

[two rules]

PREFACE.

T^{HE} writing of Characters was a Kind of Wit much in Fashion in the Beginning of the last Century. The two principal Authors in this Way were Sir Thomas Overbury, and Dr. John Earle Tutor to Prince Charles in 1643, and after the Restoration Dean of Westminster, and successively Bishop of Worcester and Salisbury. How agreeable these Sorts of Essays were to the public Taste may be judged from Sir Thomas's little Book having fourteen Editions before 1632, and the Bishop's six between 1628 and 1633. Whether Butler has equalled or excelled them, and what Place he is to hold in this Class of Writers must be left to the Decision of the Public, as the Interest and Prejudice of a Publisher may render me a suspected or an incompetent Judge. The Reader will have an Opportunity of determining for himself, as they have all attempted to draw the same Pictures.

As in such a Variety of Characters there must be some drawn from Originals in general the same, and only differenced by particular Circumstances, the same Observations are sometimes repeated. Whether the Author in this Case requires any Apology must be left to his Judges the Critics ; it is enough for me that I can say I have done him Justice in publishing them.

As most of these Characters are dated when they were composed, I can inform the curious, that they were chiefly drawn up from 1667 to 1669, at which time, as has been before observed, Butler resided in Wales under the Protection of Lord Carbery.
