

II.

NOTES (1) ON A SET OF SHUFFLE-BOARD COUNTERS WITH PORTRAITS OF KINGS AND HERALDIC DEVICES, ABOUT 1640; (2) ON A SILVER BADGE OF THE CONSERVATOR OF SCOTTISH PRIVILEGES IN THE NETHERLANDS, EXHIBITED BY SIR ROBERT FRASER TURING, BART. BY J. BALFOUR PAUL, F.S.A. SCOT., LYON KING-OF-ARMS.

Shuffle-Board Counters.—The set of counters now exhibited by the courtesy of Sir Robert Fraser Turing, to whom they belong, are supposed to have been used for playing the game of shuffle-board and other similar pastimes. Two distinct sets of such counters are known to exist, both representing in a series of thirty-six pieces the sovereigns of England, with certain of their consorts and relations thrown in to make up what appears to have been the requisite number. In the first set the obverse contains a full-length figure of the sovereign, while on the reverse is depicted his arms, the length of his reign and the place of burial being also added. In the second set, to which the present series belongs, the bust only of the different figures is given on the obverse, the reverse bearing an armorial shield surmounted by a crown and surrounded by an ornamental border.

Counters similar to these, and also of a larger size, were frequently issued between the years 1616 and 1638. Nicolas Hilliard, jeweller, goldsmith and engraver to Elizabeth, and afterwards to James I., received in 1617 a patent granting him a monopoly for twelve years of the right of executing and issuing all engraved portraits of the King and Royal Family. Simon Passe received somewhat later a similar licence, and it is probably to him that the present series of counters may be attributed, though they cannot be said to be particularly favourable specimens of his undoubtedly fine work. Their date must be about 1638, as we find James, Duke of York, who was born in 1633, represented as a child; while Charles Louis (nephew to Charles I.) is represented as Count Palatine, an honour to which he did not succeed until 1631. Passe, who was born in Utrecht in 1574, came to England

in 1613; he was an engraver of frontispieces and book-plates, consequently his portraits, which are always on thin silver plates, have generally been supposed to have been engraved. Many examples of the same portrait are known, and in the case of counters it is probable that a number of sets would be issued at one time; indeed, in the present set there is a duplicate of Henry III. This being so, it is evident, as the examples do not vary in a single line, that they were not engraved, but struck from metal dies produced, Mr Franks says in his work on *British Medals*, from very finely engraved punches.

The present set should consist of thirty-six, but has really only thirty counters. One, as above mentioned, is in duplicate, and there are seven missing. They are contained in a very pretty silver box, the lid of which has a head of Charles I. in profile within a circular border, from which it is detached except at the shoulders and top of the head, leaving the rest of the space open. On the sides on four panels are trophies of arms and weapons; the bottom has a finely executed figure of Time with his hour-glass and scythe, with hills, a town, churches, &c., in the background.

Badge of the Conservator of Scottish Privileges in the Netherlands.—

This badge, the property of Sir Robert Fraser Turing, Bart., consists of a silver plate, measuring about $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length by $1\frac{1}{8}$ in breadth. Its shape is oval, save at the top, which is fashioned in the form of an imperial crown surmounting the whole badge. On the plate itself is engraved a shield charged with the Scottish thistle, while in a garter round the edge is the motto *Nemo me impune lacesset*. Attached to the foot of the badge by a small silver ring is another shield of diminutive size, bearing on it the figure of St Andrew and his cross in the usual style. Neither the design nor the workmanship of the badge can be highly praised, but it is a curious relic of a somewhat peculiar office which lasted for several centuries, and which was abolished almost within the memory of persons now living.

From very early times considerable trade was done between Scotland and the ports of the Netherlands. So early as 1321 we find a safe-conduct granted to certain Scotsmen by the Earl of Hainault, for the purpose of trading in Holland; and Robert the Bruce granted a general

permission to the Dutch to come to Scotland for the like purpose ; and in 1374 we have another charter granting to all Scottish merchants liberty to trade in the Netherlands, without, however, giving them any special privileges in the way of reducing the duty on their goods. Still later, in 1407, a charter was granted which made the city of Bruges the staple port for Scotland, and permitted a commissary, who should be appointed by the Scottish king, to reside in the port, and protect the mercantile concerns of his countrymen. The privileges belonging to a staple port were peculiar. So far back as 1299 the staple port of Dort had the power of detaining all goods passing by the town until they had been offered for sale there ; if sold, they paid a duty to the town, but if not, they were allowed to be taken elsewhere. When applied to merchandise, however, it may be taken to mean certain commodities, the product or manufacture of particular countries brought under specified laws or regulations of export and import, agreed upon by different states.

Following upon the charter of 1407 above mentioned, the town of Bruges, as the staple port therein mentioned, issued letters-patent giving in detail the privileges it was prepared to concede to Scottish merchants. Generally, they were to be treated as the merchants of Germany, "and others frequenting Flanders," but in one clause mention is made for the first time of a "conservator of their privileges." His rights and duties appear at this time to have been solely those of a procurator, leave being given him to "procure, pursue, request, or defend the goods of the said merchants and their rights and actions in the said city of Bruges in all cases for or against." This notice of a Conservator is nearly a hundred years earlier than the first mention of the office in the Acts of the Scottish Parliament. Whether or not the city of Bruges profited much by this policy seems doubtful, as very soon after its date Scotland and the Netherlands were at daggers drawn, and doing everything possible to injure each other's trade. When matters became quieter, we find that the Scottish trade had established itself more at Middleburg than anywhere else.

It would be interesting to trace the gradual development of Scottish trade with the Netherlands, but the subject is far beyond the scope of a paper like the present. We can only note the principal points in

connection with the office of Conservator. In 1503 an Act of the Scottish Parliament mentions the office as one by that time firmly established, and orders him to decide any differences which might arise among his compatriots beyond the sea, but not without the concurrence of a certain number of merchants, who were to sit with him as assessors. He was also ordered to come home every year, or send a responsible representative, and report upon his proceedings. No particular port is mentioned at which the Conservator was to reside, but at this time the competition amongst the towns of the Low Countries for Scottish trade was getting keen—Bruges, Middleburg, and Campvere vieing with each other as to who should hold out most attractions to the Scottish merchants. The last-mentioned town gradually drew most of the trade to itself; and in 1553 we find George Gordon, the Conservator, residing there, though as yet there existed no staple contract with that port. The number of Scotsmen at Campvere must indeed have been considerable, for Philip II., in 1563, granted them, amongst other privileges, the choice of a chapel and chaplain, provided he were of the Roman Catholic religion, a stipulation which is quite in keeping with the character of that prince; they were also to be accommodated with a garden or private place for their recreation. It was not, however, till 1578 that Campvere was officially ordered to be the staple port, and an agreement regulating the conditions of trade was drawn up between the Royal Burghs and the town of Campvere. In 1587 George Hacket, who had been Conservator for many years, died, and the king appointed Robert Denniston to the office, against the decree of the Burghs, who were in favour of a nominee of their own. In 1588 a Scottish kirk was established at Campvere, and endowed with certain customs on ale and wine; this church grew and flourished, and it ultimately obtained the privilege of sending its minister to the General Assembly in Scotland every year; not only so, but by an act of the Burghs the whole factors resident at Campvere were ordered to attend the church under a penalty of five shillings for every time they were absent; and the Conservator was obliged to be not only a member but an elder of the church.

The church at Campvere was greatly helped and strengthened by one of the Conservators, Thomas Cunningham, who was an ardent Presby-

terian, and a rich and able man. He held the office from 1648 to 1655, when he died, having been knighted by Charles II., though he had at first been by no means a favourite at Court, a dispute having arisen on his appointment between the king and the Burghs as to who had the right of nominating to the office. The king's commission, however, was never afterwards disputed. Cunningham was succeeded in his office by Sir William Dawson, who seems to have made himself very unpopular with the merchants at Campvere. So uncomfortable did he feel there that he used his influence successfully to get the staple port changed from Campvere to Dort, which latter town was lavish in its promises of privileges to the Scottish merchants who might be induced to come there. It is difficult to ascertain whether the Scottish trade was ever really taken away from Campvere. Previous to the Revolution in 1688, it had certainly not been in a flourishing state, and the Conservators appointed did not appear to have exercised their functions with much tact, Sir James Kennedy, who held that office in 1686, having gone so far as to appoint a Roman Catholic clergyman to the Scottish kirk at Campvere, an act which gave rise to a very vigorous "disputed settlement." Sir Andrew Kennedy of Cloburn was the first Conservator appointed after William the Third came to the English throne. Under his rule matters went on quietly, though he had his residence at Rotterdam, where there was a large colony of Scottish merchants, and not at Campvere, which was not only still considered the staple port, but with which a new staple contract was entered into in 1697. This was renewed in 1718, and twice again during the same century, not, however, without some opposition from the Scottish merchants who resided at other ports of Holland, who somewhat resented such privileges being conferred on a comparatively unimportant place like Campvere. These, however, were destined not to continue long. In 1795, by an act of the short-lived Batavian Republic, all immunities from taxation were rescinded, and in 1799 the privileges granted to and enjoyed by the members of the Scottish Factory at that place were revoked. Campvere is now the merest shadow of its former self; its grass-grown streets and deserted harbours speak of a trade long since departed. The office of Lord Conservator continued to be held till recent times, long after its uses had

come to an end. Sir Alexander Ferrier was the last holder of the office, and he was alive in 1827. Its principal distinction in later times is derived from the fact that it afforded a comfortable and dignified provision for Home, the author of *Douglas*, who was probably never in Holland in his life, but who sat in the General Assembly as representative elder of the church at Campvere.