

THE DRESS OF ELIZABETH AS SHOWN ON HER EARLY  
SILVER COINS, 1558-61.

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**T**HE great change in fashions which took place about the time of Mary's death in 1558 is well illustrated in the coinage. On her late groats, those struck after her marriage, Mary is depicted as wearing the usual Tudor dress, square cut and slightly décolletée at the neck, with a pearl necklace having an ornamental pendant. Elizabeth, on the other hand, carefully covered up all that was exposed by her predecessor, for she is represented in a low bodice with a close-fitting yoke of tulle or lace, with an elaborate high collar and ornamental braid where the yoke fastened down the front. The bodice is supported by straps which vary in number passing over the shoulders, where they are connected by another strap. There is also a ruff round the neck, and on her head, under the crown, a cap of similar material to that of the ruff. The yoke, which is the principal feature, is at first plain and then becomes more ornamental and, on the milled coins, most elaborate. The bodice, whenever it appears, is, with one exception, always ornamented.

The Queen evidently was interested in her portrait, and expressed her opinion upon it. In October, 1560, Thomas Stanley, the Comptroller of the Mint, writes to Lord Cecil: "I am sorry the Queen's Majesty misliketh her stamp of her fine moneys; I have sent your honour to show her highness a pound's weight here enclosed, trusting in God that the next stamp shall be better, which the graver is now about." (*S.P. Dom. Eliz.*, vol. XIV, No. 8; *Num. Chron.*, vol. XVI, 4th Series, p. 64.)

The changes are particularly presented on the shillings. Taking the three early mint-marks, viz., Lis, Cross-crosslet and Martlet, in order, the following changes appear :—

Mint-mark, Lis.—No. 1: The earliest coin has no inner circle. The yoke is quite plain and the straps are beaded. The collar has a diamond-shaped embroidery. No. 2: The yoke is plain and the straps are plain, but in pairs, and the collar ornamentation has lozenges. No. 3: The yoke is now of lace with a slightly worked pattern, the straps are single tapes, and the collar has the lozenge pattern. The top of the bodice appears and it is embroidered. The so-called pattern milled half-crown has a somewhat similar dress to No. 3.

Mint-mark, Cross-crosslet, which was that of the nether mint, from November, 1560, to November, 1561.—No. 4 corresponds with Lis No. 1. No. 5 differs from No. 4 by the straps being composed of a double line of beads. No. 6, the yoke is of spotted net, the straps of tape and the collar has lozenges. The bodice is ornamented. No milled coins were struck in this mint.

Mint-mark, Martlet, which was that of the upper mint which was closed in 1562.—No. 7 corresponds with No. 6. No. 8, the lace work of the yoke has a decided pattern, straps and collar as before. The bust on the milled shilling with this mint-mark is similar.

The Queen or her advisors appear to have been satisfied with this bust No. 8, for when the recoinage of shillings began again in 1583 with the Bell mint-mark, this die was used and continued till the end of the reign, the only alteration being that with and after the scallop mint-mark her ears are shown.

No. 9: Mint-mark, Star on the milled coinage only. Everything is very elaborate, the corsage having two rows of pearls.

There was no issue of shillings after the stoppage in November, 1561, until 1583.

Less trouble was taken over the lower denominations.

The groat has the yoke, and straps plain; and the collar and bodice, where shown, ornamented. There are exceptions, for one without inner circle, mint-mark Lis, has the straps in pairs; and another, with inner circles, has the bodice plain. The milled groat mint-mark Star is similar to the shilling with the same mint-mark.

The half-groats are *like the majority* of the groats *without exception*. The milled half-groat mint-mark Star is like the groat and shilling.

The pence are different. Those with small bust with mint-marks Lis, Cross-crosslet, and Martlet, have a yoke of spotted net like shilling No. 6; and those with the large head, mint-marks Cross crosslet and Martlet, have a decorated lace yoke.

It is curious that so much detail should have been put into these pence; perhaps the reason may have been that they came especially under the Queen's notice when distributing the royal maundy.

The elaborateness of the Queen's dress on the milled coins makes it appear that the engraver was anxious to flatter Her Majesty's vanity by representing her as attired in her most gorgeous gowns, which might be appropriate to such a special coinage.

