GOLD AND SILVER MEDALS OF THE HONOURABLE EAST INDIA COMPANY.

BY C. WINTER.

The medal commonly known as the "Deccan" was issued to native troops only, and is the earliest Anglo-Indian decoration granted to all ranks.

The troubles in the west of India, Guzerat and the Carnatic caused Warren Hastings, at the request of the Bombay Presidency, to despatch two native detachments of the Bengal Army. These detachments were known as the Bombay and Carnatic detachments. The former's services spread over a period of years from 1778 to 1784, and those of the latter, in the south of India, from 1780 to 1784.

The authority for the grant of a medal to the Bombay detachment will be found in a minute of the Governor-General and Council of January 19, 1784, where it is stated that "each subadar should be awarded a gold medal, each jemadar a silver one, and that similar badges of inferior value should be given to the non-warrant officers and sepoys." The grant of medals to those who served with the Carnatic detachment is a minute dated January 22, 1785, twelve
months later than the grant to the Bombay troops. A subsequent minute of January 28, 1785, extended the grant to the Artillery Lascars. Messrs. Young and Shepperd, of Calcutta, were instructed to prepare the dies and strike gold and silver medals. Mayo, in his Medals and Decorations, states that the choice of a design was left to the Commander-in-Chief. The dies were made by Mr. Shepperd at a cost of 600 rupees, and as Mayo mentions Mr. Shepperd as being the maker of the dies, and not the firm, I presume that he was the die-sinker, but no name or initials appear on the medals to indicate either designer or die-sinker.

The two specimens exhibited to the members were those of the silver issues, the larger one being $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. diameter and the smaller one $1\frac{8}{2}$ in. diameter. The obverse of the medal depicts Britannia seated on a military trophy consisting of a drum, spears, a flag, two cannon, a sword, and three cannon balls; in her right hand she holds out a wreath towards a distant fort in the background; in her left hand rests her spear, and at her right side the Union shield. There is a slight difference between the two designs in the number of cannon balls. The design on the whole is somewhat pleasing, but of no particular artistic merit. The reverse consists only of a long Persian inscription. Tancred, in his Historical Record of Medals, gives the translation as follows: "The courage and exertions of those valiant men by whom the name of Englishmen has been celebrated and exalted from Hindostan to the Deccan having been established throughout the world, this has been granted by the Government of Calcutta, in commemoration of the excellent services of the brave; year of the Hegira 1199, A.D. 1784. As coins are current in the world, so shall be the bravery and exploits of those heroes by whom the name of the victorious English nation was carried from Bengal to the Deccan." This translation differs from the one given by Mayo, which reads: "Presented by the Calcutta Government in memory of good service and intrepid valour, A.D. 1784, A.H. 1199. Like this coin may it endure in the world, and the exertions of those lion-hearted Englishmen of great name, victorious from Hindostan to the Deccan, become exalted." Tancred's translation is most
flattering to the English, and speaks of their exploits circulating as a current coin in the world, whilst Mayo somewhat impairs the dignity of the award as being for martial prowess when he says: "Like this coin may it endure." Which is the correct translation I must leave to those versed in the language.

According to a letter sent to the Commander-in-Chief and read before the Council, Messrs. Young and Shepperd found that they were not able to strike the medals, as they thought, from one stroke of a hammer, and had to seek permission to double the price estimated for striking to allow of their procuring a press for stamping the medals. The following is a copy of the letter addressed to General Stibbert:

"Sir,—Herewith we send you as a specimen a Gold and Silver Medal, and find it necessary to observe to you that the Dyes from which they were struck, will, in striking off 50 or 60, be totally spoiled. All this I was a stranger to when first I undertook to make them, thinking from the extraordinary softness of the Gold and Silver in this country, that they might with ease be struck up, with one blow of an hammer, but to my very great disappointment, they take a dozen at least, besides passing them through the fire as many times before the impression appears decent. As there are numbers of them to do, I find it impossible to complete them without the assistance of a large Mint Press, which we can get made here under our directions should it please you to enable us to pay the expense, by allowing one Rupee each for striking them off, independent of the Gold and Silver which may be worked up in the quantity required. I will be answerable that one pair of Dyes shall complete the whole provided they are struck up by Press—otherwise if an accident should happen in striking them with an hammer as before mentioned of breaking the Dyes, it would be attended not only with a double expense in sinking them again, but would be a great disappointment to you.

"We are, etc.,
"Young and Shepperd."
Possibly the firm was in the habit of striking hollow work or small solid pieces, and had overlooked the great resistance that would arise in an apparently small increase of diameter of the blank.

By way of illustration, the large bronze medal exhibited, which is 5 in. in diameter, was struck under a 6-in. hand screw-press, and took 300 blows of a screw pressure of about 30 tons. A 4-in. medal, struck from similar metal under an 8-in. screw power-press of about 60 tons pressure, took 40 blows, the great increase in the number of blows being caused by the 1 in. difference in diameter of the medals. The term "hammer," I presume, in the case of Messrs. Young and Shepperd, was not a drop-hammer, otherwise I do not understand the difficulty which they mention. Both Tancred and Mayo seem to think that it was the intention of the authorities to issue a second design for the Carnatic detachment, but at the same time both produce proof that the one design was used for all the troops.

The gold medals granted to the subadars are exceedingly rare; in fact, I have only seen one gold specimen during the past thirty-five years, which came into the possession of Messrs. Spink when they purchased the Philp Collection. The large silver specimen exhibited is in very fine condition, and is rarely met with. Specimens of the smaller one are to be found in most collections.

Mayo gives the following extract from the Bengal General Consultations, 1785, p. 505, and Military Consultations, 1785, p. 228:—

"Ordered that the Military Paymaster-General do advance to the Commander-in-Chief, the sum of 20,000 Rupees, for the purpose of preparing the honorary medals ordered to the Troops late serving in the Carnatic: and to create a proper distinction between the Jemadars and the inferior Officers and Privates, the Medals of the former are directed to be gilt."

From this it would appear that some of the silver medals granted to jemadars were to be gilt for the purpose of making a distinction, which is somewhat strange, as the medals, being of the larger size, would have the appearance of being gold, such as issued to the subadars. If it was the intention to gild the smaller ones, the
distinction would be simple. I have never seen or heard of a gilt specimen, and query if this order was carried through.

**EGYPT, 1801.**

A force under the command of General Baird was despatched from India to assist in expelling the French from Egypt, and left Bombay on April 6, 1801, arriving too late to take any part in the fighting, the French having surrendered before they arrived. After spending about twelve months in Egypt, Baird and his troops returned home, and were received with great respect, every honour being paid them. A General Order dated at Fort Williams, July 31, 1802, states:

"Major-General Baird, commanding the forces employed in the late expedition from India to Egypt, arrived this day at the Presidency, attended by the Governor-General's state boats, and was received on his landing at Chaundpaul Ghaut by the officers of His Excellency's staff. The Governor-General in Council derived sincere satisfaction from the highly honourable testimony borne by Major-General the Earl of Cavan to the services of Major-General Baird, and of the troops from the
Gold and Silver Medals of the establishment of India lately employed in Egypt. Under a grateful impression of the important aid derived to the common cause of our country by the able and successful conduct of the expedition from India to Egypt, His Excellency is pleased to order that Honorary Medals be conferred on all the native non-commissioned officers, troops and Sepoys, Golundauze and Gun-Lascars, who have been employed on service in Egypt.”

The gold medal exhibited is \( \frac{1}{2} \) in. in diameter, and weighs \( 1.850 \) oz. including the loop. Only 16 gold medals were issued, and 2,199 silver ones. The troops were drawn partly from the Bombay Presidency, for whom silver medals were prepared to the number of 1,439 of all ranks, and also from Bengal, for whom 776 medals were struck including 16 gold. It will be noticed “that the Bombay troops received no gold medals, and some confusion seems to have arisen, and the Seringapatam medal, which is similar in size, was first prepared both for Egypt and the expedition to the Isle of France, but afterwards cancelled and a distinctive design adopted in both cases. Obverse: A sepoy holding the Union Jack in his right hand, with a camp in the background; exergue, a Persian inscription, of which Tancred gives the following translation: “This medal has been presented in commemoration of the defeat of the French armies in the kingdom of Egypt by the great bravery and ability of the victorious army of England.” Reverse: A man-of-war in full sail with an obelisk and pyramids in the background; exergue, MDCCCI. These gold medals are extremely rare and seldom met with, whilst the silver ones are often to be seen in collections.

Expedition to Rodrigues, Bourbon and the Isle of France, 1810.

On July 8, 1810, the troops under General Abercrombie attacked the island of Bourbon, which, after a slight resistance, fell into our hands. Being reinforced by troops from Bombay and the Cape, the Isle of France was assailed, and on December 3, 1810, Port St. Louis surrendered to the British Army and the Isle of France became a
British possession and reverted to its old Dutch name of Mauritius. Forty-five gold medals with loops and 2,156 silver ones were granted, which, according to Mayo and the Calcutta Mint accounts, were only issued to the Bengal troops. Obverse: A sepoy resting his left foot on a French standard; in his right hand he holds a Union Jack and in his left a musket with fixed bayonet. At his side is a cannon, and a view of shipping in the background. Reverse: A band inscribed RODRIGUES, VI JULY MDCCCX; BOURBON, VIII JULY AND ISLE OF FRANCE, III DEC. MDCCCX. In the centre a Persian inscription within a laurel wreath, of which Tancred gives the following translation: “This Medal was conferred in commemoration of the bravery and accustomed fidelity exhibited by the Sepoys of the English company in the capture of the Mauritius Islands, in the year of the Hegira 1225.” The dies were prepared by the Calcutta Mint, and are still preserved by them.