

ton's discovery of the law of the inverse square of the distance he wrote to Halley,—“ And now having sincerely told you the case between Mr. Hooke and me, I hope I shall be free for the future from the prejudice of his letters. I have considered how best to compose the present dispute, and I think it may be done by the enclosed scholium to the Fourth Proposition.” This scholium was—“ The inverse law of gravity holds in all the celestial motions, as was discovered also independently by my countrymen Wren, Hooke and Halley.” That may have been true in a certain sense, but it must be remembered that these “ my countrymen ” had only barely suggested the law but had given no reason or proof of it.

I cannot forbear at this point quoting some eloquent passages from that classic Sir David Brewster's *Life of Newton*.

“ The *Principia* will be memorable not only in the annals of one science or of one country, but it will form an epoch in the history of the world, and will ever be regarded as the brightest page in the records of human reason,—a work, may we not add which would be read with delight in every planet of our system—in every system of the universe. What a glorious privilege was it to have been the author of the *Principia* ! There was but one earth upon whose form and tides and movements the philosopher could exercise his genius,—one moon, whose perturbations and inequalities and actions he could study,—one sun, whose controlling force and apparent motions he could calculate and determine,—one system of planets, whose mutual disturbances could tax his highest reason,—one system of comets, whose eccentric paths he could explore and rectify,—and one universe of stars, to whose binary and multiple combinations he could extend the law of terrestrial gravity. To have been the chosen sage summoned to the study of that earth, these systems, and that universe ; the favored lawgiver to worlds unnumbered, the high-priest in the temple of boundless space, was a privilege that could be granted but to one member of the human family, and to have executed the task was an achievement which in its magnitude can be measured only by the infinite in space, and in