

Variant holograph draft of MINT00087 (/catalogue/record/MINT00087), (Mint 19/1/98-9).

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Source: MINT 19/1/100-101, National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, UK

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Tis suggested that the Queens Assaymaster is a cheque upon the Officers of the Mint & that M^r Brattle being under the direction of the Officers hath acted partially: whereas on the contrary, the Comptroller is a cheque upon the whole Mint & all the three first Officers are a cheque upon the Assaymaster. For he has no trial piece of his own but performs his Assays by their Trial pieces & in their present & his Assays without their approbation are of no force. In overseeing his Assays the Warden & Comptroller act in behalf of the Queen & her people & the Master acts for himself: & the Assaymaster acts only as a manual Artificer & is to act with skill & sincerity to the satisfaction of the Officers of both parties. For its easy for an Assayer to give a turn to the Assay, of a quarter of a grain or an halfpenny weight or above, for or against the Master. And if any such thing be suspected, the Assayer must repeat his Assay till the Officers of the Mint are satisfied of his acting with skill & candour. And if any Importe{r} think himself aggr{rieved} he hath a remedy prescribed, which is an appeal not to persons not concerned, but to a trial by the Wardens Trialpiece.

It was right therefore for the Lord High Treasurer to refer the four Petitioners to a triall before the Officers of the Mint as the proper judges of their qualifications in print of skill.

Now the direction given to M^r Brattle were no other then those given to his brother Her Majestys late Assaymaster two years before his death & they have been executed more exactly by the present M^r Brattle then by his brother, & they were to coin by the Trial piece of K. James. The Pot Assay pieces of the Gold coined after the Trial of the Pix 1710 untill those directions were given being melted down together & assayed with that triall piece were found to agree with it, the ballance standing at the cock. And all the Gold money coined since that Trial of the Pix being lately tried by the same Trial piece, the Iury found them equal in fineness the scales standing at the cock. And After the money hath been found well coined by a Iury, the Master of the Mint hath a legal right to be quiet against all the Queens subjects for what is past.

To err within the Remedy is no crime. It only creates a a reconning between the Queen & the Master. If the Master has got by the error he must refund his profit to the Queen: if he has lost, the Queen returns his loss. And if the error be under a quarter of a grain or an halfpenny weight, it is neglected by ancient custome & creates not so much as a reconning. If the error be by designe the only punishment is that the Master must be at teh charge of recoinng the mony before delivery. If it be without designe the money is deliverable notwithstanding, provided the error be within the remedy. But nothing less then a quarter of a grain {us}es to be reconned an error or taken notice of in the received method of assaying. The Iury takes no notice of any thing less.

All the bullion is received by the Masters Triall-piece. And if the Importer shal at any {time} think himself aggrieved by the Masters assay, he hath an appal to the wardens trial piece. This is his proper remedy & his only remedy against the Master. But if the Importers do not appeal, there is no reason why those that are not Importers nor have anything to do with the Mint should be allowed to complain. They may admonish the Importers to appeale but that have not so much as a right to appeal themselves, or to give the Officers of the Mint any molestation. For the coinage is not to be made impracticable.

When M^r Brattel & M^r Oadham had a comparative Trial before the Officers of the Mint, they made each of them eight assays of Gold in four successive fires, two in <100v> each fire, & as many of silver. Some of M^r Oadhams assays taken from one & the same piece of gold differed from others a quarter of a grain, & one of them erred two grains which is three times the Remedy, & the error was in fineness & therefore not likely to be by mere accident. Whereas all M^r Brattles Gold assays agreed perfectly with one another except one which differed from the rest only about the twelft part of a grain, which is but the eighth part of the Remedy. And almost all the coinage is in gold. M^r Brattle was also observed to handle things with more dexterity & dispatch

At that time M^r Oadham was offered a fuller trial by more assays & did not then desire it, but has since desired another trial. Had acknowledged the fairness of that trial, & that he had since been learning to assay better & was now grown more skilfull then before his request might have been granted without a reflexion upon the Mint: but he pretends to have learnt his skill long ago in his Apprenticeship & has appealed from the Report of the Officers, If declining a Trial by an objection against some of the Petitioners, appealing from the Report of the Officers & labouring is a greater objection against M^r Oadham. & now in opposition to it produces a certificate of his skill in assaying signed by Merchants & Goldsmiths. But it doth not appear that his subscribers are men of note for skill in assaying or ever met to see him make a competent number of successive assays whereby they might judge of his skill. They are merchants, shopkeepers & plateworkers & generally trust the assays of the Hall.

The Importers are proper Iudges not of hte skill of an Assaymaster but whether they will freely trust him with their bullion. Amongst his subscribers there are only six who have imported gold within these three years, & all of them together have imported only to the value of about 14 thousand pounds: whereas the Importers who have signed a paper for M^r Brattle (as I am credibly informed, for I have not sen it) have imported to the value of eight or nine hundred thousand pounds within that time. All the Importers trust M^r Brattel freely with their bullion, but M^r Oadhams credit is not yet established among them. And a miscariage in the Assay-Office would be a discouragement to the coinage.

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It was very right therefore for the Lord High Treasurer to refer all the Petitioners to a trial before the Officers of the Mint & it was not right in M^r Oadham to appeal from their Report < insertion from lower down f 101r > to defame them & to make an interest against them. The increase of the coin depends upon the credit of the Officers with Importers & this credit is at present very good & its the interest of the Government to support it.

To say that M^r Brattel being under the direction of the Officers of the Mint hath acted partially, is to object against the very constitution of the Mint. For the Queens Assaymaster is & ought to be as much under the direction of the Officers in assaying the money as M^r Brattel is at present. And the directions given < text from higher up f 101r resumes > reflect upon them & endeavour to carry his point by interest. If declining a Trial be an objection against {illeg}a of the Petitioners appealing from a Report of the Officers to the proper Iudges is a greater objection against M^r Oadham.

The directions given to M^r Brattel against all the Queens subjects for what is past.

Before the late trial of the Pix the Master of the Mint for obviating complaints which might arise, ordered the money for the Assay to be kept from time to time to be reassayed by the Queens Assaymaster so soo as there should be one appointed by her Majesty. And now he ordered the like to be done for the future. Which is the

utmost care that he can take for the satisfaction of people in this matter & for keeping up the credit of the Mint.

All the Bullion is received by the Masters trial piece. And if the Importer at any time thinks himself injured by the Masters Assays he hath a remedy appointed by law, which remedy is an appeal to the Wardens trial piece. But the Importers do not appeal & if they do not complain of the Masters assays, those that are not Importers nor have any thing to do with the Mint should not be allowed to complain.

By the constitution of the Mint the Master & Worker receives & coins all the Bullion of gold & silver by his own trial-piece. The Importer hath at all times an Appeal from the Masters Assays to a trial by the Wardens trial piece: And the Queen & all her people have an Appeal to the Trial piece of the Exchequer at every trial of the Pix. If any Importer is dissatisfied with the Masters Assays & will appeale to a trial by the Wardens Trial piece: the Queen & Council or the Lord High Treasurer may appoint any indifferent person or persons skilled in Assaying to stand by & see the whole Trial. But if the Importers do not complain, M^r Oadham & his friends who are not Importers have no right to appeal complain or intermedde with the Mint. They & all the Queens subjects will have justice done them at the next trial of the Pix. And in the mean time they are not to discourage the importation of bullion into her Majestys Mint. But if they desire a hearing before the Queen & Council, the Officers of the Mint do not decline it.
