

coverer himself. I shall, therefore, give a separate consideration to this part of the subject. It may be proper, however, in the first place, to make a few observations on the progress of the doctrine, independently of these physical speculations.

Sect. 2.—Diffusion of the Copernican Theory.

THE diffusion of the Copernican opinions in the world did not take place rapidly at first. Indeed, it was necessarily some time before the progress of observation and of theoretical mechanics gave the heliocentric doctrine that superiority in argument, which now makes us wonder that men should have hesitated when it was presented to them. Yet there were some speculators of this kind, who were attracted at once by the enlarged views of the universe which it opened to them. Among these was the unfortunate Giordano Bruno of Nola, who was burnt as a heretic at Rome in 1600. The heresies which led to his unhappy fate were, however, not his astronomical opinions, but a work which he published in England, and dedicated to Sir Philip Sydney, under the title of *Spaccio della Bestia Trionfante*, and which is understood to contain a bitter satire of religion and the papal government. Montucla conceives that, by his rashness in visiting Italy after putting forth such a work, he compelled the government to act against him. Bruno embraced the Copernican opinions at an early period, and connected with them the belief in innumerable worlds besides that which we inhabit; as also certain metaphysical or theological doctrines, which he called the Nolan philosophy. In 1591 he published *De innumerabilibus, immenso, et infigurabili, seu de Universo et Mundis*, in which he maintains that each star is a sun, about which revolve planets like our earth; but this opinion is mixed up with a large mass of baseless verbal speculations.

Giordano Bruno is a disciple of Copernicus on whom we may look with peculiar interest, since he probably had a considerable share in introducing the new opinions into England;³ although other persons, as Recorde, Field, Dee, had adopted it nearly thirty years earlier; and Thomas Digges ten years before, much more expressly. Bruno visited this country in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and speaks of her and of her councillors in terms of praise, which appear to show that

³ See Burton's *Anat. Mel. Prof.* "Some prodigious tenet or paradox of the earth's motion," &c. "Bruno," &c.