

Sometimes a discovery seems to be evolved from the gradual progress of human knowledge, which has advanced so near to its borders that it cannot long escape detection; and though in such cases the men of keenest intellect may be the first to detect it, the merit of the discovery belongs in great measure to the age in which they live. Hence it often happens that the same discovery is made contemporaneously by different persons, and suspicions of piracy are entertained without any foundation in fact. Thus it was with the calculus which has proved so mighty an instrument in the hands of modern mathematicians, and respecting whose discovery a fierce war of words was carried on between English and Continental savans, the method having been elaborated independently and contemporaneously by Newton, under the name of Fluxions, and by LEIBNITZ, under that of the Differential Calculus. In like manner (excepting the disputes) our own age has witnessed the discovery of the planet Neptune by calculations conducted independently by ADAMS in England, and LEVERRIER in Paris, their numerical results agreeing closely, and being obtained within a few months of the same date.

On the principle that "to him who hath shall be given," tradition has ever been prone to ascribe to heroes more than their due; and discoverers are frequently credited by popular opinion with that which does not belong to them. For instance in speaking of HARVEY as the discoverer of the circulation of the blood, many persons entertain the erroneous belief that before his time the blood was supposed to stand still in the vessels, and that he was the first to discover that it flowed—a belief which certainly gives our forefathers small credit for intelligence, as if, with the beating of the heart and the throbbing of the pulse, patent to their observation, they could possibly have rested in the assurance that the blood stood still. Harvey's discovery was not the fact of the blood