

THE JUBILEE COINAGE OF 1887

JEFFREY L. LANT

THE coinage issued in 1887, and for ever to be associated with the Golden Jubilee of that year, was destined to be the shortest lived of the Victorian period. Like many of the other schemes which began as a result of this occasion, such as Church House or the Imperial Institute, the coinage was the subject of much hostile comment. It lasted only six years. What follows is the story of this issue.

The need for a new coinage was not generally disputed and, indeed, Mint authorities were alert to the necessity of bringing the effigy of the Queen up to date. Arrangements had been in progress since 1879 to adopt a portrait medallion by J. E. Boehm, R.A., to the requirements of the coinage and on 15 January 1886 the deputy Master of the Mint, the Hon. C. W. Fremantle, C.B., wrote to the Secretary of the Treasury in order to request payment of Mr. Boehm's 'moderate' fee for seven years' work of 200 pounds. He stated that another of the many pattern coins struck in these years had been presented to the Queen in August 1885 and that the alterations that she had asked for would shortly be effected so that a 'new effigy will be definitively adopted'. (Public Record Office, Mint 1/48, 577.) The fact that the authorities began as early as 1879 to prepare for a change in the royal effigy proves that the new design of the coinage really had nothing to do with the Jubilee and that it was but happy fortune which links this change and the Jubilee of 1887. Had there been no Jubilee impending the coinage would still have been changed, though it would probably have been released earlier. The fact that it is known as a Jubilee issue is more because it was made to be released contemporaneously with that occasion rather than because the Jubilee provided the *raison d'être* for the change. Similarly, the People's Palace in the Mile End Road, a building which bore no necessary relation to the Golden Jubilee, happened to be ready to be opened by her in May 1887 and so was made to play its part in the general paeon to the Queen.

Because the change had been so long contemplated there was little hope that the many suggestions which poured from the public would ever be seriously considered by the authorities, who regarded the change as mere routine. However, this attitude, unknown to the public, could not stop the comments which increasingly came to be made about how the Mint should proceed. As the *Daily News*, the chief Liberal newspaper, said on 8 July 1886, 'Our coins are very well in their way, but they are commonplace and prosy.' The *News* further dismissed the shilling, the half-crown, and the gold coins as being characterless, and said that the florin was 'particularly aggravating'. In short, it stated, 'Our English currency seems in the last hundred or hundred and fifty years to have had little history and no romance.' Therefore the idea of introducing commemorative coins to mark the Jubilee received hearty backing from the *Daily News*. Such an idea was not, as we have seen, considered by the Mint. None the less, and most ironically, the issue has become, for posterity, just as commemorative as if some distinctive Jubilee device was placed upon it to mark the occasion.

The decision to issue new coins caused other proposals to be mooted besides that of commemoration. One of the most interesting was that offered by the proponents of

decimal coinage. The history of the demands for such a coinage in the nineteenth century has been little explored and is perhaps best known because of the dogged perseverance with which Plantagenet Palliser, sometime Duke of Omnium, had pursued the subject through an entire series of Trollope's novels. He struggled, as did the other Victorian rationalizers, but without success. Partisans of the idea made use of the Jubilee to again bring their proposal before the public.

These partisans were particularly to be found among adherents to the Liberal Party and it is no surprise, therefore, to find the first re-emergence of the subject in a letter of 16 July 1886 to the editor of the *Daily News* from 'A Traveller'. 'Cannot,' he said, 'the decimal system be introduced in remembrance of that day (the Jubilee)? By the congress about the adoption and introduction of the decimal system, held many years past, all countries then represented pledged [themselves] to adopt and introduce that system. . . . Is it not time that England should break with old customs and introduce the decimal system, which it promised to do forty years ago. . . .?' 'Traveller' doubtless had in mind also the Parliamentary Commission of 1841 which had suggested decimalization.

The battle for decimalization was one which took on general party lines and lent itself to a good deal of violent rhetoric, for the new system was seen to be something foreign and un-English. The Conservative party organ, the *Standard*, was ever-watchful against subtle changes which might lead to the decimal system, and, to anticipate slightly, when the actual proclamation concerning the new coins had been printed in the *London Gazette*, the *Standard* was quick to see the changes as a Mint plot to introduce decimalization. It editorialized on 19 May 1887:

It seems . . . that not only are we to have a fresh design and portrait of the Queen more nearly contemporary with her actual age . . . but an entirely new coin, to be known as the double florin. In other words, England is, for the first time in the history of her numismatical changes, to have a 'dollar'. So far there is nothing very much to be said against the innovation . . . there is no particular need for a four-shilling piece. . . . We get along very well with the single florin, and still better with the half-crown. Long usage has rendered the latter indispensable, though it has long ceased to be regarded with favour at the Mint. And, now that the double florin will form the middle denomination between the two shillings and the half-sovereign, probably a fresh attempt will be made to withdraw it [the half-crown] from circulation. For some years it has been gradually sharing the fate of the four-penny piece. The Mint theorists never took kindly to either. They were 'unscientific' pieces. They rebelled against every approach to the decimal coinage, and, therefore, at least as far as the half-crown and its double were concerned, were discontinued as much as possible, to the regret of many and the satisfaction of few. . . . We must, therefore, protest against the contemplated withdrawal of the half-crown, which . . . has been for some time in progress, and will be still more rapidly consummated by the issue of the double florin . . . the withdrawal of the half and whole crowns, is, we take it, a desire to gradually get into line with the decimal currency. There has always been a peculiar liking for this 'fad' among a certain class of people. . . .

There had of course been decimal coins since 1849. As from that year the coinage included one decimal denomination, the two shilling piece or florin (both names appeared on it); those struck between 1851 and 1887 became known as 'Gothic florins' because the inscriptions on them were in a black-letter alphabet.

These decimal faddists were not willing, it seems, to begin a major campaign on the subject in 1886 or early 1887 when they might have thought themselves able to influence the new issue. No record exists of any attempts to influence the Mint authorities until, most strangely, a fortnight before the new coins were to be released. Then a deputation of the London Chamber of Commerce, under Mr. Samuel Montagu, head of the

banking firm of that name and a Liberal politician, waited on the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Goschen, on 8 June 1887 to urge the adoption of a decimal coinage. *The Times* commented on 10 June:

A decimal coinage can prevail only by a strong force of public opinion in its favour. . . . Of this, however, there is little or no sign. . . . It seems a pity that instead of attempting to deal with the coinage they did not turn their attention to our system of weights and measures. . . . The trouble and inconvenience (of changing coinage) would be enormous, and the benefit comparatively small.

Decimalization was not, of course, destined to come about on the occasion of the Jubilee and the demonstrations in its favour were not very strong. Indeed, the season itself was not conducive to favourable expressions on the issue and this its proponents must have sensed. The Jubilee was a collective backward glance over the glories of Victoria's reign and a celebration of England and things English. It is not surprising that an idea regarded as continental did not get far at this time.

On 12 May 1887 Fremantle, in his capacity as Deputy Master of the Mint, wrote (Mint 7/89) to the Secretary of the Treasury announcing officially that at the Queen's pleasure certain changes were to be made in the designs of the gold and silver coins and that a double florin or four-shilling piece would be added to the currency. He forwarded a draft of the proclamation carrying the Queen's commands into effect and requested the Lords of the Treasury to take the necessary steps for causing an Order in Council to be passed. No changes were to be introduced in the design for the bronze coinage and indeed none was carried out until 1895. This was because there was a large stock of excess bronze at the time. There exists an interesting memorandum on this subject by the Clerk of the Mint dated 7 June 1886 (Mint 8/8) which partially blames 'pushing shopkeepers in London' for the plethora of coins which existed, on the grounds that they ordered immense numbers of bronze coins and placed them in the wrappings of tea and sweets as an inducement to buy.

The proclamation was issued in the *London Gazette* on 17 May 1887 and ordered that 'every Five Pound Piece should have for the Obverse Impression an Effigy with the Inscription "Victoria D.G. Britt:Reg:F.D." And for the Reverse the Image of Saint George armed, sitting on Horseback, attacking the Dragon with a Sword, having broken his spear in the Encounter, and the Date of the Year. . . .' The two pound, sovereign, and crown pieces bore identical designs. On the obverse of other denominations the title and style of the Queen was given solely as 'Victoria Dei Gratia', except in the case of the shilling and the sixpence which carried 'Britt:Regina F.D.' as well. On half-sovereign, half-crown, florin, and double-florin, 'Britt:Reg:Fid:Def:' was transferred to the reverse, either in that form (on florin and double-florin) or in the form 'Britanniarum Regina Fid:Def:' (half-sovereign and half-crown).

The reverse designs varied. Each of the coins offered the ensigns armorial of the United Kingdom but on the half-sovereign they were placed in a 'garnished Shield surmounted by the Royal Crown' while on the half-crown they were 'in a plain Shield surrounded by the Garter, bearing the Motto "Honi soit qui mal y pense" and the Collar of the Garter.' On the florin and double-florin the ensigns armorial were 'contained in Four Shields arranged crosswise, each shield crowned, and between the Shields Four Sceptres surmounted by Orbs, a Thistle and a Harp, and a Star of the Garter in the Centre'. On the shilling and sixpence they were contained 'in a plain Shield surrounded by the Garter bearing the Motto "Honi soit qui mal y pense"'. All carried the date of the year

on the reverse. None were marked with their monetary value. The sixpence and the half-sovereign were the same size.

In addition, new Maundy coins were ordered with the titles of the Queen on the obverse and on the reverse the respective figures of the value of the coins (4, 3, 2, and 1 pence) in the centre, dividing the date of the year and encircled by an oak wreath surmounted by the royal crown.

The Annual Report of the Deputy Master of the Mint, issued in May contained engravings of the new coins. Editorial comment upon these illustrations was an indication of their controversial nature. The *Daily News* said on 30 May 1887,

All these coins will, so far, be universally regarded as an improvement on the old ones. But it is not so with the Queen's effigy. On most of the present coins the Queen's head is uncrowned; on the existing florin, she is represented with a crown which admirably becomes the wearer, by fitting to the head which it properly covers. On the new coins the crown has shrunk into a mere top-knot, and a certain stiffness in the figure suggests that her Majesty is balancing it on her head, from which it shows a decided tendency to slip off. . . . As it is, a good effigy and a series of coins otherwise beautiful have been spoiled.

Mild criticism this, compared with what was to follow.

Whether to answer such criticism or as a means of anticipating similar comments, or simply to herald the Jubilee issue, the Deputy Master of the Mint wrote an article for the June number of *Murray's Magazine* entitled, 'Our New Coins and Their Pedigree'. The designs of Victorian coins generally, and particularly their reverse designs, came in for a great deal of artistic criticism from him and Fremantle said that they generally had not enough artistic merit to be retained. However, it had been decided that the half-crown was still to bear the same reverse as when first issued, that is, a design by Merlin which Fremantle said was of 'considerable merit'. In addition the celebrated reverse by Pistrucci, the 'beautiful design of St. George', had been retained for the five pound, the two pound, the sovereign, and the crown pieces. It had been kept since its first use in 1817 when the sovereign was first introduced, and had been generally approved. That such approval was not universal, however, can be seen in an entirely unappreciative comment by *The Church Times*, the newspaper of the Anglo-Catholic party in the Church of England. On 10 June 1887 it said: 'We cannot join in the applause which has been bestowed upon the George of Pistrucci, which is retained for the sovereign. It is not likely that anybody going out to fight dragons would forget to put on any clothes except a helmet, a cloak, and a pair of shoes.'

Naturally enough, a good deal of public attention had been directed to the new double-florin piece and Fremantle was forced to pass some comment on this coin. Although he said nothing which could directly affront the sensibilities of anti-decimalization opinion (such as the *Standard*), his words by no means calmed their fears.

I am not [he said] without hope that these attempts to substitute silver coins of artistic design for the somewhat commonplace currency to which we have been accustomed during the last fifty years may be favourably viewed by the public; and it is possible that the introduction of a larger piece than those which we have hitherto been in the habit of using, in the shape of the double florin, may in many ways be found useful.

Even before the coins were officially released the adverse reaction of press and public had begun. For example, on 18 June the *Daily News* commented,

In short, the new coins compare unfavourably with the old. The natural grace and majesty of the

Royal countenance might have been more distinctively brought out, and the little crown perched on the disproportionate head like the apple which William Tell's son was said to have been called upon to stand upon his head provokes, as we anticipated, the oddest comments. The new two pound gold piece is a brassy coin in appearance, and its ring, when tried at a banker's counter, is unpleasantly suggestive of base metal. It may be safely said that its ugliness, together with its similarity in size and weight to the silver florin, will bar it from general favour. Practically the weak point in the new coins is the absence of denominations. . . . It is quite possible that a cry will arise for the withdrawal of the new coins.

The *Standard*, in an editorial of 29 June, after the coins had become generally available (they were released on 22 June), wrote,

The portrait of the Queen is not a bad likeness, though certainly not a pleasing or a dignified one. As to the Crown and the head-dress they are quite unnecessary and a distinct disfigurement. The real objection which causes the eye instinctively to rebel against the whole effect of the new coins is that the lines and curves of the portrait are unharmonious in themselves and do not agree with the outline of the piece. . . . People have not been persuaded to take the new issue quite seriously, and the idea has been very prevalent that its quantity will be extremely limited.

In the midst of a growing storm of criticism the Chancellor of the Exchequer was questioned in the House of Commons. On 23 June Mr. W. L. Bright asked the Chancellor whether the general dissatisfaction on the part of the public as to the appearance and workmanship of the new coinage would cause the Government to recommend any alteration in the dies. Mr. Goschen, the Chancellor, responded that it was considered by the authorities of the Mint that it would be preferable to have an artistic design of former days reproduced upon the new coins instead of a simple description denominating their value. He had heard no complaint except in regard to the sixpence. The public had become quite accustomed to the difference between the florin and the half-crown and no confusion existed with regard to them. There would be a similar difference between the new double-florin and the crown. Considerable comment, he was aware, had been made with regard to the head on the coins, but he had heard very little condemnation of the reverses. If they had been condemned at all, it was probably in ignorance of the fact that they were simply reproductions of the best of the old designs.

Thereafter Mr. Childers, the former Liberal Home Secretary, asked whether it could be arranged that the value of a coin be expressed on the coin itself, and Sir John Lubbock, the Member of Parliament for London University, asked whether Goschen had given any further attention to making a distinction between the sixpence and the half-sovereign? Goschen replied to that question that the matter would be reconsidered by the Mint. He replied to Childers as follows:

In regard to the Question of the Right Hon. Gentleman, there had been a great controversy between the numismatists, or lovers of coins, and the more practical persons who passed the coins from hand to hand. It had been considered that it was reverting to a more artistic state of things to have the George and Dragon on the reverse rather than the commonplace device of 'one shilling', 'one sovereign', or whatever. . . . It was a matter in which there was a conflict of authority; but the Mint would be extremely reluctant to abandon the design.

Mr. Isaacs then asked whether Goschen was going to pay any attention to the crown on Her Majesty's head and save it from falling to the ground? If worn as represented, he said, nothing could save it from falling. Goschen said that it would be his duty to take the Queen's pleasure before he would consent to any alteration in the design (Hansard, 3rd series, 316, 774-5, 23 June 1887).

Barclay Head, Keeper of the Department of Coins and Medals of the British Museum and Hon. Secretary of the Numismatic Society of London, wrote on the following day to the *Daily News*, which printed his letter on 25 June:

In your leading article to-day you refer to Mr. Goschen's assertion in the House of Commons last night that there exists a great contest of opinion between numismatists and practical people on the subject of the types of the new coins. As Secretary of the Numismatic Society, I may perhaps be allowed to correct the Chancellor of the Exchequer in this particular, for I can assure him that the new coinage has given very general dissatisfaction to the members of the Council of the Numismatic Society. Some of the new designs were severely criticised by the President of the Society in his annual address, delivered before the general meeting last week, in the course of which he expressed his regret that the Council of the Society had not been communicated with by the authorities before the choice of the new types.

On 28 June Mr. Isaacs again brought the matter before the House of Commons by asking Goschen whether, having regard to the general dissatisfaction on the part of the public as to the new coinage, he would call in the recent issue and cause new designs to be obtained which would afford a more faithful portrait of the Queen in which the crown should be worn in the traditional manner and the value of each coin be indicated. Goschen responded that notwithstanding the statements as to the general dissatisfaction with the new coinage there had been immense demand for it and that, 'I must frankly say that I feel more bound to satisfy the demand than to call in the coin already issued.' The Mint was unable to meet the demands made on it and the gold five-pound pieces were so much in demand that a premium was being paid on some of them. 'I am not prepared to recommend that the value of each coin should be indicated thereon. Even in the existing currency the value has only been indicated on some of the coins, and I remember no complaints as to its not being on the remainder.' He also defended the head-dress and the crown, which had been so severely criticized, saying that these and the mode of wearing them had been adopted on the new coins because they were shown in the same manner on all the more recent authorized effigies of the Queen (Hansard, 3rd series, 316, 1150-1, 28 June 1887).

The *Standard* replied to Mr. Goschen the following day, 29 June, in an editorial which took him to task for his misleading statements.

The questions put by Mr. Isaacs last night about the new coinage were so worded, as to give Mr. Goschen an opportunity for making, without much difficulty, what looks at first sight like an effective answer . . . the idea has been very prevalent that its quantity will be extremely limited. Hence the rush to get specimens while they might be had. With regard to the five-pound pieces, for which silly people have been paying large premiums, the statement has been deliberately put about that no more would be struck, and it was this rumour that raised the price.

Furthermore, Mr. Goschen had not taken into account the general Jubilee fervour which induced people to want to put aside some souvenir of the great occasion of the summer, and, indeed, a unique occasion of the reign.

Public opinion and criticism did finally become so great that the design of the sixpence was altered. As 'Branch Manager' said in a letter to *The Times* of 22 June 1887,

I think it a great blunder that the new sixpence should be precisely the same in size and pattern as the new half-sovereign and that it bears no indication of value. It will be very easy to gild these coins and pass them through banks for half-sovereigns where the amounts paid in are small. Where a credit consists of only a small amount of gold the cashiers simply count it without weighing. I think the sixpence should at once be withdrawn or the most cruel frauds will be perpetrated upon persons who will

not be able to judge of the difference by feeling the weight, and the cashier's 'shorts' will show a considerable increase.

On 9 November Fremantle wrote to the Secretary of the Treasury that the Queen had signified her pleasure that the sixpence was to be changed (Mint 1/49, 1668). The Treasury Solicitor had advised a new Order in Council and this was promulgated on 28 November 1887. The design adopted was one with the words 'Six Pence' placed across the centre of the reverse.

Criticism, however, despite Mr. Goschen's assurances, by no means abated in the summer of 1887 and on 28 July Mr. Poynter (later Sir Edward Poynter, P.R.A., in opening an exhibition in South Kensington of the work of the art schools of the kingdom, suggested that these same schools should send in designs for a new coinage, implying that the Jubilee coins should be at once withdrawn. As the *Daily News* said on 29 July, 'The Royal Academician's criticism of this deplorable failure only puts in a more coherent manner what has been said by everybody else. The coinage is universally condemned.' Poynter fixed the responsibility for the poor quality of the coins on the engravers of the Mint. He absolved Boehm from responsibility for the fiasco. He said, 'The head was modelled by Mr. Boehm, and making all allowance for the necessity of pleasing an illustrious patron, that may have led Mr. Boehm to accept such structural absurdities as the toy crown and the straight veil, it was difficult to believe that a sculptor of his eminence should have turned out such a thoroughly bad work. For the head is bad all over. . . .' Poynter suggested that in this instance the machine was not employed and that the head was turned over for manual reproduction to the mint engravers. The *Daily News* finished its account by saying, '. . . the new coinage is only the worthy successor of the new postage stamps. In each case, one of the greatest opportunities of the whole reign has been muddled away.'

Poynter also criticized the heraldry of the new coins in saying, 'Some of the new heraldic devices are the poorest things of the kind we have ever had.' This observation was not unique and found expression elsewhere, and in a correspondence, not without its amusing aspects, which exists within the Mint records, and is between a Mr. A. MacGeorge and the Mint authorities.

On 31 December 1887 Mr. MacGeorge wrote to Fremantle,

Your kind attention to a former communication from me which resulted in the correction of the design on our bronze coinage, encourages me to write to you now in regards to an equally serious error in the new florin and which again affects Scotland. The lion rampant, as you are aware, is not peculiar to Scotland. What constitutes the distinctive peculiarity of the arms of that kingdom is that the lion is represented within a *double tressure* floré and counter floré. But on the new Florin the lion appears within a *single tressure* only. What appears on the coins, therefore, *is not the arms of Scotland*. I am surprised at Mr. Wyon [Leonard Wyon, modeller and engraver to the Mint] not attending to this, if it *is* Mr. Wyon's work—as the arms are given with perfect correctness on the new shilling. The double tressure appears there with perfect distinctness. This is a very serious error. It is a matter affecting the dignity—to use heraldic language—of one of the United Kingdoms. You will know how to deal with it. With the coins already issued nothing of course can be done, but the further issue may be stopped and the error corrected. There is another particular in which the shilling—which is a beautiful coin—contrasts favourably with the florin. On the shilling the *tinctures* of each of the three shields are given, as they ought to be. Was there any reason for not giving them on the florin? Apart from heraldic accuracy it adds much to the richness of the design (Mint, 7/38).

On 23 January 1888 Mr. MacGeorge wrote again asking whether the matter he had brought to the attention of Mr. Fremantle had yet been attended to since he had merely

received an acknowledgement of his earlier letter. On 9 February Fremantle wrote to MacGeorge:

The matters to which you called my attention on the 31st December have not been overlooked. If you will look closely at the Scottish shield on the new Florin you will observe that the treasure is really double, but it will no doubt be desirable to put the lines farther apart, and this will be done in future dies. With regard to the lines or marks which indicate tincture it may be desirable to introduce them, but I would point out that tincture was not indicated in the pieces of which the new coins are reproductions. Coins of William III and Anne are before me now, in which the tincture of the shields is not shown.

Naturally enough Mr. MacGeorge returned to the attack in another letter to Fremantle:

I was quite aware that there were two *lines* surrounding the lion. But unfortunately it takes two lines to make one tressure. Single lines in Heraldry are only used as 'partition' lines, in the division of a shield or to enclose spaces which are filled with colours. The lines are themselves colourless. But the tressure is a *band of colour* and the two lines on the florin to which you refer are merely to enclose this coloured band and to separate it from the other colour (or metal) which forms the tincture of the 'field' or ground of the shield. . . . You say the correction will be made 'in future dies' but I trust no more coins will be struck from the present die. It is wrong. The arms of Scotland are not represented at all. And the matter is important. There is nothing, I think, more essentially a question of State, nothing *more* clearly affecting the dignity of a great nation than the heraldic accuracy of its flag and its coinage.

Fremantle replied on 14 February,

. . . I confess that your drawing of the double tressure does not show me what is the precise change which you think right to be made in the Scottish shield on the reverse of the new florin, &c. In your letter of the 31st December you say 'The arms are given with perfect correctness on the new shilling. The double tressure appears there with perfect distinctness.' I propose to adopt the treatment of the shilling on all other shields, probably adopting the tincture also.

On 15 February MacGeorge wrote to Fremantle,

I regret extremely to find that in my letter to you of 31st December I inadvertently misled you as to the heraldic device on the shilling. The mistake arose from my very defective eyesight. On applying a magnifying glass I find that each tressure is represented by only a single line. There *ought* to be two. On so small a scale it is not easy to do this, but the success of Mr. Wyon's work in the alteration which he made in the bronze coinage—where the scale was much smaller—satisfies me that he will easily do this also. . . . Permit me to add that if it would save you any further personal trouble it would give me great pleasure to look at the engraver's drawing before he puts it on the die. . . . I have become—as you have no doubt found out—hypercritical perhaps in my notion of what heraldic forms should be. . . . It will be a beautiful coin when you alter it as you propose.

Finally, Mr. MacGeorge sent along a corroborating opinion of the Lyon King of Arms on the double tressure in the shield of Scotland, but when the next issue of coinage eventually emerged in 1893 it revealed no change from that of 1887 in the treatment of the tressure, the correction not being made until as late as 1937.

Other, and more eminent personages than Mr. MacGeorge found themselves dissatisfied with the coins and within a year, in June 1888, the Queen herself inspected a new design for the effigy on the coinage. She wrote to Goschen on 10 June saying,

The Queen thanks Mr. Goschen for his letter received yesterday and returns the pattern coin and memorandum by Mr. Fremantle. She thinks this new design greatly preferable to the one struck last year, especially as to the size, for the other head was much too small. She regrets the Crown not being on the head. As regards the likeness the underlip projects too much and the chin though correct in shape is slightly too short and the eye is not good. It lacks the beauty of workmanship of the original

coin. Then she *must* insist on the Imp. being added before D.F. Really there is room for one of her proudest titles while the D.F. is really a most unnecessary one having been given to Henry VIII by the Pope. There is plenty of room for Imp. as well as Reg. and D.F. and the Queen *must insist* on it [Percy Colson, ed., *Lord Goschen and his Friends*, Hutchinson & Co., London, 1945, p. 51].

The question of the inclusion of 'Imp.' was in fact scarcely one of space, as the Queen well knew. It was one of the strictest constitutionality, for, by the Bill which made her Empress of India, she was strictly prohibited from using her Indian title within the United Kingdom, and to make use of it on the coins would be a departure from precedent. Goschen wisely took no action on the question at this time.

Following the Queen's approval the larger effigy was used for shillings of the years 1889-92, but dissatisfaction with the coinage continued and in 1893 a wholly new coinage was released. The explanation why this was not done earlier is twofold. In the first place, the Jubilee coinage was popular with the public notwithstanding the criticism directed against it. It constituted, initially, the best form of Jubilee keepsake. No less than 1,881 sets of specimen coins in proof were sold for eleven guineas or approximately 25 per cent more than their face value (Mint 1/49, 2532). A more significant indication of their popularity, however, exists in two letters sent from the Mint to the Treasury requesting gratuities for overtime and extra work on the part of salaried Mint officers. On 21 May 1889 (Mint 1/49, 2514) Fremantle wrote to the Secretary of the Treasury saying that, 'Early in 1887 it became necessary to make preparation for the issue of coins of the new designs, of specimen coins, and of medals to be struck in commemoration of Her Majesty's Jubilee. From June to December 1887 the Department was engaged in the execution of an exceptionally large coinage of silver, of the nominal value of £671,000, rendered necessary by the demand for coins of all denominations bearing the new effigy of Her Majesty.' Furthermore, the Jubilee medals and the specimen coins were not finished until 31 December 1888. As Fremantle wrote, 'during these eighteen months the amount of coinage executed has been far greater than during the preceding two years' (*ibid.*). The undoubted demand for the coins made it easy for the Mint to wait for a moment far removed from the Jubilee and the criticism of the Jubilee coins to change the designs.

In March 1891 Fremantle wrote to the Secretary of the Treasury to inform him that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had requested that a committee report to him on what changes it might be desirable to make in the design of the coins. Fremantle asked for Treasury authority to give up to eight artists, an honorarium of £150 for submitting designs. The Committee was composed of Sir Frederick Leighton, President of the Royal Academy; Mr. David Powell, Deputy Governor of the Bank of England; John Evans, as President of the Numismatic Society of London (thus placing on the committee one of those who had criticized the coinage in 1887); Mr. Richard Wade, Chairman of the National Provincial Bank; and Fremantle himself, now the Hon. Sir Charles Fremantle, K.C.B. (Mint 1/49, 135b).

This Committee invited Henry Armstead, R.A., Thomas Brock, R.A., Hamo Thornycroft, R.A., Charles Birch, A.R.A., Edward Ford, A.R.A., and Edward Poynter, R.A. (who had made such effective criticism in 1887 to submit designs). Brock's design for the Queen's head was selected. Leonard Wyon, modeller and engraver to the Mint had died during 1891 and there was no regular Mint engraver, Mr. G. E. de Saulles was specially selected by Brock to put the design in steel. Particular attention was given to

the crown, the result of which, as Fremantle said, 'left little to be desired as a work of art' (Mint 1/49, 499).

The Committee, which reported on 11 March 1892, also had the satisfaction of seeing its recommendations adopted concerning the double-florin and the florin; the first was dropped from the 1893 coinage and the other had its dimensions reduced. Denominations were still not indicated on the gold coins though all the silver coins were marked with their values. None of the reverse designs created for 1887 was retained though the Pistrucci obverse remained on the gold coinage and the revised sixpence reverse was also retained. In a paragraph of some significance the Committee said, 'We submit with our Report the selected designs, to the legend of which we have caused the addition of "Indiæ Imperatrix" in an abbreviated form, to be made in compliance with the recent request of the Chancellor of the Exchequer' (Mint 1/49, 533). A tenacious Queen had triumphed.

The official proclamation was promulgated on 18 January 1893. The death of Leonard Wyon had placed a convenient scapegoat in the hands of the Mint authorities in the person of De Saulles, and he was given only a probationary contract in order to complete the new designs. However, since a good deal of forethought had gone into the preparation of these new designs no human sacrifice proved to be necessary and on 1 January 1894 Fremantle wrote to the Treasury requesting the retention of De Saulles, who became the official 'Engraver to the Mint'; an appointment, said Fremantle (no doubt with relief), 'justified by the favourable reception of the new series of coins both by experts and by the public generally' (Mint 1/49, 1055). Full came the circle and the Jubilee coins were history.