

**LECTURES ON THE COINAGE
OF THE GREEKS AND ROMANS;
DELIVERED IN THE UNIVERSITY
OF OXFORD; PP. 1-236**

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LECTURES

ON

THE COINAGE

OF

THE GREEKS AND ROMANS;

DELIVERED IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

BY

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TO THE

LORD GRENVILLE,

CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

§c. §c. §c. §c.

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED

WITH SENTIMENTS OF THE UTMOST RESPECT

AND GRATITUDE.

PREFACE.

I AM not aware of the existence of any book in our language which treats of ancient coins in the manner and with the object proposed in the following Lectures. The few English treatises which have been written upon the subject, like many of those which have appeared in other languages, have been composed for the sole benefit of the collector, and without any design of illustrating the literature and history of the ancients. The Essay of Pinkerton, for instance, in addition to the positive faults arising from the peculiar temper of the writer, affords little information on points connected with the learning of Greece or Rome, and is of no value whatever in questions of that kind, so far as they appear to depend upon his authority. Even the Essay of Addison, which might

reasonably be expected to display the scholarship as well as the gracefulness of its writer, is confined to the poetical part of the subject, being occupied with the devices of Roman coins, and more particularly with the impersonations impressed upon them, and omitting altogether the more important knowledge contained in their inscriptions^a.

This then is the principal reason which has induced me to commit the following Lectures to the press. But it is not the only one. Treatises upon ancient coins may have been rendered useless by the results of more recent investigations. The subject itself, though confined in its nature to the examination of the past, partakes of the progressive character of general know-

^a “ Non parlerò qui dei Musei Anglicani ai quali si
 “ puo dir mors et erit mors; cioe, Vita e tomba fu il
 “ principio; sparizione ed avello la fine. Così spiegar
 “ decsi una tal fatale sentenza; che dopo l'Haym An-
 “ glo-Romano et Wise, non abbiamo veduto se non
 “ scheletri, o dir vogliamo puri et semplici cataloghi
 “ d'un prezzo esorbitante.” Sestini, Degli Stat. Ant.
 p. 99.

ledge, as fresh materials are continually presenting themselves, and the labours of learned men are not only directed into new fields of inquiry, but are also enabled to define more accurately, and in many cases to reverse, the information which had been previously acquired. And so completely is this the case, that whatever may have been the advantages of older writers, the value of their works has been continually impaired by the more extensive observation of their successors. Even the *Doctrina Numorum* of Eckhel—for the composition of which the writer combined the rare endowments of native sagacity, unwearied patience, and considerable scholarship, with the command of an excellent library, and one of the richest of all modern cabinets—is gradually losing its estimation as a perfect work, under the influence of more recent discoveries. All writers indeed of an earlier date may still be considered as of doubtful authority, unless they are supported by the approbation of Eckhel; but even Eckhel himself is sub-