

SIR ALFRED RYDER, K.C.B.

(From a Photogragh by Messrs. Symonds, Portsmouth.)

Admiral of the Fleet Sir Alfred Phillipps Ryder, K.C.B., seventh son of a former Bishop of Lichfield was born in 1820, and entered the Royal Navy as Cadet in 1833, he was promoted to Mate in 1839, Lieutenant 1841, Commander 1846, Post-Captain 1848, Rear-Admiral 1866, Vice-Admiral 1872, Admiral 1877, and Admiral of the Fleet 1885. He married in 1852, Louisa, daughter of the late Henry Dawson of Launde Abbey, by whom he had one son. During the Russian War, Captain Ryder commanded H.M.S. "Dauntlets," and while on active service in the Black Sea he lost his wife. As Private Secretary to the First Lord of the Admiralty he acquired that thorough knowledge of official business and correspondence, which has characterised his subsequent career and enabled him to work so methodically in his many philanthropic enterprises. As Comptroller General of the Coastguard he devoted his attention to questions affecting life-saving at sea, and during his subsequent service as Admiral he took an active part in every plan which approved itself to his intense desire to promote the religious, moral and physical welfare of the Navy and all connected with it. Just before taking command of the China Station in 1874, Admiral Ryder with a small body of Chaplains and Officers founded the Naval Church Society, the value of which will be readily understood when it is remembered that previous to its foundation the Church had no corporate existence, or bond of union in the Royal Navy, except in the Article of War which ordered the worship of Almighty God to be observed, and in the appointment of Chaplains to a few of the larger ships. The Sacraments were rarely administered, and quasi-episcopal authority was in the hands of the Private Secretary. The Naval Church Society has united some of fellowship essential to it: in fact by its means the Church of England may be now said to have some existence in the Royal Navy.

On assuming command in China, Admiral Ryder's attention was at once arrested by the gross moral conditions which prevailed on the station, and with characteristic zeal he set himself to do all in his power to establish a better state of things. As the Admiral's conduct in this matter has been assailed and misrepresented, with singular lack of taste, even since his death, by those who cannot possibly be acquainted with the circumstances, it is well that we should here recall the fact that throughout the period of his command in China he never ceased to exert his influence and authority to the utmost, in promoting the five "objects" which now form the charter of the C.E.P.S. "Purity among Men, A Chivalrous Respect for Womanhood, Preservation from Contamination, Rescue, and A Higher Tone of Public Opinion." On his way home from China, the Admiral looked forward with delight to seeing his son again, from whom he had been parted for years and who, having quite recently married, was at Malta expecting the pleasure of introducing his wife to his

father. On reaching Malta however the Admiral learnt that his only

son was dead, so sadly ended his last tour of foreign service.

During his term as Commander-in-chief at Portsmouth, Admiral Ryder was appointed by the Bishop of Winchester a member of a small committee charged with the duty of reporting upon the spiritual condition of Portsmouth. The recommendations of that committee have led to the thorough reorganisation of the ecclesiastical borough, so that what was once a sadly neglected town is now admirably provided with centres of vigorous spiritual vitality.

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At this time the good Admiral's study had in it a table covered with a most orderly collection of papers and correspondence connected with the several philanthropic agencies in which he maintained continuous interest notwithstanding his absorbing official duties. Among the enterprises thus daily remembered were the Church Penitentiary Association, The Diocesan (St. Thomas') Home at Basingstoke, and The Industrial Home for girls Waterloo (Near Portsmouth) as well as the Naval Church Society, The Royal Naval Female School (Officers) The Seamen and Marines Orphan Home, &c. On retiring from the more active professional life, as Admiral of the Fleet Sir Alfred Ryder found still more leisure to attend to such matters, and when the C.E.P.S. was inaugurated he threw all the energy of his nature into the promotion of a work so near his heart. During the first months of the Society's existence, while our Hon. Secretaries Rev. Dr. Griffith and Rev. J. G. Mills were fully occupied with the voluminous correspondence involved in its establishment, Sir Alfred Ryder's experience at the Admiralty enabled him to organise the office work upon a basis so complete that no subsequent change has been found necessary, and when the Secretary was appointed he found everything in perfect working order.

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Sir Alfred remained for a year in London, chiefly that he might devote himself to the developement of the C.E.P.S. organization, and when he moved to Torquay he gave the same attention to the formation of our Exeter Diocesan Branch, and with such success that he soon added nearly a hundred and fifty names to our list of members. Until his last illness the Admiral never ceased to afford his assistance in all matters of general interest, while his purse was ever open to our needs. For two years in succession his generous help kept the Society afloat, and during the present year he has obtained for it an anonymous contribution of £300 in addition to the liberal support given through him to the Exeter Branch.

During the last few weeks of his life the Admiral seems to have been conscious of his failing health and energies, and anxious that our ociety should not suffer for lack of the active assistance which he no longer felt strong enough to give. It was a consolation to him to be assured that the work that he had begun was established, and that much as we should miss his active co-operation, the greatest kindness he could do us at the moment would be to rest from labour till his health should be restored. Then came the sad news of his sudden death, and our great loss; but the remembrance of his example will be an abiding encouragement, and the fruit of his labour, may, please God, be ours to reap.

"He shall send down from on high to fetch me, And shall take me out of many waters."