NUMISMATIC REMINISCENCES OF THE LAST SIXTY YEARS

BY A COIN DEALER

The following paper, the script of a talk given by Leonard Forrer to the Society on 28 April 1948, was brought to my attention by Mr Peter Woodhead. Although in its nature it is non-scholarly and Forrer’s interests were primarily classical, it gives a view of the numismatic scene in the early days of the Society which we both felt would be of interest to our members today and would be a fitting contribution to this Centenary Volume of the Journal. I have lightly edited and corrected Forrer’s original words and added explanatory footnotes where I thought they would be appropriate and of relevance to students and collectors of British coins.

Leonard Forrer (Pl. 14a) was born at Winterthur in Switzerland in 1869. Enjoying very indifferent health and with a short expectation of life he came to England in 1887, joining Messrs Spink and Son two years later. By the time he retired in 1952 he had been associated with the firm for sixty-three years and was very much the doyen of European professional numismatists. For generations of students and collectors Forrer was the admired grand old man of Spinks. He died aged eighty-four on 17 November 1953.

Considering his full-time business responsibilities Forrer’s scholarly output – very much in the continental mode – was remarkable both in its scale and its breadth of learning. He took most pride in his four-volume catalogue of Sir Hermann Weber’s Greek collections, a model of its kind, which he completed in 1929. Even in his last years he was intimately involved in the editing and production of Sydenham’s Coinage of the Roman Republic that appeared in 1952. To British numismatists he will be best known for his monumental Biographical Dictionary of Medallists, the eighth volume of which appeared in 1930 and which, although it may be faulted in detail, is still an indispensable mine of information. All this was done, of course, in tandem with the production of innumerable auction catalogues and, for sixty years, the Numismatic Circular, which he not only edited but for which he compiled most of the coin lists and wrote many of the articles.

Humphrey Sutherland in his obituary of Forrer described him as ‘the tranquil possessor of qualities of gentleness, kindness, courtesy, and personal modesty . . . a man who could as little reproach others as he himself reproached’. These aspects of his character are well brought out in his all too brief reminiscences. To an audience today they are perhaps over reticent and even for 1948 one might have wished him to have been a little more forthright and more fully to have captured the personalities of the likes of P.W.P. Carlyon-Britton, Montagu and Murdoch but this would not have been in his nature.

D.W.D.

My kind friends in this Society and especially our honoured President, Messrs. Winstanley and Whitton, have suggested that I should give a short talk this evening on my numismatic reminiscences of the last sixty years. I will endeavour to comply with their wishes, but warn you that I shall not be able to tell you much that you do not already know, especially since I have to confine my remarks to my experiences in this country alone.

1 I am grateful to Dr Nicholas Mayhew and the Ashmolean Museum for permission to publish Forrer’s typescript (Heberden Coin Room: PUB Fol. A 104).
2 Forrer was elected an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Numismatic Society in 1939 and awarded that Society’s Medal in 1944. He was elected an Honorary Member of the British Numismatic Society in 1950.
5 BNM XXVII (1952–4), 226.
6 The Society’s President at the time of the meeting was Christopher Blunt (1904–87), while Edgar Winstanley (1892–1977) and Cuthbert Whitton (d. 1950) were, respectively, Secretary and Director. All three were John Sanford Saltus medallists of the Society.
A young American Air Force officer, who during the last war frequently called at King Street in quest of Roman Republican coins, generally enquired before coming up to the office, whether the ‘old guy’ was in — meaning your humble servant, of course! Now, I do not know at what age an American ‘guy’ is considered to be old, but as a Swiss ‘guy’, I only feel a little over middle age, although my two sons, whom many of you know, are both between 50 and 60, and I happen to be a great-grandfather. I thank God for my long life and the retention of my faculties. This by way of introduction.

Sixty years ago, this country was somewhat different from what it is now. Great Britain was the unchallenged first nation of the world. Britannia ruled the waves — and still does, whatever some Americans or Russians may think. The Rt. Hon. W.S. Churchill agrees with this, as he kindly told me in a letter written in answer to one setting out my own views on the subject. The British flag was supreme over four continents. British subjects numbered 400 million and she owned one-third of the surface of the globe. Queen Victoria, the mother and grandmother of most of the royalties of Europe, had just been proclaimed Empress of India. The word of her statesmen was law. Even the great Bismarck had to acknowledge England’s supremacy. Disraeli, Gladstone, Lord Salisbury, were men of unchallenged authority. Income Tax was at 10d. in the £. And no capital levy! Everyone was carrying golden sovereigns in his purse! It is true that the working classes were not so well off as in our days, but are they more contented now?

Such was this country when I first landed on these shores early in 1887. England was the eldorado for a young Swiss, leaving old and modern languages, history and archaeology had prepared me for the career I was to follow.

Although the firm of Spink & Son was established as early as 1772, and their name appears as buyers at coin sales in the early nineteenth century, the coin business was in its infancy when I joined and the coin stock was confined to a few cabinets of English coins, a display in the window of the shop at Gracechurch Street. However, it was the intention of the two brothers, Samuel M. Spink and Charles F. Spink, to develop the numismatic branch and, when they engaged me, they had already in their employ the late Charles Winter, who specialized in war medals, and W.C. Weight who, however, left very soon and settled on his own account at Brighton.

I immediately began to study Greek and Roman coins, deriving my first knowledge from such standard works as Head’s Historia Numorum, Babelon’s Monnaies Consulaires, and Cohen’s Monnaies Imperiales. The British Museum’s galleries, being open until 10 pm, gave me a rare opportunity to learn the types of electrotypes then on exhibition and it was not long before I became acquainted with the Keeper, Mr. Reginald Stuart Poole, the learned Mr Barclay V Head, to whom Greek numismatists owe so much and who was always ready to help one, Mr Percy Gardner, Mr Herbert A. Greuber and Mr Warwick Wroth. Those heads of the Department of Coins and Medals were succeeded by Dr George F. Hill, Dr E.S.G. Robinson, Dr John Allan, Mr Harold Mattingly and Dr John Walker, who have always shown me as much indulgence and invariable kindness and to all of whom I acknowledge my deep gratitude: they are far above praise.

7 This was Charles Harsh (1923–99), the distinguished scholar-collector whom Forrer introduced to the Roman Republican series and who collaborated with the latter over the editing of the first edition of Sydenham’s The Coinage of the Roman Republic.
9 This had, in fact, taken place some eleven years earlier on 1 January 1877.
10 The assentative sentiments expressed in this paragraph are a not untypical reflection of the mind-set of many of Forrer’s generation brought up in the increasingly uncertain England of the last years of the nineteenth century.
11 Samuel Marshall Spink (1836–1947) — always known within the firm as ‘Mr Sam’ — was the driving force behind the development of the coin and medal side of Spink & Son that issued its first coin list in 1885 with prices ranging from 6d. to £1.
12 Spink & Son now traces its origins at least to 1666 and to one John Spink, a London goldsmith. Samuel Marshall Spink moved the business from 2 Gracechurch Street to 17 Peculiy in 1899 and to 5–7 King Street, St James’s in 1927 where it remained until its transfer to 69 Southampton Row in 2000. Charles Winter (1861–1933), a John Sanford Saltas medalist of the Society (1922), had, at the time of his death, been member of Spink’s medal department for forty-eight years and had also managed the firm’s medal-making factory for a considerable period. William Charles Weight (1859–1923) later (c. 1911–12) moved his business to Letchworth. His stock was dispersed in three Glendining sales in July, September and October 1923.
13 Forrer’s memory was playing him tricks here; at this time the Museum was never open to the public later than 8 pm (and in the summer only). Evening opening was abandoned in 1896 because of the small attendances.
14 For an appreciation of some of these scholars see their obituaries (where appropriate) in the Proceedings of the British Academy, D.M. Wilson, The British Museum (London, 2002), passim; J. Walker, ‘The early history of the Department of Coins and Medals’, The British Museum Quarterly, XVII, 76–90; and C.G. Hill, ‘An Auto-biographical Fragment’, The Medal 12 (1968), pp. 17–24. At this time — and until 1911 — Herbert Appold Greuber (1846–1927; Keeper of Coins, 1906–12), strictly a Roman specialist, was the only British Museum staff member responsible for British coins. His relationship with P.W.P. Carlsson Britton was a fraught one, he never joined the British Numismatic Society or Graeber’s ‘Keeper of Coins’ (1906–12), strictly a Roman specialist, was the only British Museum staff member responsible for British coins. His relationship with P.W.P. Carlsson Britton was a fraught one, he never joined the British Numismatic Society or Graeber’s Handbook of the Coins of Great Britain and Ireland in the British Museum (1899) was not superseded as a general overview of British coinage until his successor George Cyril Brooke’s English Coins appeared in 1931 (and for Scottish and Irish coins not until at least another twenty and thirty years after that). His edition (with A.W. Franks and W.S.W. Vaux) of Hawkins’ Numismatic Illustrations of the History of Great Britain and Ireland to the death of George II (text 1885 and plates 1904–11) continues to be an essential echiridion. Wroth (who died in 1911 aged 53) and Mattingly (1884–1964) were never Keepers of the department.
Messrs. Spink having acquired in 1889 a fine collection of Roman and Byzantine gold coins, I compiled my first private catalogue of that series in that same year. In order to attract Continental clients and to cover my deficiency in English, I did it in French! My first visit abroad to attend an auction sale was in Paris, 1890, at the Photiades Pasha Sale, where I went entrusted with commissions from Sir Hermann Weber, Mr Montagu and Dr F. Imhoof-Blumer of Winterthur, a school-fellow of my father's from whom I learned a good deal. In December 1892, Spink & Son's monthly Numismatic Circular, of which I was co-founder and editor, first appeared. It ran for 47 years and was only interrupted in 1940 by the Second World War, to be replaced by the Numismatic Circular List. As you know, the old Numismatic Circular is again published, from the present year, in a smaller size, and now printed in England, and not in Maçon, by Protat Frères, as formerly.

The coin dealers in 1890 were Peter Whelan, representative of Rollin and Feuardent of Paris, of whom I could tell many tales; Mr Talbot Ready, who confined himself then, as Whelan, to classical coins; James Verity, a specialist in English coins; Lincoln, who dealt chiefly in English and Continental coins; Mr Baldwin, who specialized in the copper coinage and laid the foundation of the present world-renowned firm; E.J. Sellman, of Great Berkhamsted, who dealt in Greek and Roman; and W.J. Webster, who at a subsequent date and on the invitation of Mr Montagu, came into the business of Spink & Son, and was the official catalogue for Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, etc.

Foremost among collectors in the nineties was Sir John Evans, President of the London Numismatic Society for 25 years, from 1875 to 1902. Through his influence the Society obtained a Royal Charter from King Edward VII in 1904. His knowledge was prodigious. There was not a branch of numismatics with which he was not conversant. He collected Greek and, especially Roman aurei, early British, Anglo-Saxon, English medieval, stone implements, Celtic jewels and ornaments, weapons and relics of Great Britain and Ireland. Mr S.M. Spink and I valued his collection for probate after his death, to the value of £145,000. I shall ever remember with gratitude the encouragement I received from Sir John, translated into words in the Numismatic Chronicle, when I ventured on my Biographical Dictionary of Medallists. Sir John and Lady Evans often visited us at Gracechurch Street and later at Piccadilly. I recollect with what pleasure he exhibited, at every meeting of the Numismatic Society, his latest acquisitions, whether British or Roman. Once, Sir John gave me a commission for a very rare ancient British coin at a Munich sale, which turned out to be an electrolyte, made by Ready, from a specimen still in his collection. Sir John's unique collection of early British coins was ceded to the British Museum by his son Sir Arthur; the early prehistoric ornaments in gold went to the Ashmolean at Oxford. We were entrusted with the sale of the English collection, which was purchased by Pierpoint Morgan, senior (the American Railroad King) but which was brought back later by his son and sold conjointly to the British Museum and to Mr R.C. Lockett. This collection comprised 4,222 pieces (279 AU, 3,422 AR and 51 AE), including two Henry III gold pennies (one from the Cuff and Wigan cabinets and the other acquired in Rome), a gold florin of Edward III (only two known), half and quarter florins; nobles of second and third coinages; a half noble of the fourth issue; an unpublished noble and half of Richard II; a heavy noble and half of Henry IV with many other unique gold coins of Edward IV and V and a unique cinquefoil sovereign of Henry VII. In silver, British rarities from William Rufus to Charles II, including two portcullis groats. The Roman aurei were sold in Paris, except for a number of pieces retained by Sir Arthur. The rarities disposed of, many of which were purchased by Mr Robert Jameson of Paris, included an AU Balbinus (only two known), Didius Julianus, Didia Clara, Pescennius Niger, Victorian Senior, Tetricus Senior, Magna Uricia, Carausius, Allectus, and others. Some came from Francesco Gnecci of Milan, others from Paris sales and from finds in Egypt. My contacts with Sir John were manifold. He has left in my heart an indelible sense of profound gratitude. In 1908, I dedicated to his memory an obituary notice, published in the Gazette Numismatique Française (1909), in which I gave a complete list of his scientific works from 1849 to 1907.

I first became acquainted with Sir John Evans' son, Sir (then Dr) Arthur Evans in 1898, when I compiled the sale catalogue of one of his collections of Greek coins, known under the name of 'Archaeologist & Traveller'. Sir Arthur died in July 1941 at the age of 90. Throughout the forty years of our business relationship, he honoured us with his confidence and only two months before his death he entrusted us with many orders for the W.L. Gantz sale. His original collection of Greek coins was disposed of, through Rollin & Feuardent, to Mr Jameson, for the modest sum of £10,000; what would it be worth now? This sum would now barely represent the value of some very few coins, such as the

15 Friedrich Imhoof-Blumer (1839–1920), the great Swiss collector and student of Greek coins; RNS Medallist 1888.
16 Timothy Peter Whelan, father of Francis Edward Whelan (1848–1907); dealing from Great Russell Street; William Talbot Ready (1857–1914) who took over representation of Rollin and Feuardent after Francis Whelan's death; James Verity (1845–1910), a Yorkshire dealer at Dewsbury and subsequently Leeds: active at London coin sales; Frederick William Lincoln (d.1890), effective founder of W.S. Lincoln & Son of New Oxford Street; Albert Henry Baldwin (1856–1936); Ernest John Sellman (d.c.1944), father of Charles Theodore Sellman (1886–1957), the Ancient Greek historian and numismatist; William John Webster (1845–1919), son and business successor of the Great Russell Street (and subsequently Bedford Square) dealer William Webster (1821–85) and great-nephew of William Till (d.1844). He gave up his own business then in Bloomsbury Place to join Spink in 1892.
17 The second Henry III gold penny, now in the Schneider Collection (SCBI. Vol. 47, no. 1) came to Evans via Lord Grantley.
19 The Revd William Lewis Gantz (1873–1940) whose wide-ranging collection was sold by Glendining in May and June 1941. Gantz's questionable behaviour over the non-payment of his Society subscription was a momentary cause célèbre in 1932; see pp. 16–17 above.
famous Demareteion, the incuse Taras, the facing head staters of Metapontum (Jameson Catalogue 81 and 326) etc. These particular gems are now in the possession of the famous oil-king, Mr Nubar Gulbenkian.

In 1922, I compiled the sale catalogue of Sir Arthur's collection of Roman and Byzantine gold coins (Neville & Co., Lucerne, Ars Classica III), another in 1926 (Neville & Co., Lucerne, Ars Classica XII) and a third in 1934 (Neville & Co., Lucerne, Ars Classica XVII (lots 1001-2722)), in which re-appeared the aureus of Quintillus (from the Comte de Viry’s Collection 1900) and which is now in the Ashmolean Museum. Through our intermediary, the late Dr A.H. Lloyd purchased a further collection of Greek coins, built up by Sir Arthur since 1908, and of which I compiled a private catalogue: this was sold for £17,000.

Sir Arthur Evans acquired world fame for his excavations in Crete on the site of Cnossos, the subject of his monumental work on the palace of Minos. Sir Arthur’s contributions to Greek numismatics are too well known to be mentioned. His last paper, published after his death, was in the form of “Notes on early Anglo-Saxon gold coins” (Numismatic Chronicle 1942, 19-41). Possessed of ample means, Sir Arthur was able to form collection after collection of Greek coins, engraved gems, and other works of art. His generous benefactions greatly enriched the National Collection and the Ashmolean Museum, of which latter he was Keeper for many years. He was in our offices in May 1941 on the day the news came through of the bombardment of the ruins of Cnossos and the destruction of the museum at Candia. He was terribly perturbed and immediately took a taxi to the offices of the Hellenic Society to enquire after the safety of the personnel of the British School of Art. The charm of his manner, his retiring disposition his genial personality, endeared him to all who enjoyed his friendship and I esteem it a great privilege to have been associated for half a century with two generations of Evans.

Sir (then Dr) Hermann Weber was probably my first client. In 1899 and subsequent years, we used to obtain monthly consignments of Greek coins from A.J. Lawson of Smyrna, J.P. Lambros of Athens, and other sources, which we sold to him first and then to Mr Montagu. On receipt of a consignment, I advised him and he gave me appointments at 10.12 or 10.25 but, as you may guess, I always had to wait half an hour or more in his waiting room before I could see him. He bought largely, but we never added more than 10% on the prices fixed by the consignors. He also commissioned us to buy for him at London and continental auction sales. At the Ashburnham Sale (1895), he gave us an order for a beautiful Amphipolis tetradrachm, limiting us to £55. I bought the coin for £62. He came the next day, insisting on our ceding it to him at his limit of £55, attributing to my youthful enthusiasm the excess price realised. This coin would now be worth many hundreds of pounds.

As is well known, we purchased Sir Hermann’s collection after his death, undertaking to compile and publish a catalogue of it, a task that devolved on me, but in which I was greatly assisted by Mr Robinson of the British Museum. The National Collection, with a grant from Parliament, availed itself of the option to incorporate all the coins not already represented at Bloomsbury. Sir Hermann lived to a great age and at 90 he was still taking his “constitutional” every morning in St James’s Park. Next to him, I must name the great collector Hyman Montagu, the shrewd solicitor, who within a few years formed a vast assemblage of Greek, Roman and English coins that was unsurpassed in his time. He purchased collections on bloc such as the Addington in 1883, and was a heavy buyer at the Bergne (1873), Marsham (1888), and other noted auction sales. His Roman aurei came from the Ponton d’Amécourt (1887), De Quelen (1888), and other Continental sources, in Italy and Egypt. I often visited him in his office in Bucklersbury, City, where, however busy he was, he would always find time to examine coins. During his lifetime, he parted with his series of milled English coins, of which the late Mr S.M. Spink compiled the catalogue for publication. Many of his Greek coins passed through our hands. A fine Croton stater, which we sold to him for £25, brought £75 at his sale (no. 73). Two magnificent Amphipolis tetradrachms realised £33 and £18 10s respectively; what would they be worth now? Amongst Montagu’s priceless English treasures, the Henry III gold penny fetched only £250, and one of the most remarkable pieces of his collection, the ‘Juxton’ Pattern Five Broad piece by Rawlinson realised £770 and was purchased by us for the British Museum. Mr Grupeier compiled the catalogues of the Montagu Collection, except that of the Roman aurei, sold in Paris by auction through Rollin and Freuand in 1896 when 1,291 coins realised 300,000 francs (£12,000). With the Greek and English, the Montagu Sale brought over £55,000. Mr Montagu, after a good classical education, studied for the Bar, and about 1878 began to collect English coins. His Greek and Roman collections date from 1889. He died at the comparatively young age of 50 on 18 February 1895. He had the natural gift of practical knowledge of coins and all that was rare or very fine came to him in the end.

21 Sir [Edward] Stanley [Gorget] Robinson (1887-1976), a member of the department of Coins and Medals 1912–52 (Deputy Keeper from 1935 and Keeper from 1949). Of independent means Robinson was a consistent donor of Greek material to the British and Ashmolean Museums, a degree of munificence eventually (in 1972) recognised by a knighthood.
22 Sir Hermann Weber (1823-1918) was an eminent consultant physician (specialising in consumptive diseases). His son, Dr Frederick Parkes Weber (1863–1962), who presented a general collection of some 5,500 coins and medals to the British Museum in 1906, was also a consumptive specialist, and surpassed even his father’s extreme longevity.
23 And William Brist’s main collection in 1887. The remnants of Samuel Addington’s collection were sold by auction in 1886.
24 [S.M. Spink], H. Montagu: Catalogue of Milled English Coins from George I to Victoria, including Patterns and Proofs (London, 1901).
25 Acquired by Murdoch, subsequently in the Leslie-Ellis and Lockett collections, and at present continuing in a private collection.
26 For Hyman Montagu (c.1543-95) see SNC 3 (1894-5), cols 1143-4 (April 1895): Montagu’s cabinet of British coins was one of the most important private collections ever formed.
J.G. Murdoch was a contemporary of Montagu. He started collecting only late in life as a hobby and derivative to his commercial activities. His collection of English coins ranks as one of the most important ever formed or sold in this country. Many of the rarities and finest coins came from the Montagu sale. He did not touch Greek and Roman and only shortly before his death did he venture on continental gold. He owned an unrivalled series of patterns and proofs in gold, silver and copper from George I to Victoria. The earlier series were well represented in the first sale that took place in March 1903; the second, in May 1903, consisted of a remarkable series of Scottish coins. The third included the reigns of Charles I to George II, and the fourth, the Colonial, Irish and American series.

Mr Murdoch had extraordinary opportunities to add to his collection and he rarely missed securing a piece that he desired to possess. I recall on one occasion that we were commanded by Queen Victoria to buy on her behalf a specimen of the Jubilee £5 piece, bearing her signature engraved in the field. Mr Murdoch had given us a previous commission and it was only with the greatest difficulty that we could persuade him to give way to Her Majesty.

During the lifetime of Mr Montagu, the rivalry between these two collectors was a source of great perplexity to the dealers entrusted with their commissions. Once, Mr Murdoch, wanting a coin that Mr Montagu also desired, made the remark: 'I can align as many £5 notes on the table as Mr Montagu, and I insist on your obtaining it for me.'

Mr Murdoch was a most affable collector. His fine and venerable presence attracted all who came into contact with him. He died in 1902.

Sir Henry Howorth occupied the Presidential chair of the Royal Numismatic Society from 1908 to 1913 and remained one of the Vice-Presidents until his death in 1922. A most regular attendant at the meetings, his vast knowledge, strong sense of humour, controversial mind, not only in numismatics, but also in almost every branch of science, made him a first-rate commentator and debater. His opinion often differed from the generally accepted one, but his observations were always suggestive and opened fresh channels for investigation. Sir Charles Oman, who first met him at Westminster, stated in his obituary notice that he was astounded to find that the same man wrote a solid book on the Mammouth, three volumes on early Anglo-Saxon Church history, and four on the history of the Mongols. It was a pleasure to hear Sir Henry discourse with ease on any subject of numismatics. He and Sir John Evans were great friends and I always enjoyed their caustic remarks.

Sir Edward Bunbury was a keen collector of Greek coins. I knew him personally but did not have many dealings with him. At his sale I bid £75 for a tetradrachm of Catana which twenty years later fetched £475 and would now be double that amount. He also had a Demeteratone that only brought £199 at his sale, and yet at the time of the Bunbury and Montagu sales the prices were considered high! Sir Edward was amongst the collectors of the latter quarter of the nineteenth century who had access to the cabinets, with their untold treasures, in France and Italy.

Canon Greenwell had a general collection of Greek coins, but was especially noted for his fine series of Cyzicene staters, which were purchased by the Boston (USA) Museum. Dr Kurt Regling of Berlin compiled the catalogue of the Warren-Greenwell cabinets.

Reginald Huth was for many years a keen collector of English, Spanish and Russian coins. He would never place a coin in his Cabinet before having washed it; so afraid was he of microbes! C.E. Mackerell collected Roman bronze coins and was very particular as to condition. Until you got accustomed to him, you could not but be amused at the way he examined coins sideways. Sometime before his death, I went to see him at Clapham, to value his collection, for which we offered £3,000. He having accepted that sum, I was preparing to take the cabinets when he burst into tears, and his three sisters also. Under these circumstances, I could do nothing less.
than leave him the cheque and the coins as well (with his promise that the coins were ours) until he had finally decided to part with them.  

Major P.W.P. Carlyon-Briton, the founder of this Society, was a keen collector and student of Anglo-Saxon, Norman and medieval English coins. He had a grievance with the Royal Numismatic Society, which he blamed for paying too much attention to the classical, to the detriment of the British series. Having obtained the support of some friends, W.J. Andrew, Colonel Morreson, Mr Tallis and others, he decided to form the British Numismatic Society. He did not get on well with Sir John Evans. I remember one of the meetings of the Royal Numismatic Society, at which Lady Evans had read an interesting paper on ladies’ coiffures on Greek and Roman coins, that he sarcastically remarked: ‘Have we come to this to discuss ladies’ bonnets?’  

Mr W.C. Hazlitt, the grandson of the famous essayist, collected English and Continental coins in finest condition. His book *Coins of the European Continent* and supplement gave me a lot of work. The publishers could not make out his writing and so I had to rewrite the whole for them. We once had an obsidional testone of Florence that we described in the *Numismatic Circular*. On the morning following the publication Mr Hazlitt was waiting before the office was opened, only to find that the Prince of Naples had visited us a few days before and bought the coin; he naturally was furious! I catalogued his collection for auction sale.

Mr R.C. Lockett’s unrivalled collection of both Greek and English coins is too well known by us all that I should give it more than a passing notice. A Continental dealer who saw part of it described it as ‘fantastic’. The Greek gold and silver series have been published and illustrated in the *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum* by Mr Robinson. The English series are even more worthy of publication and it is hoped that posterity may have a permanent record of such a unique cabinet, comprising untold rarities from early British, Anglo-Saxon, Norman, and later English coins. As to Mr Lockett himself, I trust he will allow me to say that I have always had a special regard and admiration for him. His most kind and sympathetic attitude and generous patronage to us deserve our deepest gratitude.

It would take me too long to mention my many numismatic acquaintances, J.T. Beachett, Colonel Tobin Bush of Le Havre, William S. Churchill of Manchester, Captain Clark, Oliver Codrington, the Orientalist and for many years the Librarian of the Royal Numismatic Society, Professor E. Copp, the Reverend G.F. Crowther, A. Durlacher, my old friend Henry Garside, J. Campion, another good friend, W.J. Gillespie, Nathan Heywood, Richard Hoblyn, T. Hodgkin, J.M. Johnston, Thomas Jones, of sad memory, Dr. L. White-King, E.C. Krumholz, F.W. Maddon, Alfred E. Pacha, Sir Augustus Prevost, Jonathan Rashleigh, William Rowe, Lt. Colonel Sandeman, E. Shorthouse of Birmingham. Sam Smith, junior, F. Spicer, Captain Tufnell, Colonel Talbot, Arthur W. Young, F. McClean of Tunbridge Wells, and so many others who are remembered for their collections. But I cannot end this list without mentioning my dear old friend, my senior by ten years, Dr L.A. Lawrence, whose name is venerated as a pioneer and to whom, voicing the thoughts of each one here, I offer the expression of our admiration for all his achievements and wish him some peaceful years amongst us still.

In conclusion, I would say that numismatists are delightful people. Absorbed as they are in their studies and hobbies, they live in the peaceful atmosphere of the past and rise above the worries of the present.

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34 Charles Edward Gregg Mackerell (d. 1905) also collected English coins, sold by Sotheby on 14-15 May 1906.
35 ‘Hair-dressing of Roman Ladies as illustrated on Coins’, read to the RNS on 18 January 1906 and published in *NC* 6 (1906), 66-76.
36 For William Carew Hazlitt (1834-1913), bibliographer and self-proclaimed man of letters, see *DNB* and *SNC* 21 (1913), cols 742-44 (October 1913). His *Coinage of the European Continent* (London, 1893; *Supplement* 1897), although not without its use as a collector’s manual, was regarded as amateurish and superficial even in its own time. The sale of Hazlitt’s collection (Sotheby, July 1909) extended over nine days.
37 This was never achieved in the way Forrer hoped but the Society was able to fund a photographic record of the English coins not illustrated in the eventual auction catalogues of Lockett’s collection: see above, pp. 21-25.
38 For an indication of the interests of these collectors see Harrington E. Manville and Terence J. Robertson, *British Numismatic Auction Catalogues: Encyclopaedia of British Numismatics*, I (London 1986). For Laurie Asher Lawrence (1857-1949) see *BNJ* XXVI (1949-51), 95-6 and above, passim.