

A UNIQUE NAVAL RELIC OF 1742 :
THE CALLIS MEDAL.

BY CHARLES WINTER.

IT is rarely, indeed, that a medal has been specially designed to reward the services of a subject and presented by the Sovereign to him, yet such was the origin and purpose of the gold medal illustrated in the two plates to these notes, which was awarded to Captain Smith Callis, R.N., by George II., in 1742. The designs it bears may be described as—

Obverse.—George II., in the costume of a Roman Emperor, presenting the medal to Captain Callis, who kneels before him. Above, upon a label, is the legend:—PRO TALIBUS AUSIS. [For such bold enterprises.] Plate I.

Reverse.—Captain Callis's fireship, the "*Duke*," attacking five Spanish galleys at anchor in St. Tropes. Four other British vessels are seen quiescent in the foreground. In the exergue is the legend:—OB. V. TRIREM. HISPAN. A. S. CALLIS. COMBUST. V. IVLII. MDCCXLII. [On account of five Spanish galleys burnt by Smith Callis, 5th July, 1742.] Plate II.

In June, 1742,¹ five royal Spanish galleys, laden with ammunition, and provisions for the Spanish army, were lying at Antibes, ready to escort Don Philip with a body of troops into Italy. The intention was to elude the vigilancè of the British cruisers by keeping close in shore, but not long after they had quitted their place of refuge they were discovered by Captain Norris in the "*Kingston*," which, with the

¹ The action was fought early in June, 1742. The date noted on the medal probably records the reception of the news in London.

"*Oxford*" and "*Duke*" fireships, chased them into St. Tropes, a small town belonging to France, where they would have remained unmolested had they not violated the laws of neutrality by firing on the blockading ships. Captain Norris at once gave orders to Captain Callis of the "*Duke*" to sail in and burn the galleys. This service Captain Callis performed with consummate courage and cool perseverance, and it was crowned with such complete success that King George II. ordered him to be promoted to post rank, and a special gold medal to be struck, which he personally presented to him.

Captain, afterwards Admiral, Callis, died at Bath on October 22nd, 1761. He was buried in the Abbey Church, where a small but neat monument is erected to his memory.

The medal passed from Admiral Callis to his sister Anne, the wife of Thomas Western of Rivenhall, Essex, and grandmother of Lord Western, under whose Will it passed to Sir Thomas Charles Challis Western, Bart., and was purchased by Messrs. Spink on July 2nd, 1913.

My authorities for these short notes are : *Medallic Illustrations of British History*, *Tancred*, and *Medals of the British Navy*

