NOTES ON A COLLECTION OF MONEY-SCALES AND OTHER COIN-WEIGHING APPLIANCES.

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In venturing to exhibit certain diverse examples of money-scales and other coin-weighing appliances, I am under no delusion that I can make any substantial addition to our knowledge of the subject. At the same time, without having made systematic search for such things, I have from time to time acquired such examples as happened to come my way, and which seemed to illustrate varieties of type; the results up to the present are now before you.

I can show nothing earlier than the 17th century, nor do I claim that any single example is of exceptional interest or merit. In short, it is just an average collection of typical specimens, and nothing more.

Nor do I propose to dilate at any length on the objects exhibited. Anything like a detailed description of each example would be extremely tedious, and I will content myself with drawing attention to such points as may possibly be of interest. Apart from these, the exhibits really explain themselves.

What may be called the archaeology of coin-weights has been admirably dealt with in the paper read before this Society by our Member Dr. L. A. Lawrence, F.S.A., and published in vol. vi, 1st series, of our Journal.

Since then Messrs. Sheppard and Musham (the former a Member of this Society) have contributed a series of articles on this subject to Messrs. Spink's Numismatic Circular (1920-3), which have now been reissued (with additions) in book form under the title Money-Scales and Weights (1923). Though it suffers from the serious
defect of possessing no index, the book contains a vast amount of information on a subject which had previously been somewhat neglected, and obviously represents the results of much patient research. Cordial gratitude is due to these pioneers for their work.

In 1925, M. Dieudonné, the learned Curator of the Department of Coins in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris, issued his *Manuel des poids monétaires*, a scholarly work, but one which naturally concerns itself primarily with the French series.

It seems, therefore, that the whole subject of coin-weights is at last attracting attention, and this may provide some justification for introducing the matter.

Beginning with the boxes of scales and weights, I will first dispose briefly of the foreign examples:

A1.—Apparently French and contains its original weights intact, but has no maker’s name or label.

A2.—Bears the label of Abraham Kruse, of Schwelm, in Westphalia, authorized scale and weight-maker to the King of Prussia. 18th century.

A3.—A very similar box, with the label of Johann Caspar Mittelstenscheid, of Lennep, in Rhenish Prussia, under the authority of His Royal Highness the Prince of the Bavarian Palatinate.

A4.—Also emanates from Lennep, the issuer being Johann Daniel vom Berg, or “John Daniel of the Hill.” Late 18th century. Many of the original weights are missing, and have been replaced by an odd assortment of earlier Dutch and other weights.

A5.—A Flemish box issued by J. F. Wolschot, and dated 1730. The label further bears a motto of which the translation is “A false scale is a crime with God, but an honest weight is His will.” This set is clearly by the same maker as a very similar box figured and described by S. & M. on pp. 134–7, where the maker’s name appears
as Jacobus Francis Wolschot living near the Meat-market, Antwerp. This maker is also referred to by M. Dieudonné, p. 167, and there are several boxes of weights by him in the museum at The Hague.

A6.—An attractive box of lime-wood, embellished with bookbinders’ tooling, and fitted with a drawer, a locker in the lid, and another small one in the box. It bears a stamp “AD” in a crowned shield of peculiar form. Though it now contains various English round weights of James’s reign, the box is, to my mind, typically Dutch.

A7.—A plain oak box with a very fairly complete outfit of weights, mostly stamped with the Bruges mark, which may justify us in assigning it to that town.

A8.—A plain box bearing the label of T. Melchior Kruse, of Elberfeld, in Prussia, who may or may not be connected with Abraham Kruse, of Schwelm (A2). The weights appear to be complete (with one exception, which is evidently a substitute), and are knobbed. The label bears an interesting and intricate coat of arms, which I have not yet identified. The escutcheon of pretence in the centre seems to be that of the Palatinate of the Rhine. The similarity of several of these Prussian boxes suggests that the makers of the weights did not necessarily make the boxes, but procured them from wood-workers who specialized in the manufacture of boxes for the purpose.

A9.—A German or Flemish box of stained (?) lime-wood ornamented with bookbinders’ tooling. There is a locker in the lid for 8 weights, and 5 are accommodated in the box itself, with a smaller locker to contain the grain-weights. The set of weights seems to be original and complete.

The boxes of English money-scales may be divided for convenience into two classes: (1) Those cut out of the solid, or “dug-out”; and (2) those put together in the ordinary way. Of class (1), three have the labels of the makers inside the lid.
B1.—An apple-wood box decorated with tooling and dating from about 1700. The label has been cut to fit the lid, but there is no doubt as to the reading: “Edmund Jenks at Ye Angell & Star in St. Ans Lane nere Aldersgate.”

B2.—A mahogany box of George III’s reign, “made by Henry Oxly,¹ No. 230 Upper Thames Street London.” The box-lid is embellished with 2 incised hearts of quintuple concentric lines. A similar device is figured by S. & M. on p. 61, as occurring on a mahogany box, and the suggestion is there made that a love-token is denoted. Personally, I see no sufficient reason for this sentimental interpretation of a fairly commonplace ornament. Two boxes exhibited by me have the double-heart ornament upon them.

B3.—Label of “Henry Neale at ye End of St. Bartholomew Lane near the Royal Exchange London.” Pans stamped “H. N.” Contains English weights. (See S. & M. List, p. 172.)

B4.—A 17th century box of apple-wood, with traces of ornamentation on the lid.

B5.—A mid-17th century lime-wood box, with tooling on the lid.

B6.—A larger mid-18th century pear-wood box, with tooling on the lid.

B7.—A box having a distinctly German look, of stained lime-wood, and fitted up for rectangular knobbed weights. There is a brass-lidded locker stamped “I. W. Herberts—London.”

Sheppard and Musham record the name of “John William Herbertz of Stidwell St. Soho” occurring on a printed label inside a box of apparently a more or less similar description.

¹ Not “Oxby,” as in Sheppard and Musham, p. 172.
other Coin-weighing Appliances.

B8.—A mahogany box, fitted up for rectangular knobbled weights of which 3 only survive. There is a brass-lidded locker.

B9.—A mahogany box, with weights for guinea and half-guinea only, is in practically perfect preservation.

The chief interest of the built boxes, of which I show seven examples, lies in the makers' labels on the lids:—

C1.—A mahogany box, with the label of “Thos. Goulding at the Angel and Scales No. 15 in Queen Street, Cheapside, London.” The same maker is recorded by S. & M. on a “dug-out” box of mahogany (No. 23, p. 49).

C2.—An oak box with the label of “James Kirk No. 52 St. Paul's Churchyard, London,” and containing a number of weights made by John Kirk, whose place of business was in St. Paul's Churchyard. This maker was presumably one of the same family as Arthur and John Kirk, but I have not been able to ascertain what the relationship was. Mr. Forrer tells me he has not met with his name. This box has the same device of 2 hearts on the lid as the “dug-out” box, B2.

C3.—An oak box with the label of “I. & O. Westwood, Birmingham.” Coin-weights stamped with this maker's name are not infrequently met with.

C4.—A mahogany box with the label of “S. Read in St. Ann’s Lane near Aldersgate London.” There is a label of this maker recorded by S. & M. (No. 56, p. 67), from which we learn that Samuel Read worked at the Angel and King's Arms in St. Ann's Lane.

C5.—A large mahogany box with the label of “Freeman & New in Leadenhall Street London. Scale makers to his Majesty's Mint, Exchequer, Bank of England &c.” S. & M. quote a label with the same reading (No. 55, p. 67), except that the name is given as “Freeman & Son,” which may conceivably
be a misreading of “Freeman & New.” Among the few odd weights remaining in this box is a square one stamped on both sides, “2 ounce frank wt.” of which I should be grateful to learn the explanation.

C6.—A plain mahogany box bearing the label of “Basil Hunt at No. 48 in Edmund Street Birmingham.”

C7.—Another plain mahogany box, with the label of “Sewell & Young, at the Hand and Scales, No. 5 in Bear Street Leicester fields.” A similar box, but of somewhat larger size, is described by S. & M., pp. 46–7, where an illustration of the label is given.

Of the 5 boxes covered with real or imitation shagreen, two have the labels of the issuing firms, one reading “Henry Neale at y’ end of St. Bartholomew Lane near the Royall Exchange, London”; the other “Henry Neale Franting of St. Bartholomew Lane near the Royal Exchange, London.” A third label with a slightly varying legend is recorded by S. & M., but all three must refer to the same place of origin. In the 2 boxes exhibited the Royal Arms on the labels will be seen to be those adopted by William III, with the escutcheon of Nassau in the centre of the shield. In one box the motto appears as the usual “Dieu et mon droit,” while in the other it is “Je maintiendray,” which, as Mr. Andrew has kindly pointed out, was introduced by William III, being the motto of the House of Orange. The labels, therefore, provide us with an approximate date for the boxes. Another of the boxes has a table of weights for the Georgian guineas in the lid, and all 5 differ from each other in details which I will not weary you by commenting upon.

We come now to what is perhaps the commonest type of box, the japanned metal boxes, usually described as “Pontypool lacquer,” from its place of origin, though S. & M. inform us that a similar industry existed near Wolverhampton. All the 9 boxes exhibited are more or less complete, and differ as to their interior fittings one from another, but detailed description hardly seems necessary.
Another type of coin-weighing machine which is very frequently met with is the automatically rising balance usually in a long oblong case of mahogany or rose-wood and less commonly of brass. Of this class I am exhibiting 11 varieties in wooden cases and one in brass. Six contain labels bearing the makers' names:

(a) "James Spyers No. 121 Cheapside and at No. 8 Ball Alley Lombard Str." This name is recorded by S. & M., but the number in Ball Alley is given as 28.

(b) "De Grave & Son, Makers, London." S. & M. give the address of this firm as in St. Martin's le Grand, London, while a footnote states that it has been in continuous existence from 1603 to the present time.

(c) "A. Wilkinson, Ormskirk (late of Kirkby) near Liverpool."

(d) "Stephen Houghton & Son, makers, Ormskirk, successors to A. Wilkinson."

(e) "W. & T. Avery, makers, Birmingham."

Classified according to their mechanism:

5 are furnished with pans and weights and are, in fact, merely scales.

4 are automatic balances with a single "turn," for weighing guineas and half-guineas, with the addition of a movable slide to register variations of weight. The all-brass specimen falls in this class, but is provided with what seems to be an additional indicator, the precise purpose of which I confess I cannot explain.

1—that by Stephen Houghton—has a double "turn," so that by various combinations of "turns" and slide it is possible to weigh guineas, half-guineas, and one-third guineas; and sovereigns and half-sovereigns.

The two balances by De Grave and the Averys, respectively, are single-turn machines for weighing the sovereign and half-sovereign.
Of the miscellaneous coin-weighing appliances, the first I would draw attention to is a simple, flat balance of brass, with a sliding weight. The bar is marked to weigh the Portugal piece or Dobra, and the moidore and their fractional parts, as well as the guinea and half-guinea. It bears a stamp “C.P.265,” and the case into which it fits has the initials “H.A.P.” embossed upon it. This instrument seems to be identical with one described by S. & M. (No. 312, p. 155), where the writer suggests that the 2 small screws in the centre are “for securing to base (which latter is missing).” My own view is that these screws are merely the fulcrum of the balance, and I cannot see where room could be found, in the cardboard case which contains my specimen, for anything in the shape of a “base.”

The next example is a well-made balance of brass and steel, fitting into a cardboard case. It bears the maker’s name, “Sutton, 85 Cheapside, London,” and is furnished with a sliding weight, as well as a gauge, for the guinea and half-guinea. The balance is put in action by depressing a spring release.

No. 3 is a balance and gauge for sovereign and half-sovereign. No maker’s name appears on it and it closely resembles one for weighing half-crowns, shillings and sixpences figured and described by S. & M. (No. 310, Fig. 75, p. 155).

No. 4, by Henry Laxton, of Liverpool, is a simple steelyard for sovereign and half-sovereign, fixed in a velvet-lined case.

No. 5 is “Charles Simmons’s Improved Balance,” of 14, New John St., Birmingham. It is for sovereign and half-sovereign.

No. 6 is a triple brass balance and gauge for crowns, half-crowns and shillings. A somewhat similar one in iron, from the York Museum, is figured by S. & M. (p. 149, Fig. 65), but this is for guineas, half-guineas and one-third guineas.

No. 7 is a small pocket-balance and gauge of brass for sovereign and half-sovereign, made by Paine & Simpson, whose name (with G. R. crowned) is stamped on the lid. It is identical with S. & M. No. 302 (p. 149).
Nos. 8 and 9, brass balances for sovereign and half-sovereign, call for no detailed description.

No. 10 is Cotton's balance, apparently made by Bate of London. A beautifully made little instrument of brass and steel in a mahogany case. It seems to be for weighing the sovereign and half-sovereign, but lacks the additional weight which I imagine fitted into the hollow of the half-sovereign weight when a sovereign was to be weighed.

The round gauge for testing the guinea, half-guinea and one-quarter guinea is, perhaps, rather outside our subject, but I have ventured to include it. It is of steel, and has the name of "S. Henry Inventor by Royal Patent" stamped upon it, with a crown above. A similar one is figured on p. 98 (Fig. 44) of S. & M.