

Fresnel to Young," in November, 1824 : "For a long time that sensibility, or that vanity, which people call love of glory, is much blunted in me. I labor much less to catch the suffrages of the public, than to obtain an inward approval which has always been the sweetest reward of my efforts. Without doubt I have often wanted the spur of vanity to excite me to pursue my researches in moments of disgust and discouragement. But all the compliments which I have received from MM. Arago, De Laplace, or Biot, never gave me so much pleasure as the discovery of a theoretical truth, or the confirmation of a calculation by experiment."

Though Young and Fresnel were in years the contemporaries of many who are now alive, we must consider ourselves as standing towards them in the relation of posterity. The Epoch of Induction in Optics is past ; we have now to trace the Verification and Application of the true theory.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONFIRMATION AND EXTENSION OF THE UNDULATORY THEORY.

AFTER the undulatory theory had been developed in all its main features, by its great authors, Young and Fresnel, although it bore marks of truth that could hardly be fallacious, there was still here, as in the case of other great theories, a period in which difficulties were to be removed, objections answered, men's minds familiarized to the new conceptions thus presented to them ; and in which, also, it might reasonably be expected that the theory would be extended to facts not at first included in its domain. This period is, indeed, that in which we are living ; and we might, perhaps with propriety, avoid the task of speaking of our living contemporaries. But it would be unjust to the theory not to notice some of the remarkable events, characteristic of such a period, which have already occurred ; and this may be done very simply.

¹¹ I was able to give this, and some other extracts, from the then unedited correspondence of Young and Fresnel, by the kindness of (the Dean of Ely) Professor Peacock, of Trinity College, Cambridge, whose Life of Dr. Young has since been published.