NOTES UPON WAR MEDALS, NAVAL AND MILITARY.

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THE PAPAL DECORATIONS OF 1860.

The study of medals and decorations awarded for military or naval service, is, comparatively speaking, a new branch of numismatic science. An historical record stamped upon a piece of metal is of greater value in the elucidation of minor events in the annals of a state or kingdom, than the information which may be gained by careful reading or the study of manuscript. That which is recorded upon the obverse or reverse of an ancient coin or medal, must be received as accurate and truthful, whether directly giving the name and titles of some individual little known in history, or whether some remarkable event is distinctly noticed; while on the other hand the most assiduous research is often productive of only supposition.

Addison, in his Dialogues upon the usefulness of Ancient Medals, has said:—"It was indeed the best way in the world to perpetuate the memory of great actions, thus to coin out the life of an Emperor, and to put every great exploit into the mint. It was a kind of printing, before the art was invented. It is by this means that Monsieur Vaillant has disembroiled a history that was lost to the world before his
"time, and out of a short collection of medals has given us "a Chronicle of the Kings of Syria. For this too is an "advantage medals have over books, that they tell their story "much quicker, and sum up a whole volume in twenty or "thirty reverses. They are indeed the best epitomes in the "world, and let you see with one cast of an eye the substance "of above a hundred pages."

It appears, therefore, that coins and medals do help to explain the history of nations; so do badges of distinction illustrate the military history of empires.

The decorations, which I have the honour to bring before your notice this evening, were presented by His Holiness Pio Nono to a wounded volunteer officer (a British subject) in the Papal army of 1860. This army consisted of volunteers from all parts of Europe:—Germans, Frenchmen, Belgians, Italians, and British subjects; and according to General Lamoricière’s estimate amounted altogether to a little over 16,000 men.* The favourite or "crack" regiments were called Guides and Zouaves. The soldier who received the decorations served in the latter corps.

ORDER OF PIUS IX, SECOND CLASS.

This order of knighthood was instituted on the 17th June, 1847,† and is divided into two classes. The badge of the second class is of fine gold, and consists of a blue enamelled star of eight points fixed upon a gold radiation: on the centre of the star is a stud of white enamel, inscribed "Prvs IX," in gold letters: this is encircled by a band bearing the legend—

+ "VIRTVTI ET MERITO"—in relief and blue enamel. On the reverse is fixed a white enamelled stud, inscribed—

† Vide Sir Bernard Burke’s Orders of Knighthood, p. 175.
“ANNO MDCCCXLVII.” It is suspended to the breast by a dark blue ribbon edged with two narrow stripes of crimson.

**THE PAPAL WAR MEDAL, 1860.**

The medals given to all grades who served the Pope in this war are the same in type; a difference being in the metal and clasps attached. By far the greater number were distributed in German silver, the wounded only received the decoration in gold. The clasps are inscribed—Les Grottes, Perugia, Pesaro, Spoleto, Castelfidardo and Ancona. That for “Les Grottes” is exceedingly scarce. In this affair Colonel Pinodin, with a small force of fifty gendarmes, attacked and defeated three hundred Garibaldians. Colonel Pinodin was afterwards made a General; he was killed at the battle of Castelfidardo.

The medal in gold consists of a crimson enamelled cross inverted, and resting upon the head of a serpent, by which it is encircled. The serpent is here emblematic of eternity, the inverted cross is symbolical of the martyrdom of St. Peter, who was crucified with his head downwards.

Outside the serpent is the legend, in gold letters upon blue enamel—pro Petri sede—“for the seat of Peter”—Pio IX, P. M., A. XV.

Reverse:—Victoria quae vincit mundum fides nostra. “The victory which conquers the world is our faith.” This medal has one clasp, inscribed—Castelfidardo.

Ribbon—Crimson, with two stripes of white edged with yellow.

The third medal I have to notice is a commemorative one. After the battle of Castelfidardo, the Pope presented this medal, first in bronze and afterwards in silver, to about fifteen of his wounded soldiers.

Obverse:—Bust of His Holiness Pius IX. Legend:—Pius IX. Pont. Max.
Reverse:—Inscribed, Catholicis peregre advententibus cives Romani fratribus concordissimis in Pont. Max. parentis omnium ivribus defendendis tvtandis.—In ipsis Paschae solemnibus, anno MDCCCLX.

"The Roman citizens to their Catholic brethren coming "from other lands, and acting with the greatest concord in "defending and securing the rights of the Sovereign Pontiff "the Father of all."—"On the festival of Easter, anno 1860."

Legend:—Multitvdimis credentivm cor vnvm et anima vna.—"One heart and one soul of the multitude of believers."