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THE GOLD NOBLE OF EDWARD III.

BY GEOFFREY CALLENDER.

THAT Edward III. was the first monarch to issue a gold coinage; that in 1340 he won a great sea victory at Sluys; that in issuing a second gold coinage he altered the design and adopted an image of a ship with himself enthroned therein; these are facts well known. What is not well known is that Edward III. adopted the ship design *in order to* commemorate his victory at sea. That this was so has been conjectured over and over again. And the conjecture has been made by historians, artists, antiquaries, archæologists and numismatists. But they have made their suggestion with the utmost diffidence, as if it were presumptuous in its boldness and startling in its novelty.

By the most recent authorities an attitude of hesitation is carefully maintained. *A Brief Survey of the English Coinage*, by Bernard Roth, F.S.A., Vice-President of the "British Numismatic Society," recently included by Messrs. J. M. Dent, in their *Literary and Historical Atlas of Europe* (Everyman's Library) states concerning the noble of Edward III., "This beautiful work of art was current for six shillings and eightpence. On the obverse the King, standing in the ship, is supposed to refer to the victory over the French fleet off Sluys, in 1340." Many other quotations to the same effect might be cited. But it will be sufficient to refer to that monument of scholarship, the new *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Under the heading "Numismatics," the *Encyclopædia* tells us that "the obverse type of the noble, the king in a ship, is generally thought to refer to the victory of Sluys in 1340."

In reality there is no occasion for conjecture; not even room for hesitation. That Edward III. adopted the design to celebrate his victory is a demonstrable truth, an interesting fragment of naval lore preserved for us by a contemporary historian.

Thomas Burton was appointed Abbot of Meaux in 1396. I do not know whether he was one of the Chapter, or whether he came from another convent. But that is beside the point. Meaux Abbey was situated in the East Riding of Yorkshire, equidistant from Beverley and Kingston-upon-Hull. Burton was nineteenth Abbot, and lived to exercise his high functions

for three years, dying as the fourteenth century came to an end. During his term of office he wrote the annals of his monastery. He wrote on paper which measured eleven inches by eight. The Abbey, of which he was so proud, and which in the all-pervading Latin of the day was known as Melsa, had as long ago as 1396 a history worthy to be set on record; for it was founded by William le Gros, Earl of Albemarle, in 1150. Abbot Burton told the story of his eighteen predecessors. In doing so he did not confine his attention to strictly intra-mural concerns. And herein lies the interest of his work. As he concluded the history of each past Abbot's reign, he appended thereto a survey of external events in the wider world outside. And thus it comes about that after dealing with Abbot Hugh de Leven, who ruled over Meaux for the ten years ending 1349, he turns to a consideration of the French wars, which filled the realm of England with their noise when he himself was a young man.

The CHRONICON DE MELSA was not complete when its author died. It was finished and brought down to the year 1406 by a different hand. This supplement was, however, for some reason or other not considered worthy of Burton's work and Burton's own peeps into the outer world came subsequently to be regarded as not strictly germane to his theme. Accordingly a new copy of the CHRONICON was made, omitting all that was not actually written by Burton and all that did not appertain to Meaux itself.

Both copies of the CHRONICON still exist. The revised and abridged version is among the "Egerton MSS." The original manuscript of Abbot Burton himself is in the "John Rylands Library," Manchester. [MS. (R. 26225), f. 133].

The passage dealing with Edward III.'s Noble is as follows. It is taken from the narrative of the French Wars, and follows immediately upon the account of the Battle of Sluys:—

QUAPPT' IPE REX ED IMP'SSIONE MONETE SUE AUREE FEC'AT
COMUTARI UN IN SUO NOBLI DIMID' MARC' VALENTE EX UNA EI'
PTE NAUE CU REGE ARMATO IN ED CONTENTO REGIO NOU CIR-
CUSCRIPTO & EX ALT'A EI' PTE CRUCE IMPRIMI CONSTITUENS
HANC CIRCUSCRIPTOEM ADHIBUIT IHS AUTē T'NSIENS P MEDIU
ILLORUM IBAT.

I take this to be the unabbreviated form :—

“ Quapropter ipse Rex Edwardus impressionem monetæ suæ aureæ fecerat commutari. Unde in suo nobili, dimidiam marcam valente, ex una ejus parte navem, cum Rege armato in eo contento, regio nomine circumscripto, et ex altera ejus parte crucem imprimi constituens hanc circumscriptionem adhibuit : ‘ Jesus autem transiens per medium illorum ibat.’ ”

Which may be translated :—

“ It was on this account [his victory at Sluys] that King Edward himself had the type of his gold coinage altered. Wherefore in his noble, which is worth half a mark, he ordered to be stamped on the one side of it a ship containing the King in armour with the royal title inscribed round the edge, and on the other side of it a Cross with the following inscription round it :

“ ‘ But Jesus, passing through the midst of them, went his way.’ [Luke iv. 30.] ”

HOOKERS.

BY H. S. VAUGHAN.

THE following remarks are offered as supplementary to those in the second article on Round-Sterned Ships (Vol. I., pp. 293, *et seq.*). It is proposed to place on record some particulars of the modern hooker derived from personal observation and experience, and to suggest that the term hooker as applied to these and former fishing craft has not, and never did have, any connection with the Hoeker, Houcre, Hourque, Howker, Oucré, etc., of the 17th and 18th centuries.

The plain English word hooker has been applied for two or three hundred years at least to a fishing vessel which employs lines and hooks, as distinct from nets, in her business, and has probably never indicated rig, build, or type of any special kind. Thus the vessel illustrated at page 294 (Fig. 16) is a hooker, merely because her business was to fish for cod with lines; but she was no doubt a totally different type of ship from Simon Smith's “ Hooker, or Welboat, whose bayt is with Lampres,” and the latter is probably the ancestor of the hooker of to-day. A vessel used specially for fishing with lines and hooks will vary in type with locality, and the word hooker no more denotes rig or build