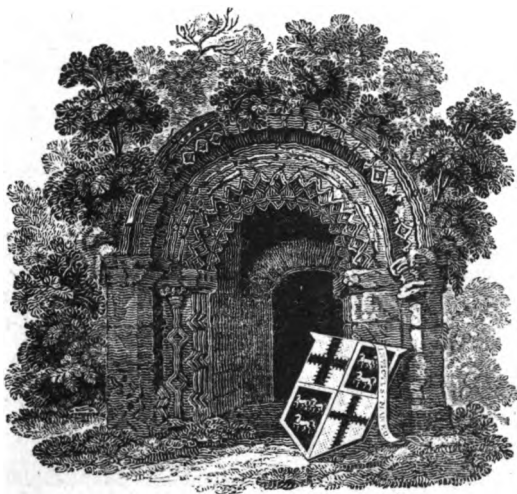


AN  
ESSAY  
ON  
**Antique and Counterfeit Coins.**



TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,  
WITH NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

AN  
ESSAY  
ON THE  
MEANS OF DISTINGUISHING ANTIQUE,  
FROM COUNTERFEIT,  
**Coins and Medals.**

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF M. BEAUVAIS;

WITH  
NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS,

BY  
JOHN TROTTER BROCKETT, F. A. S.

NEWCASTLE:  
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E. CHARNLEY.

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MDCCCXIX.



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THE Medal, faithful to its charge of fame,  
Through climes and ages bears each form and name ;  
In one short view, subjected to our eye,  
Gods, emperors, heroes, sages, beauties lie.

L'etude de l'antiquité est une de celles qui font le plus d'honneur à l'esprit humain ; elle étend le cercle de ses connoissances, réforme son moral en lui rappelant l'exemple des grands hommes qu'elle a produits, et renforme une source inépuisable de plaisirs et d'agrémens pour l'être sensible qui connoît la jouissance de réfléchir sur le passé, le présent, et l'avenir.

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# PREFACE,

## BY THE TRANSLATOR.

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**T**HE first edition of the following Treatise was printed at Paris, in 4to. in the year 1739. It was afterwards corrected and enlarged by the author, and added to his "*Histoire abrégée des Empereurs Romains et Grecs,*" 3 vols. 12mo. This latter, being a much improved edition, has been followed in the present translation.

The Essay of M. Beauvais being allowed on all hands to be the best (and it is also the

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most copious) that has been written on the subject, to which it immediately relates, it is not necessary to make any apology for presenting it to the English reader, at a time when ancient Coins and Medals are so eagerly sought after in this country. Neither need any thing be here said in favour of a study now become so very prevalent; or of the pleasure and information that may be derived from its cultivation. It is, however, proper to observe, (and it is an observation in which every one must concur,) that, unless the Coins deposited in the collector's cabinet are genuine and authentic, their very basis, as evidences of historical truth, independently of their value as Medals, is at once destroyed. The object, therefore, which the author had in view, in the publication of the present dissertation, was to impart to his readers, so far

as it could be laid down by theory, such a set of rules as might be sufficient to enable them, from time to time, to discern Coins and Medals really ancient, from such as were spurious and counterfeit.—However much the ignorance of some, and the limited information of others, may think it savours of pedantry or self sufficiency, a medallist, of skill and acute experience, can, at first sight, decide upon the genuineness or falsity of almost every Medal that comes under his notice.

It is not, however, to be expected that this distinguishing knowledge can be obtained, without much previous study and application. The rules of M. Beauvais, and the perusal of a few of the best medallic books, will acquaint the amateur of Coins and Medals with the



theoretical department of the science ; but to perfect himself in the real and practical part, he must carefully and attentively examine the objects themselves in the best cabinets, which he will find our English collectors, with hardly an exception, liberal enough to lay open to him ;—attend, as much as he conveniently can, on the public sales in London, where the very best specimens are often to be seen ;—and never make any important purchases (where he cannot avail himself of the previous opinion of some eminent Antiquary) without first looking upon the Coins that are offered to him, particularly if high priced, with a very cautious and microscopic eye.

With respect to the notes, all of which have been added by the translator, they are

inserted with a view of supplying what, it must be confessed, the author has sometimes either misconceived or left deficient ; and for the purpose of further illustrating a subject at once so interesting and important.

*Newcastle, 18th September, 1818.*



AN ESSAY  
ON  
THE MEANS OF DISTINGUISHING ANTIQUE,  
FROM COUNTERFEIT,  
**Coins and Medals.**

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INTRODUCTION.

TO those, who attempt the formation of a collection of Medals, the first knowledge, necessary to acquire, is that of being able to distinguish Coins, which are really ancient, from such as are of modern fabrication. It is, therefore, astonishing, that, among the number of authors, who, for a century past, have treated on the science of Medals, not *one* should be found to have prescribed any

certain rules to enable us to make this important distinction.\*

It is true. Father *Jobert*, the jesuit, in his treatise on the *Science of Medals*,† has incidentally, and in a few words, mentioned the subject I now undertake to elucidate ; but this part of his work is so superficial, that it leads one to think he only spoke of it, merely

\* This is too widely stated by the author ; for so long ago as 1548, when the study of Coins was in its very infancy, *Eneas Vico*, a celebrated medallist for that period, in his work “ *Discorsi sopra le Medaglie de gli Antichi*,” among many other things relating to that branch of knowledge, expressly treats of false Medals, and on the rules for discerning them, with considerable intelligence and ability. The best editions of Vico’s book, which, as an elementary treatise, may be safely recommended to the student, though not readily to be met with, are those of *Vinegia* 1555, or 1558, 4to.

† The best edition of this work, which is extremely rare, owing to a very limited number of copies having been printed, is that of Paris 1739, 2 vols. 12mo., edited by the *Baron de la Bastie*. It is not now, however, considered a publication of any high authority :—being entirely without method, it is dangerous for a beginner.

to avoid reproach, in case he had altogether omitted so essential an article, in a book intended to embrace every thing relating to the Medallic Science.

It was never, however, more necessary to furnish the admirers of Medals with the requisite means of defending themselves, against the different artifices of forgers, than at a time, when France and many other countries are inundated with such a prodigious number of false Medals;—brought, and continually bringing from Italy. I am, therefore, induced, by this consideration, to communicate to the public some new observations, which I have made, on the art of distinguishing antique Medals from such as are counterfeit. In doing so, I flatter myself that the curious, who are not yet far advanced in the mechanical part of the science, will not be displeased at the assistance I propose to render them in this study, and the useless expense I wish to guard them against. The love of what is true and genuine, with which I am

desirous of inspiring them, is my sole motive for undertaking the present work.

It is not in our days alone that the temptation of gain, and the desire of imposing upon the curious, have led able artists to attempt the counterfeiting of ancient Coins.

*William Du Choul*,—who lived about 200 years ago, and one of the first virtuosos who wrote upon the monuments of Greece and Rome,—has, in his book on the religion of the ancient Romans,\* engraved two Medals of *Agrippa*; one of first brass, having the *pantheon on the reverse*, the other of silver, with a reverse of *Neptune in a chariot drawn by two sea horses*, and the legend, *ÆQUORIS HIC OMNIPOTENS*:—both these Medals were unquestionably false.

*Antony Le Pois*,† who was contemporary

\* Printed at Lyons in 1556, folio. The author was a gentleman of fortune and distinction, and had a large collection of Medals.

† This writer may be styled the Vico of France; having done for that country what his predecessor effected for

with Du Choul, and who wrote (in French) very fully on the subject of Medals, after the manner of the age in which he lived, likewise mentions many others of the same kind; such, for example, as a *Scipio Africanus* in brass, the *Pons Ælius* on the reverse of *Hadrian*, and a *Pescennius Niger* in gold, then undiscovered, though since found, and to be seen in the King's cabinet.\* These instances too evidently shew us, that, so soon as ever a taste for Coins began to appear in France, or in any other country, the trade of imposition arose, among a set of persons, always

Italy. Le Pois's "*Discours sur les Medalles et Graveures antiques principalement Romaines*," printed at Paris in 1579, though dry and verbose in its language, contains some of the finest and most admirably executed engravings of Coins that ever accompanied a medallic work. It is a publication of great rarity and estimation.

\* The *Pescennius Niger*, here alluded to, is in the cabinet of the French King. It has generally been valued at £50.; but if now brought to public sale, and really genuine, it is believed it would bring even a greater sum.



on the alert to defraud an inexperienced collector.\*

Shortly afterwards appeared in Italy the celebrated falsifiers of Medals, generally known by the names of the Paduan and the Parmesan. Since that time, Michael Der-vieu, of Florence, and Cogornier, became not less distinguished :—The first in counterfeit-ing every species of ancient Medal, though chiefly Medallions in brass ; the second, in imitating, among others, the different Tyrants under the reigns of the Emperors Valerian and Gallienus.

Holland also produced one named Carteron,

\* Considering that the destable practice of counterfeit-ing ancient money is, in no degree, treated as a crime, or in the least restricted, by the laws of any country ; and that the gain arising from these imitations is enormous ; we need not much wonder at its having spread to such an amazing extent. Mr. Pinkerton looks upon the offence as greater than that which leads the common coiner to the gallows ; inasmuch as it is committed with more ease, and the profit is incomparably larger.

and some others equally skilful,\* who dispersed among the curious an infinite number of false Medals. Most of their productions are, indeed, of exquisite workmanship; but they have neither the force nor the delicacy of the real antique. The greatest part of all these Medals are now called the *Paduan*; and they are the first whereof I intend to speak in this Treatise which I have divided into ten chapters.

\* Vico in his discourse on the Medals of the ancients, quoted in a former note, has enumerated among the artists who followed this infamous trade, the names of Victor Gambello, Giovanni del Cavino, called the *Paduan*, and Alessandro Bassiano, his son, also of Padua; Benvenuto Cellini, Alessandro Greco, Leo Aretino, Jacobo da Trezzo, Federigo Bonzagna, and Giovanni Jacopo, his brother. Other celebrated forgers of ancient Medals were Sebastiano Plumbo, Valerio de Vicenza, and Gorlæus a German. None of their Coins, however, are held in much esteem, except those of Cavino, many of which are of wonderful execution. He and Carteron did the most; several of the other forgers not having executed more than two or three specimens.

In the first, I propose to treat of the Medals just mentioned, which generally go under the appellation of the Paduan.

In the second, of Medals cast upon such as are of modern coining.

In the third, of Medals cast in moulds taken from the antique.

In the fourth, of antique Medals retouched, and altered in the heads and figures.

In the fifth, of Medals struck with the hammer, and such as are encasted or soldered.

In the sixth, of Medals that have cracks and countermarks.

In the seventh, of Medals that are plated, and such as are incuse or miscoined.

In the eighth, of cast Medals that are ancient, and of Medallions composed of different kinds of copper.

In the ninth, of Medals that have been invented by false coiners, never existing in the antique; and of such as have been very seldom counterfeited.

The tenth chapter contains what I have

further to say on the subject of the present work.

I develope, as will be seen in each chapter, the different plans that have been resorted to, for counterfeiting Medals; and I have endeavoured to specify certain rules for ascertaining the true from the false, whatever artifice may have been used to impose on the world in this respect.

Undoubtedly I shall lay open and expose one of the greatest mysteries of iniquity that any class of men ever conceived for deceiving others;\* and I own sincerely, that, when I began to take notice of all the rocks, with

\* The only circumstances, that can possibly be pleaded in extenuation of modern artists, are, the masterly skill required in imitating the strength and beauty, the spirit and finish of the ancients; and the emulation that might be supposed to have excited the attempts to rival their exquisite productions; but nothing can wholly remove the infamy and disgrace, that must always continue attached to every action, which tends to embarrass the road to knowledge with falsehood and forgery.

which the collector is encompassed in the science of Medals, I have been tempted a thousand times to relinquish the pursuit. Indeed, I should altogether have abandoned it, had it not been for the violent inclination I always felt for this department of knowledge.

## CHAPTER I.

*Medals of modern Fabrication, mostly known  
by the Name of the Paduan.*

THE Medals, in general called the Paduan, are struck in modern dies, engraved with great art and taste, by the most expert workmen of Italy or elsewhere. As they copied from genuine Medals, they of course endeavoured, as far as possible, to imitate the ancients. Of these modern pieces there are a prodigious number, not to be surpassed for beauty and excellence by any thing but the antique itself. Collections may be formed of them, as well in Medallions or Greek Medals of gold, silver, and brass, as of the Roman, equally in all the three metals; but more especially in Medallions of copper, and first

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brass. Most of the spurious Medallions of the Roman Empire have been copied after the ancient ; but there are engraved on some of them new reverses, never to be seen upon antique Medals. In these latter, however, the forgers took care to found their devices upon established historical facts.

The first twelve Emperors have been counterfeited an infinite number of times in first brass. In doing them the counterfeiters chiefly applied themselves in imitating the rarest heads, such as *Tiberius*, *Otho*, (of which as yet no antique Latin one has been found but what is of the colony of Antioch, or Egyptian, in the three sizes of brass,) *Vitellius*, *Pertinax*, the two *Gordians of Africa*, the *Agrippina* of Claudius, *Domitia* (which is seldom to be met with), the *three Wives of Trajan's family*, *Annia Faustina*, and *Tranquillina*. Collectors, who have had the looking over of a few well chosen cabinets, cannot have much difficulty in avoiding such Medals ; but as the generality of them reside in

the country, at a distance from Paris, and hardly ever come to a place, which is, in a manner, the fountain head of the Medallic Science, as well as of all the polite arts, they are consequently out of the way, and have no opportunity of profiting by the information which our learned antiquaries are in the habits of communicating, with equal readiness and politeness.

I have known many persons in the country, who, after having spent a great part of their lives in the formation of a cabinet of Medals, were really unable to discern a modern Coin from one that was ancient. What is here stated is so true, that the connoisseurs of Paris unanimously agree, that among all the scarcer Medals in the collections made in the provinces or in foreign countries, which are sent thither for sale, after the decease of those who collected them, even in the most celebrated serieses, it has constantly happened that most of the large pieces have turned out to be counterfeits.



It is not, however, difficult to discover those of which I am here speaking, if the collector (who has not already acquired that distinguishing eye, which seldom allows a connoisseur to mistake,) will be careful to attend to the following rules.

1. All the Medals of first brass, which are called the Paduan, and which are the only ones now under discussion, are generally much thinner than the ancient.\*

2 They are neither so much worn or damaged, nor so pored or eaten away as the others.†

3. The letters appear modern, that is, of a character similar to the Medals of our own time.

4. They never have any varnish, unless it

\* Although the Coins and Medals of the Paduan are seldom thinner than the antique, it is to be remembered that those of inferior forgers are almost universally so.

† Many of the modern forgeries appear very much worn, especially in the reverse, and legend of the reverse, which often, as in some false *Othos*, appear as half consumed by time.

be false, which is easily discerned ; for it is usually black, greasy, and shining,\* and is found soft when pricked ; while the real antique varnish is extremely bright, and as hard as the Medal itself.†

5. The borders have always been filed, which is discoverable in a manner more or less perceptible when viewed with attention.

6. In short, these Medals are always quite round, while the ancient ones are never so

\* Sometimes a light green coaty-like varnish is given, spotted with a kind of iron mark. This is made of sulphur, verdigrease, and vinegar ; and is often discoverable among other marks, by hair-strokes of the brush with which it has been laid on. A disclosure of the whole art and mystery of false Patina is made by Vico (Book I. Chapter 22), who has a long and curious article on the subject, well worth the reader's perusal.

† The fine and beautiful rust or varnish, with which many ancient Coins are covered, when really produced by time, is not imitable by any effort of modern art. Instead of concealing the most minute particle of the impression, it shews it to the greatest advantage, and produces the most delightful effect.

regularly so, especially after the reign of Trajan. Thus much for Medals in first brass, of modern fabrication.

The Medallions, in the same metal, may likewise be discovered by the same rules. No great hazard will be run at first, in looking upon all we meet with, from Julius Cæsar to Hadrian, as much to be suspected. There are scarcely any true ones to be found, actually struck during the first fourteen reigns of the Roman Empire; so that all of that time may be considered as false, except a very small number, which are not to be met with in a genuine state, but in the richest cabinets.

Those of the following reigns are not more difficult to be distinguished. They carry along with them the same marks of falsity as the counterfeits in first brass; having the same fabric, the same varnish, the same borders; in a word, the same appearance in every respect.

The imperial Coins in silver or gold, and

the Greek Medals of modern coining, of whatever metal they may be composed, are also easily ascertained. If the borders are sometimes more likely to impose, the letters soon betray the counterfeit. Indeed, the character and form of the letters on ancient Coins is the first point of knowledge that a collector ought to gain; and it is not at all a difficult matter, if those, who are given to the pursuit, would but use a little steady application. In whatever manner\* Medals are counterfeited,—whether of recent work, cast upon an antique or a modern, retouched or struck with the hammer,—the letters on them are invariably false. This, it must be acknowledged, is the principal, or rather the only, art of distinguishing a suspected Medal, when we have not already obtained that

\* One material distinction of cast Coins is, that the letters on them do not go sharp down to the field of the Medal, but appear as melting into it; so that they have no fixed outline, and one cannot, as it were, see to the bottom.

perfect familiarity with the work and coinage of the ancients, which enables us, at one view, to pronounce upon the veracity or falsehood of a Medal.

## CHAPTER II.

*Medals cast upon such as are of modern  
Coining.*

**MEDALS** cast upon such as are of modern coining are so very numerous, that all cabinets, not formed by a masterly hand, abound with them. It is, indeed, much easier to execute counterfeits in this manner, than if they were cast upon antiques. Most of the scarce ancient Medals, which it is obvious are the only ones forgers find an interest in imitating, are worn, and have left a part of their charms on the road (except those in gold which are almost always finely preserved\*) while the

\* The reason is, gold admits of no rust, but iron mould, when lying in a soil impregnated with that metal.

Paduan Medals are still in all their beauty, and take much better in a mould than those which time has injured and partly destroyed. Hence the facility which false coiners (who have not skill enough to engrave) have found in casting these Medals. A discovery is sometimes more difficult than in the original counterfeits, upon which they are formed; because, in the casting, they can give them whatever thickness they please. In the second place, the cavities left by the sand are filled with mastic; the letters are retouched and carefully repaired with a graver; and their disguise is completed by a coat of varnish. It ought not, therefore, to appear extraordinary, if collectors, especially such as have only begun to dabble in the science, should be sometimes trepanned into a purchase of Medals of this sort.

Still, however, they may be as easily unmasked as those of modern coining, if we only observe the same rules for ascertaining them; and always bear in mind, that these

Medals are lighter than those which have been struck, inasmuch as fire rarifies the metal that is melted, while that which is beaten is condensed, and consequently becomes more weighty. We are likewise to remember, that the letters are not genuine, and that the mastic and varnish, when looked into, will at once betray themselves.

Such as are cast upon the modern in gold and silver are still more easy to be found out than those in brass; because it is impossible to disguise them either with mastic or false varnish. Their turpitude, therefore, as it may be said, cannot be concealed; and an amateur must be a novice indeed, who allows himself to be at all mistaken in them.

A great many of the reverses on every species of coin often enough tend to impose on the collector; and accordingly we find, it is usually the first rule by which connoisseurs examine a Medal. The generality of them lay it down as a maxim, that the border will justify the field of a Medal, and that the



field in its turn will serve to justify the border ; but after all, nothing is more uncertain and fallacious than this rule in some respects. We have in truth a great number of silver Medals, whose reverses were filed and rounded in the time of the Romans, in order that they might be inched or set in rings, around vases, or in monuments of a similar nature, which are still occasionally found. These have often been looked upon as doubtful pieces, and many medallists still suspect them, though they are undoubtedly ancient.

Besides, there is an infinite number of false Medals that have their borders destroyed and eaten, as if they had so suffered from the ravages of time. This is accomplished in the following manner :—They cover the borders of false Medals with wax ; prick the wax in several places ; and then fill up the holes, made by the instrument used in pricking, with aquafortis, which eats into and wastes the edges, as much, and sometimes more, than if the Medals had been of the greatest

antiquity. It is, therefore, impossible for them in this case to justify the field of the Medal ; so that in general, nothing is less decisive than the borders ; since, for the reasons before stated, Medals that have been filed may boast indubitable antiquity, while those, that have their borders eaten and worn, as one would naturally suppose ancient Medals to have them, may possibly prove to be spurious.

## CHAPTER III.

*Medals cast in Moulds taken from the Antique.*

THE Medals here enumerated, being cast upon ancient pieces, are less easy to be ascertained than either the Paduan, or those cast upon the modern; because when forgers set about executing Medals of this kind, they took care to choose, for the print of their mould, a real antique Coin in the best preservation they could find. In this manner specimens are frequently produced, so well imitated as sometimes to impose even on an experienced medallist. They can be thus cast of all sizes and metals; and when a skilful hand in this trade of iniquity has retouched and repaired his performances with the graver, they sometimes appear as natural as

the antiques themselves. In these counterfeits the artists confine themselves to such heads and reverses as are rare ; and in order the better to cover the imposition, they generally use for the purpose some common antique Coins, struck at the same time with those they intend to imitate, so that the silver used, in the making of the Medals, may be of the same standard. For example, if it be intended to counterfeit the *triumphal arch* of *Septimus Severus*, a reverse extremely rare in silver, care is taken to melt down a common Coin of the same Emperor, of which to make the false one, and thus, by the equality of the silver, render it more likely to be mistaken.

It must be owned that Medals thus manufactured are not, in a general way, so easily detected as other forgeries ; because (as just observed) being cast upon the best preserved and most perfect ancient Medals, they retain the character of their model, and have really an air and appearance that may

very well impose on a collector. Accordingly we find many are deceived in some cases of this nature, but more especially in the imperial Medals of silver, they being the best of any sort to imitate, owing to the smallness of the field. Few cabinets exist wherein there are not some of these Medals :—such was one, in fine silver, of the Empress *Magnia Urbica*,\* which I saw in a collection at Paris. This Medal imposed upon several medallists; and, among others, on Father Banduri, who has cited it in his catalogue as a piece extremely rare. It was afterwards discovered to be a cast, and to have been repaired with a vast deal of art and skill;—consequently false.

Antiquaries cannot be too much on their guard against Medals of this sort, on account

\* In the first edition, this famous Medal of *Magnia Urbica*, is stated to have been in the cabinet of the Abbé Leroy at Paris. The *Pacation* of Father Chamillart is also there mentioned as another instance of counterfeits of this kind.

of the great resemblance they bear to the antique. They ought, in particular, to doubt all the large heads in silver. The *wives* belonging to Trajan, *Pertinax*, *Didius Julianus*, *Pescennius Niger*, the two Gordians of Africa, *Tranquillina*, and *Cornelia Supera*, have been imitated a thousand and a thousand times; and I have found by experience, that out of twenty Medals of this rarity, to be seen in the collections made in the provinces of France, it is scarcely possible to meet with more than one or two really genuine.

To discover these Medals, it is necessary to examine two things:—1. The *Letters*; 2. The *Field of the Coin*. When a Medal has not been struck in a die, as all money is done in the present day, and as was the case with the ancients, except in a few instances of brass, of which I shall speak in their proper place, the letters on them are more irregular; they do not come forward from the field of the Medal with the same elegance

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and plainness as those on the antique ; they are more faded ; and if the graver has been at work, we are enabled to discover its touches, and the alterations that have been made. A legend should be closely followed from one end to the other ; and it is requisite to examine whether all the letters are of the same character and uniformity ; whether none of them limp ; and whether they all come equally forward. If there be a defect in any of these respects, the Medal may be suspected.

The field should likewise serve as a guide to determine the fate of a cast Medal. It is never so even as when it has been struck. In fact, a certain hollowness, and also the cavities left by the sand, may always be observed. As these defects cannot be either covered or concealed, as in brass, by mastic and false varnish, they must necessarily be perceivable upon Medals of gold and silver. In that case, an acute and discerning eye goes a

great way towards distinguishing them immediately ; especially when it has been so exercised as to have reached that perfection which makes it hardly possible ever to err.



## CHAPTER IV.

*Antique Medals retouched, and altered in the  
Heads and Figures.*

THIS is a species of Medals, doubtless the most likely of any to impose upon us, as there is the less reason to suspect them. Indeed, it is candidly admitted, that a man must be well versed in the mechanism of Medals, to be able, at all times, to avoid impositions of this nature. They are antique Medals, to which new legends are substituted, and the heads and reverses are counterfeited with an art truly astonishing. A connoisseur fancies himself perfectly secure when he purchases Medals of this description, of which he is not apt to be suspicious, as the Coins themselves are in fact ancient. They are

not, however, the less spurious on that account, because they are in reality different Medals from what they represent. We may readily enough conceive, it is only the scarcer heads, and the large reverses, which are thus distinguished. The greatest part of these Medals originated in Italy, where the artists of that country began to exert themselves in this manner, when they found their other kinds of forgeries had become too well known any longer to deceive.

In consequence they formed the design of taking a common ancient Medal, and metamorphosing it into a rare one. For instance, they changed a *Claudius* in brass, of the colony of Antioch, into an *Otho*; a *Faustina the elder* (a Medallion of potin, or yellow copper), into a *Titiana*; a *Julia* of Severus in silver, into a *Didia Clara*; a *Macrinus* (colonial), into a *Pescennius Niger*; an *Orbiana* of first brass, into an *Annia Faustina*; a *Mammæa*, into a *Tranquillina*; a *Philip the father*, or a *Valerian* of first brass, into an *Æmilian*; and so on with others.

When the heads do not so nearly resemble each other, as those here mentioned, although the difficulty of counterfeiting, in such a case, may seem greater, yet it does not altogether put a stop to the deception. Expert forgers know well enough how to retouch them with the graver, so as to make them alike. They generally take a *Marcus Aurelius* of brass to turn it into a *Pertinax* ; but as there is not much resemblance between these two Emperors, they are careful in choosing a Marcus Aurelius on the reverse of his consecration, which is a reverse also to be met with on *Pertinax* ; the beard of Marcus Aurelius is thickened, and the nose enlarged ; and when the name has been changed with skill and address, such a piece, having a genuine reverse and other marks of antiquity about it, is very liable to deceive an amateur too eager to purchase a head of such consequence.

All the ancient Medals, thus dressed up, are quite common in cabinets ; especially in first and second brass, which the varnish best

disguises. It is, therefore, the interest of those, who are forming collections, to apply themselves as early as possible to unveil this trick, consisting almost always in the letters, which it is not an easy matter for them to manage.\* There are in Italy men, who have passed all their days at this kind of imposture, and who are perfect masters of the art of taking out such letters as are prejudicial to their design, and of engraving others in their stead, so naturally as to impose on most collectors. I have seen very skilful medallists, who knew quite well how to distinguish the true from the false, divided in their opinion about a *Titiana* of potin, of Egyptian coinage, which after all was only a *Faustina*, in disguise. The *Cæsonia* in gold, in the late M. Lebre's cabinet, was of this sort. So soon as it arrived in Paris, it was

\* In a general way, (whatever ingenuity may have been used in changing portraits and reverses) the characters of the inscriptions, which are altered, will, when scrutinized, be found to be disunited, and not in a line.

discovered to be an *Agrippina* the mother, on the reverse of *Caligula*; and that her name had been taken out to substitute in its place that of *Cæsonia*; making of it, by means of this alteration, a Medal that imposed on all the antiquaries of Provence.

I have also seen a number of Medals of *Claudius* and *Nero*, of the colony of Antioch, manufactured into an *Otho*, and wrought with surprizing art. These Medals are chiefly to be discovered by the letters, which ought to be examined with all the rigour prescribed at the latter end of the foregoing chapter.\*

Besides the heads, the reverses are likewise retouched and refitted. A Medal may be

\* No doubt, the letters form the surest test, by which to judge of the genuineness of a Coin. Cellini, in his two Treatises, *Dell' Oroficeria* and *Della Scultura*, Fior. 1568, observes that the difference in appearance, between the letters on antique Coins and those that are counterfeit, is owing to the ancients having engraved all their matrices with the burin, while the forgers strike theirs with a punch.

fine on the head side, and much eaten, worn, and spoiled on the reverse. If, therefore, it be a scarce reverse, and the Medal is brass, it is worked over again with a graver, and all its figures are revived by hollowing a little into the field of the Coin. We must, however, take notice, that the reverses, refitted in this manner, have no relief, and do not come forward out of the field:—they are chiefly to be detected by this mark.

There are also a number of Medals (I am still speaking of those in brass) that have some rare reverses, which seem fair and well preserved, but which, notwithstanding, are entirely fictitious. There are likewise ancient Medals, the heads of which they do not usually touch; but only hollow the reverses, which are filled with mastic, of a colour resembling that which time gives to ancient Coins, and fastened so firmly to the metal that there is no separating them without the application of force. They then engrave upon these reverses whatever figures, or other

ornaments, they wish to have on them, so as, apparently, to constitute the rarest and best preserved Medals. The Coins thus produced are next varnished on both sides, and in this condition are the more liable to deceive; because, seeing that the heads are genuine, a purchaser does not always think of bestowing such a critical examination on the reverses as he otherwise would have done. A part, however, of the finest reverses of many Medals in first brass have been, more or less, retouched in this manner. Although not entirely refitted, (many of them having some parts only retouched,) still, in my opinion, it is a great defect, and exceedingly diminishes their merit and value.

In the first brass, there are few collections without an abundance of such Coins. To be able thoroughly to know them, the collector must have an intimate acquaintance with the Medals, and be well versed in the coinage, of the Romans. A medallist, so armed, can never be misled by any of these pieces.

In the mean time, it is advisable for the amateur to doubt a Medal when he finds it covered with false varnish ; and he should prick the suspicious parts with a graver or some sharp instrument, to ascertain whether they make resistance, or are composed of mastic. He should also be particularly careful in examining, whether all the parts of a reverse form one uniform whole, such as an ancient Coin, issuing from a die engraved with art and exactness, may be imagined to be.— When any inequalities are observable, he does right in entertaining a suspicion of the Coin. Indeed, in making a purchase in this way, he should have recourse to some able connoisseur, who would not allow him to be imposed upon ; or, at least, he ought to be convinced of the probity, as well as the judgment of the seller. In either of these cases, he will incur little or no danger.



## CHAPTER V.

*Medals struck with the Hammer, and such as are encasted or soldered.*

**T**HE Medals, termed hammered, are much of the same kind with those just now spoken of. They are likewise common ancient Medals, well preserved. The workmen, who practise these frauds, totally file off the reverses, and, in their stead, impress new devices by dint of a modern die and the hammer, which makes a tolerable imitation of the antique. This is done by laying the side of the head (which it is to be observed is not at all touched) upon different folds of paste-board so that it may not be flattened; and then the modern die is put upon the reverse of the Medal, and it is made to take the

impression or stamp by strokes of the hammer. As the reverses, thus hammered, come forward from a die, they are neat and uniform, and imitate the antique, more or less, according to the skill and abilities of the engraver. These reverses generally strike novices with their rarity; the greatest part of the devices and inscriptions on them being such as are not to be found on any genuine ancient Medals. Such are *Aquas Claudiam ex fontibus*, &c. on the reverse of Claudius; *Pontem Ælium* on the reverse of Hadrian; *Expeditio Judaica*, of the same Emperor; and the like. In this case, the Coins themselves discover their falsity, as it is generally known that most of these reverses are mere fictions, and never in reality appeared on ancient money. This circumstance ought to stimulate the amateur to make himself familiar with all such devices as are known to exist on real Medals, especially in those which he collects. However little accustomed to Coins, a tolerable eye can easily distinguish such as

are hammered, by the obvious difference in the coinage of the head from that on the reverse. The contrast is too strong not to be observed at a single glance.

After having treated of hammered Medals, we are next to consider such as are called incasted or soldered. They consist of two halves, belonging to different common Medals, that are sawed through, and then joined together with solder; thus making a Medal rare and curious. This new fraud is generally practised upon Coins of brass and silver. For instance, they will take an *Antoninus*, and hollow off its reverse; and then solder to the obverse a *Faustina*, prepared in the same manner,—which makes a scarce and uncommon Coin. When this deceit is resorted to in Medals of brass, care is taken that the two Coins are of one colour,\* and of the same

\* Some fabricators, however, were so little up to the trade as sometimes to solder copper and brass together! Such the Translator has seen.

varnish. Some of these Medals are joined in this manner so very dexterously, and with so much exactness, that hardly any thing, but the absolute assurance that they are in fact incasted, could possibly distinguish them; the rather so, because the borders of the Medals which are hollowed still remain.\*

I have seen a number of silver Medals, of the family of Septimus Severus, bearing two heads, though they were only Medals artfully soldered. Great attention is necessary to ascertain these pieces; but careful medalists,—who are alive to the suspicion, and of course on their guard,—will always be able, by a strict examination, to discover some marks of fraud, about the engrailed rims of the Coin, which are apt to reveal the imposture.

\* Notwithstanding all the disguise that can be put upon these Medals, a fine discriminating eye may readily perceive the minute ring of the solder. Indeed, in many cases, they will come to pieces by applying a graver to the edge.

Most of those Medals are composed of two heads ;\* but we also find some with reverses added to them in the same manner ; such as the amphitheatre of Titus Vespasian, which is sometimes found in first brass on the reverse of a *Domitian*.†

Although these fabrications have a head and a reverse both antique, they are not, on that account, the more valuable. Being notwithstanding false, they ought to be rejected with as much contempt, as all the other sorts of spurious and counterfeit Coins already mentioned. Nothing is really fine and beautiful but the truth ; nothing but the truth is lovely.

\* The reason is, that Medals which have a head on each side, are generally extremely rare, and bring the highest prices.

† Many others of the like kind occur.—The Temple of Janus, upon Nero's Medals, gives an instance of another art ; viz. : that of the second brass being sometimes taken off, and inserted in a cavity made in the reverse of a Medal of first brass of that Emperor.

There are also Medals, as well in brass as in silver, that have two halves fastened together, by artists who had not skill and dexterity enough to incast them. These are easily discerned by the bare inspection of the border or edge, which is always filed, and consequently exposes itself at the first comparison of the two parts.

We must not, however, confound these incasted Medals with an infinite variety of antique ones,—existing in all the three metals and of all sizes,—which have reverses, that do not properly belong to the heads they represent. Such mistakes happened at the very time when the Medals themselves were coined, through the fault of the workmen employed in striking them. Sometimes they were obliged to take one die for another, and in consequence often tacked to an emperor or empress, a reverse of a preceding reign, or one that belonged to a different head. There are few cabinets wherein some of these Medals are not deposited. I have several of them in

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my own series of first brass. Having quoted them on another occasion, it is needless for me here to repeat what was then observed. I have begun to prepare a catalogue of Medals of this kind, which I may possibly, some day or other, give to the public:— nothing relating to Medals ought to remain unknown; and these pieces are extremely curious, even on account of the very defect in their coinage.

The reverses, thus transposed from one Medal to another, frequently occur in small brass, at the beginning of the lower empire; I mean under the reign of Gallienus. The thirty Tyrants, who rose up one after another in this prince's time, hardly made their appearance on the stage of empire before they were crushed and destroyed, by the different rivals who supplanted them; while these latter, in their turn, were compelled to retire, from their usurped dominions, as speedily as their predecessors. The officers and workmen of the mints, in the provinces of these

short-lived tyrants, had scarcely time to engrave the portraits of their new masters, and so joined to them the reverses of former reigns. Hence *Pacator Orbis* on the reverse of a coin of Marius, who reigned only three days ; and innumerable others. It is necessary to be previously acquainted with these circumstances, in order that we may not be puzzled or stopped every moment in the explanation of such like inconsistencies.



## CHAPTER VI.

*Medals that have Cracks and Countermarks.*

THE cracks observable in a great number of ancient Medals, particularly those of first brass, which by the extent and broadness of their flank were most subject to such an accident, gave occasion to forgers to imitate this defect,\* so as by the help of a well counterfeited cleft, to make their work pass the easier. The greatest part of spurious Medals have this equivocal mark of antiquity, especially, as just before observed, those of first brass; because the broader a Medal is, the

\* This was done by filing an incision on the margin of the Medal, as nearly resembling the casual cracks as possible.

more it is liable to split and fly in pieces. Now it is plain that nothing but the force of the die can make a coin crack. We see very few, or indeed next to none, of our modern Coins with this mark, because a single stroke or pressure of the press gives them the stamp and impression they are to bear; whereas the ancients, who coined their money with repeated strokes of a hammer (as is proved irrefragably by a variety of Medals, in which we may observe the heads, reverses, and legends to have been marked or stamped at several places,) could not always prevent their Medal or Coin from being cracked. These cracks being formerly regarded as infallible marks of antiquity, the modern forgers set themselves to imitate them upon an abundance of counterfeit Medals, not only in such as were coined, (as the Paduan) but also in those that were merely cast. In order, therefore, to ascertain whether the crack has been added since the coinage, the Medal should be examined on both sides, and we must see

whether it be equal and uniform in its shape ; whether it be natural ; that is, whether it winds and goes on gradually lessening, till it ends in certain imperceptible filaments which terminate the genuine. If we find in a Medal all these requisites, we may safely pronounce it to be antique ; or rather that the flank is so ; for the Medal may otherwise have some of the other defects adverted to in this treatise.

If, on the contrary, the crack be broad at the extremity, and goes straight in, without ending in the manner above stated,\* we may conclude that it has been made by the file ; and, in such a case, we need not look out for any other marks of falsity.

\* It will be well for the collector always to bear in mind, that the two sides of a crack in a real antique Medal, on examination, will be found to correspond with each other, by mutual chinks and protuberances, which cannot be imitated by the file, so that the distinction in this respect is by no means a task of difficulty. We may further remark, that if the filaments of the real cracks are attempted to be imitated, a small needle will easily decide their depth and reality, and thereby detect the imposition.

Countermarked Medals are pieces with an antique impression stamped upon them, when any alteration took place in the value of the money of the empire; or rather when they were intended as tokens, or tickets, for the men employed in public works. Pieces, with countermarks, were also delivered to them, in lieu of the ordinary money, on the appointed days of payment.

These countermarks may be seen in various fashions and shapes, upon many Coins in first and second brass. On certain Medals of the early emperors, or the princes of their family, appear the letters N. C. A. P. R. struck in a hollow square. These have been explained by the words, *nobis concessa a Populo Romano*. Upon other Medals we see the names of emperors marked in monograms, or naturally abridged, as AUG. *Augustus*, upon the colony of Nismes, and a Medal in second brass of Tiberius. CÆ. *Cæsar*, upon Medals of Augustus in second brass; TIB. IM. *Tiberius Imperator*. Upon Medals of Augustus and

Tiberius, TI. C. AU. *Tiberius Claudius Augustus*. Upon a Medal of Caligula, DACI-CUS, in which is to be understood *Trajanus*. Upon one of Domitian, M. O. A. *Marcus Otho Augustus*. Upon a Medal of Nero we find the letters PRO, *probatas*, in which we are to understand *nummus* :—and so of other countermarks. There are also Medals on which may be found two, such as IMP. AUG. and TIB. AUG.; others bearing the names of the princes on the Medals with which they are impressed. In short, we may observe, as countermarks, upon Greek Medals, the plants and fruits of different countries, the most remarkable animals, and sometimes the heads of Gods and Goddesses.

There is no doubt that all the brass Medals thus countermarked are ancient. In fact, I have never yet found that any false countermarks were ever fabricated. It is, therefore, a sure sign that a coin is genuine, when it has such a countermark upon it. Consequently all that remains further to be done, is to

examine whether it be otherwise genuine in all its parts ; or whether it be not a common antique retouched or refitted with the graver, and by that means converted into a rare Medal ; just as I have sometimes seen the *Agrippina* of Germanicus countermarked, and with the reverse of *Senatus-consulto*, changed into an *Agrippina* of Claudius.

## CHAPTER VII.

*Medals that are plated, and such as are incuse  
or miscoined.*

THE Medals of gold and silver, denominated plated,\* seem to be exempt from all suspicion. They are pieces of false money fabricated among the ancients, for the purpose of circulating as good and current coin. It is not difficult to believe, that there always were false coiners, from the very first formation of nations into societies under a civil Govern-

\* In 1809, M. L. de Waxell published a very elegant and interesting little essay on this express subject; in which, after a preface and an introduction, he treats on the origin of plated Coins; their antiquity; their rarity; and on the art of fabricating them. Six engraved examples of plated money are attached to the publication.

ment, and the consequent introduction of gold and silver Coins among them. This cheat has been perpetually practised down to our time, and in all probability will not end but with the world itself; yet it must be owned that, among the Romans, the forgers were most expert and ingenious, and in particular were excellent engravers. As all the money of the empire, both gold and silver, was executed in the utmost perfection of workmanship, it was absolutely necessary to equal them in the counterfeits they intended to pass away to the public as genuine. We consequently see these productions so highly imitated, that we are often obliged to prick them, when they are not cut or paired, in order to discover whether they are plated; that is, whether there is really copper within.

The coining of these counterfeits was in consequence extremely difficult. It was not to be practised in those days, as it is now, with little more than mixing a proportion of gold with copper, or with barely whitening



over a piece of base metal. The false coiners among the Romans actually covered their pieces with a leaf of pure gold or silver, thick enough not to wear off, or discover itself until after the money had been used in commerce. This covering was so compressed with the copper in the inside, at the time when struck, that it was impossible to distinguish them in any other way than by cutting or piercing them with a graver or some such instrument.

This circumstance alone is sufficient to shew us, that money was scarce in the Roman empire, since a workman ran the hazard of being punished with all the *severity of the laws*,\* merely for counterfeiting a silver Coin, at present hardly worth ten pence, and then even of a lower value.

\* The punishments decreed against false coiners were various, according to the times, and different conditions of the guilty. During the common-wealth, falsifiers of the public money, according to Ulpian, were condemned to the beasts, if they were free, and punished with death,

We may therefore be assured that a Coin is undoubtedly antique, when we find it

if slaves. Cornelius Sylla, the dictator, was probably the author of this law, which was called *Lex Cornelia Nummaria*.

When our authority says, that false coiners were condemned to the beasts, it is only to be understood of such as were of the very dregs of the people ; for with regard to those who were at all distinguished by their parentage or employments, they were sentenced to perpetual banishment, and their estates were confiscated.

In the time of Constantine the Great, false coiners appeared in much greater numbers than before ; and accordingly almost all the laws made against them are the acts of that emperor. He particularly applied himself to exterminate these public pests, who only sought their private interest in the ruin of their fellow citizens. By the law which he enacted in 319, he ordered that if any magistrate of a corporation should be convicted of the crime of false coining, he should be banished to one of the remotest towns in the empire ; and he reserved to himself the power of disposing of his estate. In case the guilty person was a man of low degree, he ordered him to be banished for ever ; and his effects to be confiscated ; and if he were a slave, directed him to be punished with death. Nothing was enacted by this law against persons of condition. As the punishments, however, ordained by this

plated, and really struck at the time it was so plated. As these pieces were coined in a

law, were inadequate to the evil, and unable to put a stop to the crime, the Emperor was obliged to have recourse to a more violent remedy. Accordingly in 321, he published a law denouncing death on all false coiners of every condition. This same law was renewed in 326, and to the penalty of death was added that of confiscation of property, omitted in the former ordinance.

This crime being of a public nature, all the world was allowed to accuse and impeach such as were suspected to be guilty of it ; and to prosecute not only the false coiners themselves, but also all those who harboured or concealed them ; or, knowing their guilt, did not denounce them to the magistrates. These accusers had recompences allotted them according to their situation in life :—free persons were exempted from all real tributes, or taxes upon land ; while slaves obtained their liberty and the right of denizenship, their masters being first indemnified for their loss.

In such abhorrence was the crime of false coining held among the Romans, that the man, who was condemned for it, was debarred the liberty of appealing to the emperor ; and whoever was entrusted with the custody of a false coiner, was condemned to death, if he suffered him to escape. Indeed, amnesties, or general edicts for the pardon or abolition of crimes, did not extend to false coiners.

hurry, and always in subterraneous places, they often have blunders in their legends, which render them for the most part singular, either by the transposition of the letters, or by some other defects. We should examine them with attention ; for after all we shall find few of them, especially those in silver, but what are well worthy of a place in a collection of Medals.

The thickness and relief of the ancient gold and silver money having enabled the false coiners the more easily to plate them, there was at last found such a prodigious quantity of these plated coins, that when, in the reign of the sons of Constantine the Great, the currency of the empire (which had scarce been any thing but base metal since the time of Caracalla) was reformed by a coinage of pure silver, it was thought necessary for the public security, to diminish it to half its former weight or thereabouts, and to make it so thin, that it would be impossible any longer to falsify it. This was conceived to be the most effectual plan that could be adopted, to

prevent the repetition of similar frauds. Notwithstanding this precaution, I have seen a plated Valentinian in gold,\* in the cabinet of the late M. Mahudel, who was the only antiquary that I know of, in France, who took the pains of collecting every imaginable peculiarity that was to be found on ancient Medals, as well in regard to their fabric as their history. Indeed, he made a collection unique in its kind.

As to the Medals in silver, which are plated, they may be safely admitted as antiques. It is not practicable to refit the letters on them, as may be done upon coins of a good alloy; because the Medal being covered only with a leaf of silver, it will not bear to be worked over again. Some other scheme, therefore, was necessary to be resorted to, by the artists who contemplated forgeries of this sort. In order to carry the deception to the utmost point it was capable of reaching, some of

\* M. Waxell, in his essay before quoted, has also published a plated gold Coin of Honorius, and he likewise mentions having seen one of Zeno.

them bethought themselves of piercing a false, but well counterfeited, Medal of silver with a red hot needle. The effect of this is, that the fire taints and reddens the Medal in the inside, and gives it an appearance, to those who do not examine the matter closely, of having been plated. When we meet with a Coin thus pierced, and imagined to be plated, we must, if we are not skilful enough to discover its spuriousness, take care to prick it, either in the field or in the border. By that experiment we shall be able to satisfy ourselves whether it be really plated, and consequently antique.

Incuse Medals, or such as were by accident miscoined, I am persuaded never were counterfeited; and they may be looked upon as undoubtedly antique. Those so called are Medals that have the same head on both sides;—in relief on the one, and hollow on the other. The defect is owing to the hurry and precipitation of the coiner, who, before he had taken off the Medal which had been

previously struck, clapped on it a new flank. This having the die above, and the Medal, which had not been taken away, below it, received on both sides the impression of the same head in relief and in hollow ; but always struck less perfectly on the side of the hollow ; the effect being of course much weaker on the side of the Medal than on that of the die. Coins of this kind, which are rare, are preserved in cabinets, merely as objects of curiosity. There are several of them in gold and silver ; and some in brass, generally of the second size, though I do not remember to have ever seen one in first brass. We sometimes meet with rare heads of this sort ; such as a Pertinax in silver, which was formerly in the cabinet of the late M. de Pont-Caré, first President of the Parliament of Normandy. This collection afterwards passed into that of M. D'Ennery.\*

\* This gentleman had one of the most wonderful private collections, in Europe :—the printed catalogue shews what may be done, in the accumulation of Medals, by wealth, industry, and perseverance.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Cast Medals that are ancient, and Medallions composed of different kinds of Copper.*

ALTHOUGH it has been stated, that all ancient Medals were struck with the hammer, and that such as are cast ought to be looked upon as spurious,—fabricated either upon the antique or the modern,—it is nevertheless certain that there are some cast Medals in brass which are of undoubted antiquity. It is not intended here to speak of those pieces of an enormous size, which represent the head of Rome, and which served for weights among the Romans; nor yet of those, which are almost like them in weight,—on which we see the heads of the Ptolomies, Kings of Egypt,—intended for the same use, and which



could not have been made without the help of a mould ; but merely of the Medals, which are to be met with in all cabinets, and which have been cast in ancient times. Such are most of the brass Egyptian Medals, or the Medallions of yellow copper of the same fabric, done in the reigns of the emperors. There are others, which are Greek, either of Antioch, or other colonies, that are also cast, but in a mould and of a make, so obviously antique, as to be impossible to be mistaken. It is true, a collector without experience may reject these pieces ; but, when his taste has been once formed, and he has acquired a correct knowledge of the workmanship of the ancients, he will no longer treat them as Coins in the least degree to be suspected.

I am unacquainted with any Latin Medals, except those of *Posthumus* in first and second brass, among which we can find any that are cast. In fact, the greatest part of the Coins of this tyrant are visibly so ; but with such an air and execution as immediately to satisfy

a virtuoso, who is in the least a connoisseur, of their antiquity. There was not, however, at that time, any want of able engravers in Gaul; witness a great part of the brass Medals in the reigns of the *Posthumi*, and particularly those in gold of *Posthumus* the father, which are of a form, a neatness, and a delicacy; worthy the best times of the empire. A collector, therefore, must not reject, without discrimination, all the cast Medals he meets with, or those which have that appearance: On this head it may not be immaterial to state, that most of the Medals which are found in the earth, are completely covered with a thick rust. Although they are thereby intrinsically preserved, dealers, who purchase these Medals, sometimes put them on the fire to remove it. As there is always alloy, whether in silver (as, for example, the pewter) or in brass, it often happens that the soft part of the metal will run and waste itself, whilst the remainder is simply heated without being moved. Hence it follows, that the metal

which evaporates, must leave cavities upon the surface of the Coin. This leads one to suspect, a Medal so treated has been cast, though it has no other fault than that of having been placed on the fire to clean. I have made many experiments of this sort, to which credit may be given; and I possess in my series of first brass several Medals which have had the dirt so removed from them.\*

The rarest pieces, we have among the ancient Medals, are those called Medallions, which were not the current money of the empire, as all other Coins were. These Medallions were struck as memorials of public events, and were either distributed and thrown away among the people at plays, triumphs, and the like ceremonies, or given to ambassadors and foreign princes. The Romans called these pieces *Missilia*, and the Italians

\* Cleaning Medals is what, under any circumstances, the translator would not much recommend; but as to the mode here alluded to, it is one of the very worst kind, and cannot be too much reprobated.

now call them *Medaglioni*, a name we have borrowed from them to denote Medals of the largest size.\*

There are, as already stated, a number of

\* With all due deference to the learned author, the translator is under the necessity of dissenting from him, in the opinion here expressed, as to the Medallions of the Romans. The mistake has arisen by the writer's having confounded the larger pieces, properly called *Medallions*, with the smaller ones termed *Missilia*. The *former* may be said to include all the productions of the ancient mints, which, from their superior size, and exquisite workmanship, (generally bearing an uncommon device,) were not intended for circulation as money, but as presents from the emperor and the like. They were besides struck upon the commencement of the reign of a new sovereign, and on other solemn occasions; and were often presented by the mint masters to their prince as specimens of their art; something similar to our own pattern pieces; but were never thrown away in the manner mentioned in the work. The *latter*, called *Missilia*, a species of small Medals, (extremely curious though little known to collectors,) were scattered among the people, on different occasions. This class also includes the pieces struck for the slaves in the Saturnalia, tickets for baths and feasts, and such like. Besides these, there is a third class of Latin Medallions, between the size of first and second brass,

false Medallions of modern coining, as well as those that have been cast. Over and above the rules laid down for discovering them, we should carefully notice, whether they are not composed of different kinds of copper, in which case they are ancient. The fabric of these pieces, in two sorts of metal, consists in the centre being copper, with a ring of brass encircling it; or the contrary; both being struck with the same die. We may observe that the legend of these pieces sometimes bites as it were upon both metals; and at other times runs upon the inner, to which the first circle of metal serves only for a border. Medallions of this kind being inimitable, and of indubitable antiquity, are not in the least to be suspected. I shall not, therefore, attempt to say any thing more on the subject:—the misfortune is, very few of them are ever to be met with.

of uncommon neatness of execution, called by the Italians *Medaglioni*, or little Medallions, and scarcer even than the larger Medallions.

## CHAPTER IX.

*Medals that have been invented by false Coiners, never existing in the antique ; and such as have been very seldom counterfeited.*

I SHALL, in this chapter, merely point out some of the Medals which have been invented,—just as the fancies of artists suggested,—for the purpose of imposing on inexperienced collectors ;—always delighted with purchases of any singular or uncommon kind. Such are the Greek Medals of Priam, Paris, and Helen, of Æneas, Hercules, and different kings; generals, and philosophers, whose memory (notwithstanding the renown with which they filled the universe) was never transmitted to posterity by the aid of Medals. There are likewise Latin ones of Hannibal,

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Scipio, Cicero, and other heroes of the republics of Carthage and Rome, precisely of the same class.\*

All these pieces, which it is well known to those conversant in Medals, never existed among the ancients, carry on the face of them such strong marks of falsity,—having been most of them cast,—that it is hardly possible not to discover them at first sight.† It seems needless, therefore, further to enlarge on the matter,—particularly as the collector's first attention is directed towards gaining the requisite information to enable him to detect the falsity of all these heads.

\* Particular counterfeits of this kind occur of Cinna, Crassus, Sempronius, Marius, Virgil, &c. &c. ; and in the Greek class, several palpable ones of Aristotle, Plato, Alcibiades, and Artemesia, are to be met with.

† Medals of this kind, however, have imposed upon some of the most celebrated scholars in Europe ! Among other names, may be mentioned those of Budæus, Erasmus, Scaliger, and Lipsius. To be learned in one subject, as a modern medallic writer justly observes, excludes not ignorance in others.

Consular Medals, collections of which are generally confined to silver, because there are few to be met with in brass and still fewer in gold,\* have not been so frequently counterfeited as those of the Greek kings, or the Roman imperial Coins. As less eagerness was evinced in search of these consular Medals, whereof there are but few fine sets, false coiners were not so much interested in imitating them, as they were in the others. To this reason may be added another:—few are to be obtained in such a perfect state of preservation as to be fit to make a fine mould, except those that were renewed by order of the Emperor Trajan, and a very few others. These Coins, being worth little more than their weight† in silver, afford but poor

\* The consular Coins in brass are very uninteresting, being, for the most part, large unwieldy pieces, with types of insipid similarity; but the gold, independently of their curiosity, possess great beauty, and are of inestimable value.

† This might be so in France, in the time of M.



encouragement to an artist to counterfeit or imitate them. Indeed, I do not think there are any of modern coining;\* though I do not mean to say one may not meet with some that are cast. A virtuoso, however, who collects consular Medals, runs less risque of being deceived in them than he does in other collections.

The Medals, coined in the Roman colonies, are undeniably the most curious monuments

Beauvais; but the prices of consular silver Coins are now, in this country at least, very different. Indeed, they form a series of much curiosity and great interest. Many of them give us the busts of different Heathen deities; and several of them present us with portraits of illustrious men; whilst the reverses, in many instances, are fraught with erudition, and contain a representation of some of the most memorable actions and other remarkable matters connected with Roman history,—in no mean degree of taste.

\* The author is mistaken in this; for the celebrated Denarius, of Brutus, with the cap of liberty and two daggers, is an instance to the contrary; though it is perhaps the only one.

left to us, of the ruins of that mighty empire. These have been even less subject to counterfeits than the consular, on account of the clumsiness and coarseness of their workmanship, which it is in a manner impossible to imitate. Few of them are found in fine condition, and a collector has great luck, when, in those he purchases, he can find the figures tolerably preserved, and the legends in a condition to be read. This is the most learned of all kinds of Medals;\* but they are the most uncouth in their execution; though consequently the less liable to be counterfeited, inasmuch as an artist is seldom capable of imitating any thing but what is fine. We may, therefore, consider every colonial Medal as genuine, and really antique; having never, that I remember, seen any that

\* Those who are curious respecting colonial Coins, and wish for the fullest information on the subject, may have their curiosity amply gratified by a perusal of Vaillant's "Numismata in Coloniis et Municipiis percussa," *Paris*, 1697, fol.

were spurious. If we meet with some Greek ones, such as those of the colony of Antioch, of Samosata, or others of that sort, which seem to have been cast, they are not the less ancient on that account, as stated in a former chapter.

The pieces called *Quinarii*, which are the smallest denomination of Coin, have been counterfeited as often as the rest of the imperial Medals. Great abundance of them are cast, as well in gold as in silver. In fact, it is even necessary to examine them with more care and exactness than ordinary Coins, because in general they are much scarcer. Few of these Medals are to be seen in cabinets. M. Vaillant collected a series of them for the Duke of Maine, which is now to be found (considerably augmented) in the collection of the King of Spain.\*

\* The Abbé Rothelin, whose collection also was afterwards added to that of Spain, gathered together a greater number of these Coins than any other individual. The Abbe Strozzi was likewise a collector of *Quinarii*. As all

Among the silver consular, or family Coins, we find several with their borders or edges indented.\* Some of this sort also occur among the first heads in the imperial series; such as Julius Cæsar, Mark Antony, and Augustus. These Medals were, at the time when struck, adjusted in this manner by the Roman moneyers, to shew that they were legitimate money, and not plated. They are unquestionably antique, and never were counterfeited.

The Medals called *Contorniati*, from an Italian word, expressive of the manner in which they were struck, are of two sorts.

metals are allowed to be mixed in this class, for variety and curiosity, it exceeds every other. In fact, many Coins belong to it which are not to be found in any other size.

\* Other Coins are found pierced through with holes, and sometimes with a small ring fastened to them. Such were worn as ornaments to the head, neck, and wrist; either by the ancients, as bearing images of favourite deities; or in modern times, when the Greek girls thus decorated themselves.

Some of them are Grecian, generally and with reason believed to have been coined in Greece, in honour of the great men they represent ; while others were struck for some of the Roman emperors. The latter are the oftenest to be met with ; and they are usually arranged in the series of first brass, or among Medallions. Antiquaries are much divided in their opinions as to the time of striking these Medals. Some maintain that they were revived by the Emperor Gallienus, when he restored all the consecrations of his predecessors ; others, and I believe with greater reason, postpone them until the reign of Valentinian. Be that, however, as it may, these Medals, which are of the most singular fabric, and the least capable of being imitated, have not, so far as I have been able to observe, ever been counterfeited. I have, notwithstanding, met with some where the figures, having been effaced by time, had been retouched with the graver ; but these are easily enough discovered by the marks

left by the instrument, which, being quite fresh, may be easily seen when carefully examined. All these Medals are rare and curious. No particular series is formed of them ; but they are arranged, in their places, as I have already said, among Medallions, or with the first brass.\*

\* The author has hinted at the diversity of opinions, expressed by medallic writers, respecting these singular pieces of coinage. As the translator, however, is precluded, in the short compass of a note, from entering into any investigation of this much disputed subject, he has merely to state it as his own opinion, in which many other English medallists coincide, though contrary to what M. Beauvais has advanced in the text, that the intention of striking these *Contorniat*i Coins was, neither more nor less than, that they might serve as tickets for different seats or places, at the public games. We must recollect, that, though they are generally assimilated to Medallions, they are in reality every way different from them, except in their size. To that unity of strength, beauty, and relief, which pervade the larger Medallions, independently of other adventitious circumstances attending them, nothing can be a stronger contrast than that afforded by the *Contorniat*i, in their mean thinness, faint relief, and universally inferior execution.—It is believed the finest collection of these pieces,

M

The last species of ancient Medals, several of which have been preserved to us, are those of lead. Forgers in these latter ages have made counterfeits of them; but they are hardly worth the trouble of being looked at, and ought rather to be thrown away with contempt. Such antiques as we have left are few in number; but I have seen some of Antoninus, and another emperor.\* They are easily to be known by the lead, which is whitish and of a dirty colour; as well as by their fabric; it being a task of much greater difficulty to execute an imitation in lead than in any other metal.

any where to be met with, is that in the British Museum, formerly belonging to the Earl of Exeter.

\* *Ficoroni*, in his *Piombi antichi*, printed at Rome in 1740, has published a numerous and curious collection, from his own cabinet. Most of them are pieces struck, or cast on occasion of the Saturnalia, as the inscriptions shew. Others are tickets for festivals, and public and private exhibitions. Besides these, a few imperial ones have been found, but they are chiefly trial pieces, to enable the artist to judge of the progress of the die. All authentic Roman Coins in lead are of great rarity.

## CHAPTER X.

*Conclusion.*

**A**MONG the Medals in every cabinet we find many ancient pieces in one particular sort of metal, and of one size, although none of the like are to be met with in any other series of different metals and sizes. It must not, however, from hence be imagined, that, because none as yet have been discovered, we shall never hereafter be able to find any such. Reason and experience concur in proving the contrary ; since there is no doubt that in striking Medals,—whether of an emperor, or for any of his family,—impressions were taken off in all the three metals of gold, silver, and brass, and likewise of different sizes ; though to this day, in many serieses,



several heads are missing. We have no *Otho* struck at Rome by the consent and authority of the Senate ; because they did not declare in his favour. That illustrious body, before they acknowledged him for their sovereign, and in consequence ordered money of brass to be coined in his name, thought it proper to wait the termination of the civil war between him and Vitellius, his competitor for the empire. This reason, however, which holds good as to medals in brass of *Otho* and *Pescennius Niger*, cannot operate as to other reigns, because (as before hinted) they did not confine their coining to one sort of Medal. When, therefore, any of one kind have been discovered, we may reasonably hope in time, to find those of another, though they have hitherto been wanting.

The earth has not yet given up all the medallic treasures, which the ruins of so many ages have deposited within her bowels. The *Annia Faustina*, of silver, was not so much as known, until it was sometime ago luckily

found, and placed in the King of Spain's cabinet. Although two centuries had then elapsed since the curious world began to form cabinets of Coins, it had all that while escaped the researches of antiquaries. It was the same with the *Orbiana* in gold. M. Vaillant asserted that there was no such thing; yet, since his time, a fair one well preserved has been discovered, and deposited in the cabinet of the King of France. Fortunate discoveries of this nature are pretty frequently made. Indeed, there are few amateurs,—zealous and diligent in their enquiries,—who do not often meet with uncommon and sometimes even unique pieces. In particular, I myself found a fine Medallion in brass of the Emperor Hadrian, having on the reverse COS. III., with the wolf and the two infants.

This piece was previously unknown. I also discovered a Medal still more remarkable. It was an Alexander Severus of first brass, with the legend POTESTAS PERPETUA on the reverse, bearing a figure of security in

a sitting posture. This Coin is not at all to be questioned ; and though we have not yet seen the title inscribed to any Roman emperor, we ought not to be surprized at its being given to this prince, because we see on the reverse of his Medals in silver, PERPETUITATI AUG. an inscription never to be found, save on the Medals of this emperor.\*

These Coins, with a great number of others which might be mentioned, as well in regard to the heads as the reverses, will not in all probability long remain the only ones of their kind. It was not the custom to strike so inconsiderable a number as to make us despair of ever seeing them multiplied. Their degree of rarity, no doubt, must remain until new discoveries are made. Though, therefore, we have not yet met with the *Gordians* of

\* In the first edition of the present treatise, it is stated, that the Abbé Rothelin likewise found two silver Medals of the same prince, with the legend PIETAS MILITUM ; having the figure of a woman holding generally one or two military ensigns.

*Africa*, a *Maximus*, or a *Paulina* in gold, it is not impossible for us, hereafter, to discover them; because, when they were making Medals in silver and brass, it is natural enough to suppose they might, at the same time, coin some in gold; and so as to others.\*

After the account that has been given of the prodigious number of counterfeit Medals of every kind,—scattered up and down in almost all the cabinets of Europe,—it will hardly be credited that any collection should be totally free from so general a contagion.

\* When it is considered that it was a custom among the ancients invariably to bury one or more pieces of money (and those in the best preservation) with their dead; and that military chests were sometimes obliged to be secreted, besides being occasionally lost and abandoned; we need not at all be surprized at the amazing number of Coins which are, from time to time, unexpectedly brought to light. Among other instances of wonderful discoveries of hidden treasure may be mentioned that at Modena, in the 16th century, of sixty thousand Roman Medals; while a number between twenty and thirty thousand were found near Brest, in 1760.

There are, however, extensive cabinets, formed by able connoisseurs, which are altogether composed of genuine Medals; and which historians, and other learned men may safely make the subject of their disquisitions. Such is, above all others in the world, that of the King of France. It is a precious treasure, containing all the rarest specimens,—highly preserved,—in every department of the medallic science. No collection is more comprehensive or more complete. The Greek and Roman are as numerous as they are choice and beautiful. In short, no cabinet can enter into any competition with it.

FINIS.

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