

PREFACE

TO THE THIRD EDITION.

IN the Prefaces to the previous Editions of this work, several remarks were made which it is not necessary now to repeat to the same extent. That a History of the Sciences, executed as this is, has some value in the eyes of the Public, is sufficiently proved by the circulation which it has obtained. I am still able to say that I have seen no objection urged against the plan of the work, and scarcely any against the details. The attempt to throw the history of each science into EPOCHS at which some great and cardinal discovery was made, and to arrange the subordinate events of each history as belonging to the PRELUDES and the SEQUELS of such Epochs, appears to be assented to, as conveniently and fairly exhibiting the progress of scientific truth. Such a view being assumed, as it was a constant light and guide to the writer in his task, so will it also, I think, make the view of the reader far more clear and comprehensive than it could otherwise be. With regard to the manner in which this plan has been carried into effect with reference to particular writers and their researches, as I have said, I have seen scarcely any objection made. I was aware, as I stated at the outset, of the difficulty and delicacy of the office which I had undertaken; but I had various considerations to encourage me to go through it; and I had a trust, which I