

A BRIEF MEMOIR OF  
ADMIRAL SIR EDWARD WHITAKER, KNT.

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HAD I been aware of the intention of my friend Mr. Milbourn, to publish in the Collections of the Surrey Archæological Society his valuable "Notes on the Parish and Church of Carshalton," I should gladly have placed in his hands such materials as I possess, that he might have included a notice of Sir Edward Whitaker, perhaps the most distinguished person connected with the place.

That he was not able even to mention the gallant officer is not surprising, as I learned from him, on subsequent enquiry, that Sir Edward Whitaker's gravestone, a plain flat slab, in the churchyard, which simply recorded the date of his death, was removed, owing to the enlargement of the church, and no longer exists; even had it been extant, or the name found in the register, yet, without some previous knowledge, the identity of the person might have been doubtful.

At Mr. Milbourn's suggestion, I have, therefore compiled, as a supplement to his historical sketch of Carshalton, a brief memoir of the distinguished Admiral, who resided there, and whose remains are there entombed. For the narrative of Admiral Whitaker's naval services, I am necessarily exclusively indebted to printed, and therefore generally accessible authorities, and mainly to Charnock's *Biographia Navalis*; but with respect to the family history, the pedigree appended has been compiled as a

work of personal research, and entirely from documentary and monumental evidence, no descent of the family, so far as I can discover, having been anywhere recorded.

After much pains, I have failed to discover the birth-place or parentage of Sir Edward Whitaker, and his scarcely less distinguished brother, Captain Samuel Whitaker. Neither of their wills affords the slightest clue to their origin by the mention of any collateral relations or otherwise. Whether by right or assumption they, however, used armorial bearings. I must be content, therefore, to commence this sketch of Sir Edward Whitaker's life from the 16th of October, 1688, when he was appointed Lieutenant of the *Swallow*, being then 28 years old. Nothing of his earlier life has been discovered. On the 28th of December following, he was promoted by Lord Dartmouth to be first Lieutenant of the *Mary*; and on the 15th of May, 1690, he was advanced to the command of the *Dover*, of 44 guns, principally employed as a cruiser in the channel. In this ship he was very active and successful, having captured, or assisted in the capture, of three large French privateers, several of the enemy's merchant ships, and rescued others, belonging to the allied powers, which had fallen into the enemy's hands.

The high reputation he had acquired for nautical skill, and by these successes, recommended him to notice, and early in 1693, he was appointed captain of the *Royal Sovereign*, the ship in which Mr. Aylmer (afterwards created Lord Aylmer) had hoisted his flag as Rear-Admiral of the Red.<sup>1</sup> Soon afterwards, he was appointed to several different ships of war in succession, one of which was the *Victory*, as captain to the renowned Sir Cloudesley Shovel, then Vice-Admiral of the Red; and

<sup>1</sup> There was at this time, or very soon after, a family connection between Captain Whitaker and Admiral Aylmer. Lady Whitaker's sister Elizabeth was married to Chester Moore, Esq., of Leigh, in Essex, and their son, Captain Chester Moore, R.N., married Elizabeth, daughter of Admiral Aylmer. Captain Chester Moore dying in 1696, his wife, being then a minor, afterwards married the distinguished Admiral Sir John Norris.

early in the reign of Queen Anne to the *Dorsetshire*, of 80 guns, as one of the squadron sent out under Sir Cloudesley to reinforce Sir George Rooke, at Vigo.

But it was at the siege and capture of Gibraltar, when in command of the same ship, as one of the seconds to Sir George Byng, that Captain Whitaker most signally distinguished himself, and I think I shall hardly incur blame if I save the reader the trouble of reference to, perhaps, a not easily accessible book, by transcribing from the pages of Charnock, Captain Whitaker's personal narrative of the siege and capture of that famous fortress, in which he took so conspicuous a part, contained in a private letter to his friend and kinsman, Admiral Sir Richard Haddock, then Comptroller of the Navy.

“On board his Majesties ship *Dorsetshire*, in  
“Gibraltar Bay, *July the 29th*, 1704.

“Sir,—I here give you an account of our good success, especially what has related to my own particular part. July 21st we anchored here in the bay, and about 4 in the afternoon landed about 2,000 marines, Dutch and all. I commanded the landing with 3 captains more, all w<sup>ch</sup> was don with little opposition. About 40 horse came downe from y<sup>e</sup> towne, w<sup>ch</sup> was all, and they run away soe soon as our guns began to play upon them. We landed about 2 miles from y<sup>e</sup> town, in y<sup>e</sup> bay, and marched directly to the foot of the hill, where they posted themselves within the muskett shott of the gates, to cut off all manner of communication with the land. We hove into y<sup>e</sup> towne this evening about 17 shells; and the Prince of Hesse landed with us, and immediately sent a summons to the governor, to w<sup>ch</sup> he did not return any answer till the next morning; and then the governor said he would defend the towne to the last. Then adm<sup>l</sup> Byng, who commanded the cannonading, began to draw up all his ships in a line before the towne, but it proving little wind, could not get in w<sup>th</sup> them all, so that we did little this day. There was three small ships in the old mold, one of which annoyed our camp by firing amongst them. One having about 10 guns, lying close to the mold, and just under a great bastion at the north corner of the towne, I proposed to Sir George the burning her in the night. He liked itt: accordingly ordered what boats I would have to my assistance: and about 12 at night I did itt effectually, w<sup>th</sup> the loss of but one man, and 5 or 6 wounded.

“*July 23.*—At 4 this morning, adm<sup>l</sup> Byng began w<sup>th</sup> his ships to cannonade, a Dutch rear-adm<sup>l</sup> and 5 or 6 ships of thairs along w<sup>th</sup> him, w<sup>ch</sup> made a noble noise, being within half shott of the town. My ship, not being upon service, I desired Sir George to make me his *aducon* to carry his commands, from tyme to tyme, to adm<sup>l</sup> Byng, which he did

accordingly; and after about 2 hours continued firing, sent me w<sup>th</sup> orders to forbear. Upon this, I went to every ship in the line with his orders: and coming on board Captain Jumper, in the Lennox, found him extraordinary well posted, and with<sup>n</sup> musket shott of y<sup>e</sup> new mold head; and had beat them all out of the battery, and off the mold; so that I believed we might attack it with our boats. I went immediately and acquainted adm<sup>l</sup> Byng w<sup>th</sup> it, who ordered all y<sup>e</sup> boats to be manned and armed. From him I went to Sir George, and gave him my opinion that the mold might be attacked. He immediately made the signal for all the boats in the fleet, and gave me y<sup>e</sup> command of y<sup>e</sup> attacke, with 3 or 4 captaines along with me. I made all the hast I could, with orders to adm<sup>l</sup> Byng to send me accordingly: but some of the boats got ashore, with little or no opposition, before I could reach them. Severall of our men got into y<sup>e</sup> castle, upon which it blew up. We had killed bet<sup>n</sup> 40 and 50 men (most of all y<sup>e</sup> boats that landed first were sunk), about 100 or two wounded; upon w<sup>ch</sup> all y<sup>t</sup> remained came running down and leaped into y<sup>e</sup> water, being so mightely surprized. I landed within a minute after y<sup>e</sup> accident, and rallied our men. We went over a breach in y<sup>e</sup> wall, but one at a time, and took possession of the hill. I immediately sent Cap<sup>t</sup> Roffy and Cap<sup>t</sup> Acton, with about 40 and 50 men, to take possession of a bastion of 8 guns, within less than half-muskett shot of the town wall, and there we pitched our colours. Soon after, adm<sup>l</sup> Byng came ashore to me, and sent a drummer w<sup>th</sup> a summons, who returned in about 2 hours w<sup>th</sup> a letter in answer, that they would surrender the next day; which they accordingly did. I believe I had w<sup>th</sup> me, at the first onset, between two and three hundred men; but we grew in a very little tyme to neare 1,000. This was the manner we took Gibraltar, w<sup>ch</sup> I hope we shall maintain. I hope, sir, you<sup>ll</sup> excuse this trouble I give; but believe that every-boddy will right att this tyme, upon this occasion. I could not forbear giving my very good friend Sir Richard, this particular acco<sup>t</sup> of y<sup>e</sup> whole matter, which I don't doubt but capt. Haddocke will give much y<sup>e</sup> same account. Pray please to favour my spouse w<sup>th</sup> a line or two, fearing mine should miscarry. My most humble service to my good lady and all y<sup>e</sup> good family. I beg you'll make use of this as sunn as you shall think fitt, it being a true account of the whole matter.

"I am,

"Your most harty, humble servant, and

"kinsman to serve,\*

"whilst

"P.S.—This is rite all in a hurry,  
sir, y<sup>t</sup> I hope you'll excuse me."

"EDWARD WHITAKER."

\* I have failed to trace the relationship between Sir Edward Whitaker and Sir Richard Haddock. I can only conjecture that it arose by marriage. Lady Haddock, Sir Richard's second wife, was daughter of Capt. John Stephens (or Stevens), and Ann, Lady Whitaker, was daughter of Thomas Stevens (or Stephens), surgeon.

Charnock remarks upon this, that "the only possible objection that can be made to the justice and truth of the foregoing account is, that no notice appears to have been taken of Captain Hicks, who certainly distinguished himself on this occasion." But it should be borne in mind that this is a private letter to a friend, hurriedly written, chiefly narrating the writer's share in the operations, and not an official dispatch. There is obviously no deliberate omission of the name of Captain Hicks, and Captain Jumper, the first who landed, one of the "three or four captains" associated with Captain Whitaker in the assault, is only just mentioned by name. All historians concur that these three officers carried the redoubt, and that Captain Whitaker was leader of the assault. Captain Samuel Whitaker, Sir Edward's brother, was in command of the *Nottingham* at the attack, in which he behaved with distinguished gallantry. Both were engaged in the desperate battle with the French fleet, off Malaga, on the 13th of August following.

Promoted to the rank of a flag officer, Sir Edward commanded, in April, 1706, a small squadron which convoyed the Duke of Marlborough to Holland. In January, 1708, he was advanced to be Rear-Admiral of the Red, and appointed to a command in the fleet, under Sir John Leake, to Lisbon and the Mediterranean, when he was detached by the Commander-in-Chief to undertake the reduction of Minorca, which he effected within ten days. He continued to conduct and accomplish many important services<sup>1</sup> in the Mediterranean, till the end of March, 1710; and soon afterwards retired on a pension of £456. 5s. *per annum*, of which, however, he is said to have been deprived on the accession of George I. on political grounds. He certainly does not style himself Admiral in his will, though this would not afford conclusive evidence that he had been deprived of his rank.

His town house was in Soho-square, his country resi-

<sup>1</sup> On one occasion, off Rosas, he captured thirty of the enemies' transports, laden with provisions, causing great distress to King Philip's army, and affording unexpected succour to the allies.

dence at Carshalton, where he lived during the summer. Dying on the 12th of November, 1735, he was buried in Carshalton churchyard, in a vault which he had caused to be constructed there for the interment of Cecil, Lady Whitaker, his second wife, in 1626. His first wife, Ann, daughter of Thomas Stevens, of Leigh, in Essex, 'chirurgion,' lies interred with her family in that church, where Sir Edward caused a large and handsome mural monument of marble to be erected to her memory, the pediment surmounted by the arms of Whitaker impaling Stevens; Sa. a fess between three mascles Arg. impaling, Arg. on a chevron Gu, between three demi-lions rampant Sa. as many cross-crosslets Or. Crest, a horse passant Sa. Sir Edward Whitaker's only son, Captain Edward Whitaker, died at Windsor in the lifetime of his father, and his remains were brought to Leigh for interment in the church; but, although a large blank space remains upon the entablature of his mother's monument, his name was not inscribed, and the parish register alone attests the fact of his interment there.

Captain Samuel Whitaker, Sir Edward's brother, also married a daughter of Mr. Thomas Stevens. At the time of his death he was flag-captain to Sir Cloudesley Shovel, and perished with that Admiral on the rocks of Scilly.

Other genealogical particulars are sufficiently set forth in the pedigree annexed. But it must be noticed that there was a contemporary family of the same name living at Carshalton. I cannot connect them, nor can I discover any grounds for assuming a relationship. One Joanna Whiteaker, as she signs her name, late of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, widow, by will dated the 8th of March, 1730, upon which administration was granted, 25th of May following, desires her "body to be buried in the parish church of 'Casholton,'" but mentions no one of her name. The supposition of any connection with this family must obviously be rejected.

Another will, however, presents a grave doubt, whether, with identity of names and synchronizing dates, the testator can be the last representative of an illus-

trious name, reduced, whether by his misfortune or his fault, to such condition as therein expressed. Edward Whitaker, of John's Coffee House, St. Martin's-lane, coffee-man, by a brief will dated the 21st of June, and proved the 23rd July, 1762, gives all he possesses to his friend Joseph Harris, he to pay creditors, and if any surplus remain, such to be given to Mary Pitt, then living with testator; concluding, "I desire to be buried in the family vault at Carshalton." I hesitate to apply this to the pedigree, in default of other evidence, though suggestive of identity.

It is not a pleasing reflection that an officer of such distinguished reputation as Admiral Sir Edward Whitaker, who has left his name in the annals of his country, should now have a nameless grave at Carshalton. All memory of him had perished, probably, in the place upon which he had conferred some honour, and the unpretending sepulchral slab was utterly disregarded. I shall be gratified if this concise reproduction of the record of his gallant and meritorious services shall revive his memory in Carshalton.

By H. W. KING.

WHITAKER=

Ann, dau. of Thomas Stevens, of Leigh, Co. Essex, Surgeon. Marr. there 27 Sept., 1692. Ob. 17 June, 1705. Aet. 33. Bur. in Leigh Ch. atd.

Sir Edward Whitaker Knt., appointed Lieut. of the *Swallow* in 1688; Commander of the *Dorey*, 15 May, 1690. Com-manded storming party at the capture of Gibraltar, 23 July, 1704. Rear-Admiral of the Blue in 1705, when he was Knighted. Rear-Admiral of the Red, 26 Jan., 1708. Comman-der-in-Chief in the Mediter-ranean, 1709-10; Will dat. 17 Feb., 1732-33; prov., 31 Dec., 1735 (P.C.C. 260 Ducie). Ob. 20 and bur. 28 Nov., 1735, at Carshalton, Co. Surrey, aet. 75, M.I.

Edward Whitaker, Esq.=  
(also styled Captain); only son and heir appt. Bapt. at Leigh atd., 25 June, 1697. Died at Windsor, 23 July, 1729. Bur. in Leigh Ch., Co. Essex.

Ann Whitaker only dau. and heir. Living and a spinster in 1739.

Cecil, dau. of . . . and widow of . . . Matthews. Marr. 26 June, 1710, at St. Benet's, Paul's Wharf, Lon-don. She then of St. Margaret's Westminster. Ob. 14th and bur. 20 Feb., 1626, at Car-shalton (Par. Reg.).

Samuel Whitaker, 2nd Lt. of the *Essex*, 1692. Promoted to the command of the *Lark*, 15 June, 1695. Capt. of the *Not-tingham* at the capture of Gib-raltar and battle off Malaga, in 1704. Flag Captain to Sir Cloudesley Shovel, then of H. M. S. *Association*, and drowned with that Admiral on the rocks of Scilly, 23 Oct., 1705. Will dated 10 Apr., 1705. Prov. 8 Dec., 1707 (P.C.C. 305 Poley).

Samuel Whitaker, Esq. (also = styled Captain). Bapt. at Leigh, Co. Essex, 5 Nov., 1697. Will dat. 16 Nov., 1739, (he then of Soho-sq., London), and proved 13 Nov., 1640, and 6 Feb., 1740-1 (P.C.C. 311 Browne). Bur. at Car-shalton atd., 11 Nov., 1740.

Edward Whitaker, only son and heir, not 21 in 1739.

Mary, dau. of Thomas Stevens, of Leigh, Co. Essex, Surgeon, and sister to Ann, Lady Whitaker. Ob. 28 Apr., 1698, aet. 22. Bur. in Leigh Ch. atd., M.I.

Mary, Exe. to her uncle, Sir Edward Whitaker, in 1735, she then a spinster. Marr. in Oct., 1736, to Peter St. Eloy, a Proctor in Doctors' Commons. Died before 26 July, 1738.

Wife dead before 1739.