

INTRODUCTION.

THE earliest records of Collegiate Institutions afford convincing evidence, that they sprung from an earnest desire entertained by learned and enterprising men, to disseminate among others the knowledge they had acquired after careful and fruitful study; and to awaken and promote an appetite and love for those literary pursuits which they had found so captivating and beneficial. In carrying out so noble and philanthropic a design, they associated themselves for the purpose of delivering public instruction, to all who were desirous of embracing the opportunity and advantage thus offered to them. The schools then formed, became the models on which the establishments of future ages were founded by public authority, under the style of Universities.

The relative antiquity of the several schools of this early period has been the cause of much learned and keen controversy. Whether Paris or Bologna should take precedence, or whether Oxford and Cambridge should not share in the renown of being the first pioneers of learning with their Continental contemporaries, although a question of peculiar interest to the antiquarian Scholar, is not altogether relevant to our present purpose. The principal and important points which we seek to establish are, that from their commencement, these institutions have been recog-