

INTRODUCTION.

Not the forestalling the *Abbe's* publication by London editions, both in French and English, and the consequent sale of the work, and the consequent sale of the work, are only the slender injuries which such conduct may occasion. A man's opinions, whether written or in thought, are his own, and he pleases to publish them himself; and it is adding cruelty to injustice to make him the author of what future reflection or better information might occasion him to suppress or amend. There are declarations and sentiments in the *Abbe's* *Discours*, which, for my own part, I did not expect to find, and such as himself, or a friend, might have seen occasion to change; but the anticipated piracy effectually prevented him the opportunity, and precipitated him into difficulties, which, had he not been for such ungenerous fraud, might not have happened.

This mode of making an author appear before his time, will appear still more improper, when we consider how exceedingly few men there are in any country who are at once, and without the aid of reflection and revision, combining warm passions with a cool temper, and the full expansion of imagination with the natural and necessary gravity of judgment, so as to be rightly balanced within themselves, and to make a reader feel, fancy, and understand justly at the same time. To call down powers of the mind into action at once, in a manner that neither shall interrupt and thus each shall aid and vibrate the other, is a talent very rarely possessed.

It often happens, that the weight of an argument is lost by the exit of setting it off, or the judgment disordered by an intemperate irritation of the passions: yet a certain degree of animation must be felt by the writer, and raised in the reader, in order to interest the attention; and a sufficient scope given to the imagination, to enable it to create in the mind a scene of the persons, characters, and circumstances of the subject; for without these, the judgment will feel little or no excitement to office, and its determinations will be cold, feeble, and imperfect. But if either or both of the two former are raised too high, or heated too much, the judgment will be affected from its seat, and the whole matter, however important in itself, will diminish into a pantomime of the mind, in which we create images that promote no other purpose than amusement.

The *Abbe's* writings bear evident marks of that extension and rapidity of thinking, and quickness of passion, which of all others requires revision, and the more particularly so when applied to the living characters of men, as is evident in a part of his work. His last information as to the progress of the war, and an error before he knew the progress of it, and as the *Abbe* has himself since intimated to France, by dissolving certain circumstances of the war, and the characters of the parties therein, it becomes some apology for him, that these errors were precipitated into the world by the anxiety of an ungenerous country.

Itself of the honour and service of letters and the improvement of France, which sufficient laws are made to prevent depredations on literary property. It is well worth remarking, that Russia, who but a few years ago was scarcely known in Europe, owes a large share of her present greatness to the close attention she has paid, and the wise encouragement she has given to every branch of science and learning; and we have almost the same success in France, in the reign of Lewis XIV.