

CAPT. SIR ANDREW SNAPE DOUGLAS.

COLONEL OF MARINES.

Sir Andrew Snape Douglas, who was born on the 8th of August, 1761, was the son of a Scotch gentleman, that had married Sir Andrew Hamond's eldest sister, and who died at Edinburgh in the year 1770- At the time of his father's decease, and when young Douglas was only ten years old : having shewn an inclination for the sea-service, his mother sent him up to his uncle in London, after having received some slight education at a school in Edinburgh. Captain A. Hamond had just been appointed to the *Arethusa* frigate, of thirty-two guns, in which his nephew sailed with him for the coast of North America : and, it being a time of peace, his active commander and relation took the opportunity of making his officers well acquainted with the coast and harbours of that country. In 1773, the *Arethusa* returned to England, and was paid off; but Douglas was sent by his uncle to the West Indies, with the late Lord Gardner, in a twenty-eight gun frigate, and continued on that station until the American war broke out in 1775. He then rejoined his uncle, who had the command of the *Roebuck* at Virginia, a new ship of forty-four guns, and built on a new plan. In-December 1775, the *Roebuck* arrived at Halifax, and, in this ship, whilst on most active and perilous service, Mr. Douglas went through all the gradations of midshipman, third, second, and first lieutenant; until at the siege of Charlestown, Admiral Arbuthnot being commander-in-chief, with his flag on board the *Roebuck*, Lieutenant Douglas was advanced by him master and commander into the *Germain*. Captain Douglas shall now speak for himself.

" I was," says he in a letter to his uncle, " made a master and commander on the 15th of February, 1780, and appointed to the command of the *Germain* : but instead of joining her, I commanded the *Sandwich*, floating battery, at the siege of Charlestown. At the surrender of which I was made a post captain into the *Providence*, American frigate, of thirty-two guns. On the 1.5th of May, 1780, my uncle, Sir Andrew Hamond, captain of the *Roebuck*, being ordered to England, with the admiral's dispatches, and other public business, I was directed to take the command of the *Roebuck* during his absence: and I was succeeded in the *Providence* by Captain Henry. Through the kindness of my uncle, a confirmation was sent to me from the Admiralty, as captain of the *Roebuck*, in which ship I remained until July, 1781; having, during that time, been very actively employed, and having taken two frigates, vis. the *Confederacy*, of thirty-six guns, and the *Protector* of twenty-eight, besides several privateers.

" In July, 1783, the *Roebuck* being ordered to England, I was appointed captain of the *Chatham*, of fifty-four guns; in the command of which ship I continued, during the war, upoji the coast of North America. During the first part of the time, about three months, I was employed, from my knowledge of the coast, as conductor of the fleet under Admiral Graves, in a cruise to the Iky of Boston, which was ;it that time the rendezvous of the French fleet ; and during the latter part of the same period, about two years, I was commander of a squadron of frigates, and senior officer upon the northern coast of North America ; having taken or destroyed in the last twen- . ty months fifty sail of vessels from the enemy, one French frigate, of thirty-six guns, the *Magicienne*, and several stout privateers. Some circumstances, which existed at the time, made this capture of the *Magicienne*, of great consequence : for her commander was also commodore upon the same station, and had appointed his squadron, a fifty gun ship, and three frigates, to meet him, on the morning upon which I took him,

exactly on the spot where I first engaged his ship : he had steered directly for the harbour of Boston, where the French squadron then lay, and they were actually under way, coming out with their headmost, the *Astrea*, of forty guns, commanded by Mons. De la Perouse, not more than three or four miles off, when the *Magicienne* struck. Having sent all my ships upon different services, I was alone. The intention of the commander of the *Magicienne*, in ordering his ships to join him off Cape Ann was, to have attempted the destruction of our mast ships, in the river of St. John's, Bay of Fundy : this capture was, therefore, of the more consequence, as it defeated such an intention in the enemy.

" When the war ended, I went on half-pay, and continued so from that period until August, 1756. Having, during that interval, studied naval architecture at Chatham dock-yard ; and made a tour of observation on the continent, when I embraced the opportunity of rendering myself acquainted with both the French and Italian languages. On my return to England, I was immediately appointed commander of the Southampton frigate, of thirty-two guns, and was sent to the Mediterranean, where I continued until the year 1787; and was then ordered home, with an account of the state of the French and Spanish fleets ; England having thought it necessary to arm, in consequence of some disturbance in Holland. At the end of the Dutch armament, I returned to the Mediterranean, where I continued some time; and afterwards commanded my ship, the Southampton, in the channel of England, nominally stationed between the South Foreland and Dunnose ; but I had private leave to visit Cherbourg, and the ports of France in the Channel.

" During the latter part of my continuance on this station, I was ordered to put myself under the king's directions at Weymouth; when his Majesty, with the royal family, sailed in the Southampton : the first time the king had ever been under way in one of his men of war; and he was pleased to repeat it afterwards between thirty and forty times. When the royal family went to Plymouth by land, I carried the first lord of the Admiralty there, Lord Chatham, in the Southampton. - The royal family, with the king and board of Admiralty, came on board the Southampton in Plymouth Sound, and proceeded to sea to review a squadron of line of battle ships, under the command of Commodore Goodall. The Southampton carried the Standard at the main, the Admiralty flag at the fore, and the Union at the mizentop-mast head. The royal family then returned to Weymouth by land, but Lord Chatham accompanied me thither by sea in the Southampton. After this service, the king was pleased to confer upon me the honour of knighthood : and when the royal family left Weymouth, I was ordered to Portsmouth.

" The Southampton was now paid off. I had commanded her three years and a quarter, and the next day I was appointed to the *Goliah*, of seventy-four guns, in which ship I continued six months ; when she was found defective, and I was removed from her, with my officers and ship's company, into the *Alcide* of seventy-four guns* upon the armament then fitted out to check the insolence of Spain, in May, 1790. On that occasion, I sailed as one of a fleet consisting of thirty-one sail of the line, under the command of the Earl Howe, who did me the honour of appointing me to lead the centre division or column of the fleet. We continued a month at sea; and upon our return, the object of the armament having been adjusted without coming to blows, I was put under the command of Lord Hood, who was at the head of a large fleet then intended to act against the Empress of Russia. But at length that design was relinquished, and the *Alcide*, with other ships, were ordered into Portsmouth harbour, where I continued the command of her, until the latter part of the year 1792, at which time she was paid off. I had commanded her and the *Goliah* for three years.

" Afterwards, that is on the breaking out of the present war, in 1793, I was appointed to the Phaeton, of thirty-eight guns, which was the first ship sent out to cruise for the destruction of the enemy, and the protection of our commerce; for which service the merchants of London presented me with a piece of plate. While I commanded the Phaeton, a fortunate accident enabled me to take the French privateer General Dumourier, and a Spanish galleon, the St. Jago, which she had captured.*

* The following letters from Sir A. S. Douglas, to his uncle Sir A. Hamond, particularly illustrate this part of the above narrative.

TO SIR ANDREW HAMOND, BART.

On leaving him the Charge of my Wife and Children, tehen I sailed in the Phaeton for the Mediterranean. Dated February 12, 1793.

" The uncertainty of human affairs induces me to leave this with my dear friend, that he may be assured of my gratitude to the last, for his fatherly attention to me. Words are insufficient to express all I wish to say to him upon this occasion. My heart feels the tenderest affection towards him. If the chance of war should prevent me from returning, I commend to his care a dear and most beloved wife, and my infant family : and at this moment it is a source of infinite consolation to me to reflect, that I have so sincere a friend whose protection they will be sure of.

" Adieu, thou best of friends. Heaven guard you, Lady Hamond, and your children.....Your affectionate and most grateful
f-.J nephew."

" I continued upon that and other services, until Lord Howe proceeded to sea with the Channel fleet. This happened just at the time I had returned from Lisbon, with a small frigate of the enemy, La Prompte, of twenty-eight guns, and a privateer, which I had taken; and I was then attached to the western fleet by the Admiralty. Lord Howe gave me a distinguishing pendant, and the command of all the frigates of the fleet, formed into a separate squadron. This was the first appointment of the kind that had ever taken place; and as such I considered it as a very honourable one, although it was very fatiguing : for it might in some measure, be considered in the same light as the flank corps of an army. I continued to serve in that situation, sometimes cruising separately, but in general with the fleet, until the captain of the Queen Charlotte, Lord Howe's ship, quitted the command of her, and went to be a commissioner of the Transport Board; when Lord Howe applied for me to be appointed to succeed him. - I was accordingly nominated captain of the Queen Charlotte, on the 8th day of April, 1794. FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME. On taking the Spanish galleon. Dated Phaeton April 15, 1793.

41 deg. 43 min. JV. lot. 25 deg. W. " My Dearest Uncle,

<c Yesterday our squadron gave chase to two sail in the' north, west, I came up with a large Spanish galleon under French colours : dropped a boat on board of her as I passed, leaving her to be taken possession of by Molloy, and stood on in chase of the headmost, which I took two hours afterwards, a French privateer captured, the General Duinourier, of twenty-two guns, six pounders, one hundred and ninety-six men ; having on board six hundred and eighty cases of silver, each case containing three thousand dollars. The galleon is from Lima, she had been taken by the French eleven days before. The two prizes are of immense value, exceeding Commodore Anson's. We have had a meeting in the admiral's cabin, and we consider ourselves fully entitled to all and every thing found on board the General Dumonrier ; but we imagine we shall only receive the salvage of the galleon, I think it is one half. The admiral sends the Flag in, with the prizes. If this money had got to France, how it would have operated in their favour! The money in the privateer, weighs fifty-five

tons : w« have put it all into the Edgar. You may easily imagine, as success has a very sensible effect upon the human mind, how much we are elated at this stroke of fortune, and I feel much gratified at having been the principal feature in the picture : Phaeton sails remarkably well Ever believe me, my dear uncle, your most grateful and affectionate nephew."

" In that situation, as captain of the Queen Charlotte, I have remained ever since, with the good fortune of having commanded her in three engagements with the enemy's fleet, viz. on the memorable 29th of May, and 1st of June, 1794, under the union flag worn by the Earl Howe. And again, on the 23d of June, 1795, when she was a private ship, commanded by myself, under the flag of Lord Bridport, off L'Orient. I trust I may say, I had it in my power to render my country some service upon those occasions, without incurring the imputation of arrogating to myself what I have no right to.

" I forgot to mention my having gone over to France a second time, as you may remember I did by your advice, just before I was appointed to the command of the Southampton, for the purpose of visiting the different ports in the channel upon the French coast, in order to form some judgment of the practicability of the French being able to invade this country suddenly, by their large fishing boats and coasters, without giving us the alarm of a preparation. I did so, and freely confess, that I had hopes of sometime or other rendering my visit useful to the public.

" I remember, my dear uncle, your desiring me some time ago, to put down in writing the principal occurrences of my life for your perusal: which I have now done, in the hope, that, as I owe every thing to your fatherly kindness, and continued affection towards me, it may enable you at least to imagine that my life has not been badly spent; and that I have done all in my power, by pursuing a steady course, with unremitting attention to my duty, to second those

VOL. VII. H

kind endeavours on your part for my welfare. I do not mean to say, that there are not many parts of my public life, which might be altered for the better if it were to come over again ; but I have, at the same time, the invaluable consolation of reflecting, that every determination I have taken, in the journey I have now related to you, has been governed by honour and by honesty, and according to the best of my judgment upon the circumstances existing at the moment. I never have for one moment lost sight of the good of the king's service and the welfare of my country. I have been nearly twenty-seven years in his Majesty's service, upwards of twenty-four years in actual employ, and nearly seventeen years of that time a post captain.

" You may put this by amongst your papers, and it may fall into the hands of your, or my children, when we may be no more; and as it contains the general outline of my public life, it may afford them some satisfaction. Although there is nothing brilliant in it, yet I trust there is nothing that will cause them to blush upon my account: and that, upon the whole, I shall have acquired the credit of having been a zealous officer, a steady well-meaning friend to my country, and a faithful servant of the king."

« A. S DOUGLAS."

Such was the modest letter of this great sea-officer, to his intimate friend and relation: and it remains to be added, what is far from being generally known, that the glorious victory of the 1st of June, or rather the glorious termination of the battle which commenced on the 28th of May, and did not entirely terminate until the 1st of June, was much indebted to the great and painful exertions of Captain Douglas. During the action on the 1st of June, and at a most critical moment, in that memorable contest, a

piece of grape shot forcibly struck Sir Andrew Douglas in the forehead, above the right eye. His face was covered with blood, and the pain was intense. Yet did that lamented officer, knowing the importance of the moment, order the tourniquet to be applied to what proved a mortal wound, even with a piece of the shot still remaining in it; and, in that state, holding the tourniquet on with one hand, and grasping his speaking trumpet with the other, he instantly returned to the quarter-deck; where a gloominess and even a despair prevailed, which his activity and unparalleled exertions soon dissipated. Lord Howe, with his usual liberality, afterwards declared, that Sir A. Douglas was a prodigy; and that his admiral could never, as commander-in-chief, say enough of Sir Andrew's services during that action.

If the services of Sir A. S. Douglas had been great, whilst he continued in Lord Howe's fleet during the year 1794, they were equally pre-eminent, in the memorable action which Lord Bridport had with the French fleet on the 23d of June, 1795. During the whole night that preceded the morning of the 23d of June, Sir A. S. Douglas never left the deck; thus taking immediate advantage of every flaw of wind, and by his presence imparting additional promptness and energy to his judicious orders.

"By watching every breath of wind," adds one of his officers, "that blew from the heavens, and trimming incessantly to give it with the best advantage to the sails, Sir Andrew Douglas, soon after the morning broke on the 23d, had the satisfaction to find himself within two miles of the enemy's rear. Undismayed by the fire which they soon poured upon the Queen Charlotte, and the slender prospect of an essential support, he appeared willing, if necessary, to sacrifice his ship for the public benefit. She was seen to approach the enemy with a silent intrepidity, that at least deserved a pointed notice; and with even royals ami steering sails set, she dashed amidst the thickest of the enemy. Sir A. Douglas thus received the broadsides of five or six of their ships, and the

HS

stern chasers of three of them at the same time; but closing with the nearest, four of them were brought into one point, by which the effect of their guns was greatly diminished."

Sir A. Douglas, on going to the admiral's ship after the action, was received by Lord Bridport at the gangway, and thanked by him publicly for bringing the French fleet to action, and thereby retarding their design of getting into L'Orient. And these sentiments of Lord Bridport, were afterwards supported by Captain Domet, on his arrival in town, who expressed, in very strong terms, his admiral's sense of Sir A. Douglas's services, of which he assured his friends, he could not say enough.

It had long been the wish of Sir A. Douglas's friends, that as he had been captain of the Queen Charlotte, Lord Howe's flag ship, in the battle of the 1st of June, and had rendered such great and known service in Lord Bridport's action, of June 23, 1795: government would extend the rank of mere knighthood, to that of a baronet. . A reference to the list of baronets, will shew some names that were created at that time, whose claims were certainly not superior to that of an eminent naval officer, already knighted by his Sovereign, and standing deservedly high in his Majesty's opinion. The tide did not, however, lead on to this distinction; and although Lord Spencer, as first lord of the Admiralty, declared himself to be of that opinion; he thus concluded the letter, which he felt it to be his duty to write on this subject to the comptroller of the navy: "I shall say no more about it at present, except repeating, that I have so high an opinion of your nephew's merit, that whenever an opportunity offers, when I can with propriety press for any thing in his favour, it will give me a great deal of pleasure to

contribute towards the gratification of any wish he may have formed of distinction or advancement."

The followings the answer which this officer wrote in consequence to Sir A. Hamond, dated Portsmouth, June 14th, 1796.

" My Dear Uncle,

" I must begin my letter, by thanking you most sincerely for your kind conduct towards me, just as much as if you had succeeded, by inducing Lord Spencer to confer upon me the distinction of a baronet ; and the sensation I feel for your having done so is indescribably grateful to my mind. I have said so much already, upon the subject of my pretensions, that I will say no more of that kind, but have done with it for ever: feeling, however, perfectly satisfied in my own mind, that what I have looked for, and what you had the kindness to ask for me, could not have been considered as a prostitution ('tis a word of iny own) of the favours of government. And I am also certain, I could convince the whole world, by an explanation, that I have been treated extremely ill by all those people, who pretended to be my friends. Now then I have done, and never again will mention the subject. Assuring you that I have too much of the spirit of a man, to let it affect me for a moment; on the contrary, I shall really go to sea in better spirits ; as I am more perfectly convinced, that true happiness is only to be derived from the state of one's own mind. I could add a great deal more, but to say the truth, I am in much pain, and it is taking up your time. There is a promise that you must make me, in the first place, as the greatest favour you can possibly confer—never to mention this subject again to Lord Spencer, nor to suffer yourself to be drawn into conversation upon it ; I beg this particularly: And, in, the next place, that you will not in the slightest manner allow it to interfere with the good understanding and harmony that ought to subsist between you both, and which, for your own comfort, I trust and hope you will not fail to cultivate ; for I cannot bear the idea of your feeling all that you have done, for some time past. You will naturally give your opinion upon the public service, as you always have ilone, like an honest man: if your advice is not followed, you should not for that make yourself uneasy, and if it is not asked, you have the less to answer for. A truce for the future with honours and distinctions. And now let me tell you, what you will be sorry to hear. I have been extremely ill ; all apprehension, however, is removed, and I am now getting better very fast: the pain will leave me today, and then I shall be as well as ever. Our love and affection to you and yours. Keep your mind at ease, and continue to go right forward."

Notwithstanding the energy and vigour of this great seaman's mind, he was at that time suffering the most acute and increasing pain in his head, from the wound he had received on the 1st of June, 1794; and his days in consequence of it began to draw towards a close. The effects of this wound long baffled the experience and solicitude of the medical men who attended him ; and like all complaints, whose latent cause cannot be discovered by the imperfect ken of human penetration, the general term of nervous had too hastily been given to the mortal effects, which the severe contusion had produced. Yet neither himself, nor any of his friends, imagined for a long time any immediate danger. " Let me assure you," said he, in writin'g from Widley to Lady llamond, " let me assure you, upon my faith, that there is not the smallest occasion to be under any apprehension about my speedy and most perfect recovery; and I do not speak in the least more favourably than I ought to do. My constitution has undergone, as it appears to me, a perfect revolution, and I have not the smallest doubt of enjoying better health than I have ever done. For God's sake take care of my \mcle—I hope in a very few days to report myself-fit for service. I am as retired here as a hermit, and in

all respects am very comfortably situated.—P. S. To say the truth, I had not an idea that I was so far down the hill, as I found to be the case when I came on shore: but then you are to recollect, that I had been very ill three weeks before that, and perhaps the crisis of the disorder happened at St. Helen's."

With these delusive ideas of the state of his health, this resolute and zealous servant of his king and country, was induced to return to the command of his old ship, the Queen Charlotte; which at the close of the year appears to have been attached to the flag of Admiral Thompson.

On the 20th of January, in the ensuing year 1797, Mr. White, surgeon of the Royal William at Spithead, reported the declining state of Sir Andrew Douglas's health to his uncle, and recommended change of scene; with every caution to be observed, to avoid any thing that might agitate a mind too susceptible of slight impressions, and a constitution already in much too irritable a state. He, in consequence of this, was removed to a villa of Sir Andrew Hamond's at Fulham. Where, after the severest sufferings which he bore with all the fortitude and resignation of a Christian, he expired on the 4th day of June, 1797. Having just outlived the third anniversary of a proud day for his country.