

his book was intended for English readers; though he describes the mob which was usually to be met with in the streets of London with expressions of great disgust: "Una plebe la quale in essere irrespetevole, incivile, rozza, rustica, selvatica, et male allevata, non cede ad altra che pascer possa la terra nel suo seno."⁴ The work to which I refer is *La Cena de le Cenere*, and narrates what took place at a supper held on the evening of Ash Wednesday (about 1583, see p. 145 of the book), at the house of Sir Fulk Greville, in order to give "Il Nolano" an opportunity of defending his peculiar opinions. His principal antagonists are two "Dottori d' Oxonia," whom Bruno calls Nundinio and Torquato. The subject is not treated in any very masterly manner on either side; but the author makes himself have greatly the advantage not only in argument, but in temper and courtesy: and in support of his representations of "pedantesca, ostinatissima ignoranza et presunzione, mista con una rustica inciviltà, che farebbe prevaricar la pazienza di Giobbe," in his opponents, he refers to a public disputation which he had held at Oxford with these doctors of theology, in presence of Prince Alasco, and many of the English nobility.⁵

Among the evidences of the difficulties which still lay in the way of the reception of the Copernican system, we may notice Bacon, who, as is well known, never gave a full assent to it. It is to be observed, however, that he does not reject the opinion of the earth's motion in so peremptory and dogmatical a manner as he is sometimes accused of doing: thus in the *Thema Cœli* he says, "The earth, then, being supposed to be at rest (for that now appears to us the *more true* opinion)." And in his tract *On the Cause of the Tides*, he says, "If the tide of the sea be the extreme and diminished limit of the diurnal motion of the heavens, it will follow that the earth is immovable; or at least that it moves with a much slower motion than the water." In the *Descriptio Globi Intellectualis* he gives his reasons for not accepting the heliocentric theory. "In the system of Copernicus there are many and grave difficulties: for the threefold motion with which he encumbers the earth is a serious inconvenience; and the separation of the sun from the planets, with which he has so many affections in common, is likewise a harsh step; and the introduction of so many immovable bodies into nature, as when he makes the sun and the stars immovable, the bodies which are peculiarly lucid and radiant; and his making the moon adhere to the earth in a sort of epicycle; and some

⁴ *Opere di Giordano Bruno*, vol. i. p. 146.

⁵ *Ib.* vol. i. p. 179.