

III.

NOTICE OF A CURIOUS MANUSCRIPT IN THE LIBRARY OF THE
BRITISH MUSEUM, CONTAINING DRAWINGS AND DESCRIPTIONS OF
SCOTTISH COINS. By R. W. COCHRAN PATRICK, Esq., B.A., LL.B.,
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This manuscript, of part of which a photographic fac-simile is herewith presented to the Society, is preserved amongst the Cottonian MSS. (Tiberius D. II.) in the Library of the British Museum.

It consists of eighty-three leaves, of which fos. 1-40 are occupied with drawings of the coins of various countries, all executed by the same hand. Fos. 41 to 57 contain a treatise on the French coinage by the same hand, and the remainder of the manuscript contains drawings of shields of arms.

The author of the manuscript is not known. It must have been written between 1580 and 1582, as the last date given in the original hand is 1580, while another hand (as may be seen at the close of the third sheet of the Scottish coins) has added various coins minted in the latter year. Fos. 14, 14 b, and 15, contain the Scottish coins, and these are now laid before the meeting.

The first coin figured is called a groat of Alexander the Second, and is certainly not known now to exist, whatever may be its origin. It is

curious, however, that there has always been a tradition that Alexander the Third coined larger pieces than the penny. Ruddiman, p. 64, mentions this, and Macpherson¹ refers to it also in his "Annals of Commerce." It is said that at one time a half groat of this reign existed in the Sutherland collection, but if this ever was the case, it is not there now. It must be noticed that the lettering on the coins in the manuscript does not follow the original. The form of the king's name (Alexandrius) does not occur on any coin of the Scottish series that I am acquainted with, nor the title "Rex Bonge." The drawing is evidently copied from a coin, whatever it was, and the space between the head and the front of the crown which is found on the pennies of Alexander III. is faithfully copied in the drawing. The weight is said to be two deniers four grains, or 42·7 grains Troy weight of the modern standard, and nine penny twenty grains fine.² It is said that James VI. after his accession to the English throne had certain coins struck representing an imaginary coinage of the earlier sovereigns of England. One of these pieces is figured in the work referred to. It represents Henry II. as king of England and Duke of Normandy. Possibly this groat of Alexander may have the same origin, though it is difficult to account for it appearing in a work which apparently represents well-known and common coins, and written at a period when forgeries of Scottish coins for the purpose of taking in collectors were probably unknown.

The remainder of the coins noticed are of ordinary occurrence (with the exception of a jetton of Mary Stuart), and the chief interest of the manuscript consists in the particulars given as to their weight and fineness.

¹ Vol. i. p. 432.

² De Vet. Num., p. 191.