

ENGLISH AND IRISH COINS OF HENRY VIII BEARING INITIALS OF HIS QUEENS.

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THERE are certain coins of Henry VIII which bear the unusual feature of a Queen's initial. These coins belong to the English and the Irish series; the English coins are of gold and are a George Noble, its half, and the Crown of the Double Rose and its half; the Irish coins are the silver Harp Groat and its half. All these pieces bear the letter A, I, or K, the initials of Queens Anne, Jane, Katherine, accompanied in each case by the letter H on the same side of the coin. The question to be solved is which of the two Annes and Katherines is indicated by the letters A and K. Numismatists in the past have expressed different opinions. The letter I can, of course, only represent Jane Seymour. The pertinent dates of the Queens are:—Katherine of Aragon, divorced in May 1533; Anne Boleyn, married in January 1533, beheaded May 1536; Jane Seymour, married June 1536, died October 1537; Anne of Cleves, January to July 1540; Katherine Howard, married August 8th, 1540, beheaded February 1541/2; Katherine Parr, married July 1543, survived Henry. Incidentally the last queen cannot have been represented on the coins of either the English or the Irish series, as will be seen subsequently. The English coins will be considered first as their attribution is fairly certain.

The coins are all so well known that special descriptions are unnecessary. In 1526 Wolsey was appointed to supervise a new coinage; of this the coins that concern our present purpose are the Crown of the Rose, the Crown of the Double Rose and its half, and the George Noble and its half. The Sovereigns and Angels and the silver coins do not bear the Queens' initials and therefore need not be considered here. The marks on this second coinage of Henry VIII are: (1) rose, (2) lis, (3) arrow, (4) sunburst, (5) lis, (6) pheon; of these the first three only, rose, lis, arrow, occur on coins which bear the initial of a queen. There can be no doubt that the rose is correctly placed as the first initial-

mark, as it is the mark on the Crown of the Rose, which was ordered in August, 1526, and was replaced by the Crown of the Double Rose in November of the same year, and with this new Crown was issued the George Noble and its half. All these coins bear the rose as their initial-mark and their legends are almost entirely in Roman letters except those of the George Noble. This coin and its half bear the letters H K uncrowned on the reverse; the Crown of the Double Rose with the rose as the initial-mark has the same letters crowned on the reverse; the similar Half-crown has the same letters uncrowned. The K on these coins must therefore represent Queen Katherine of Aragon, and, as K is the initial always found on both sides of the Crown with the lis mark, which, as it is muled both ways with rose and arrow, must be the second of these initial marks, it follows that the same Katherine was intended. The arrow-marked crowns have HK on both sides, *obv.* HA and *rev.* HK, *obv.* HK and *rev.* HA, and HA on both sides. This proves that HA is Anne Boleyn. These are followed by another arrow-marked crown bearing the initials HI on both sides, which can only be Jane Seymour. By some evil chance there is a mule known with *obv.* HK and *rev.* HI; this mule does not disprove the order of the initials as given above, for queens with initials K and I never succeeded each other. Later crowns, with the arrow as initial mark, combine HR on the obverse with HI on the reverse. Evidently HR took the place of HI during the run of the arrow mark. The letters HR have been interpreted by some as representing a consortless period, but this interpretation is disproved by the fact that all the later crowns bear HR only though Katherine Parr survived the king; the coin mentioned above with HR and HI must have been struck just after the death of Jane and, although this may have been during a consortless period, we have to admit that there are no coins bearing queens' initials that can be placed later; HR is always used on later coins.

We do not know the reason for these initials ever having been placed on the coins. It has been suggested that the queens represented may have had a seignorage on these pieces.

One additional date must be mentioned. In January 1541/2 Henry changed his title of *Dominus Hibernie* to *Rex Hibernie*, and his English subjects were given six months in which to recognize the change. Presumably his Irish subjects were required to recognize it at once. As Katherine Parr was not Queen until 1543 and no English or Irish coin with HK reads *Rex Hibernie*,

Katherine Parr cannot have been represented on the coinage at all.

Now to consider the Irish series: Our late member, Mr. Henry Symonds, wrote a paper on the Irish coinage of Henry VIII and Edward VI in the *Numismatic Chronicle* for 1915. He there discussed the series of Harp Groats and their halves with a view to finding out when they were first struck. The coins have HK, HA, HI on the harp side only. The initial-mark on all of them is a crown, and they all read *Dominus Hibernie*. Later groats with crown i.m. have HR beside the harp, and a mule is known combining this reverse with an obverse which has trefoil i.m., the next mark on this coinage. Mr. Symonds conducted a careful search into documents and letters; the earliest entry he could find where the name "new coin of the harp" was used was an account dated October 1536, from which he concluded that the harp groat was first ordered in a missing indenture of March 1535/6, and that therefore the initial A could not be that of Anne Boleyn who was beheaded in May 1536, and still less could K be Katherine of Aragon who was divorced in 1533. He therefore, following Aquilla Smith, ascribed the coins to Jane Seymour, Anne of Cleves and Katherine Howard. In the *Numismatic Chronicle* for 1929 Miss Stokes published the mint accounts of this period; the accounts include the coins struck for Ireland at London until 1545 and later at Bristol. There is a gap in the accounts from Michaelmas 1530 to Michaelmas 1536;¹ there is no reason, however, to suppose that coins were not made during the period for which the accounts no longer exist; the later years all include coinage made for Ireland. Mr. Symonds was careful to add on p. 197 "if I am correct in believing that the earliest order for an Irish currency was dated 6 March, 1535-6." At the time the paper was written, 1915, these mint accounts had not been published.

The following list shows the comparison between English crowns and Irish groats:—

ENGLISH CROWNS.		IRISH GROATS.	
<i>Dominus</i> legend	i.m. Rose	HK	
	i.m. Lis	HK	
	i.m. Arrow	HK HK	<i>Dominus</i> legend, i.m. Crown HK
	„	HK HA	
	„	HA HK	

¹ On p. 41 of *Num. Chron.* 1929, the first entry should read "Mich. 28 (not 22) Hen. VIII. to Mich. 29 Hen. VIII."

<i>Dominus</i> legend, i.m. Arrow	HA HA	<i>Dominus</i> legend, i.m. Crown	HA
"	HK HI	"	HI
"	HI HI	"	HI
"	HR HI	"	HR
"	HR HR	" <i>obv.</i> Trefoil	" <i>rev.</i> HR
		Crown	HR
		" i.m. Trefoil	HR
<i>Rex</i> legend i.m. Pheon	HR HR	<i>Rex</i> legend "	HR

I think that this comparison proves the point, which I have attempted to show in these notes, that there is a correspondence between the two sets of the series with the Queens' initials. As a matter of fact the coins of England and Ireland after the death of Jane Seymour and the removal of the Queens' initials, including the Bristol issues, are also in correspondence.