

tory of which we refer the reader to the Appendix to the Memoir of Cabot.* It is sufficient for our purpose, to remark that it is acknowledged to be an original, for which Sebastian sat to the artist, and which, in the time of Purchas, hung in the Privy Gallery at Whitehall. Upon this picture is the following inscription:—"Effigies Seb. Caboti Angli, filii Johannis Caboti Veneti Militis Aurati, Primi Inventoris Terræ Novæ sub Henrico VII. Angliæ Rege." It is evident by the common rules of grammatical construction, that the words Militis Aurati, Primi Inventoris Terræ Novæ sub Henrico VII. Angliæ Rege, apply exclusively to John Cabot; and if so, they contain a positive assertion that John was the first discoverer of North America. Now, the authenticity of the picture being undoubted, the inscription furnishes as convincing a piece of evidence as could well be conceived. And again, it may be fairly argued, that the circumstance of the words Militis Aurati being found united with the name of John Cabot, by which it is proved that the king had conferred on him, and not on Sebastian, the honour of knighthood, affords the strongest presumption that it was John who was the original discoverer.

This remark leads us, in the last place, to expose an extraordinary series of errors committed by the biographer, in relation to this Latin inscription on the picture. He has accused Dr Henry, Dr Campbell, and the authors of the Biographia Britannica of an absurd misconception, in imagining that the words Militis Aurati indicate that John Cabot had been knighted. But it is justice to let him speak for himself. He first demonstrates that the words Miles Auratus cannot possibly apply to the son Sebastian, after which he proceeds thus:—"The point being thus clear with regard to the son, other writers have assumed, as a matter of course, that the distinction (of knighthood) must have been conferred on John Cabot." "Accordingly, Campbell, in his Lives of the Admirals, has an article entitled Sir John Cabot. Dr Henry informs us, in his History of Britain, vol. vi. p. 618, that John Cabot was graciously received and knighted on his return, and the same statement is repeated in the Biographia Britannica." "*To the utter confusion,*" he continues,

* Memoir of Cabot, Appendix, Letter F. p. 323.