

## MISCELLANIA

Sesqui-Centenary of New South Wales ; Admiral Phillip's service with the Portuguese Navy.

On investigation, the story of Admiral Phillip's connection with Portugal is disappointing, for of the four years which the founder and first Governour-General of New South Wales served in the Portuguese Navy, three years and a half were spent at sea.

In August 1774, Arthur Phillip applied to the British Admiralty for permission to enter the service of Portugal (then at war with Spain). He was 40 years of age, and a naval lieutenant on the Retired List, but was evidently weary of a peaceful life. His petition was favourably received by the Admiralty, and Rear-Admiral Augustus John Hervey recommended him to Luiz Pinto de Sousa, the Portuguese Minister in London who, in turn, communicated with the Portuguese Minister for Marine and Colonies in Lisbon (Martinho de Mello e Castro). After some further correspondence Phillip sailed for Lisbon where he arrived at the end of 1774. The Royal Warrant appointing him a Post-Captain (Capitão de Mar e Guerra) was signed by Dom João VI in January 1775, at Salvaterra, whither Phillip went, upon obtaining the necessary permission from the Marquis of Pombal, to receive his orders.

It would be interesting to know something of Phillip's life in Lisbon from the time he landed, probably in November, 1774, until he went to Salvaterra, but no information has come

to light. The authors of the book «Admiral Phillip» (published in 1896) say :

«Phillip, during his services aboard appears not to have troubled himself with private correspondence.»

He was married, but if he wrote to his wife — as is probable — the letters have never been published.

On February 9th 1775, Phillip sailed from Lisbon as Second in Command of the Frigate «Nossa Senhora de Belém». This vessel was one of a small fleet commanded by another British officer — Captain Robert MacDonnell — which was sent to Brazil to defend the Portuguese possessions there against the Spaniards.

In a list of the officers serving in this fleet, dated November 1776, the Marquis do Lavradio, Viceroy of Brazil, gave the following information regarding Arthur Phillip :

«This officer is intelligent and active, and shows that he has been reared as a soldier; he is a little headstrong but can easily be brought to reason.»

In another report from the Viceroy, dated June 1777, regarding an encounter of the Portuguese fleet with two Spanish vessels off Santa Catarina, we read :

«Captain Arthur Phillip came up with his frigate (the «N.ª S.ª do Pilar») and was allowed by the enemy to get closer, because they thought this vessel was their own, as they were unable to convince themselves that a vessel so small and so weak in artillery would venture to attack a 70-gun ship. It was only when Captain Phillip poured a broadside into them that they became aware that it was a frigate of ours.»

Phillip was placed in charge of the captured vessel, the «S. Agostiño».

In October of the same year the Viceroy sent the following report :

«This officer (Phillip) is most honourable and meritorious  
 «When at the Colony<sup>1</sup> he with only his own frigate made the  
 «Spaniards respect that fortress as they ought to. When the  
 «fleet sailed from St. Catherine's upon receiving news of the  
 «Spanish fleet he made every effort to induce the Chief<sup>2</sup> to attack  
 «the enemy, and finding that he did not do so he wrote a private  
 «letter to him imploring him, for the sake of his own honour  
 «and that of the Nation, not to refrain from attacking them  
 «..... His health is very delicate, but he never complains  
 «except when he has nothing special to do for the Royal service.»

In May 1778 the Viceroy wrote a letter to Martinho de Mello e Castro, which is mainly about Phillip. It is too long to be reproduced here, so only the most important part need be quoted :

«... He is an officer of education and principle ; he gives  
 «way to reason, and does not, before doing so, fall into those  
 «exaggerated and unbearable excesses of temper which the major-  
 «ity of his fellow-countrymen do, more especially those who have  
 «been brought up at sea. He is very clean-handed ; is an officer  
 «of great truth, and very brave ; and is no flatterer, saying  
 «what he thinks, but without temper or want of respect.»

On October 1st 1777, the Preliminaries for a Treaty of Peace with Spain were signed at S. Ildefonso, and MacDonnell received orders to return with the fleet under his command, to Lisbon, where he arrived in August 1778. In the same year, the outbreak of war between Gt. Britain and France obliged Arthur Phillip to relinquish his commission, and return to England.

(to be continued)

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<sup>1</sup> Sacramento.

<sup>2</sup> Capt. Robert MacDonnell.

(Extracted by Mrs. M. N. B. Baptista, née Becke, from «Admiral Phillip» by Louis Becke & Walter Jeffrey, 1896.)