

grants until its money value is now estimated at more than £3,000,000. No wonder that the medal room of the British Museum, in which are hoarded, besides medals properly so called—*i.e.*, metal memorials struck, not for purposes of commerce, but solely in commemoration of historical personages and events—coins ancient and modern, home and foreign, many of them of extreme rarity, and some even unique, has always been, and still is, guarded with hardly less jealousy than the bullion cellars of the Bank of England or the Mint.

To the public at large this interesting and instructive department of our national collection has long been a sealed book, no visitors being admitted within the mysterious precincts of the medal room without special permission. Numismatic students, however, find no difficulty in obtaining this, whether natives of the British Empire or foreigners. Once properly introduced, all who require to examine the cabinets can, of course, reckon upon receiving the most courteous attention and most efficient help in their learned researches from the keeper of the coins and medals, Mr. R. S. Poole, or, in his absence, from assistants. This distinction there is no intention of breaking down. But although the general public will not be admitted to the medal room, the crowds who flock at the holiday seasons of the museum will find as they enter the King's Library four glass cases on the left-hand side filled with an invaluable selection of medals illustrating the last four centuries of our national history.

This first step in the popularization of our numismatic collections is not the least interesting and hopeful of the valuable reforms for which the nation has to thank the new principal librarian and secretary to the trustees—Mr. Edward Augustus Bond. That this step is to be followed by others in the same direction will be seen by a glance at the cases on the right side, where a beginning has been made of a similar Italian series of medals. Higher than 400 years ago the