

A Hoard of Fourteenth Century Pennies and Foreign Sterlings found at Derby, September 1st, 1927.

By J. O. MANTON.

ON September 1st, 1927, a workman employed by a firm of builders, when making an excavation between two houses, Nos. 110 and 112, City Road, Derby, and when about two feet down, struck with his pick a small earthenware jar which broke and which had contained what appeared to him to be "some kind of checks from some Stores." The pieces of the jar and its contents were gathered together for examination, and Mr. F. Williamson, Curator of the Derby Museum, recognised the find as one of Edward 1st and 2nd pennies, and he placed the jar as a production of the Tudor period, which later was confirmed by the British Museum pottery experts. 640 coins were gathered from the earth "and possibly a few went to the tip:" some were "badly corroded and others were in an excellent condition."

Such a find naturally recalled the find of exactly similar coins on June 1st, 1831, at Tutbury, near Derby, which came from the military chest of Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, lost in March, 1322; the fact, however, that the Derby find included coins minted after March, 1322, seemed to preclude the possibility of connecting the two finds.

The Tutbury find. Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, was a son of Edmund, a younger brother of Edward 1st, surnamed "Longshanks," (1272-1307), and was therefore first cousin to the son of Edward 1st, who succeeded as Edward 2nd—"Edward II of Carnarvon" (1307-1327). Thomas held from his father the Earldoms of Lancaster, Leicester, and Derby, and was foremost in a party—the Barons—whose object was to take the government of the country out of the King's hands (1312).

Edward II was a weak and worthless man, incapable of ruling himself or his realm. He chose friends alike of no value, ennobled them and advanced them as his chief agents in the government. This estranged the old Barons who had been prominent in the rule of the country and led to civil war. Thomas of Lancaster, with others, took up arms in the north against Edward II, and advanced into the midland district. He disposed his forces to meet those of the King, on a bank of the river Trent at Burton bridge, a few miles from Tutbury. The King having been guided to a ford of the river about five miles above the bridge, crossed the river and fell upon the Earl's forces in the rear and dispersed them. This compelled the Earl to return to his castle at Tutbury and then, finding his personal safety imperilled, he secretly forded the adjacent river Dove, which was swollen by flood water, and hastened to his castle at Pontefract, leaving his baggage and military chest in the care of his Treasurer to follow. Difficulty was experienced by his followers in flight in the intended transit of his military chest which apparently was abandoned and buried locally in one of the banks of the river Dove. In those troublous times there was no opportunity to recover the chest and as time passed it faded out of memory. The river, in the six centuries following, gradually reached the place of deposit of the chest, which had perished, and swept its contents into the stream. In 1831, in order to obtain

a better fall for the tail-water of a cotton-mill owned by a Mr. Webb, workmen were employed to remove gravel from the bed of the river; several of them when wheeling barrow loads of the gravel along planks slipped on what they thought were bits of tin, but one of the workmen discovered that the supposed pieces of tin were really silver coins. The workmen then, naturally turned their attention to searching the stream and were soon joined by other people in the neighbourhood. Coins in increasing numbers were gathered as the searchers slowly ascended the stream until the main bulk was discovered, when approximately 100 to 150 might be secured by a single spade thrust. Officers of the Crown appeared late on the scene and declared the find "treasure-trove," the coins having been found beneath the surface of the land (*sic*) without indication of any legal owner, under the statute "De officio Coronatoris" of 1276 (4 Ed. I, C. 2). 1,500 coins were secured by the officers of the Crown, but it was estimated that over 100,000 were in the hands of the people—two men, it was said, secured as many as 5,000, which they sold at 6/- to 8/- per hundred.

The Derby Find. There was a Benedictine Abbey, (founded 1002-1004), at Burton-on-Trent, endowed with lands widely spread locally, including a large acreage of land together with a church, a priest's house, etc., at Derby.¹ After the flight of Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, from the near-by castle of Tutbury, and the following battle of Boroughbridge, (March 16, 1322), where he was taken prisoner and later, at Pontefract, beheaded and attainted, the Abbot of Burton was prosecuted for being illegally in possession of £400 worth of the late Earl's effects (17 Ed. II), and he was convicted of having taken possession of "£300 worth of the chattels of the King's enemies which had been forfeited," by which verdict

¹ Vide the Burton Chartulary, fo. 23.

"the Abbot was attainted (*attinctud*) of the said £300."¹ Part of the treasure had been traced to the possession of the monks who were with the Abbot and they were suspected of cognizance of the remainder which was missing and of secreting it.

Here we have direct evidence that part of the Earl's treasure was acquired by the monks, under circumstances that compelled them to secrete it, and we know that the period following was one that prudence made it necessary to continue the secretion. Doubtless portions of the money would be used by the monks, from time to time, in the early days of its possession, and there would be "incomings" as well as "outgoings." In this way there would be accretions of coins of then current dates, which accounts for the presence of Edward III pence in the Derby find. This is submitted as a probable explanation showing that the coins of the Derby find, excepting those of a later issue than 1322, came from the same source as those of the Tutbury find, lost in 1322. Monastic establishments continued until the 16th century and it is quite feasible for the balance of the stolen 14th century coins handed down to succeeding generations, until by reason of their age they would become "suspect" if used in currency, to be finally hidden in a 16th century jar. And as regards the "made-up" ground from which the coins were recovered in September, 1927, there is no data to show when the ground was last disturbed, but even if it was comparatively recently it would be easy for an ignorant and indifferent workman to throw up from its hiding place and to bury again the jar with its contents.

The bulk of the coins which are placed as beginning *circa* 1278 and ending before 1345-61, consisted of Ed. I and II silver pennies of English mintages, a few of Irish

¹ Vide the Burton Chartulary, fo. 113—£300 would be equivalent to a fine of upwards of £20,000 at the present date.

and Scotch mintages and a number of Flemish sterlings.¹ According to a list prepared by Mr. L. A. Lawrence of the British Museum, and Mr. Shirley Fox, the mintages were:—

375 Edward I, 1272-1307, pennies of London (186), Canterbury (104), Bristol (15), Bury St. Edmunds (11), Robert de Hadelie (2), Durham (8), Bishop Bek (17), Exeter (1), Kingston (5), Lincoln (7), Newcastle (5), York (14).

2 Edward I half-pennies of London.

91 Edward II, 1307-1327, pennies of London (38), Canterbury (28), Bury S. Edmunds (5), Durham (6), Bishop Kellaway (4), Bishop Beaumont (10).

79 Edward III, 1327-1377, pennies of London (2) and 1344-46, London (61), Canterbury (2), Durham (6), York (8).

18 Edward III, early half-pennies.

5 Edward I, Irish pennies of Dublin.

11 Edward I, Scotch pennies of Berwick.

10 Alexander III, 1249-1286, Scotch pennies.

27 Sterlings, Alost, Robert de Béthune, 1305-22 .. 2

(*per* Namur, Guillaume I, 1377-91 .. 1

Mr. Brooks, Liège, Hugues de Chalons, 1296-1301. 1

B.M.) Loos, Arnold V, 1280-1323 .. 1

Luxemburg, Jean l'Aveugle, 1306-46 . 12

Toul, Ferri IV of Lorraine, 1312-28 .. 1

Arleux, Jean de Flandre, 1313-25 .. 1

Serain, Valeran II, 1316-54 .. 3

Yves, Gaucher de Chatillon, 1303-29.. 2

Shoeneck, Hartard, 1316-50 (fragment) 1

Arnheim, Renaud I, 1272-1326 .. 1

Uncertain 1

22 Edward I and II, Uncertain

¹ For comparison see *A Descriptive Catalogue of the series of coins found at Tutbury in 1831*, printed by W. Rowbottom, Iron Gate, Derby; also *Archæologia*, vol. 24.