James Savage

Memorabilia; Or Recollections, Historical, Biographical, and Antiquarian

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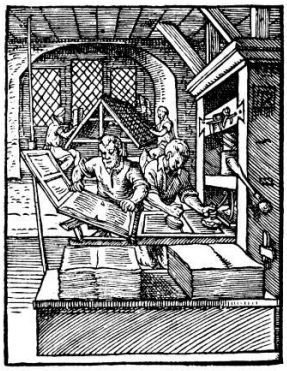

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Dr. KENNICOTT.

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Dr. Kennicott was the son of the parish clerk of Totness, once master of a charity school in that town. At an early age young Kennicott took the care of the school, and in that situation wrote some verses, addressed to the Hon. Mrs. Courtenay, which recommended him to her notice, and to that of many neighbouring gentlemen, who laudably opened a subscription to send him to Oxford.

The following inscription, written by Dr. Kennicott, is engraven on the tomb of his parents:

As Virtue should be of good Report,
Sacred be this humble Monument to the Memory of
BENJAMIN KENNICOTT,
Parish Clerk of Totness,
and ELIZABETH his Wife;
The latter an example of every Christian Duty,
The former animated with the warmest zeal, regulated by the
best good sense, and both constantly exerted
for the salvation of himself and others.
Reader! soon shalt thou die also;
And as a Candidate for Immortality, strike thy breast and say,
“Let me live the life of the righteous,that my
latter end may be like his.”
Trifling are the dates of Time, where the subject is Eternity.
Erected by their Son, B. Kennicott, D. D.
Canon of Christ Church, Oxford.

It is said that when Dr. Kennicott took orders, he came to officiate in his clerical capacity in his native town,—when his

father, as parish clerk, proceeded to place the surplice on his shoulders, a struggle ensued between the modesty of the son and the honest pride of the parent, who insisted on paying that respect to his son which he had been accustomed to shew to other clergymen; to this filial obedience he was obliged to submit. A circumstance is added, that his mother had often declared she should never be able to support the joy of hearing her son preach; and that on her attendance at the church, for the first time, she was so overcome as to be taken out in a state of temporary insensibility.

The following Letter from Dr. Kennicott to the Rev. William Daddo has been preserved:

"*To the Rev. Mr. Daddo, in Tiverton, Devon.*

"*Wadh. Coll. Mar. 30, 1744.*

"Rev. and Hon. Sir,

"Gratitude to benefactors is the great law of nature, and lest I should violate what was ever sacred, I presume to lay the following before you.

"There are, Sir, in the world, gentlemen who confine their regards to self, or the circle of their own acquaintance, and there are (happy experience convinces me) who command their influence to enlarge and exert itself on persons remotely situate, both by fortune and education. To you, Sir, belongs the honour of this encomium,—to me the pleasure of the obligation, and as I am now first at leisure in the place whither your goodness has transplanted me, I lay this acknowledgment before you, as one of the movers in this system of exalted generosity; for when I consider myself as

surrounded with benefactors, there seems a bright resemblance of the now exploded system of Ptolemy, in which, Sir, (you know) the heavenly bodies revolved around the central earth which was thus rendered completely blest by the contribution of their cheering and benign influence.

“And now, Sir, the sentiments of duty rise so warm within me, that every expression of thanks seems faint, and I am lost in endeavours after a suitable acknowledgment of my obligations.

“But I know, Sir, whom I am now addressing; I know those who most deserve can least bear praise, and that your goodness is so great, as even to reject the very thanks of the grateful; like the sun in its splendour, which forbids the eye that offers to admire it.

“That Heaven may reward yourself and Mrs. Daddo with its best favours, and console you under your parental sorrows, is my daily and fervent prayer; and I shall esteem it one of the great honours of my life to be favoured at your leisure with any commands or advices you shall condescend to bestow on

Rev. Sir,

Your dutiful and obliged Servant,

BENJAMIN KENNICOTT.”

The Rev. William Daddo was for many years head-master of Blundell’s Free School, in Tiverton, where young Kennicott received the rudiments of his classical education. Mr. Daddo having acquired a considerable fortune from the emoluments of his school, quitted Tiverton, and retired to Bow-hill House, in the neighbourhood of Exeter, and there

died many years ago, leaving a daughter, an only child, afterwards married to the Rev. Mr. Terry.

REMARKABLE HISTORICAL COINCIDENCES.

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Among the curiosities in the British Museum are shewn two helmets; the one Roman, found in the ground on which the battle of Cannæ was fought, 216 years before Christ, and the other made of feathers, brought from one of the South Sea Islands, by Captain Cook. On comparing these helmets, the shape will be found exactly similar, though the latter was made by an uncivilized people living at the distance of more than 2000 years since the battle of Cannæ was fought, and who had never even heard of the Roman name.

A second coincidence is found in the same collection. Two breast-plates are shewn to the visitors, exactly corresponding in uniformity of shape, though made of different materials, the one taken from the bosom of an Egyptian Mummy, which had been dissected, if I may be allowed to use the term, in the Museum, and the other brought by Captain Cook, among various other curiosities, from the South Sea Islands.

A third coincidence is the mode of cookery practised by the South Sea Islanders as described by Captain Cook, especially in roasting their hogs. This is by means of hot stones placed in a hole dug in the ground. In Ossian’s Poems the reader will find that the Caledonians of that time made use of the same method in cooking their hogs for the table.

The extinction of the Roman Empire in the West, about the year 476, by Odoacer, King of Italy, was attended by one of the most memorable coincidences in the history of mankind. The patrician Orestes had married the daughter of Count *Romulus*, of Petovio in Noricum; the name of *Augustus*, notwithstanding the jealousy of power, was known at Aquileia as a familial surname; and the appellations of the two great founders, the first of the city of Rome, and the second of the Roman monarchy, were strangely united in the last of their successors. The son of Orestes succeeded to the throne of the Western Empire, and assumed and disgraced the names of Romulus Augustus; the first was corrupted into Momyllus by the Greeks, and the second has been changed by the Latins into the contemptible diminutive Augustulus. The life of this inoffensive youth, the last Sovereign of the Roman Empire in the West, was spared by the generous clemency of Odoacer, who dismissed him, with his whole family, from the imperial palace, fixed his annual allowance at 6000 pieces of Gold, and assigned the castle of Lucullus, in Campania, for the place of his exile or retirement.

CHARLES XII. OF SWEDEN.

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That Charles the twelfth did not fall by a shot from the walls of Fredericshall, as is commonly supposed, but met his death from a nearer and more secret hand, has been fully ascertained; and M. Megret, a French Engineer, who accompanied him, was, no doubt, concerned in the murder. Many years afterwards, one Cronsted, an officer, on his death bed, confessed that he had himself, at the instigation of the Prince of Hesse, brother-in-law of Charles, and whose wife was declared Queen of Sweden, fired the shot that killed the unfortunate monarch.

In the arsenal at Stockholm, the Swedes preserve, with great care, the clothes he was habited in at the time he fell. The coat is a plain blue cloth regimental one, such as every common soldier wore. Round the waist he had a broad buff leathern belt, in which hung his sword. The hat is torn only about an inch square, in that part of it which lies over the temple, and certainly would have been much more injured by a large shot. His gloves are of very fine leather, and as the left one is perfectly clean and unsoiled could only have been newly put on. Voltaire says that the instant the King received the shot, he had the force and courage to put his hand to his sword, and lay in that posture. The right hand glove is covered in the inside with blood, and the belt at that part where the hilt of his sword lay, is likewise bloody, so that it seems clear, he had previously put his hand to his

head, on receiving the shot, before he attempted to draw his sword and make resistance.

In the same case that contains his clothes is preserved the cap he wore on the terrible day at Bender, when he so desperately defended himself against the Turks. It is of fur; and has one tremendous cut on the side, which must have been within a hair’s breadth of there ending the career of this wonderful man.

BRITISH PEARLS.

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The River Conway in North Wales was of considerable importance, even before the Roman invasion, for the Pearl muscle, (the *Mya Margaritifera* of Linnæus) and Suetonius acknowledged, that one of his inducements for undertaking the subjugation of Wales, was the Pearl Fishery carried forwards in that river. According to Pliny, the muscles, called by the natives *Kregindilin*, were sought for with avidity by the Romans, and the pearls found within them were highly valued; in proof of which it is asserted, that Julius Cæsar, dedicated a breastplate set with British Pearls to Venus Genetrix, and placed it in her temple at Rome. A fine specimen from the Conway is said to have been presented to Catherine, consort of Charles II. by Sir Richard Wynne of Gwydir; and it is further said that it has since contributed to adorn the regal crown of England. Lady Newborough possessed a good collection of the Conway pearls, which she purchased of those who were fortunate enough to find them, as there is no regular fishery at present. The late Sir Robert Vaughan had obtained a sufficient number to appear at Court, with a button and loop to his hat, formed of these beautiful productions, about the year 1780.

PILLARS OF COMMEMORATION.

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The erection of a column or pillar, on the highest point of that ridge of hills, called Blackdown, which separates the county of Somerset from that of Devon, in commemoration of the great victories obtained by the Duke of Wellington, is an inducement to look into history, to see how the nations of antiquity, particularly those of Greece and Rome, rewarded their heroes who signalized themselves by the performance of feats of military courage, valour, and skill.

Among the Grecians it was usual to confer honours and rewards upon those who distinguished themselves in battle by valiant and courageous conduct. The ordinary rewards presented to conquerors in all the states of Greece, were crowns, which were sometimes inscribed with the person’s name and actions that had merited them, as appears from the inscription upon the crown presented by the Athenians to Conon. The Athenians sometimes honoured those who had performed great actions with permission to raise pillars, or erect statues to the gods, with inscriptions declaring their victories. Plutarch, however, supposes this to have been a grant rarely yielded to the greatest commanders. Cimon, who commanded the Athenian fleet against the Persians, became master of the city of Eion, in Thrace, and was, on account of his not imitating former commanders, by standing upon the defensive, but repulsing the enemy, and carrying the war into their own country, highly respected and admired by his countrymen, who allowed him, in honour

of his success over the enemy, to erect three pillars of stone or marble, each surmounted with the head of Mercury; but though they bore an inscription, Cimon was not permitted to inscribe his name upon them. These pillars were considered by his contemporaries as the highest honour which had then been conferred upon any commander.

Various Pillars were erected at Rome in honour of great men, and to commemorate illustrious actions. Thus there were the *Columna Ænea*, a pillar of Brass, on which a league with the Latins was written. The *Columna Rostrata*, the Rostral Column, erected in the Forum, in honour of Duillius, was adorned with figures of ships, and was constructed of white marble. This column is still remaining with its inscription. It was built in honour of a great victory gained by Duillius over the Carthaginian fleet near Lipara, in the first Punic war. Another Pillar was erected by M. Fulvius, the Consul, consisting of one stone of Numidian marble, nearly 20 feet high.

But the most remarkable columns were those of *Trajan* and *Antoninus Pius*.

Trajan’s Pillar was erected in the middle of his Forum, and was composed of twenty-four great pieces of marble, but so curiously cemented as to seem but one. Its height is 128 feet. It is about 12 feet in diameter at the bottom, and 10 at the top. It has in the inside 185 steps for ascending to the top, and forty windows for the admission of light. The whole pillar is incrusted with marble, on which are represented the warlike exploits of that Emperor and his army, particularly in Dacia. On the top was a Colossal figure of Trajan, holding in his left hand a sceptre, and in his right a hollow globe of

gold, in which his ashes were put, but Eutropius affirms that his ashes were put under the pillar.

The pillar of Antoninus was erected after his death, by the Senate, in honour of his memory. It is 176 feet high, the steps of ascent 106, and the windows 56. The sculpture and other ornaments are much of the same kind with those of Trajan's pillar, but the work is greatly inferior.

Both these pillars are still standing, and justly reckoned among the most precious remains of antiquity. Pope Sixtus V. instead of the statues of the Emperors, caused the statue of St. Peter to be erected on Trajan's pillar, and of St. Paul on that of Antoninus.

Pompey's Pillar, as it is commonly called, in the city of Alexandria in Egypt, is equally celebrated with the two just mentioned. It is composed of red granite. The base is a square of about 15 feet on each side; this block of marble, 60 feet in circumference, rests on two layers of stone bound together with lead. The shaft and the upper member of the base are of one piece of 90 feet long, and nine in diameter. The capital is corinthian, with palm leaves, and not indented; it is 9 feet high. The whole column is 114 feet in height. It is perfectly well polished, and only a little shivered on the eastern side. Nothing can equal the majesty of this column; seen from a distance it overtops the town, and serves as a signal for vessels. Approaching it nearer, it produces astonishment mixed with awe. The eye can never be tired with admiring the beauty of the capital, the length of the shaft, nor the extraordinary simplicity of the pedestal.

Among the first inhabitants of the world after the flood there were pillars erected sacred to the Pythonic god,

Apollo, or the Sun. These pillars had curious hieroglyphical inscriptions; they were very lofty and narrow in comparison of their length; hence among the Greeks, who copied from the Egyptians, every thing gradually tapering to a point was stiled an Obelisk.

MASON THE POET.

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The merit of this gentleman as a poet is well known. However he was not satisfied with the applause he received in that character; he was desirous also of being esteemed a good musician and a good painter. In music he succeeded better than in painting. He performed decently on the harpsichord, and by desire, I undertook, says Dr. Miller, in the History of Doncaster, to teach him the principles of composition; but that I never could effect. Indeed, others before me had failed in the attempt, nevertheless he fancied himself qualified to compose; for a short Anthem of his, beginning “Lord of all power and might,” was performed at the Chapel Royal, of which only the melody was his own; the bass was composed by another person. The same may be said of two more Anthems, sung in the Cathedral of York. In painting he never arrived even to a degree of mediocrity; so true is Pope’s observation:

“One science only will one genius fit,
”So vast is art, so narrow human wit.”

Fond, however, of being considered as a patron both of music and painting, he contributed to the advancement of several young men by his recommendation: yet I never knew him patronize but one, in either of these arts, whom he did not desert afterwards, without his former favourite ever knowing in what he had offended him.

“When young,” says Dr. Miller, “I was one of those he took under his protection. He permitted me to dedicate the

music of some elegies to him, and also gave me pieces of his own writing to set to music, particularly the ‘Ode to Death’ in Caractacus. However, at the end of a few years, I found myself involved in the disgrace of others, though I never knew the cause of my dismissal; most probably our disgrace proceeded from the envy of some officious tale-bearer. On recollection, I have often observed him listen attentively to these characters; and his favourite servant had it in his power to lead him which way he pleased, even to the changing a former acquaintance as easily as he would change his coat. Rather late in life he married Miss Sharman, of Hull, which was his native place. The reason he assigned for making her an offer of marriage was, that he had been a whole evening in her company with others, and observed, that during all that time she never spoke a single word. This lady lived about a year after their marriage. She died at Bristol, where, in the Cathedral, he placed a handsome monument to her memory, on which are inscribed some beautiful and much-admired lines as an epitaph. During the short time this lady lived with him, he appeared more animated and agreeable in his conversation; but after her decease, his former phlegm returned, and he became silent, sullen, and reserved.

“Though he had a good income, and was by no means extravagant, yet he frequently fancied himself poor, to that degree, that he once asked an acquaintance to lend him a hundred pounds, though at that very time he had considerable sums of money in the public funds, for which he neglected taking the interest. A great attachment appeared to exist between him and a very hospitable family

in the neighbourhood of Doncaster, to whom he was nearly related, and with whom he used to pass some months in the summer. At length he fancied they expected to receive a good legacy at his decease, but resolving to disappoint them, he did not even mention them in his will, but left the greater part of his property to a person who had formerly been his curate."

The following Letter from Mason to Dr. Beattie, is preserved in Sir William Forbes's Life of the latter:

York, 17th October, 1771.

"In my late melancholy employment of reviewing and arranging the papers, which dear Mr. Gray's friendship bequeathed to my care, I have found nine letters of yours, which I meant to have returned ere this, had I found a safe opportunity by a private hand; but as no such opportunity has yet occurred, I take the liberty of troubling you with this, to enquire how I may best convey them to you. I shall continue here till the 12th of next month, and hope in that interval to be favoured with a line from you upon this subject.

"I should deprive myself of a very sincere gratification, if I finished this letter, with the business that occasions it. You must suffer me to thank you for the very high degree of poetical pleasure which the first book of your 'Minstrel' gave my imagination, and that equal degree of rational conviction which your 'Essay on the Immutability of Truth' impressed on my understanding. I will freely own to you, that the very idea of a Scotsman's attacking Mr. Hume, prejudiced me so much in favour of the latter piece, that I should have

approved it, if, instead of a masterly, it had been only a moderate performance.

“I shall be happy to know, that the remaining books of your ‘Minstrel’ are likely to be published soon. The next best thing, after instructing the world profitably, is to amuse it innocently. England has lost that man, (Mr. Gray) who, of all others in it, was best qualified for both these purposes; but who, from early chagrin and disappointment, had imbibed a disinclination to employ his talents beyond the sphere of self-satisfaction and improvement. May Scotland long possess, in you, a person both qualified and willing to exert his, for the pleasure and benefit of society.”

BISHOPS OF SODOR AND MAN.

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The Bishopric of Sodor and Man was first erected by Pope Gregory IV, about the year 840, and had for its diocese the Isle of Man and all the Hebrides or Western Islands of Scotland; but when the Isle of Man became dependent upon the kingdom of England, the Western Islands withdrew themselves from the obedience of their Bishop, and had Bishops of their own, whom they entitled *Episcopi Sodorenses*, but commonly Bishops of the Isles. The Prelates of the diocese of the Isles had three places of residence, namely, the Isle of Icolumkill, Man, and Bute; and in ancient writs, are promiscuously styled *Episcopi Manniæ et Insularum*, *Episcopi Æbudarum*, and *Episcopi Sodorenses*, which last title is still retained by the Bishops of the Isle of Man; and the reason of this style is as follows: The Island of Ily, or I, or Ionah, was in former ages a place famous for sanctity and learning, and very early became the seat of a Bishop. This little Island was likewise denominated Icolumkill, from St. Columba (the companion of St. Patrick) founding a monastery here in the sixth century, which was the mother of above one hundred other monasteries situated in different parts of Britain and Ireland. From the many learned men who came to study here, the Picts and English Saxons of the North owe their conversion to Christianity. The Scots used long ago to commit the education of the presumptive heir of the crown to the care of the Bishops of this see; and so holy was the Island of

Icolumkill reckoned, that most of the Scottish monarchs were interred there. The Cathedral church was dedicated to our Saviour, for whom the Greek word is *Soter*, hence *Soterensis*, now corrupted to *Sodorensis*; and it seems probable that this is the reason why the Danes called these Islands *Sodoroe*. The civil wars that raged among the Scots enabled the Danes and Norwegians to seize the Isle of Man; and about the year 1097 or 1098, Donald Bane, an usurper, who then sat on the throne of Scotland, treacherously put the Norwegians in possession of the Western Isles, for the assistance they had given him. It is probable that these foreigners were the cause that the see was translated entirely to the Isle of Man. They were at length however, expelled from all their usurped dominions. During the great contest between the houses of Bruce and Baliol for the throne of Scotland, King Edward III., of England, made himself master of the Isle of Man, and it has remained an appendage of the crown of England ever since. The Lords of the Isle of Man sat up Bishops of their own, and the Scottish monarchs continued their Bishops of the Isles. The patronage of the Bishopric of Man was given, together with the Island, to the Stanleys, by King Edward IV. and they came by an heir-female to the Duke of Athol, who still keeps it; and on a vacancy thereof, he nominates the intended Bishop to the King, who sends him to the Archbishop of York for consecration. This is the reason why the Bishop of Sodor and Man is not a Lord of Parliament, as none can have suffrage in the house of Peers who do not hold immediately of the King himself.

THE TABLE.

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The form of a half-moon for a table is of very ancient date; the Romans called it the *Sigma*, from its resemblance to the Greek letter so called, which was in the time of the Roman Emperors like the letter C. Martial tells us this sort of table admitted but of seven persons, *septem sigma capit*. And Lampridius, in his life of Heliogabalus, mentions it very frequently, and says it was for seven only; he tells us the Emperor once invited eight, on purpose to raise a laugh against the person for whom there would be no seat. The same form of a table continued in after ages. The authors of the life of St. Martin say, that the Emperor Maximus invited him to a repast, where the table had the form of a sigma; and again in the lower ages, Sidonius Apollinaris speaks of the same thing in the life of the Emperor Majorianus; and it is likewise represented in a manuscript of the fifth or sixth century. The seat itself was only a common bench or form; the sigma was the principal piece of furniture, and most ornamented. In the time of Homer the guests sat round the table, as we do now, but afterwards some nations adopted the custom of a reclining position at their meals.

CLOCKS.

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The first Clock we know of in this Country was put up in an old tower of Westminster Hall, in the year 1288, and in 1292, there was one in the Cathedral of Canterbury. These were probably of foreign workmanship; and it may be doubted, if there was at that time any person who followed the business of making clocks. There was, however, one very ingenious artist, Richard of Wallingford, Abbot of St. Albans, who constructed a clock which represented the motions of the sun, moon, and stars, and the ebbing and flowing of the sea. That this wonderful piece of mechanism might be of permanent utility to his Abbey, he composed a book of directions for the management of it. And Leland who appears to have seen it, says, that in his opinion all Europe could not produce such another.

There is a fine specimen of ancient Clock-making in Wells Cathedral. It is a clock constructed by Peter Lightfoot, one of the monks of Glastonbury, about the year 1325, of complicated design and ingenious execution. It was originally put up in that celebrated Monastery, and was placed in the south transept, and by means of a communication tolled the hours on the great bell of the central tower, whilst the quarters were struck by automata on two small bells in the transept. The dial plate shews the hours, and also the changes of the moon, the solar and other astronomical motions; on its summit there is an horizontal frame work, which exhibits by the aid of

machinery, eight knights on horseback armed for a tournament, and pursuing each other with a rapid rotatory motion. At the Reformation this clock was removed from Glastonbury Abbey to its present situation in Wells Cathedral.

The Clock in Exeter Cathedral was erected by Bishop Courtenay in the year 1480. It is on the Ptolemaic system of Astronomy and of a curious construction for the age in which it was put up. The earth is represented by a globe in the centre; the sun by a fleur-de-lys; and the moon by a ball painted half black and half white, which turns on its axis, and shews the different phases of that luminary.

ALDUS MANUTIUS.
[DIED 1516.]

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It would be difficult to say whether the exertions of any individual, however splendid his talents, or even the labours of any particular association, or academy, however celebrated, ever shed so much lustre on the place of their residence as that which Venice derives from the reputation of a stranger, who voluntarily selected it for his abode. I allude to Aldus Manutius. This extraordinary person combined the lights of the scholar, with the industry of the mechanic; and to his labours, carried on without interruption till the conclusion of a long life, the world owes the first or *principes editiones* of twenty eight Greek Classics. Among these we find Pindar, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Herodotus, Thucydides, Demosthenes, Plato, and Aristotle. Besides these, there are few ancient authors of any note, of whom this indefatigable editor has not published editions of acknowledged accuracy, and as far as the means of the art of printing, then in its infancy, permitted, of great beauty. In order to appreciate the merit of Aldus, we must consider the difficulties under which he must have laboured at a time when there were few public libraries; when there was no regular communication between distant cities; when the price of manuscripts put them out of the reach of persons of ordinary incomes; and when the existence of many since discovered, was utterly unknown. The man who could

surmount these obstacles, and publish so many authors till then inedited; who could find means and time to give new and more accurate editions of so many others already published, and accompany them all with prefaces mostly of his own composition; who could extend his attention still farther and by his labours secure the fame, by immortalizing the compositions of the most distinguished scholars of his own age and country, must have been endowed in a very high degree, not only with industry and perseverance, but with judgment, learning, and discrimination. One virtue more, Aldus possessed in common with many of the great literary characters of that period, I mean, a sincere and manly piety, a virtue which gives consistency, vigour, and permanency to every good quality, and never fails to communicate a certain grace and dignity to the whole character.