

his philosophy in the universities of England. These are often represented as places where bigotry and ignorance resist, as long as it is possible to resist, the invasion of new truths. We cannot doubt that such opinions have prevailed extensively, when we find an intelligent and generally temperate writer, like the late Professor Playfair of Edinburgh, so far possessed by them, as to be incapable of seeing, or interpreting, in any other way, any facts respecting Oxford and Cambridge. Yet, notwithstanding these opinions, it will be found that, in the English universities, new views, whether in science or in other subjects, have been introduced as soon as they were clearly established;—that they have been diffused from the few to the many more rapidly there than elsewhere occurs;—and that from these points, the light of newly-discovered truths has most usually spread over the land. In most instances undoubtedly there has been something of a struggle, on such occasions, between the old and the new opinions. Few men's minds can at once shake off a familiar and consistent system of doctrines, and adopt a novel and strange set of principles as soon as presented; but all can see that one change produces many, and that change, in itself, is a source of inconvenience and danger. In the case of the admission of the Newtonian opinions into Cambridge and Oxford, however, there are no traces even of a struggle. Cartesianism had never struck its roots deep in this country; that is, the peculiar hypotheses of Descartes. The Cartesian books, such, for instance, as that of Rohault, were indeed in use; and with good reason, for they contained by far the best treatises on most of the physical sciences, such as Mechanics, Hydrostatics, Optics, and Formal Astronomy, which could then be found. But I do not conceive that the Vortices were ever dwelt upon as a matter of importance in our academic teaching. At any rate, if they were brought among us, they were soon dissipated. Newton's College, and his University, exulted in his fame, and did their utmost to honor and aid him. He was exempted by the king from the obligation of taking orders, under which the fellows of Trinity College in general are; by his college he was relieved from all offices which might interfere, however slightly, with his studious employments, though he resided within the walls of the society thirty-five years, almost without the interruption of a month.² By the University he was elected their representative in parliament in 1688,

² His name is nowhere found on the college-books, as appointed to any of the offices which usually pass down the list of resident fellows in rotation. This might be owing in part, however, to his being Lucasian Professor. The constancy of his