

Sect. 3.—Reception of the Discovery.

WITHOUT dwelling long upon the circumstances of the general reception of this doctrine, we may observe that it was, for the most part, readily accepted by his countrymen, but that abroad it had to encounter considerable opposition. Although, as we have seen, his predecessors had approached so near to the discovery, men's minds were by no means as yet prepared to receive it. Several physicians denied the truth of the opinion, among whom the most eminent was Riolan, professor at the Collège de France. Other writers, as usually happens in the case of great discoveries, asserted that the doctrine was ancient, and even that it was known to Hippocrates. Harvey defended his opinion with spirit and temper; yet he appears to have retained a lively recollection of the disagreeable nature of the struggles in which he was thus involved. At a later period of his life, Ent,¹⁵ one of his admirers, who visited him, and urged him to publish the researches on generation, on which he had long been engaged, gives this account of the manner in which he received the proposal: "And would you then advise me, (smilingly replies the doctor,) to quit the tranquillity of this haven, wherein I now calmly spend my days, and again commit myself to the unfaithful ocean? You are not ignorant how great troubles my lucubrations, formerly published, have raised. Better it is, certainly, at some time, to endeavor to grow wise at home in private, than by the hasty divulgation of such things to the knowledge whereof you have attained with vast labor, to stir up tempests that may deprive you of your leisure and quiet for the future."

His merits were, however, soon generally recognized. He was¹⁶ made physician to James the First, and afterwards to Charles the First, and attended that unfortunate monarch in the civil war. He had the permission of the parliament to accompany the king on his leaving London; but this did not protect him from having his house plundered in his absence, not only of its furniture, but, which he felt more, of the records of his experiments. In 1652, his brethren of the College of Physicians placed a marble bust of him in their hall, with an inscription recording his discoveries; and two years later, he was nominated to the office of President of the College, which however he

¹⁵ Epist. Dedic. to *Anatom. Exercit.*

¹⁶ *Biog. Brit.*