

Handbooks of
Archaeology and Antiquities

A HANDBOOK
OF
GREEK AND ROMAN COINS



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WITH FIFTEEN COLLOTYPE PLATES



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PREFACE

THE attempt has often been made to condense into a small volume all that is necessary for a beginner in numismatics or a young collector of coins. But success has been less frequent, because the knowledge of coins is essentially a knowledge of details, and small treatises are apt to be unreadable when they contain too many references to particular coins, and unprofitably vague when such references are avoided. I cannot hope that I have passed safely between these two dangers; indeed, my desire has been to avoid the second at all risk of encountering the former. At the same time it may be said that this book is not meant for the collector who desires only to identify the coins which he happens to possess, while caring little for the wider problems of history, art, mythology, and religion, to which coins sometimes furnish the only key. It is meant chiefly as a guide to put students of antiquity in the way of bringing numismatics to bear on their difficulties. No attempt, therefore, has been made to avoid controversy where any profitable stimulus seems likely to be provided by the discussion of doubtful questions. The comparatively full references and the bibliography are also added with the aim of making the book an introduction to more advanced works, rather than a more or less self-contained statement of the elements.