COIN WEIGHTS.

By L. A. Lawrence.

The antiquity of coin weights is probably as high as of coins themselves, but, in the English series, owing largely perhaps to their want of artistic merit and the base metal generally used in their manufacture, they have excited but little interest and practically no study. That they are worthy of more recognition than has hitherto been accorded to them I hope to be able to show in the sequel. Ruding quotes many documents referring to coin weights, and the pieces themselves as a whole are abundant.

I have, however, never yet seen either in a museum or elsewhere a collection of classified coin weights, nor do I know of a treatise on them. Probably in Saxon and Norman times owing to the frequent change of type, and the existence of money taxes in connection with new issues, there was no need of supplying counterpoises to the people. When the three years' limit of issue was in use there could not have been much loss of weight due to circulation, and as silver, the only metal then represented by the currency, was not of any high value in relation to other metals, the loss was probably borne by the ultimate owner when he came to have his old money exchanged for new.

When, however, the coins had to do longer duty than three years, viz., in early Plantagenet times, and a little later when gold was added as a standard metal for coinage, the use of counterpoises became necessary to the people. Special weights would seem never to have been very popular with the multitude, possibly it was less expensive or easier to use the ordinary pennyweight and grain measure
which, after all, answers the same purpose. This seems to be clearly shown in the first proclamation I shall quote, temp. John, where the words are added “if they would have them.” Later references are constantly made to the difficulty either of selling the authorised weights or of getting the people to use them or, indeed, of persuading them to weigh their money at all.

In view of the fact that we have many weights, authorisations for which are not forthcoming, and some proclamations for weights for which the weights themselves are not forthcoming, I will first quote the proclamations as a whole before referring to the weights themselves.

PROCLAMATIONS CONCERNING THE WEIGHTS.

JOHN.


[Speaking of Merchants] but they were not to lend nor to merchandise with any other coins but those which were large and weighty, as the penny sterling ought to be. And for the discovering of this lack of weight in the money, there was issued from the mint office a penny-poize wanting one-eighth of a penny, to be delivered to anyone who would have it, to be used until Easter in the next year.

EDWARD I.

Ibid., p. 198. Sub anno 1292.

And because many people, poor and rich, could not distinguish the light and clipped coins, it was ordained that the money should from that time be received and paid by weight of five shillings in amount and five shillings in value, by the tumbrel, which was to be delivered by the warden of the exchange, being marked with the king's stamp as the measures were. And every person might at his pleasure bore the money which would not weigh the tumbrel; and also all other money not being the coin of the King of England, Ireland, and Scotland. And that the weights should be delivered and marked by the warden of the exchange as well as the tumbrel.
HENRY V.

Ibid., p. 266. Sub anno 1421.

[In reference to a statute just passed by Parliament.] A writ was directed to Bartholomew Goldbeter, John Paddeslie, and John Brener, of London, goldsmiths, and John Derlyngton, campson and assayer of the mint in the Tower of London, and Gilbright Vanbranburgh, engraver in the same, commanding them to make weights for the noble, half-noble, and farthing of gold, sufficient for the several cities and boroughs; and to form ten puncheons for each weight, five of them with the impression of a crown, and the other five with a fleur-de-lis, and to bring the weights when stamped to the council; and whereas it had been ordained in parliament that none of the king’s liege subjects should receive any money of England, except according to the weights provided for the purpose, it was commanded that the statute to that effect should be proclaimed in every county.

HENRY VI.


In this year, John Bernes of London, goldsmith, was appointed by the king to make the money weights for the noble, the half and quarter, and to stamp them according to the form of the statute of the ninth year of the late king [1421 as above].

HENRY VII.

Ibid., p. 295. Sub anno 1495.

Standard weights were, in his eleventh year, delivered to the knights and citizens of every shire and city assembled in parliament, barons of the five ports, and certain burgesses of borough towns, to be by them conveyed to certain cities, etc., appointed for the safe custody of the same. But in the following year, 1496, those weights were, upon examination, found to be defective; and it was then ordained that every pound should contain twelve ounces of troy-weight, and every ounce twenty sterlings, and every sterling to be of the weight of thirty-two corns of wheat that grew in the middle of the ear of wheat, according to the old law of the land.

[The sterlings in that statute are pennyweights, and not the coins of that name.]
In reference to coins of debatable weight and value. And in order to enable all persons to ascertain the lawful weights, order was given to the warden of the mint in the Tower, whose office it was to prepare upright balances and true weights of every several piece of gold lawfully current in the realm, and also of the said remedies and abatements, to be stricken with an E crowned, to be ready to deliver at reasonable prices, to be rated by the treasurer of England.

And every city, borough, and town corporate was required to have one such balance, and such weights, to be well and safely kept, for equal judgment between the queen's subjects and all others. And it was ordered that no other weights but these should be used, on pain of imprisonment, without bail or main prize.

This order for the use of certain weights was followed by a proclamation (dated upon the 19th of March) containing a declaration of an order for the making of certain small cases for balances and weights, to weigh all manner of gold coins current within the realm, provided to be sold to all persons that should have cause to use the same, and which had been viewed by the wardens and assistants of the company of goldsmiths in London, by whom it was signed, limiting the sundry prices thereof according to their several quantities; which cases, with the balances and weights, had been made by order of the master of her Majesty's mint in the Tower of London, and viewed, allowed, and set at reasonable prices, by the said wardens of the goldsmiths in London, and thereupon according to her Majesty's proclamation heretofore made for that purpose, now put into print, by order of the Lord Burghley, lord treasurer of England, whereof the original forms (so rated and prized) remained in the receipt of the exchequer, to be compared with such as should be sold by the said master of the mint, according to their several forms and prices.

The First and Greatest Case.

First, a case of wood with several partitions for xiiij printed weights, iiiij other partitions for other weights, and one partition with a cover for grains, esteemed at 

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{The balance of the same case} & \text{at} & \text{vijd.} \\
& \text{The xiiij printed weights for coins} & \text{at} & \text{xvijd.} \\
& \text{The suit of 1 dwt. from ob. weight to 5 dwt.} & \text{at} & \text{ixd.} \\
& \text{The suit of grains from di. grain to v grains} & \text{at} & \text{iijd.}
\end{align*}
\]
Proclamations Concerning the Weights.

THE SECOND CASE.

Item, a lesser or second case of wood, having a partition for a balance, three partitions for three several weights for coins, and one partition for small grains esteemed at ... ... ... vjd. 
The balance of the same case at ... ... ... xijd. 
The three printed weights at ... ... ... xviijd. 
The grains at ... ... ... ... ... ... ... iijd.

THE THIRD CASE.

Item, a lesser or third case of wood, having a partition for the balance, two partitions for the three several weights for coins, and one partition for grains, esteemed at ... ... ... ... ... ... ... iiijd. 
The balance of the same case at ... ... ... xijd. 
The three printed weights at ... ... ... xviijd. 
The grains at ... ... ... ... ... ... ... iijd.

THE FOURTH CASE BEING LEATHER.

Item, a leather case printed and gilded with gold, having in it a partition for the balance, two partitions for weights and grains, esteemed at ... ... ... ... ... ... ... xijd. 
The balance of the same case at ... ... ... xijd. 
The three printed weights at ... ... ... xviijd. 
The suit of j dwt. at ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ixd. 
The suit of grains at ... ... ... ... ... ... ... iijd.

THE FIFTH CASE BEING LATTEN.

Item, a case of latten for a pair of folding balance, also of latten, at ... ... ... ... ... ... ... viijd. 
The balance of the same case at ... ... ... xijd. 
The three printed weights at ... ... ... xviijd. 
The grains at ... ... ... ... ... ... ... iijd.

This proclamation appears to have been but little attended to, for on the 18th of February, Richard Martin complained to the lord treasurer, that notwithstanding her Majesty's proclamation respecting the weighing gold and silver coins, they still continued to pass without being weighed, and that he had expended above six hundred pounds in providing scales and weights marked with an E crowned, the far greater part of which still remained upon his hands. He proposed,
therefore, that the warden of the mint, etc., should have authority to see that the said proclamation be observed, and that all other weights and grains used against the meaning of the same should be forfeited.

**James I.**


[Referring to the recent coins.] And that all subjects might have good and just weights for the weighing of such coins, notice was given in the proclamation, that his majesty had commanded the master of his mint within the Tower of London (the appointment thereof being proper and peculiar to his majesty only) to prepare, before the first of September, a sufficient number of upright balances and true weights as well of every several piece of gold lawfully current in the realm, as of the said remedies and abatements, to be ready to deliver at reasonable prices (to be rated by the commissioners of the treasury or the treasurer of England for the time being) to all such as should require the same. And the chief officers in all cities, boroughs, and towns corporate, in the realm of England, and principality of Wales, were commanded to provide, to have one pair of the said weights sufficient, at the hands of the said master of the mint, within every city, etc., before the last day of the said month of September, these to be well and safely kept, for trial of the weight of the said coins, as any occasion should be. And all persons were forbidden to have or use any other weights than as aforesaid, for the said coins of gold, remedies or abatements.


[In a proclamation made at Edinburgh which differed from the English proclamation of July 31st in the following particulars.]

Viz., Charles Dickeson, sinker of the irons in the mint at Edinburgh, was authorized to make the weights, and was commanded to sell them at the price of twelve shillings usual money of Scotland, and not at more. And all other persons were forbidden to make or sell any of the said weights, except such as should be made by the said Dickeson, under the pain of falset, and to be punished therefore in their persons and goods, as counterfeiters of his majesty's weights, with all rigour.

**Charles I.**


The errors and abuses which existed in the money-weights called
BOX OF MONEY-WEIGHTS AND SCALES AS USED IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. DUTCH.
at this time loudly for redress. Many of them, which were in common use (although they were marked with the king's ensign), were too heavy, and others too light, so that men bought and received by one weight, and sold and delivered by another.

Sub anno 1632.

In order to remedy this, notice was given by proclamation on the 20th of December in this year, that his majesty had taken into his own hands the making, assizing, and issuing the said counterpoises or weights, with grains and half-grains; and the weights wherewith the money of gold should be poised after the 26th of January following, should be made of circular form, with certain marks thereon by which they might be easily known from the weights which were formerly used; and that they should be of the full and just size according to the true weights of the gold monies, and the grains and half-grains to be apart by themselves, to show the remedies and abatements as they ought to be; and that none of them should be made with the remedies and abatements purposely taken off (commonly called blanck weights). And further, that his majesty had committed the care of making and assizing those counterpoises and weights to Sir Thomas Aylesbury, baronet, one of the masters of requests, who was to have in readiness in the Tower of London, sufficient numbers of the said counterpoises, etc., exactly and diligently made and sized to furnish his majesty's subjects, by the 26th of January next following, to be issued at a reasonable price.

Aylesbury's patent was dated on the 20th of October, 8th Charles I., and was for England, Ireland and Wales, for life at the yearly rent of twenty shillings. Authority was given him to enter any place, with the assistance of a constable, to search for false weights and balances, and to seize the same as forfeited to the king (Pat. 8 Charles I., pt. m. 8, Rymer, xix, p. 390). And it was ordered that all chief officers in cities, etc., etc., should with all convenient speed, provide one pair to be kept within such city, etc., etc., that such as would, might have access to the same, for discerning the true weights of the money of gold.

Also that no person should use any other after the aforesaid 26th of January. That no person should make or counterfeit them on pain of punishment. That none should be compelled to use any other weights. And that all judges, etc., should attend to the execution of the premises, and, upon complaint, proceed in the high court of Star Chamber or elsewhere.
Coin Weights.

CHARLES II.

Ibid., vol. ii, pp. 19 and 20, sub anno 1683.

[In reference to Ireland Ruding notes the following coins which were then current, together with the weights and values.]

### Gold.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coin Description</th>
<th>Weight (dwt. grs.)</th>
<th>Value (£ s. d.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The golden rider</td>
<td>6 12</td>
<td>1 2 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; half-golden rider</td>
<td>3 6</td>
<td>1 1 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; Spanish or French quadruple pistole</td>
<td>17 4</td>
<td>3 10 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; double pistole</td>
<td>8 14</td>
<td>1 15 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; single pistole</td>
<td>4 7</td>
<td>1 7 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; half-pistole</td>
<td>2 3½</td>
<td>8 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; double ducat</td>
<td>4 12</td>
<td>1 8 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; single ducat</td>
<td>2 6</td>
<td>9 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; Spanish suffrance</td>
<td>7 2</td>
<td>1 8 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; half-suffrance</td>
<td>3 13</td>
<td>14 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Silver.

The ducatoon ... ... ... 20 16 6 0

Half and quarter in proportion.
The Mexico, Sevil or pillar piece of eight,

the rix dollar, cross dollar and French

Lewis ... ... ... 17 0 4 9

Half, quarter, and half-quarter in proportion.
The twelfth of the French Lewis ... 1 12 4 6

The old Peru piece of eight ... 17 0 4 6

Half, quarter, and half-quarter in proportion.
The Portugal royal... ... ... 14 0 3 8

Half and quarter in proportion.

[I have quoted these coins because the list shows what a large number of foreign coins passed current at the time, weights for which are known. Ruding continues.] And to the end that there might be no uncertainty in the weight of money, the proclamation further declared that the lord-deputy and council had directed all the weights necessary for the said silver coin, to be exactly made by Henry Paris and John Cuthbeard of the city of Dublin. The stamps to be flat, and the circle to be smooth and polished, that no dust might gather in, and each weight to be stamped with the number of pennyweights on one side, and the crown and harp on the other, and to be sold at not more
than twelve pence for all the weights, being eight in number, viz., for
the ducatoon, half ducatoon, whole plate and Peru pieces, and half and
quarter pieces thereof, a two pennyweight, a pennyweight, and a half
pennyweight, such being sufficient to weigh the several sorts of silver
coin then current commonly in that kingdom. Standards of all those
weights were to be left in the hands of sheriffs of counties, mayors, etc.,
of cities, etc., for determining or preventing all differences about any
weights for money. And any persons who should pay or receive any
money by any other weights, were to be proceeded against and
punished according to law, as keepers and users of false and unlawful
weights. No weights seem to have been provided for the gold coins.
[This is not a fact as will be subsequently seen.]

**William III.**

[William III., about the year 1694, reordered the use only of the
weights proclaimed in 1693, but different values were attached to the
several pieces.]


[It was found that the weights made by John Cuthbert and Henry
Paris were not to be relied on and these persons were discharged and
one Vincent Kidder of Dublin, goldsmith, was appointed, who was to
make the weights according to the standard lately made in his
majesty's mint in the Tower of London.]

Each weight to be stamped with the number of pennyweights on
one side and the king's arms on the other, and to be sold at not more
than fifteen pence for all the weights, eight in number.

**George III.**

[From the time of William the Third until June 24th, 1773, Ruding
is silent on the subject of coin weights. He then, p. 88, quotes the
proclamation of that date wherein the older gold coins of light weight
were to be recalled, and states that from July 15th, 1773, all guineas,
etc., more deficient in weight than at the rates specified below should
not pass current except to certain bodies appointed to receive them.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>dwt.</th>
<th>grs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guineas coined since the 31st of December, 1771</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half-guineas during the same period</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Guineas coined during the reign of the king and prior to the 1st of January, 1772  ...  ...  5  6
Half-guineas during the same period  ...  ...  2  14
Quarter-guineas during the same period...  ...  1  7
Guineas coined prior to the commencement of the reign of the king...  ...  ...  ...  ...  5  3
Half-guineas during the same period ...  ...  2  13

[Coin weights were ordered to be made for the guinea and shilling, with their multiples and parts, to be kept together with duplicates for comparison, and a counterstamp, the form of which was to be published at intervals in the London gazettes, was to be used for all weights to be sold to the public after the appropriate officers had found that the weights brought to them for comparison were correct.]

Ibid., p. 90.

All persons who should counterfeit the said stamps or marks, or sell any weights with the impression of such counterfeit stamps, knowing the same to be counterfeited, or should wilfully increase or diminish any such weight after it had been stamped as directed, or should make use of any such weight in weighing gold or silver coin, knowing the same to have been so increased or diminished, and should be convicted thereof, were to forfeit a sum not exceeding fifty pounds, and in default of payment to be committed to the common gaol or house of correction for any time not exceeding three months.

Nothing in the Act was to extend or take away any rights granted by letters patent in the 12th year of James I. to the master, etc., of the mystery of founders in the city of London, with respect to the sizing and marking of all manner of brass weights made or sold within the said city, or three miles' compass thereof, provided that the weights directed by the Act to be made use of for weighing the gold and silver coin of the realm, after having been sized and marked according to the directions of the said charter, should be carried to be ascertained and marked in the manner before directed, by the officer appointed by his majesty for that purpose.

The charge for counter marking coin weights as correct was one penny for every twelve weights.

[After this proclamation there are no further references in Ruding to coin weights. These still continued to be made, but seemingly any person could make them provided they were impressed with the necessary official stamp.]
Description of the Weights.

The Weights.

Many of the weights referred to in the proclamations can still be brought forward in evidence, but, as with the coins themselves, there are many weights of which we do not now know the history.

I have never seen the weight ordered for the sterling in 1205, nor do I know anything English before Edward IV., unless a single specimen of a weight for the Anglo-Gallic salute of Henry VI. can be made to do duty. Plate I, No. 8.

Coin weights for the rose-noble and the half rose-noble of Edward IV. are extant. They have a very rough representation of the obverse of the coin. The reverse is plain. Plate I, Nos. 1 and 2.

The crown of the double rose is the only representative of the reign of Henry VIII. I can show. The side shown is the rose crowned, but with RR at the sides instead of HR. It is square in form. There are several round weights bearing an angel, but no legend, and on these the reverse is plain. Two sizes exist, but I cannot find any evidence of their period beyond the fact that they bear the later type of the saint (Plate I, Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7). Jacobean square weights are in fair evidence. That for the xxx. piece, valued at xxxiis., bears the reverse of the coin.

The sovereign weight with the king's half length bust in armour on one side, with lettering I.R. MA. BRI., and xxiiis. crowned on the other is known, both with the bust in ornamental and plain armour.

The crown of the same issue, also square, is known with the king's bust, roughly copied from the coin. The value is given as xx. vid.

A square weight for an angel value xx. is the weight for the angel either of 1605 to 1612, or for that struck from 1619-1625.

The intermediate angel of 1617-1619 valued at eleven shillings, also square, and its half worth five shillings and sixpence, are also shown. The angel on these pieces is fairly well drawn.

The weight for the laurel or twenty-shilling piece and its quarter, also square, are the last I can bring forward as having been made in the time of James I. Most of these square pieces are counterstruck with the letter I crowned.
It will be remembered that the stringent proclamation of Charles I. is dated 1632, and that he ordered all coin weights to be made round.

I have only been able to find one square weight of Charles I., which must, therefore, clearly have been made before this date. It is for the sovereign, and the king is shown wearing a large ruff. The legend is CARO REX. The reverse shows the value xxr. crowned with a fleur-de-lis on each side of the crown and of the letter S. The piece is counterstruck with the I, crowned, so it must be for the earliest sovereign.

The weights issued in virtue of the proclamation are still quite common, and are of course circular in form. They are interesting on account of their fine work, and from the fact that they were made by Briot, whose initial B, is to be found on most of them. There are two sets of these weights: one set for the coins of James I., which were still current, and the other set for those of Charles.

The Jacobean pieces are for the

Sovereign, half-sovereign, crown, and half-crown valued respectively at xxii.s., xis., vs. vi.d., and ii.s. ixd.: also the angel, half-angel, and quarter-angel, valued at xis., vs. vi.d., and ii.s. ixd. I hesitate to attempt to explain the last weight, but it may, perhaps, be evidence of the issue of such a coin as a quarter-angel of James I., which I believe is now unknown. The B can be found on all denominations of these weights, but it is not constant. I have the sovereign and half-sovereign weights in silver. The set is shown on Plate I, Nos. 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13.

The weights of Charles are for the

Sovereign, half-sovereign, and crown; also for the angel. The values were xxr., xs., vs., and xs., respectively. The three former bear the king’s name, but the last, the angel, is devoid of lettering on the obverse. This was doubtless to distinguish it from the weight made for his father’s angel, which bears the king’s initial and title. The figure of the angel was from the same die in both weights. Briot’s initial, B, can be found on
COIN WEIGHTS.

Pl. I.
most of these weights. Illustrations of these will be seen on Plate I, Nos. 14, 15, 16 and 17. A silver penny by Briot—No. 18—is shown for purposes of comparison of workmanship.

The set were presumably also struck in silver of which I can show the sovereign, crown and angel.

The last of the weights of Charles I. that I can refer to are certainly puzzles which I cannot explain.

1. A round weight with an equestrian figure of the king as on the Exeter half-crown. Two lions rampant under the horse; legend WITHOUT GRA NS (sic), reverse CR, crowned, below it XXX*, a rose crowned on one side of the numerals and a corresponding rose, above which is the D, on the other. Below the value, a lion rampant and two oval dots. Plate I, No. 19.

2. A round weight also bearing a mounted figure of the king in full armour and helmet. The sword, or rather scimitar, is held in striking attitude above the head, fleur-de-lis below the horse's head, and another over its tail; the letters W and C under the horse; all within an outer dotted circle. Reverse XXX crowned, lis and D on either side; three pellets below; the whole within the Collar of the Garter containing the motto. Plate I, No. 21.

3. The same obverse as No. 2. Reverse, CR in ornamental letters, above which is WITHOUT GRAINS in two lines; below 2s. 6d. Plate I, No. 22.

4. Again the same obverse. Reverse, a small dotted circle, with the remains of lettering within it. Plate I, No. 20.

5. Obverse a large rose crowned; legend WITHOUT GRAINS. Reverse as No. 1, but XII for XXX. Plate I, No. 23.

6. Obverse as No. 5, but no lettering; a lion rampant in the field on either side of the crowned rose. Reverse as last. Plate I, No. 24.

These six weights are evidently for the half-crown and shilling of Charles I. They are clearly contemporary, as is shown by the horse on No. 1. I can offer no solution of them as weights for silver coins.
The weights for the gold series of the milled money occur in fairly large quantities, and, as a rule, are fashioned about as badly as it was possible to do them. The obverse bears the sovereign's bust and name, generally also the title, and sometimes the words DEI GRATIA. The reverse has usually a crown, and beneath it the value either in figures or in words.

I have not seen weights bearing the head of Charles II., but those of James II. are well known. The values are given as xxs. and xxs., and some of them are well engraved. Plate I, No. 25, where II is added incuse, is an early weight. A later example is figured on the same Plate, No. 26. The weights of William and Mary are much coarser, and the process of deterioration is very obvious. Some read 1 GVINEA W or ½ GVINEA W, and two sceptres are shown behind the crown (Plate II, No. 1). Those of William alone are generally still worse, and on some of them the spelling GVINEA is to be found (Plate II, No. 2). On one half-guinea weight the value is given as xxs. Occasionally initials, possibly of the makers, are to be found in the field below the king's chin. I have noted WH and AG, crowned, in this position. The weights for the guinea and half-guinea of Queen Anne are perhaps the worst examples of the whole series in point of portraiture (Plate II, Nos. 3 and 4).

Whether this process of deterioration was further continued in George I.'s reign I cannot say, as I have not seen a weight bearing his portrait. The specimens of George II.'s weights (Plate II, No. 5), however, are rather better made, and some of them, chiefly those in copper, are of fine work. This is not surprising when the signatures under the bust are I.K. and I. KIRK. John Kirk was a celebrated engraver of the time (Plate II, No. 6).

All the weights I have seen of George III. are counter stamped in accordance with the proclamation of 1773, so that it is a little difficult to be certain of the date of making. Some are of the old and poor style, but there are beautiful examples signed by John Kirk, in which the bust is perhaps even better than those on the guineas from which they were copied (Plate II, No. 7). The values they represented were the guinea, half-guinea, and quarter-guinea. I have not
COIN WEIGHTS.
Description of the Weights.

seen a seven-shilling weight made in George III.'s time. Besides these pieces bearing the king's bust, there are weights bearing all sorts of designs consequent on the fancies of the makers. One pretty set bears on the obverse a castle with two turrets, above which is a large rose flanked by the king's initials GR. The signature below the castle is ABDY. The weight, in pennyweights and grains, is given on the reverse, and its value, 20s. 6d., is added to the guinea weight (Plate II, No. 10). Some read Geo. III. up to the 1st of Jany. 1773 on the obverse, and again the value and weight on the reverse (Plate II, Nos. 8 and 9).

With the change of currency from guineas to sovereigns coin weights diminish largely in numbers. The set issued in 1821 of George IV. bears on the obverse the lion and crown as on the lion shilling; the legend is ROYAL MINT 1821. The reverse 5 DW 8 GR with a rose above and below; legend CVR WEIGHT GVINEA. Weights for the sovereign, half-sovereign, and seven-shilling-piece correspond with this. In 1823 a weight for the double sovereign was added of the same design (Plate II, No. 11). It will be remembered that guineas were still current at this time. The last English weights I can refer to are dated 1843. They are for the sovereign and half-sovereign, and bear the same legends as those of George IV., but incuse, and Wyon's beautiful bust of Queen Victoria is in the centre (Plate II, No. 12).

As the proclamations concerning the coin weights for Ireland have been quoted, perhaps some reference to the weights themselves may not be amiss.

The weights ordered in 1683 were to bear a crowned harp on one side, and the weight on the other. One of this date answers the description.

Obv.—A large harp crowned, the date 1683 divided by the crown legend THE STANDARD OF IRELAND. Rev.—A large IIII followed by a small d, below it 6c. Legend around it ACCORDING TO AUTHORITY. This was for the gold Spanish or French single pistole the weight of which was 4 dwt., 7 grs., and the value 17s. 6d. The weight was clearly to show the lowest limit of currency (Plate II, No. 13). It was presumably one of the weights made by Henry Paris and
Coin Weights.

John Cuthbert. The weights ordered in 1697 to replace those made in 1683 by the engravers just mentioned, were made by Vincent Kidder. The law was carried out as is shown by the king’s arms replacing the harp on the obverse. The legend was also altered as round the arms we find the date both in letters and figures: ANNO REG GULIELMI III NONO 1697. The harp, now uncrowned, occupies the field of the reverse and the weight, in pennyweights and grains, is found beneath it. The legend is THE STANDARD OF IRELAND. Sets were clearly made in this year, of which I can show those for the quadruple and single pistole. This seems to have been the standard pattern for many years, the only alteration that was made being meant to give greater effect to the figures indicating the weight, which were rather insignificant on this first issue. The harp was accordingly reduced in size and the figures increased.

The alterations are well shown on a set made in 1709 (Plate II, No. 14). Sets were again made in 1737 (Plate II, No. 15), and 1751. A further set of the same general design was made in the last year of George II., viz., 1760. It is of rather better work and is signed I.W. at the sides of the shield (Plate II, No. 16).

Besides these weights of standard pattern there are a great many of all sorts of different designs and values, which were evidently made for British dominions as the legends when present are in English, and the figures representing value are in pounds and shillings.

I think they were intended for use in Ireland because they are of the values of foreign coins ordered to be current in Ireland. If they were for currency in England it seems curious that Ruding does not refer to them. All such references that I have found in his work appear in connection with Ireland.

Both sides alike, value only in an ornamental compartment crowned or uncrowned (Plate II, Nos. 18 and 20). The inscriptions are:

Three pound twelve. Half a moidore or 13s. 6d.
Thirty six shillings. Nine shillings.
A moidore or 27 shils. one-quarter moidor or 6s. 9d.
Eighteen shillings. Four shillings and 6d.
Description of the Weights.

A set in figures only (Plate No. 17).

L. S. S. S. S. D. S. S. D. S. D.
3 12 36 27 18 10 6 9 6 9 5 3

and another in an ornamental circle adds the values—

S. S. D. S. D.
21 13 6 4 6

All these weights were probably issued between 1730 and 1760, and are possibly of English manufacture as is shown by some beautiful specimens again from the hand of John Kirk. One of these, of the value of £3 12s., is signed KIRK, and the legend is IOSEPHUS I DG PORT REX. It shows a fine portrait of the king. The smaller weight for thirty-six shillings is illustrated on Plate II, No. 21. Another of John V. of Portugal is dated 1746, and the reverse reads A PORTVGALE PEICE OF EIGHTEEN SHILLINGS (Plate II, No. 19).

In conclusion, I think it is perhaps necessary to add an apology for the shortcomings which must be evident in this paper. The series is far from complete, and I doubt whether they are worthy of completion.

I started collecting coin weights in the hope that they might throw some light on the coins themselves. The Briot weights were those which held out some hope of this sort, but apparently it is futile. At least, we have before us the weights themselves and some of the proclamations concerning them.
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE TOKENS.