

## PREFACE.

I SHALL employ a few pages in giving a very short historical account of the authors who have treated of mineralogy, with the view of enabling the reader to appreciate more fully the merits of the Wernerian system, on which the present work is founded.

The mineralogical writings of Pliny, Theophrastus; and Dioscorides, have made us acquainted with the luxury of the Romans and Grecians, and their fine works of art; but they contain nothing of system, and very little of tolerable description. The first systematic mineralogist was undoubtedly the celebrated Saxon miner George Agricola. He was also the first who investigated the external characters of minerals, determined them with any degree of accuracy; and used them with judgment in the description of fossils. In his system he divides minerals into those which are composed of homogeneous parts, and those composed of heterogeneous parts. The homogeneous, or simple minerals, he subdivides into four classes, which are entitled, 1. Terra, 2. Succus con-

a cretus,