreciated. It is a species of universal passport—a general medium of communication on the Continent. In the foreign tour and the domestic circle, in war and in commerce, this language is of incalculable value. In the counting-house and the camp, in the splendid assembly and in the distant port, those who can write and speak French possess a decided advantage over those who cannot.*

* Smollett (George II. chap. xi.) relates, that in the night which preceded the battle on the heights of Abraham, General Wolfe and his army, who were sailing down the River St. Lawrence in the dark, were saved from defeat by the readiness of an English officer, who replied so skillfully to the challenges of the French sentinels, that