

A FIND OF ENGLISH COINS OF THE TUDOR AND STUART PERIODS IN THE COUNTY OF WEXFORD.

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IN the Spring of the year 1913, a ploughman, following his calling near the village of Camolin, County Wexford, turned over with his ploughshare what appeared at first sight to be a ball of clay. The configuration of the mass being somewhat solid, however, and obviously heavy, he proceeded to a closer examination, and found that the apparently solid mass consisted of a number of metal discs of varying thickness and very discoloured by time and the nature of their hiding place.

Having no one to advise him, the countryman took home the contents of the clay envelope, and appears to have placed the whole in a basin of paraffin oil as a rough and ready means of cleansing the pieces from the soil with which they were encrusted. The "find" or hoard was sent intact to the writer—after this unfortunate process of cleaning—and carefully examined with a view to a possible discovery of its nature; and it appears to bear several features of considerable interest.

The coins themselves present few remarkable, or indeed scarce varieties. All were in a more or less circulated condition, but owing to the process of clipping, a long contact with a damp soil and, finally, the drastic "cleaning," there was very little worthy of acquirement, but the find may be, nevertheless, worth recording on account of its peculiarities.

The face value of the whole of the pieces amounted to exactly eighty shillings, and with the exception of two half-crowns, the

whole of it was in pieces of one shilling value. The period covered dated from the first "fine" shilling of Edward VI. down to the (R) mint-mark of Charles I. (1644), and these facts make it possible to deduce, with a fair amount of probability, the origin of the "find."

It is not unreasonable to suppose, from the fact that the whole of it was in then current *English* silver coins, although Irish pieces were in circulation in that country at the same time, that this was the pay—probably for three or six months—of an English soldier who had accompanied Cromwell's forces to Ireland, and who fell prior to or during the investiture and capture of Wexford, in October, 1649, shortly after the surrender of Drogheda.

The exact amount of the sum found, the fact that it was all in English coinage, and the period as determined by the coins themselves, all point to this theory as being correct; though why the coins were found apparently carefully wrapped in an envelope of clay, and why the shilling of Philip and Mary, and the later shillings of James I. were absent from the series, seeing that the other varieties and mint-marks were so fully represented, are questions more difficult to solve.

The actual varieties found were as follows :—

HALF-CROWNS.

Charles I. (1638),	mint-mark anchor ...	...	1
„ (1639),	„ triangle...	...	1

SHILLINGS.

Edward VI. (1551),	mint-mark ton ...	...	1
„ (1552),	„ "y" ...	...	1
Elizabeth (1558),	„ martlet...	...	4
„ (1559),	„ cross crosslet ...	...	6
„ (1560),	„ lys ¹ ...	...	1
„ (1582),	„ bell ...	...	3

¹ This coin reads FRA. Z. HIB.

Elizabeth	(1583),	mint-mark	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \textit{obverse} \text{ A} \\ \textit{reverse} \text{ bell} \end{array} \right\}$	1
„	(1583),	„	A	3
„	(1583),	„	scallop	2
„	(1587),	„	crescent	1
„	(1590),	„	hand	2
„	(1592),	„	ton	10
„	(1594),	„	woolpack	2
„	(1595),	„	key	1
„	(1600),	„	annulet... ..	1
„	(1601),	„	1	1
„	(1602),	„	2	4
„	(1602),	„	illegible	2
James I.	(1603),	Exurgat, mint-mark	thistle... ..	5
„	(1604),	„	lys	1
„	(1605),	Quae Deus, „	lys	4
„	(1606),	„	rose	3
„	(1607),	„	coronet	3
„	(1609),	„	key	1
„	(1611),	„	mullet	1
Charles I.	(1625),	mint-mark	lys	1
„	(1630),	„	plume	1
„	(1632),	„	harp	1
„	(1633),	„	portcullis	1
„	(1634),	„	bell	1
„	(1636),	oval shield, mint-mark	ton	1
„	(1638),	square shield, mint-mark	ton	1
„	(1640),	mint-mark	star	3
„	(1644),	„	(R.)	1

It will be seen from the foregoing that with the exception of Philip and Mary's coins, between 1552 and 1558, and a long gap between 1611 and 1625, a nearly continuous succession of the coinage of shillings is represented for close upon one hundred years. The series of hammered shillings of the long reign of Elizabeth is complete, with

the sole exception of that with the anchor mint-mark of 1597 ; and even it may be present in one of the two pieces whereon the mint-mark is indistinguishable.

The only coin specially worthy of note is the shilling of Elizabeth showing the mint-mark " A " on the obverse, and on which the " A " has apparently been very faintly struck over the bell on the reverse. This variety was, I think, previously unrecorded, although similar over-strikings have been noted in this reign and became very common in the Stuart period.