

Numismatic Collection of Alfred Sanders, Esq. , of Davenport, Iowa

Alfred Sanders

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NUMISMATIC COLLECTION OF ALFRED SANDERS,
ESQ., OF DAVENPORT, IOWA.

T. S. PARVIN, ESQ.:

Dear Sir :—You ask me for a description of my numismatic cabinet, or collection of coins, for publication. I suppose that since the days of Petrarch there has not been a time that men did not feel an interest in gold and silver coin, but unfortunately it has proceeded from sordid and not from scientific considerations. When a boy I commenced the collection of odd coins, simply from an inclination to preserve everything that was unique or rare. It was not until later in life that I learned there was a science called numismatics—a science of such importance that we are indebted to it for much of the most reliable history we possess of ancient nations.

The precise time when money was first coined is not known, though from existing data that era can be approximated so nearly as to fix it between the seventh and eighth centuries before Christ. Nor is the nation by whom it was first coined positively known, though Herodotus gives the honor to the Lydians. A gold coin of Miletus, some 800 years B. C.,—now preserved in the British Museum—is supposed to be the oldest coin yet discovered.

The manner of coining money pursued by the primitive moneyers, was to drop the metal in a globular form in the die and strike it with a punch; thus, while one side showed the design, the other betrayed the marks of the punch, while the edges were left rough. And here, among these rude efforts to give to the world a circulating medium of the precious metals, does the collection of your humble servant date. An unwieldy silver coin, its thickness one-fourth of its diameter, one side bearing the indented marks of the punch, and the other that of some *rare avis*, constitutes the first of the series.

But it would be too tedious and consume too much space were I to attempt a description of each coin, or even mention

them by name; I will therefore refer to a few of the more prominent silver ones:

Alexander the Great.....	B. C.	336
Roman Sestertia.....	"	269
Roman Victoriati.....	"	265
Jewish coin.....	"	200
Prusias, king of Bithynia.....	"	183
Monunias, king of Illyria.....	"	170
Marcian family.....	"	145
Otho Cæsar (large and rare).....	A. D.	69
Domitian (last of Cæsars).....	"	81
Trajan.....	"	98
Antoninus Pius.....	"	138
Maximinus.....	"	235
Constantine.....	"	353
Valentinus.....	"	363

Then follow several Roman coins of later dates.

Commencing back with English history, I find the first well determined coin in my possession is that of William Rufus, the "Red King," an Anglo-Norman who reigned A. D. 1087 to 1104. An interval here occurs in the series to Edward I., A. D. 1272. After that it proceeds pretty regularly through the sovereigns of England up to the present exemplary queen.

Among the moderns, I believe very nearly all the nations upon the earth who have a coinage are represented. The obverses of many of these coins show very clearly the prevailing fashions of dress and hair some hundreds of years ago. The united initials of the affianced lovers engraved on the smoothed surface of the old Spanish milled dollar, and the same coin broken in twain, represent the romantic way our ancestors had of doing up love matters!

In my cabinet are medals of merit, of valor, of religion, superstition, philanthropy, industry, science, &c. A neat inscription on this one shows that its original possessor won merit by his achievements at the battle of Busaco; another at Sebastopol, and still another figured conspicuously at Alma, Inkermann and at Sebastopol. Here is one given "for long ser-

vice and good conduct." Death alone could have induced a soldier maintaining such character to have parted with this precious memento. The Catholic hierarchy, with its superstitions, are largely represented among these medals.

But I must not dwell. The above but constitute the silver of my collection. The gold is limited, but the copper abounds and extends back from the earliest usage of that metal for coinage, up to the excavated coins of the ill-fated cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, and through almost all civilized nations to the present time.

A good collection of coins is a history in itself. A single coin, though ever so rare, is of little value, while in a cabinet it may be the missing link in a chain of events that will throw light upon otherwise obscured history. Those persons, therefore, who have detached coins, should give them to some collection, and if they can do no better, they may send them to

Yours truly,

ALFRED SANDERS.

DAVENPORT, March 28, 1864.

GREAT SEAL OF IOWA—AGAIN.

[We gladly give a place to the following characteristic letter from our old friend of many years. "Old Enoch," has no "axe to grind," and he ably argues "the other side." The Lieut. Governor is the author of Iowa's motto upon the monument to the "Father of his Country." "Iowa—her affections, like the rivers of her border flow to a perpetual union."—ED.]

ELDORA, May 5, 1864.

HON. T. S. PARVIN, IOWA CITY.

My Dear Old Friend:—I have received from you the April number of the "ANNALS," and thank you for it. I am well pleased with it. Of course you have my "*individual* efforts" to the extent of *one* subscriber, and here is my 50 cents.

I like the general plan and object of the "ANNALS." The early history of Iowa and of the pioneers who have left their indelible impress for good upon the State, is worth preserving,

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