

ISLE OF WIGHT TIMES Thursday 15th February 1877

DEATH OF SIR AUGUSTUS CLIFFORD.

Everyone here learnt, with the deepest possible regret, of the death of Admiral Sir Augustus CLIFFORD, Bart., the venerable Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, who died at his official residence, the House of Lords, on Thursday night. He had proceeded to London in the hope of officiating at another opening of Parliament, but was unwell when he started, and, though he made the journey all right, soon became worse, and no medical skill could avert the fast approaching end. Sir Augustus was beloved by everybody who had the pleasure and honour of his acquaintance. He was overflowing with good nature – his charming grounds were frequently thrown open to the public, and his purse was continually drawn upon to aid all good and needy objects. In very many ways Sir Augustus will be missed, and all will regret that such a fine specimen of an English gentleman has not been even longer spared to us.

The late Sir Augustus CLIFFORD was born in May, 1788. At an early age he went to Harrow school. Among the boys senior to him were the Earl of ABERDEEN, Lord PALMERSTON, and the late Lord BOONBOROUGH, afterwards Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. He was placed in the same form with the late Marquis of HADFORD, the late Earl LONSDALE, and the Mr. Magnell SEYMOUR. He was the last survivor of all the above-mentioned. At Harrow he became fag to Lord PALMERSTON (then Henry TEMPLE), whom he always described as the most kind-hearted boy at school and the friendly tie formed between them continued till the day of Lord PALMERSTON'S death. In those days the greatest enthusiasm – fanned by NELSON'S splendid victory of the Nile – prevailed in England in favour of Naval Service and Mr. CLIFFORD left Harrow in 1800 to be entered as midshipman in the flagship of the Earl ST. VINCENT – the Ville de Paris – the ship that had formerly been the flag of the French Admiral, the Comte de GRASSE and had been captured in Lord RODNEY'S action. Lord ST. VINCENT'S fleet was then occupied in blockading the French fleet in Brest Harbour. When westerly gales blew in the Channel the British fleet had to run into Tor-Bay for shelter. The town of Torquay did not then exist. Sir Augustus often said that in those days only two houses there stood – one Tor Abbey and the other a publichouse frequented by the sailors of the fleet. At the peace of Amiens there was a temporary cessation of the war. Mr. CLIFFORD sailed to the West Indies in the Argo, Capt. HALLOWELL, with whom he served many years in the Argo and the Tigre, both in the capacity of midshipman and lieutenant. Capt. HALLOWELL (afterwards Sir Benjamin HALLOWELL CAREW) was a characteristic specimen of the British Naval officer. Devoted to his profession, kind and gentle in disposition, he maintained with a simplicity of manner a certain touch of old-fashioned politeness found in men reared in the school of Lord COLLINGWOOD. HALLOWELL was the captain who, the morning after the battle of the Nile, presented to Lord NELSON a coffin made out of the mainmast of the Orient, destroyed by fire in the engagement. Lord NELSON accepted the gift, which he always kept in his cabin afloat, and now sleeps within the same under the dome of St. Paul's. Sir Augustus CLIFFORD always preserved the greatest affection for his old commander, HALLOWELL, till the time of his decease. His picture now hangs at Westfield. On the renewal of the war, our fleet in the West Indies captured St. Lucie, but HALLOWELL soon returned home, and in the Tigre joined Lord Nelson's fleet. Mr. CLIFFORD dined with Lord NELSON on board the Victory a short time before the battle of Trafalgar. The Tigre was not in the action, having been despatched by Lord NELSON the week previous, with one or two other ships, on some special service on the coast of Barbary, to the great mortification of the captain and all her crew. Sir Augustus always said of Lord NELSON that he had a magic art of communicating his own enthusiasm to every officer, man, and boy in the fleet. After this crowning victory the English fleet was chiefly engaged in blockading the French within the harbour of Toulon, which they may be said to have watched as a cat watches a mouse. For months even years, in all weather, the English cruised off the port, and observed the French ships moored within the batteries. Provisions sometimes ran very short in the English fleet, but they never relaxed their hold and not a French vessel ever left the harbour: thus the command of the Mediterranean was secured. After Sir John DUCKWORTH'S abortive passage of the Dardanelles, the Tigre was sent to the coast of Egypt. Mr. CLIFFORD nearly lost his life in what he described as a very foolish expedition – a night attack, made in boats, on Rosetta, up the Nile. The object was to obtain a place for supply of provisions. Troops were landed, but repulsed, and the boats were fired into: some were sunk, and a great many English killed and wounded. He was present at a far more

successful enterprise at the bay of Roses, on the coast of Spain, where the English attacked, cut out, burnt, and destroyed a portion of the French fleet engaged in operations of the Peninsular war. This action had an important effect on the campaign. Mr. CLIFFORD, after this, was promoted to the rank of Commander, and was appointed to the command of the brig Aphalus. In the Aphalus he had the great good fortune to chase, drive into port, and then capture a considerable number of French ships with their armed escort. For this he received the Companionship of the Order of the Bath. He afterwards cruised under the orders of Sir Charles NAPIER, and continued success having made them venturesome, the two ships attacked some strong batteries on shore, and received a severe mauling. Captain CLIFFORD was promoted to the rank of Post Captain in 1812: and in 1814 married Elizabeth, daughter of Lord John TOWNSHEND, who was a strong Whig, a wit, one of the authors of the *Rollia*, and had been a member of the short-lived Administration, nicknamed *All the Talents*. Whatever may be the opinion entertained of Mr. FOX as a statesman, there can be no doubt of the warm attachment which he inspired in all his associates. Lord John TOWNSHEND left as his epitaph the only thing he wished to be recorded after his death, that for thirty years he had been the intimate friend of Charles FOX. Captain CLIFFORD afterwards served on board the *Bonne Citzeanne*, the *Euryalus* frigate, went in the *Herald* to St. Petersburg, where he was invited to attend the coronation of the Emperor NICHOLAS, at Moscow, and the *Undaunted* frigate, which had taken the Emperor NAPOLEON to Elba, and in which he now convoyed Lord W. BENTINEK as Governor General to India. This was his last command. Many distinguished officers served under him in these ships. Among them may be named the late Sir. Thomas HASTINGS, Admiral H. EDNE, Admiral Sir Rodney MUNDAY, Earl DALHOUSSE, and Sir Thomas PAISLEY. William the Fourth knighted Captain CLIFFORD in 1828, and the Queen conferred a Baronetage on him at her coronation in 1838. He sat for Parliament some time for Dungarvon, and was member for Boudam on the Liberal interest during the debates on the Reform Bill, till, in 1832, he vacated his seat by acceptance of the appointment of the Usher of the Black Rod, when the late Duke of DEVONSHIRE was Chamberlain, which office he held till his death. In 1843 Sir Augustus CLIFFORD bought Westfield, a place which he had known well in his early days when in the occupation of Lord and Lady SPENCER, who had been his friends and shown him much kindness in his youth. He retained to the last his strong regard for this place. Almost the last of contemporaries of a former generation, Sir Augustus has died at an advanced age, beloved by all his surviving family and esteemed by all his friends. It is not too much to say he never had an enemy. A short time before his death he said to one of his sons that he had lived a long life and a happy one, and that he was grateful for the same, and content.

THE FUNERAL

Took place on Tuesday afternoon, the body having been brought to the family residence, "Westfield," on Saturday evening. It was now removed in a hearse drawn by four horses, followed by the Misses CLIFFORD, Charles C. CLIFFORD, Esq., M.P. Admiral CLIFFORD, C.G., Col. CLIFFORD (Yeoman Usher of the Black Rod), Mr. WILKS, M.B., and the household in mourning coaches. Next came several carriages of local gentry: there were those of Mrs. Admiral DICKSON, Sir Collingwood DICKSON, Miss BRIGSTOCKE, Sir John LEES, Mr. G. YOUNG, Mr. Le MARCHANT, Thomas Le MARCHANT, Mr. C. BRETT: and then came one from Osborne, Col. GARDINER therein, representing Her Majesty the Queen. The Official Court News is that Her Majesty desired Colonel L. GARDINER to attend the funeral, as a mark of respect to the memory of so old and faithful a servant of the Crown. The funeral cortege arrived at the parish church (All Saints) at four o'clock and as the coffin was brought in at the western door the Vicar (Rev. A POOLE, M.A.) commenced reading the service and, the choristers leading the way, the mourners and friends proceeded to the chancel end of the church, where the service was continued, it being a choral one. The body was met at the door of the church by several of the County and Borough Magistracy, and a large following of the trade of the town. The service was impressively performed. The hymn "When our heads are bowed with woe" having been beautifully sung, a move was made for the Cemetery, the Dead March, in Saul being given in fine style by the organist, Mr. F.H. SIMMS, as the mourners left the church. Despite wet weather, there was a very large attendance both at the Church and Cemetery. Though the Corporation did not formally follow, the bulk of the members were present, and we also notice Sir Collingwood DICKSON, Bart, Sir John LEES, Rear-Admiral KATON, Major LEEDS, &c., &c. Many tradesmen were present as we have said, but we may add that nearly all particularly closed their establishments during the whole day, as a mark of the great respect they had for one so deservedly

esteemed. The service at the grave was also performed by the Vicar, but the Rev. A.J. WADE, vicar of Holy Trinity, was with him throughout. The grave had been enclosed round in order that there might not be an inconvenient crush. The falling rain did not prevent the grey-haired sons of the deceased baring their heads during the solemn ceremony, and it was affecting to see one of the daughters kneel on the wet ground by the grave side evidently in silent prayer, and to note the keenness with which the loss was felt by all. – The out coffin (enclosing two others, of elm and lead) was English oak in the Medieval style, with handsome brass mountings, and bore the following inscription: “Admiral Sir Augustus Williams James CLIFFORD, Bart., C.B., died Feb. 8th, 1877, aged 89 years” – on a brass plate, illuminated in blue and red letters. The coffin was covered with a violet pall with white fringe, and crosses and wreaths of violets, lilies, &c., were placed thereon when the pall was removed.

The funeral was conducted in a most efficient manner by Messrs. R. MARVIN and Sons of Union Street, Ryde. – Councillor ELLERY was in charge at the grave.

Researched & typed by
Ann Barrett
Val Minns