

Jersey Independent and Daily Telegraph Thursday 06 May 1875 The Copper Coinage

The Copper Coinage peculiar to Jersey, always embarrassment, has become a superfluity. The drapers of St. Helier's, the most important section of retail traders of the locality, have long since given up dealing in the fanciful method of computation known as Jersey currency; and now, we see by announcement made in our columns, the grocers, teadealers, and wine, and spirit merchants fell owed the example. Substantially, all the retail traders of the town have done with the need for a coinage of thirteen pence to the shilling; and the distinctive copper money of Jersey may as well be given up.

Jersey copper money, bearing the arms of the States, will however probably die hard distinctive coinage is one of the badges of nationality; and nationality is dear to the States. The theory that Jersey is a country, and not a province, is hard to be maintained in the absence of distinctive national flag and all that a national flag implies. Jersey has neither army, navy, nor independent executive of its own; but it has a coinage, though only through the medium of copper; and a separate coinage as a sign of nationality is a great deal. The coppers relinquished, what indeed would be left? The very Legislature of Jersey, having quasi-independence, is, — unwisely as we think, — at the present moment supplicating another Legislature rather than stand calmly upon its constitutions! claims; and the official language of the island is under vigorous attack. With so much that is national at stake, there is a consolation in adhering to local coinage, which is at least an outward and visible manifestation of the inward political sentiment which Jersey men of the old school are disposed to value above all else. The States, therefore, will not be easily persuaded to surrender its coppers. They lend that body a certain dignity which it will be loath to part with under circumstances that are likely to be trying to its pride; and they will be preserved therefore a national trapping which goes far for show if not for me. The coppers are, however, as we have said, an embarrassment. Boys at school are taught, in defiance of the national sentiment, that twelve pence make one shilling; the copper money with its silver equivalents coming from the United Kingdom with gold and silver silently reiterates the fact; and the law of the land, which for purposes of the Queen's currency, is common to Jersey, says the same thing; but the States, declining to recognize the heresy insist that there are thirteen. Traders, wishing to deal intelligibly with their customers, seek to use the normal currency authoritatively prescribed; but are meet by an inconsistency in Jersey coppers which give useless trouble to themselves and is a puzzle to strangers; and an artificial computation is kept up, on the thirteen pence-to-the-shilling theory, of shilling and pounds Jersey which have no existence. I would be well if the whole embarrassed were once for all put an end by the withdrawal of a set of tokens which are not warranted by the currency of the realm as the employment of goes miserably to confuse it; for, notwithstanding a general resolve to compute by British currency, the presence of copper coin of an anomaly value will remain an embarrassment to the last. A compromise with the dignity of the State is practicable. Why not, retaining copper coinage bearing the Jersey arms substitute the present money of thirteen pence to the shilling by other coins of twelve.