A NUMISMATIC HISTORY OF THE REIGN OF STEPHEN.

A.D. 1135 TO 1154.

Continued from Volumes VI and VIII.

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CHAPTER III.

THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR 1135, AND STEPHEN'S SEIZURE OF THE THRONE.

King Henry's last illness was sudden and of short duration, for on November the 25th, 1135, he had gathered a hunting party at his castle of Lions, near Rouen, which was to be turned into a group of mourners around his death-bed on the night of December the 1st. It included three English earls, Robert of Gloucester, William de Warenne of Surrey, and Robert de Beaumont of Leicester, also Count Waleran of Meulan, Count Rotrou of Perche, and Hugh Bigod, the Seneschal: for the flower of England's nobility was in Normandy. The Empress Matilda was with her husband, Geoffrey of Anjou, at Angers, and Stephen was at his citadel of Boulogne.¹

In England but two earls were left, the young Ranulf of Chester, then fully occupied with the defence of the Marches against a general rising of the Welsh,² and Roger of Warwick, "a weak man addicted to pleasure rather than to courage"³; for the then remaining earldom, that of Huntingdon cum Northampton,⁴ was in the hands of King

¹ At least he was "beyond the sea," and immediately sailed from Wissant.
² Ordericus Vitalis, B. xiii, c. xvi.
³ Gesta Regis Stephani, B. i.
⁴ Geoffrey de Mandeville, by Dr. Horace Round, p. 272.
David of Scotland. No political conditions could have been more propitious to the cause of Stephen at this crisis than the absence over sea of most of the great barons of England, for it left the Church predominant, and the Church was almost synonymous with Stephen's party. Had Henry died here, the mere presence of the powerful Earl of Gloucester, Matilda's natural brother and the master hand of her cause, would probably have been sufficient to have diverted the threads of our history.

Henry of Blois, Stephen's younger brother, Bishop of Winchester and still Abbot of Glastonbury, had been appointed the Papal Legate in the preceding year, and was a member of the royal council. As such his influence was vast, but I think that the story of his life proves that it was consistently given to his Church, even when, five years later, this was to the bane of his brother. But now the interests of the one were the interests of the other, for the Church had suffered grievances under the late king, and had but an easy bargain to make with a new, if rightful, aspirant to the throne, which would have been difficult, if not impossible, with the proud Empress, King Henry's pledged successor.

The simultaneous action promply taken by Henry of Blois at Winchester, and by Stephen at Boulogne, proves that there was a well organized conspiracy between them, which only awaited the news of the death of the king to become operative. There was no waiting for communications: each acted instantly, and therefore each knew and could trust what the other would do. Roger, the aged Bishop of Sarum, who had served as Chancellor and Chief Justiciary, and to whom the late king, as on previous occasions, had entrusted the administration of the affairs of state in England on sailing for Normandy, so readily, and strenuously, accepted the overtures of Bishop Henry to declare for Stephen, that I think he was already within the plot. It does not seem, even, to have come as a surprise to William de Corbeuil, Archbishop of Canterbury, and the fact that Hugh Bigod alone hurried to England from the obsequies at Rouen, coupled with the opportune evidence he

1 Annals of Winchester.
brought, suggests that one at least of the laity was a party to the conspiracy. That it was wide-spread is probable, for the prompt appointment of William de Warenne, William de Roumare, half-brother to the Earl of Chester, and Hugh de Gourney to hold the duchy of Normandy, would not have been made without the knowledge that they also were pledged to Stephen's cause. On the whole, I fancy that in spite of the triple oaths of allegiance to his daughter, enforced by King Henry, the succession of the crown of England had been weighed in another balance long before his death. Of this, however, there seems to have been no suspicion in the minds of the Empress and her friends.

The news of Henry's demise must have reached the two persons most concerned almost simultaneously, yet how differently it affected them. Matilda at once left Angers for Normandy, expecting as a matter of course to receive her promised inheritance. So certain was she, that she came unaccompanied even by her husband, and her promptitude secured her the homage of Argentan, Domfront, and Hiemes, for as yet Stephen's stroke of policy had not touched the confines of the duchy. But then came the set-back; and Normandy was merged in the coup d'état. The man, the one man who could have averted the catastrophe, was one who moved slowly—yet surely when he did move—Robert of Gloucester, and he was still biding his time, although watching events over the body of his deceased father. There is a time when opportunity offers itself to all men, whatever their station in life may be, and he missed his. William of Malmesbury, a contemporary chronicler and partisan of Matilda's cause, indicates this when he says, "the Empress, for certain reasons, as also her brother Robert, Earl of Gloucester, and almost all the nobility, delayed returning to the kingdom." It was not the only occasion on which the Earl was lethargic.

Stephen, in contrast, was the man of the moment, and on receipt of the news of his uncle's death he instantly set out for England, and took ship from Wissant with a few followers.\(^1\) True, he was prepared and awaiting the crisis, for any hesitation on his part would have been the ruin of his brother and confederates in England. True, also, that

\(^1\) *Gesta.*
he could have sailed with the whole of the forces of Boulogne, and with the mercenary bands which he did not hesitate to subsidise in later years, but he was too sound a politician to allow his entry into England to have any semblance of an invasion. His cue was to appear as the natural successor to his uncle, and male heir of the line; therefore any entry in force could but have contrasted with the tactful efforts in his behalf which, as he well knew, were being made by his brother and Roger of Sarum.

Landing on the Kent shore, he must have at once issued his proclamation as claimant to the crown, for he found the gates of Dover and Canterbury successively closed against him. This, I think, proves the promptitude of his action, because it may be explained by the probability that there had as yet been no time for the news of the concerted action of the two bishops to spread into Kent. Indeed it is likely that Stephen arrived in England almost as soon as the tidings of Henry's death, so at the moment he was before his time, and the garrisons of Dover and Canterbury would still be in expectancy of the peaceful succession of the Empress.

His approach to London was, however, very different. The citizens came forth to meet him with acclamations, and brought him in triumph into the city, where their representatives in council agreed to elect him king, for they claimed the right of election "as their special privilege"; they, on their part, pledging their wealth and arms to his support for so long as he lived, and he agreeing to use every effort towards the preservation of peace in the kingdom. Whether the Londoners had any such privilege of election, or anything more than the right to be represented at the Witan, is an open question, but it was to Stephen's obvious advantage to admit it. His formal election was, however, to follow. London at this time had suffered a disaster, for "St. Paul's Church was destroyed by a fire, which began at London Bridge and extended so far as the church of the Danes" (St. Clement's Danes), and it was now in mourning for the death of the late King.

1 See ante, Chapter I.  
2 Gervase.  
3 See, however, Geoff. de Mand., pp. 1-2, where Dr. Round gives a different explanation.  
4 Gesta.  
5 Matthew of Westminster.
It will be noticed that as yet Stephen had been joined by neither his brother nor Roger of Sarum. This was due to a difficulty at Winchester. It was essential that Stephen should have the command of the royal treasury from the very outset of his reign, for the influence of wealth might be needful at the coming Witan. Rufus and Henry I. had rushed successively to Winchester to possess themselves of its castle and treasure as their first step to the throne, and in Stephen’s case the treasure was even more a necessity. William de Pont de l’Arche, Castellan of Winchester and the Treasurer, had so far resisted the persuasions, threats, and even bribes of the two Bishops, flatly refusing to hand over the keys of his charge. The castle was not to be taken by force, and the only hope left was in the presence of Stephen in person. Meanwhile the Bishops dared not leave Winchester lest an envoy on behalf of the Empress should step in and receive the coveted hoards. The royal treasury of England had always been kept in the castle of Winchester, where also was the chief seat of the Exchequer, and the book of Domesday itself.

Stephen therefore set forth for the second city of the realm accompanied by a sufficient force of the Londoners to assert his power. On his way he was fortunate in meeting and suppressing a large band of marauders which, in no little, added to his popularity. On his arrival at Winchester the citizens received him with rejoicings equal to those of the metropolis, and William de Pont de l’Arche immediately came forth and formally delivered the keys of both castle and treasure to him.¹ In explanation of this action on his part it must be remembered that in those days there had been no instance of a first claimant in person to the crown being unsuccessful. The precedents of Harold, Rufus, and Henry I. were before him, and in every case the first in the field had been anointed king:

The treasure thus handed over to Stephen was then probably of unprecedented value in England, for to quote the words of William of Malmesbury, it was “an immense mass of treasure, which his uncle, King Henry, had heaped up for many years; the pence,² and these

¹ Gesta.
² The silver penny was then the only coin we had, see Chapter II.
most carefully selected, being estimated at nearly one hundred thousand pounds. There were also vessels, of both gold and silver, of great weight and of inestimable value, which had been accumulated by the foresight of former kings, and more especially of Henry."

The reference to the pence amounting to nearly a hundred thousand pounds, means, of course, that there was that value in current coin, as opposed to treasure generally; and, as I have already explained in Chapter II, England, with in fact the rest of western Europe, was still content with the silver penny as the highest denomination of currency. Yet one would have thought that the fact, now disclosed, that the royal treasury had to contain the almost countless hoards of twenty-four millions of these small coins to represent one hundred thousand pounds, would alone have called for a higher denomination; but it was not to be for more than a century.

The expression in the original, *denarii, et hi exquisitissimi*, which I have translated "pence, and these most carefully selected," is interesting, and I consulted Mr. H. B. Earle Fox upon it, because his knowledge of mediæval Latin in this relation is second to none. Literally, the phrase would mean "most choice," or "most carefully examined," but in view of the fact that all money before it was paid into the royal treasury had already passed the checks of the Exchequer, and would

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1 The original passage is: "Habebat enim, ut supra tetigi, rex immensam vim thesaurorum quos multis annis rex Henricus auunculus suus aggesserat: aestimabantur denarii, et hi exquisitissimi, fere ad centum milia libras: erant et vasa tam aurea quam argentea magni ponderis et inaestimabilis pretii et antiquorum regum et Henrici potissimum prudentia congesta."


3 As to these, see *Henry I.*, p. 8.
therefore be of standard quality, I think that the words were intended to imply that the coin was carefully kept up to the current issue, to avoid its types becoming obsolete and no longer legal tender under the periodical limitations by royal proclamation. This would be done by exchanging the old type for the new upon every change in the coinage, which was once in every three, four or five years.

The value of the current coin alone in this treasure was enormous, when we remember that in 1130 it cost only £25 to build two arches of London Bridge,¹ and in 1156 the whole cost of the garrison of Peak Castle for the year was only £4 10s. 0d.² What the worth of the rest of the treasure was must be left to comparative estimation, but we know that Stephen used some of the "vessels of gold and silver" in payment of the tribute to his brother, Theobald, to which I shall presently refer. It was probably far in excess of that of the coin current.

Yet the whole had been left by King Henry to his daughter, and from the directions given to Robert of Gloucester to pay out of it large legacies to the household servants and troops, it is clear that he was to be, what we should now term, the executor. Earl Robert had but to have speeded to Winchester to have received the royal hoards with scarce the asking, but the opportunity had come and gone before he realized it.

The mere possession of so vast a treasure might have turned the scale of power in favour of either claimant to the crown, but in the lavish hands of Stephen, coupled with his personal popularity, it secured his seat on the throne and duchy for so long as it lasted. By it, he was able to buy off the prior claims³ of his elder brother, Theobald, Count of Blois, to the hereditary sword of Normandy, by the promise of an annual tribute of two thousand marks of silver; to abstain from those methods of extortion which had earned for his predecessors the hatred of both Church and State; and to command the staunch services of strong bands of foreign mercenaries to swell his fighting

¹ Magnum Rotulorum Pipæ, for 1129–1130, p. 144.
² Ibid, for 1155–1158, p. 91.
³ See ante, Chap. I.
force. Of these soldiers of fortune William of Malmesbury writes that they flocked to him, chiefly from Flanders and Brittany: rapacious and violent men who hesitated not to violate churchyards or rob a church. This reference to violating churchyards as an unusual and extreme crime of sacrilege is interesting, in that it incidentally explains why so many of our hoards of coins have been found in such sites. In troubled times people made the parish churchyard their bank for the deposit of their wealth, knowing, or at least trusting in their belief, that no one would ever venture to disturb its sanctity. To the English the ground was sacred, but, at least in the chronicler's view, these foreign marauders were beyond the pale of God or man.

Yet this treasure was somewhat of a pyrrhic blessing, for the prodigality with which it enabled Stephen to commence his reign became a necessity to him, and when, in a very few years, his coffers fell empty, the means to which he resorted to replenish them by the confiscation of the hoards of Bishop Roger of Sarum led to his own undoing.

Now it would be that Roger of Sarum ventured to summon the Witan to attend the Christmas Court at Westminster, and Stephen returned to London for his formal election and coronation. There he was joined by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and for the first time was confronted by that accusation of falsity to his oath of fealty to Matilda and her son, which was to be his bane throughout his life and reign. The Archbishop, who had been the first of all to subscribe that oath, hesitated to consent to perform the coronation rites. The arguments for and against the validity of the oaths of fealty are set out at length in the Gesta, and, although it is not so stated, I think that they must have been raised at the election of the Witan. However, the answer of Stephen's party, that the three oaths were made under duress, and that the first, that at the Christmas Court of 1126, which alone had been sworn by most of those present, had been given to Matilda as a feme sole, whereas she was now the wife of a foreign prince to whom they owed no allegiance, was deemed satisfactory, so far as it went. But to explain away the second oath given after Matilda's marriage, and the third
after the birth of her son, Prince Henry, Hugh Bigod, who, as I have before remarked, had left the party of mourners at Rouen and hurried to London, was put forward to swear that King Henry on his deathbed had disinherited his daughter, the Empress, and had nominated Stephen as his successor. This, again, was deemed all-sufficient, and Stephen was duly elected.

That evidence such as this, sprung on the council by Hugh Bigod at so opportune a moment, should have been scouted by the partisans of the Empress, is not surprising—yet, for two reasons, I am disposed to accept it. At the time of his death Henry was actually at war with his son-in-law, who had attacked and burnt the castle of Beaumont, and the Empress had departed from her father at Rouen in anger: hence Henry was smarting under grave domestic discord. My second reason is that Hugh Bigod was no truckler; indeed, I question whether there is any feudal baron in the whole history of England who showed so independent and turbulent a spirit as this Seneschal, Dapifer and, finally, Earl of Norfolk; who feared neither King nor Empress, but played for his own hand with both.

Meanwhile Stephen bound himself by rigorous oaths which the Primate required of him, to restore and preserve the liberties of the Church; the Bishop of Winchester becoming his pledge and surety. So William of Malmesbury tells us, and it is strange reading, significant of the power of the Church in this crisis, that the word of a Norman king elect should require the pledge of a clerical sponsor.

Then followed the coronation, as a matter of course. The ceremony was at Westminster, the Primate, supported by the Bishops of Winchester and Salisbury, officiating. William of Malmesbury infers that no other bishops were present, and adds that there were no abbots and scarcely any of the nobility. This statement is corroborated by the brevity of the author of the Gesta, Stephen's partisan throughout, who can say no more than that there was a large attendance of the clergy present. Dr. Round suggests, from the evidence of a charter, granted a fortnight later, to which I shall have occasion to refer, that

1 Geoff. de Mand., p. 11.
Stephen's chief supporters at his coronation were limited, or nearly limited, to the five personages already mentioned, namely, the Primate, the Bishops of Winchester and Sarum, Hugh Bigod and William de Pont de l'Arche, with three minor barons. True, the flower of England's nobility was still with the royal bier at Rouen, where twenty thousand men¹ had gathered to do honour to the late king; but, from the evidence, Stephen's election would seem to have been the choice of the clergy and of the Londoners, rather than of a Witan representative of the kingdom.

It is a remarkable circumstance that amongst the chroniclers, most of whom were contemporary, the date of so public an event as the coronation should remain in uncertainty. The dates given are, by Ordericus Vitalis, December the 15th; by the Continuator of Florence of Worcester's Chronicle, December the 20th; by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, midwinter day; by William of Malmesbury, the Chronicle of Melrose, Matthew of Westminster and Gervase, December the 22nd; by Roger de Hoveden and Roger of Wendover, December the 26th; and finally by John of Hexham, January the 1st. Henry of Huntingdon omits the date, and the Gesta never gives a date throughout its pages. Amidst so much uncertainty may I venture to suggest that the dates of the leading events of the month have been confused, with the result that perhaps we may deduce the following table: Election by the Londoners, December the 15th; the return from Winchester, probably the occasion of a formal proclamation, the 20th; election by the Witan, the 22nd; the coronation, the 26th, for this was St. Stephen's Day and a date, therefore, almost certainly to have been chosen for that ceremony; and, finally, the completion of the coronation festivities, January the 1st, 1136. Thus, from the royal death at Lions to the coronation of Stephen, all these momentous events had happened within the short space of twenty-five days.

¹ Ordericus Vitalis.
CHAPTER IV.

STEPHEN’S FIRST GREAT SEAL.

An essential adjunct to a coronation was the great seal, for a stream of charters must then flow from the royal hand. Stephen’s first seal must have been hastily prepared, perhaps between the 15th and 26th of the month, for it would be cut by the die-sinkers at the London Mint, and it was certainly in use in the first week of January, if not at the coronation itself. Yet it shows no signs of haste, as a glance at its illustration on Plate V will prove, for it is a carefully prepared work and well executed. The seal-proper or obverse, which represents England, is, save for the necessary change of the King’s name, a minute replica of the last seal of Henry I., and it is evidently by the same hand. It represents the King crowned and seated upon a highly decorated throne. He wears his robes of state and in his right hand holds a sword upright, whilst in his left is the orb, surmounted by the cross and dove. Legend:

* STGPHAHVS DEI GRATIA REX ANGLORVM.

This design had survived, with but slight variations in detail, from the great seal of Edward the Confessor, which was reproduced in miniature on his silver penny, known to us as the “sovereign type,” and was also very closely followed for the picture of the coronation of Harold II. in the Bayeux Tapestry.

Stephen’s counter seal, or reverse, which represents Normandy, bears a device varied from that of any of his predecessors. Depicted as the Duke on horseback advancing to the right and as if in actual battle conflict, he is armed with helm, hauberk of mail and prick spurs, holding a shield, kite-shaped, bowed and spiked, close to his breast, and a sword upright in his right hand drawn behind him in the attitude of striking. The horse is caparisoned with bridle, reins, saddle with breast band, and stirrups. Legend:

* STEPHANVS DEI GRATIA DVX NORMANORV.

On the seals of the three preceding Norman kings, the devices for Normandy, with one exception, had always represented an equestrian
figure bearing a shield and lance with gonfalon—that is, the weapons are merely carried, as opposed to being used in action. The exception is the fourth seal of Henry I.; on which, for the first time, the sword—I assume "the ducal sword of Normandy"—appears, and it is held in a position similar to that on Stephen's seal, but the shield is still carried out of use on the left arm. I am aware that the shields of the fighting horsemen in the Bayeux Tapestry are similarly held, but at that period they were far too long to be brought perpendicularly before the breast on horseback, being designed for combats on foot.

The pacific type, that of the carried shield and lance, was common to the regal and baronial seals of the time, as, for example, those of Milo FitzWalter, Constable of Gloucester, and Richard, Constable of Chester, also the great seal of Alexander of Scotland. But for this militant device I can, for contemporary comparison, refer only to the coin bearing the name of Robert, and known as "the horseman type," which I hope to explain and illustrate, with Milo's seal, in later pages. On it, however, the shield is absent, although otherwise it is identical in its design, even to the prick spurs; indeed, so close is the similarity that I fancy the designer of the coin must have had an impression of Stephen's counter-seal before him.

Without attaching undue importance to what, after all, may have been but a flight of fancy on the part of the artist, I doubt whether, in the hurry and rush of preparing Stephen's seal within the limits of the days, perhaps hours, before his coronation, there would have been any likelihood of such a departure, as this is, from the stereotyped form of previous seals before the designer, unless there had been a special order to that effect. There are two coincidences to be considered. The first is that it depicts Stephen as leading the House of Rollo in actual battle-conflict and appears at the moment when the barons were hesitating between their oaths of allegiance on the one hand, and the taunt of having to follow the distaff to war, on the other. The second is that when, a few years later, and solely in consequence of the military enterprise of a woman—his wife, for such was the irony of fate—he

1 After Stephen's time it was not infrequent on mediæval seals.
STEPHEN'S FIRST GREAT SEAL,
IN USE FROM DECEMBER, 1135.

Plate V.
had been released by the Empress from an ignominious captivity, he returned, on his second seal, to the pacific device of his predecessors. But in this, for the moment, I am following Dr. Birch's date, November, 1141, for the introduction of the second seal—a question, however, to be considered later.

That the seal was cut at the Cuneator's office at London, that is at the Mint, I have assumed because I know of no other office at which it could have been made; but I do not think that it was designed there. In addition to the fact that the lettering on the seals was necessarily much larger than that on the money, it did not conform strictly with the alphabet in use on the latter; which is certainly curious if the dies for both emanated from the same staff. For example, on the seal before us the Roman \( H \) and the Lombardic, or Anglo-Saxon, \( e \) are used, whereas the former letter had not appeared on the money since the year 1106, and the latter, with a few rare exceptions, not since Anglo-Saxon times. But both were to be revived upon certain irregular issues during the present reign. This may have been due to a conservative tendency to adhere to the ancient form and detail of the seals, but it is difficult to reconcile it with the fact that whilst \( e \) was used on the Confessor's seal and \( H \) would have been the form if the letter had been needed, \( o \) was then in use for the letter which now is \( M \), and on the first seal of the Conqueror both the forms \( H \) and \( o \) occur. Probably it would be safer to say that the alphabet upon the seals represented the general inscriptions of the day,\(^1\) whereas that on the money was governed by special custom. Another contrast between the two, which is far more difficult to explain, is that of Stephen's name and titles. On the seal they are classical and correct, whilst on the money they are, as we shall see, mere sciolism.

\(^1\) Compare, for example, the inscriptions on the enamelled plaque of Henry of Blois in the British Museum, and on the capital of the south-east pillar in Romsey Abbey.
CHAPTER V.

THE FIRST TYPE OF STEPHEN'S MONEY,
AND ITS THREE VARIETIES.

The political conditions of an accession often reflected themselves curiously upon the money. If the new king ascended the throne peacefully and as a matter of course, he proceeded at his leisure to grant the necessary confirmation charters to the various civic or urban authorities, which usually included the right to work the local mint,¹ and the dies for the new coinage were as leisurely prepared and supplied. Thus, Edward the Confessor continued Harthacnut's type with the mere alteration of name²; Henry II. waited for at least two years³ before he troubled to change the money; Richard I., John and even Henry III. for his first coinage, made no change at all in it, either in name or otherwise, and Edward I. was content to continue Henry III.'s last issue unchanged for seven years after his accession. For what did it matter? The money was only wanted for circulation, and if it was standard and current, the name of the king upon it had no political significance.

But what a contrast was there when a king with a doubtful title, or by the mere right of sword, seized the crown. The coins were no longer mere jettons of commerce, for they were the ready means at his command for circulating his name, title and fame. They were also a bond of fealty between the many cities and towns that issued them and himself, they were conclusive evidence of his sovereign power throughout the realm, and an advertisement throughout even Western Europe. To use a modern term, "he rushed into print," and placed his

¹ See ante, Chapter II.
³ Hoveden.
name and title upon the money at the earliest possible moment. Thus, Harold II., for whose election there was no precedent, issued a prolific coinage, and even varied its design during the nine months of his short reign; William the Conqueror changed the money almost as instantly as he had changed the dynasty, and Rufus and Henry I., who each struck aside with the sword the claims of their elder brother, Duke Robert, immediately proclaimed their accessions upon the currency.

To Stephen, therefore, as yet the puppet king of a snatched election at which not a single earl had been present, it was a matter of moment to assume every regal prerogative even if he had it not, and there was no better nor more popular method to accustom the nation to his kingship than the prompt circulation in metallic form of his name and title throughout the land. We see the same principle inspiring the remarkable preamble to his great charter of liberties to the Church granted at the following Easter,\(^1\) namely

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\text{“Ego Stephanus Dei gratia assensu cleri et populi in regem Anglorum electus, et a Willelmo Cantuariensi archiepiscopo et sancte Romanae ecclesiae legato consecratus, et ab Innocentio sanctae Romanae sedis pontifice confirmatus,”}
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in which, as Dr. Round remarks, he departs from all precedent and entirely relies upon his possessory title by election.

Prior to Stephen’s accession the custom of adding the title *Rex* to the king’s name had gradually fallen into disuse, and the ordinary legend of the last type of Henry I. merely comprised his name, as *HENRIEVS.*\(^2\) But we should not expect Stephen to be content to follow this modest precedent for his first coinage, and we find it bearing the title *REX* in full after his name. So soon, however, as his accession was definitely accepted by the bulk of the nobility, and his tenure of the throne seemed to be secure, he reduced it, without otherwise altering the type, to less prominence by contracting it, first to *RE*, then to *R*, and finally he returned to precedent by omitting it altogether.

\(^1\) See Geoff. de Mand., pp. 24-26, where Dr. Round calls special attention to the wording of this clause.

\(^2\) The initial *R*, for *Rex*, does appear on a few, probably early, coins of the type, and the name is often contracted.
We may safely assume that at, or immediately after, the coronation orders would be issued to the Cuneator to prepare the dies at once for Stephen's new money. The design, and its approval, to be followed by the preparation of the dies for the fifty, or more, mints at which coining was then authorized would take time, and therefore some months would elapse before coining was again in general operation throughout the whole of the land; although it is possible that meanwhile King Henry's money was allowed to be issued.

That the matter was rushed through in all haste, and that the complete design was never submitted to the revision of even a very moderate scholar of the day, is obvious from the confusion of tongues that pervades the legend. We have seen that Stephen's name and titles had been correctly rendered upon his great seal, and they gave no difficulty to the compilers of his charters and records; there was, therefore, no reason why they should not have been equally well reproduced upon the money. There could have been no objection to STEPHANVS REX, or its contractions, and that form does, in fact, occur on certain irregular coins struck later in the reign; neither would the Anglo-Latin STEFANVS REX, adopted upon some ecclesiastical pieces to which I shall presently refer, nor even STEFAN REX, have been wrong; but to combine the erroneous English nominative, STIFNE, with the Latin title REX, was a hopeless confusion of both languages and grammar. During the issue of the same type, in fact when the title REX was first shortened, opportunity was taken to vary—I cannot say to correct—the spelling of the name to STIEFNE.

Let us, for a moment, glance at the various forms in which the name appears upon our coins. As that of a moneyer we find it in the reigns of Alfred as Stefanus, and on ecclesiastical money of St. Eadmund as Stephan; on coins of Athelstan as Stefanus; and of Eadmund as Stephan. Then the name seems to have fallen out of fashion amongst the moneyers, and, therefore, probably amongst the people generally, until we find it again on coins late in the reign of Henry I. as Stephan, Stiefnes and Stifne. Turning to the vernacular, Robert of Gloucester in his rhyming chronicle refers to Stephen as Stevene and Stephene, but he lived at least a century later in date.
Curious Error in Stephen's Name.

It will be noticed that in the above instances the introduction of the letter i, either in substitution for, or in addition to, the first e, and the termination ne, only date from a period of within ten years of Stephen's accession, and I therefore submitted the problem to the better judgment of the epigraphical expert, Mr. Alfred Anscombe, who replied as follows:—

The problem presented by the English form of the name of Stephen on the coins and in the Saxon Chronicle is somewhat difficult. We have to deal with short e in Stephanus and with the digraph ph. The latter represents a sound which was that of f at first, and which subsequently became the sound of v while it was still intervocal. In the Laud manuscript of the Saxon Chronicle, under annal 1135, which was written after 1154, we find the digraph retained. There the King's name and description appear as Stephne de Blais. This annalist preserved the short e of the classical form, and he may have been constrained to use the un-English digraph ph for that reason, because there was a verb stefnan—"to regulate," and Ic stefne meant "I regulate."

But the normal form that Stephanus took in Old English was that in which the classical e was displaced by i. We cannot assert that this is in agreement with rule, because the treatment accorded to i in the first syllable of a Latin loan-word in Old English does not lend itself to regulation, and there is frequent displacement of both e and i. For instance, the loan-words perum and signum (our "pear" and "sign") became peru and segn. On the other hand regula and cerasum (our "rule" and "cherry") became regol and cieres, while gemma and mentha (our "gem" and "mint") became gimm and mint. In cieres the i does not go with the e. It is used to indicate that cieres was pronounced like "cherries," of which "cherry" is a false singular like "pea" and "asset" from "pease" and "assets." These considerations warrant the assertion that Old-English Stifan for Latin Stephan is not exceptional.

But short i before liquids and labials suffered umlaut when followed by o or a in the next syllable, and became first of all io; cf. hiora = "their," and liofast = "thou livest." This io at a later time yielded place in some cases to ie; cp. sieðdan, sieðdan, sieveðdan = "since." Hence, though ie for io is rare, we cannot say that there would be anything exceptionable in Stephan becoming Stifan, Stifan or Stifan. We must not suppose, however, that Stifan was pronounced like "Steven."

Stifan, under Alfred, was correct Old English, and a form Stifan would make its genitive and dative in Stifnes, Stifne, respectively. Whereas Steofan, Stifan, would be declined Steofnes and Stifnes. The latter form, you tell me, actually occurs on coins of the time of Henry I.

The ending -an is not usual in the names of men in Old English, and the late Peterborough chronicler bears witness to the selection of a quasi-nominative
levelled out from the genitive *Stephnes*, which actually occurs. The Peterborough scribe not only tells us about the wretchedness that *lastede xix. wintre while Stephne was king*, but also about other things that happened "on Stephens kings time."

It is not possible to decline *Stifne* in Latin, and the legends **STIFNE REX** and **STIEFNE REX** are inexcusable for that reason.

Your chronological order of first **STIFNE** and secondly **STIEFNE** is valuable, also it is phonologically correct.

This proves how, in the turmoil of his election, Stephen had to leave the details of his hurried currency to the rule of thumb of the Cuneator's office. The evidence before us suggests that in the vernacular the *i* was short and the *e* silent, the name being then pronounced *Stif*n—to rhyme with a clipped *given* (*giv’n*), and I have heard it so rendered in the Lancashire dialect.

The error did not pass unnoticed at the time, for although the later form **STIEFNE** was retained upon the official money until the end of the reign, the Abbot of Reading, for example, corrected the legends on the dies he used to **STEFANVS R**, and on the two coins known¹ of Bishop Henry we have the classically correct phrase, **ZTEPHANVS REX**, as on the great seal, and almost in the same lettering; but of these and other similar coins more anon.

We will now leave the legend and consider the devices upon the type generally. Upon Henry I.'s two latest types the bust upon the obverse had been full-faced² and, therefore, under the rules I have already endeavoured to explain, for marking the currency to enable the

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1 One in Mr. Carlyon-Britton's collection, and the other, imperfect, in the British Museum.

2 See Introduction, Plate II, and for the later of these types see also Fig. 40, ante.

legal tender to be from time to time limited,\(^1\) it was expedient that
the design of Stephen’s bust should be in profile, and, again, as its
profile predecessor had been to the left, that it should be turned to the
right. Of Henry’s fifteen types the sceptre had appeared on ten, and
as it was necessary for Stephen’s purpose that he should be depicted
in full regalia it is again in evidence. There is a general resemblance
in most of the profile obverses of the Norman coins, but it was
probably to save the delay of submitting his portrait for the King’s
approval that the preceding profile type, the thirteenth of Henry I.,
was chosen for the design of the obverse before us. It will be noticed
that it is virtually the same picture reversed. The reversal of course
brings the right shoulder and arm into the foreground, and shows the
heavily pearled border of the robes thereby brought close up to the
neck, where it passes over the shoulder and, again, as a sleeve, over
the wrist. Compare Figs. 41 and 42.

Pearls, or pellets, were a popular detail of the ornamentation of
the times, whether in architecture or in the lesser arts, and although
they also appear upon the border of the robes of the Great Seal, it is
probable that they were added here merely for the adornment of the
coin rather than copied from any actual robes worn by the King. As
such they have been mistaken for rivet-heads, and so have led to
the curious error of the bust being described as “in armour,” because
of their resemblance to the studded gorget round the throat, and to a
studded wrist-piece, or vambrace, worn with plate armour. Nearly
two centuries had yet to pass before plate armour even commenced
to supersede mail; and, to say nothing of the mail hauberk never
requiring such studs or rivets, a king with crown and sceptre in any
armour would be somewhat an anomaly. Another deviation from the
prototype is in the adornment of the crown. This was slightly
modernized from that of Henry’s two latest types, upon which the
popular symbol of the period, the fleur-de-lys, was in evidence. The
fleurs are supported upon spreading stalks, which form graceful curves
from fleur to fleur, and although only three are shown, there were of
course four fleurs upon the crown.

\(^1\) See ante, Chapter II.
It was under Henry I. and Stephen that the fleur-de-lys finally developed from the trefoil, the emblem of the Trinity, and assumed the graceful curves of the lily—shortly to become the badge of France. It was a popular ornament in the art of the day, and is profusely used upon the money throughout the latter reign. The evolution of the lily is an interesting study in dating Norman architecture and design. In the type before us it also surmounts the sceptre, which is practically identical with that of the prototype coin. Under Æthelred II. the head of the sceptre, when not a cross, was usually formed of three pellets; under Canute two leaves were often substituted for the two lower pellets, or added above them; under the Conqueror the central upright, which had hitherto supported the pellet, became leaf-shaped, and a trefoil of straight leaves resulted; finally, under Henry I., the two lower leaves of the trefoil commenced to assume the graceful droop of the lily, and the fleur-de-lys had evolved.

What the crozier is to the bishop, the sceptre is to the king, and both symbols seem to spring from a common origin, namely, the shepherd's staff, or guiding wand of the flock; for in the Hebrew the same word, shebet, was used for both sceptre and staff. To a pastoral people the staff of the shepherd was the emblem of power, and it is so referred to in Genesis xlix, 10, as "The sceptre (shebet) shall not depart from Judah." It was customary to ornament the staff of the sceptre with three or four rings, represented by pellets on the coins. One of these is at its head, and is sometimes mistaken for part of the cresting, another is midway, the third marks the commencement of the handle, and the fourth completes the butt. They are not, however, always present on Stephen's money, but on the regal issues some at least are represented. I have seen similar rings of gold of the Bronze Age, which could only have ornamented some staff of office, and I believe that on the sceptre they had an archaic and symbolical meaning, for they also seem to have been essential to the episcopal cross and crozier from the earliest times.

The portrait of the King, such as it is, so far as I am aware is the only likeness of Stephen that we have, save a small drawing of a figure representing him. I have already referred to it in the Introduction,¹

¹ *British Numismatic Journal*, vol. vi, p. 189.
but I may add that although it is a portrait of the King it is not to be taken as a likeness of the man himself. In other words, it may be accepted as well representing Stephen as he appeared at his coronation, namely, as then, clean shaven, with his hair worn long and tied at the nape of the neck; and probably the crown, costume and sceptre are faithfully reproduced. The face itself is remarkably uniform in character on nearly all the regal money of the type, but this is due to the use of the same punches, or at least the same class of punches, for the sinking of the various dies, and must not be accepted as evidence of featural portraiture; indeed, the whole bears too close a likeness to Henry's bust on the prototype coin to be deemed more than representative. The thickness of the punch which impressed the upper lip on some of the dies may suggest at first glance that a moustache was present, but this, I think, was not so. It seems to me that, like the nose, the whole upper lip was punched into the die with a single iron. Figure 5 of Plate IV suggests this, but many examples are quite clear on the point. On the other hand there are a few specimens which do bear a moustache, but these, I think, are from irregular dies which were copied from the coins, and the die-sinker erroneously assumed that a moustache was intended. In any case the pellet marking the chin is not to be mistaken for a goatee. That Stephen should appear as clean shaven upon his first type is interesting, because upon his second type, which was issued when he emerged from his long captivity, he is depicted with full moustache and beard, and one would wish to imagine that, like the Confessor's, they were reminiscent of some vow then pledged. But the pages of Ordericus tell us a very different story, namely, that the Norman ladies resented the bristles left by the razor, so the beard was allowed to grow; and also in spite of the admonitions of the Pope and bishops that “if a man have long hair it is a shame to him,” the Normans became “so hairy that they looked more like Turks than Christians.”

A glance at Plate IV at the head of Chapter III will show that upon the coins bearing the legend *STIFNE REX*, that is, upon the first of the varieties of the type now issued, the eye is formed by the impression of a complete annulet, and although the eyebrow is always
present there is but little attempt to represent the eyelids. This gives a staring effect to the face, which evidently was noticed, for on the succeeding varieties the eyelids were gradually developed, and by the use of a half-moon instead of an annulet for the eye itself the effect became quite natural on many of the late coins of the type. Little points such as these are important, because they tend to prove that the three varieties of the type were not contemporary, but were issued in strict succession, for that is essential to my story.

Another such point is the gradual disappearance of the inner circle. In the earliest variety it is continued round the bust to separate it from the legend wherever there is room for it without crowding or crossing the design. But on the subsequent varieties less prominence is given to it, until upon the last coins issued of the type it is entirely absent.

We will now turn to the reverse design of this type. Surrounded by the customary legend of moneyer and his mint enclosed between an outer and inner circle, it is usually described as a cross moline generally pierced at the ends, the terminations meeting and forming a tressure fleury internally. But we have seen how likely it was that Stephen would symbolize his sovereignty upon every possible detail of this coinage, and, therefore, I am disposed to agree with Mr. W. Sharp Ogden who, writing in 1905 of this type and its varieties, said "All these show the King's head bearing a crown, evidently of a pattern repeated on the reverse as a plan or diagram. The coincidence is interesting, and they may possibly have been intended as coronation types." If he will permit me, I will amplify Mr. Ogden's argument. Looking from beneath and through the crown, which I have already described, the inner circle of our device would represent the main band which fits the head; beyond this "the tressure fleury internally" would appear as exactly representing the four fleurs of the crown raised upon the graceful curves of their stalks; and, finally, the arms of the cross would reproduce the usual arches of the crown, "pierced at the ends" where they were riveted to the curves of the stalks. It will be noticed that on the coins there is a tiny square, or star of four rays, placed saltirewise over the centre of the cross moline, and this, I suggest,

represented the under boss of the fleur which surmounted the centre of the arches of the royal crown of the period. True, on this particular type of Stephen's money the crown was void of arches, but the arches appeared upon his subsequent types and were present on Henry I.'s crown on the money then current, which must have been in the designer's mind (see Plate II, ante), and they do, in fact, appear upon the Abbot of Reading's coins of the type before us.

Whether Mr. Ogden's ingenious suggestion was, or was not, the true origin of the design, and what more likely when the meaning of the name "Stephen" itself is "a crown"? no other numismatic device has ever remained in fashion and retained its popularity for so long a period as this. We meet it as the principal boss of the vaulting of the Norman chapel within the wall of Conisborough Castle, we cannot miss noticing it on the medieval tiles of our cathedrals and abbeys, and we tread upon it in the modern tiling of our churches to-day. Yet, so far as I can ascertain, it must have been an original device designed by Stephen's Cuneator at the time of his coronation; for, truly, vita brevis et ars longa.

In the above remarks I have treated the type generally, both as to the obverse and reverse, from the coins issued from dies supplied by the King's Cuneator at the royal mint. On these there are minor variations which may be noticed as we pass on, but to the numerous class of coins struck from dies prepared locally, whether within or without Stephen's sphere of authority, no such general rules can apply, for each example can only be explained by its own immediate history, and as to this I am afraid the explanation may often be weak or wanting.

Type I, Variety A.

I must now, for a moment, be technical and describe Stephen's money as it was designed at his coronation and issued so soon thereafter as it was possible, namely the first variety of his first type, eight specimens of which are illustrated upon Plate IV. This we will class as "Variety A," and its description is as follows:—
Obverse:—Stephen’s bust crowned to right, showing the right arm brought forward and the hand holding sceptre before the face, all within an inner circle broken at the bust, and where it would otherwise interfere with the design. The crown is surmounted by fleurs-de-lys, of which three of the four are shown, and they are raised upon graceful curves formed by their expanding and united stalks. On the portrait the eye is formed of a complete annulet below a strong eyebrow, and sometimes the eyelid is attempted, as, for example, upon Plate IV, Fig. 5. The nose is almost stereotyped throughout as a long, square-ended and overhanging feature. The lips are coarsely represented by thick punching into the die, and the chin is marked by a prominent pellet. The hair, represented by three, four or five coils, or curls, which cover the ears, is tied behind the head in a knot, the twist of which is sometimes shown. The robes have a border, ornamented by abnormally large pearls, which folds round the neck, and the robe, or its sleeve, covers the arm, showing a similar border at the wrist. The sceptre is crested with a complete fleur-de-lys and its staff is divided into sections by bands, represented by pellets, usually, one at the head, one midway, one above the hand and one below it; but these vary in position and number and are rarely all visible. The inner circle is sometimes plain, but usually engrailed, or perhaps better described as composed of pellets overlapping one another. The outer circle which surrounds the whole is similar, but is rarely visible except in occasional sections, because, although it was complete on the die, the official clipping of

1 Reverse: *GODRIE:ON:STAFO:, Stafford, H. M. Reynolds
The First Variety of the First Type.

the prepared metal to weight destroyed its true circle, and so the outer circle of the coin only appears where the metal received the outer edge of the die in the striking.

The legend invariably is **STIFNE REX**, and by it the variety may at once be identified.

Reverse.—A cross moline, bearing a minute square or cross, saltirewise, in the centre, and usually pierced at the ends of the arms, with the curves of its terminations extended until they meet internally in a fleur-de-lys in each angle: all within the legend enclosed between an inner and an outer circle similar to those on the obverse.

Owing to the circumstance that no material hoard of Stephen's coins known to us was originally deposited, or lost, before the troubled year of 1141, when all the three varieties of his first type had been successively issued, this, the first of them, is by far the scarcest in our cabinets to-day, and in consequence fewer mints and moneyers are represented upon it.