Life of Vice-Admiral Sir George Tryon

Fitzgerald Charles Cooper
LIFE

OF

VICE-ADMIRAL SIR GEORGE TRYON, K.C.B.
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LIFE

of

VICE-ADMIRAL

SIR GEORGE TRYON, K.C.B.

by

REAR-ADMIRAL

C. C. PENROSE FITZGERALD

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
MDCCXCXVII
When I undertook to write the life of Sir George Tryon I felt that I was undertaking a heavy responsibility; but I had such a high admiration for the man himself,—for his great abilities, his untiring industry, his absolute devotion to the service, and to all that concerned its honour and welfare, and for the splendid example he set by his kindly, judicious, but firm method of rule,—that I hoped to be able to give my readers a fair idea of his manly self-reliant character, and of his interesting and—up to the last day of his life—eminently successful career.

I have had great difficulty in procuring suitable materials for writing this book. One reason for this is no doubt attributable to the fact that the bulk of Sir George Tryon’s records and journals went down with him in the Victoria.

Many friends, both naval and civilian, have
been most kind, and anxious to help me, but have been unable to do so from lack of materials, or other reasons; or have only been able to furnish me with the naked facts contained in a log-book or journal; and my imagination has unfortunately not been sufficiently fertile to enable me to clothe these records with interest enough to justify me in presenting them to the reader.

The following, however, have given me most hearty and most valuable assistance, and to them my warmest thanks are due.

First, I must thank Lady Tryon for placing all the family records at my disposal; for the very useful information she has given me on various points; and for the warm interest she has taken in the work.

Next, I desire to thank Sir Samuel Griffith, now Chief-Justice of Queensland, but Prime Minister of that colony at the time that Sir George Tryon was in command of the Australian station, and closely associated with him all through the negotiations which led up to the establishment of the auxiliary Australian squadron. The two were close and firm friends, and it will be seen how thoroughly Tryon appreciated, and how warmly he acknowledged, the zeal and perseverance with which Sir Samuel worked in this matter. A whole volume
might have been written upon this subject alone, and I have the materials at my disposal for doing so; but I felt that it would not be right to devote undue space to any one period of Sir George Tryon's life, however interesting it might be to a certain section of my readers. I have therefore refrained. But at the same time that I offer to Sir Samuel Griffith my most sincere thanks for all the trouble he has taken in answering my appeals to him for assistance, I must also tender him my apologies for having cut short this most interesting chapter.

To Mr R. G. Hayes of the Admiralty my warmest thanks are due for his most valuable assistance. His was the dry and laborious task of hunting up piles of Admiralty records, and fixing dates, and without his assistance I should have had no foundation to build on.

My brother officers who have helped me are too numerous to mention: most of their names appear in the text, and it would only be waste of space to recapitulate them here. I must, however, make two exceptions in favour of Mr C. J. Pawsey, Sir George Tryon's secretary, and Commander H. G. King Hall, D.S.O., who have given me most valuable and willing assistance. If I have forgotten any one else, I beg to offer them my
sincere apology in advance. The slight is not intentional.

My readers will doubtless understand the great difficulty of dealing with the closing scenes of Sir George Tryon's life, so soon after the tragedy which ended it, and whilst many of those connected with the event are still living. I hope, however, that I have on the whole succeeded in showing due regard to the feelings of the living, at the same time that I have done justice—though no more than strict justice—to the memory of the dead.

C. C. P. FITZGERALD.