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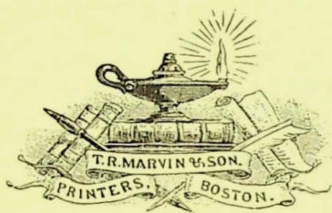
STRUCK FOR CIRCULATION IN FRENCH AMERICA.

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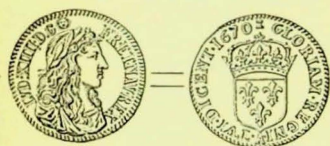




THE
 "GLORIAM REGNI,"

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 FRENCH AMERICA.

OBVERSE, LVD · XIII · D · G [Mint-mark, Sun in splendor, the badge of Louis XIV.] FR · ET · NAV · REX. (Louis the 14th, by the grace of God, King of France and Navarre.) Bust of Louis XIV., laureate, to the right, in corselet and mantle; margin serrated. REV. GLORIAM · REGNI · | · TVI · DI · CENT · ("They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom,") 1670. On a crowned shield, three *fleurs-de-lis*, (two and one.) Above the crown, a tower; beneath the shield, between the dot after REGNI and the dot before TVI, A (for Paris, the place of striking); margin serrated. Silver; size (piece of 15 sous) 17, weight 103 grains; size (piece of 5 sous) 13, weight 35 grains. The wood-cut represents the piece of 5 sous, but the description applies equally to both, except as to size and weight.



Although there has existed among us, for the last quarter of a century, a very considerable degree of interest in the subject of our pre-revolutionary coinage, and although the taste for collecting and studying such specimens of it as can be procured has steadily increased, till the majority of the rarer and more remarkable pieces extant have found their way into the cabinets of collectors, to the great enhancement of the price of those which remain in the market, and with a corresponding whetting of the appetite to possess them on the part of antiquarians, it strangely happens that the beautiful coin represented above, demonstrably American, and suggestive of important historical remembrances as it is, has remained neglected and unsought for.

No author on American numismatics seems to have been aware of its existence until the present writer, in Vol. IV., No. 9, for January, 1870, of the *American Journal of Numismatics*, which he then edited, called the attention of its readers to the fact. A brief and unsatisfactory notice of it, not founded, as is confessed, on actual inspection, forthwith appeared in Sandham's "Supplement to Coins," &c., of Canada, Montreal, 1872; the main treatise published in 1869, being silent on the matter. But Mr. Sylvester S. Crosby, of Boston, who has lately (1873-1875) produced the last and best work on the general subject, entitled, "The Early Coins of America, and the Laws governing their Issue," and proves himself, on every page of it, to be a diligent and conscientious laborer, thinks himself called on to adopt an apologetic tone when mentioning this piece, and to speak of it as "not strictly included in our original plan." Yet his purpose, or "original plan" was, in his own language, "to give all the trustworthy information at" his "command, relative to such coins, or tokens, which were intended to serve as coins, that were either struck in those parts of America which now constitute the United States, or were intended for use therein;" and it cannot be controverted that this is the earliest official coin of a region embracing at least half of the States which now constitute the Union. We are not perhaps, in general, sufficiently alive to the truth that, from the Atlantic to the remote West, the beginnings of colonization were chiefly made by France. Not Canada and Louisiana, merely, formed the French America of a once far from improbable future. In an authority easy to consult, Bancroft's *History of the United States*, Vol. II., we find a "Map of French, English, Dutch, Swedish and Spanish possessions, or claims in the United States, in 1655." A narrow strip from the Kennebec to Cape Fear, is all that is marked as not French, to the northward of Florida. A large part of Maine, all West Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, the greater part of New York and of Pennsylvania, and from these all westward, as far as exploration had then extended, are French. Every one of the States comprehended within the area thus roughly denoted, may regard the coin in question as its earliest monetary relic.

Without, however, going back to years anterior to its date, or looking away from the broad double valley, which extends between the Alleghanies and the Rocky Mountains, or including States of which any portion lies outside of these limits, we can easily, we think, form a list of fifteen, in each of which the collector, present and to come, must regard this "Gloriam Regni" of 1670, as its most ancient numismatic monument. The reader of history is aware that "Louisiana" was, in 1712, defined by authority as comprising all the country drained by waters emptying directly or indirectly into the Mississippi; while the schoolboy has been taught that, out of the "Louisiana purchase" of 1803, alone, have already been formed fifteen States and territories, eight of the former and seven of the latter. Since it happens

that, in the article already referred to, (*American Journal of Numismatics*, Vol. IV., No. 9, for Jan., 1870,) the present writer, just two centuries after the first appearance of this coin, introduced it to American collectors as a new "Colonial," not known to them before, and proper to take the place usurped by one familiar to the numismatic fraternity, under the name, "Louisiana copper," or "R F," he must now again insist on the correctness of this view, and re-affirm that the *GLORIAM REGNI* is the earliest colonial coin of at least half the States of the Union. Of course we do not mean that it actually circulated in the whole vast region mentioned; but it may have appeared accidentally in any part thereof, and, wherever it did so appear, it was, in the estimation of any Frenchman who might behold it, the coin of the realm which he trod. It is, then, our oldest French "Colonial."

With a few brilliant exceptions, our prominent numismatic collectors, and even authors, have not been men of much research or of a wide range of reading. They have delved with greater or less industry in a narrow field; and authorities, other than those in English, have not occurred to them. Hence, works of some rarity, like Le Blanc's *Treatise on the Coins of France*, or of great commonness, like the *New France of Charlevoix*, (which latter, as we shall soon proceed to show, contains most satisfactory corroboration of the American character of the coins of Louis Quatorze before us, with a tolerably ample history of them,) have equally escaped their notice.

MOREOVER, this *GLORIAM REGNI*, or French-American piece, whether of 15 sous or of 5 sous, is a very rare coin. I infer from the first of the two French authorities whom I have named—and I shall presently quote his exact words—that only one hundred thousand livres' worth of 15 sous pieces and of 5 sous pieces together, was struck in 1670, and none at any subsequent date. (The "livre," now obsolete, was one-eightieth less in value than the present franc, and, like the franc, contained twenty sous.) I know of the existence in America, of only five specimens of the Louis of 5 sous. I have had the good fortune to obtain two, both in very fine condition, from two different auction sales of coins in Europe. One of these I have had the honor of presenting to the American Philosophical Society, with an accompanying wood-cut made expressly for the illustration of this paper; a third, seemingly in a poor state of preservation, if we may judge from its heliotype likeness in Mr. Crosby's work, Plate III, No. 5, is in the cabinet of that accomplished scholar and numismatist, William S. Appleton, of Boston; the fourth had, from its appearance, and the locality where I met with it, in all probability been circulated in America. It was in the collection of Mr. J. Myshrall, of Frederickton, New Brunswick, where I saw it in 1870, towards the end of the summer. It showed marks of rough treatment, and must, I think, in passing from hand to hand, have reached, from Lower Canada, the town where it came under my observation. The fifth has been shown me since I began to write this com-

munication, by its owner, Mr. Henry Mott, of Montreal. It bears slight marks of circulation, and was obtained in the latter city. Hence it too, probably was once in actual use. Of the Louis of 15 sous, I know of the existence, in America, of only one specimen; it is the property of James W. Quackinbush, of the Merchants' Bank, 52 Wall Street, New York, and is in very good preservation, though somewhat circulated.

But it is now time to authenticate our *GLORIAM REGNI*, and establish by evidence, that it is entitled to the estimation which we claim for it. In the "Historic Treatise on the Coins of France, from the commencement of the Monarchy to the present time," by Mons. Le Blanc, Paris, 1703, we read at page 388: "In order to facilitate commerce in Canada, the King caused to be struck a hundred thousand livres' worth of Louis of 15 sous, and of 5 sous, and Doubles of pure copper. These coins were of the same value, weight, and fineness with those of France. On the silver Louis of 15 sous, and 5 sous, in place of the *Sit nomen Domini benedictum*, there was *Gloriam regni tui dicent*, and on the Doubles, *Doubles de l'Amerique Françoise*." The specimen presented to the Philosophical Society, must therefore as its size and intrinsic value denote, be one of those of five sous. No "Double" is to be found, as far as I know, among American collectors, though the inhabitants of Lower Canada and of the French West India Islands have in all likelihood preserved some few examples. Mr. Crosby's heliotype portrait of the piece, Plate III, No. 6, is, as he informs us, not taken from a genuine one.

In a letter written at Quebec, February 15, 1721, (Nouvelle France, Vol. III, p. 91.) Charlevoix gives us the following information on our subject. Commerce in Canada was depressed by nothing perhaps more than "the frequent changes which were made there in the coins. I will give a brief account of the matter. In 1670, the West India Company, to which the King had ceded the dominion over the Islands of the French American Continent, had permission to introduce into the Islands small money to the amount of a hundred thousand francs, stamped by a particular die, with a legend which was peculiar to it. The King's edict is of the month of February, and was to the effect that these coins should be current only in the Islands. But on certain difficulties, which supervened, the Council issued on the 18th of November of the year 1672, a decree by which it was ordered that the money aforesaid, and all other specie, being current in France, should also be current, not only in the French Islands, but also on the terra-firma of America subject to the crown, with an augmentation of one-fourth superadded; that is to say, the pieces of fifteen sous for twenty, and the others in proportion."

"The same decree ordered that all contracts, bills, accounts, purchaess, and payments should be made between all descriptions of persons, in money, without privilege of barter or accounting in sugar, under penalty of nullity as to transaction. And in regard to the past, it was ordained that all stipulations

relating to contracts, or bills, or debts, or obligations, or rents in sugar and other provisions should be reduced into and made payable in money, at the valuation of the aforesaid coins. In execution of this decree, coin increased one-fourth in value in New France," &c., &c. Here we leave the amiable Jesuit to relate the financial mischief which ensued, and we quit the historic aspect of our theme for the æsthetic and literary.

As a work of art this coin is beautiful. It will, from that point of view, compare advantageously with any now produced in the home-mints of this country, where it was once intended to circulate. The portrait of Louis presents him as a handsome man of thirty-two, his age in 1670; the mint-mark of the sun in splendor recalls his famous motto: "*Nec pluribus impar*"—which, by the way, has a structural similarity to our own national one;—the manner of marking with subscript the final I in XIII is very uncommon; I know no other instance of it on a coin. The reverse offers us, as a subject of remark, the legend: "*Gloriam Regni Tui Dicent.*" It is taken from the Vulgate of the fine Psalm CXLV., entitled "David's Psalm of praise." Verses 10–13, of our translation read as follows:

10. All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee.
11. *They shall speak of the glory of thy Kingdom,* and talk of thy power;
12. To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his Kingdom.
13. Thy Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.

In the application of the beginning of verse 11, to the purpose of a numismatic legend, particularly if it be considered in connection with its context, two covert references seem to me to be intended; the first, to the highly ecclesiastical character of French colonization in America, in which exploration and conversion ever proceeded hand in hand; the second, to the "mighty acts" and "glorious majesty" of the "Grand Monarque." It is true, that he had not, at this comparatively early epoch in his reign, put forth the exaggerated pretensions which he afterwards advanced; but the adulation and irreverence which offend us in the use made of these words, were already in the taste and fashion of that day.

The preceding paper is a correction and modification of one read before the American Philosophical Society, July 21st, 1876. The writer is indebted to M. Gaston L. Feuardent, of the famous house of Rollin et Feuardent, Paris and London, who is sojourning at present in New York, for the additional light which he has received on the subject. The chief blunder in the original paper consisted in mistaking the piece of 5 sous for the piece of 15 sous. This latter is exceedingly rare. Besides the one spoken of above as belong-

ing to Mr. Quackinbush. M. Feuardent has never seen or heard of more than one. It was in the collection of D'Affry, and is pictured in Conbrouse, *Monnaies de France, Atlas Second, Moderne, Pl. 203, No. 1*. It is there entitled, "Quart d'Ecu, Canada," and, in the corresponding description, *Décameron Numismatique de Guillaume Conbrouse, p. 165*, "Quart de l'écu blanc pour le Canada." M. Feuardent says that it was in uncirculated, or proof condition. Though the more significant names of the two pieces, are, respectively, as we have given them; "Louis of 15 sous," and "Louis of 5 sous," (*monnaie dite "Louis de cinq sols et de quinze sols" destinée aux colonies françaises en Amérique. Berry, Etudes, &c., sur les Monnaies de France, Paris, 1853. Vol. II, p. 549.*) yet the more strictly accurate designations are, respectively, "Quart d'écu blanc," and "Douzieme d'écu blanc," (*Conbrouse, Catalogue Raisonné des Monnaies Nationales de France, Paris, 1839. Part 2, p. 14.*) M. Feuardent is absolutely certain from familiarity with the same figure on other French coins, that the mint-mark above the crown, on the reverse of each piece, is merely a tower, of heraldic form. In the paper presented to the Philosophical Society, the writer suggested that it was a crowned A, referring to French, or Royal America, and increasing therefore the interest attaching to these coins; but the conjecture must now however reluctantly, be abandoned.



