

THE NAVY

VICE-ADMIRAL THOMAS

was a son of Walter Pringle, merchant of St Kitts, West Indies, and a grandson of Thomas Pringle, W.S. (see Stitchill). He appears in the first year of the American War of Independence. In that year, 1775, the Americans under Montgomery and Arnold assaulted Quebec. Montgomery fell at the head of his men, and Arnold settled down to a land blockade. On 25th December Lord Sandwich wrote to the War Office that Lieutenant Pringle's opinion gave him great hopes that Quebec would hold out till succour arrived. On May 1776 the town was relieved by Captain Douglas's squadron. On 15th June Arnold quitted Montreal, and on the 24th Captain Pringle wrote to the War Office that he had been sent up the St Lawrence to superintend the disembarkation of troops, and was now waiting for the boat frames arriving from England and the fitting up of ships at St Johns, to follow the rebels across Lake Champlain. On 22nd August Arnold, with 3 schooners, a sloop, and 5 gondolas, took up position between Valcour Island and the Mainland. On 9th October Governor Carleton, who was on board the *Maria* with Captain Pringle who commanded the flotilla, attacked Arnold with 42 guns against his 32. The American *Royal Savage* was set on fire; while the British *Carleton* was towed out with a loss of 14 men killed or wounded. Great was the surprise next morning when it was found that during the night the American flotilla, taking advantage of a heavy fog, had escaped unobserved through the British line anchored across the southern end of the passage, and had gone up the lake. The battle being resumed next morning eight miles up the lake Arnold kept fighting and continually retreating for two and a half hours, and at last running his flotilla ashore set fire to it and retreated to Crown Point through the woods (*Annual Register*, vol. 20).

In February 1777 Captain Pringle was promoted to the *Ariadne*, a new ship of 20 guns. In this year General Burgoyne endeavoured to cross from Canada by Lake Champlain to Albany on the Hudson, but at Saratoga, 30 miles from it, was compelled to surrender in October to an American force numbering four times his own.

In March 1778 the *Ariadne*, 24 guns, Captain Thomas Pringle, and the *Ceres*, 18 guns, while cruising in West Indian waters, saw two sail. Giving chase they speedily came up with the sternmost, the American cruiser *Alfred*, 20 guns and 180 men, which struck after a few broadsides, the other the *Raleigh*, 32 guns, ignominiously escaping.

In 1778 and 1779, France having joined the Americans, the British and French fleets fought one another in West Indian waters, with varying success, the *Ariadne* under Captain Pringle always taking part.

In 1781 Thomas Pringle again comes into view as Captain of the *Dædalus* lying at Quebec, and as "Commanding Officer of the warships and vessels employed in the river and gulf of St Lawrence." Towards the end of the year he appears to have returned home convoying a fleet of merchantmen.

About 1788-90 Captain Nelson wrote to the Admiralty that he hoped his exertions while stationed in the Leeward islands in stopping the illegal trade with America were not forgotten, that in his absence two men sent by the traders had presented to his wife a writ for £20,000 damages, and that if a satisfactory answer were not sent him by return of post he would take refuge in France. The letter having been seen by Pitt, Prime Minister, the answer was sent by Captain Pringle in an undated letter, "My dear Nelson, I have just time to tell you that I have this morning got, per Mr Rose, the answer, which is that Captain Nelson is a very good officer, that he need be under no apprehension, for that he will assuredly be supported by the Treasury; of which I wish you joy, and with my best wishes believe me ever affectionately yours, Thomas Pringle.—Let me know that you receive this."

In 1794 the British under Lord Howe won a naval victory over the French, known as the "First of June." On the British side some 25 first-class battleships were engaged, including the *Valiant* (74 guns), commanded by Captain Pringle. On

4th July following, Captain Pringle was promoted Rear-Admiral of the Blue, and in June 1795 of the Red. In August 1795 Admiral Pringle, on the *Asia* (74 guns), had in charge 7 French officers and the Comte D'Artois, afterwards Charles X. of France.

On 30th August 1796 from the Cape of Good Hope, recently captured from the Dutch, Admiral Pringle wrote a long letter to Nelson acknowledging his letter from Corsica, and saying, "Be assured no one good thing has happened to you that I have not sincerely rejoiced at, nor would your brother have enjoyed more sincerely the many good things said of you." He then relates his own experiences. While cruising in the North Sea he met a Dutch fleet, but had a force so inferior that he dared not look it in the face. When it was found that it was on its way to retake the Cape he had been sent in great haste to relieve Admiral Elphinston there in the event of his having gone to England. The Dutch fleet had arrived and put into Saldanha Bay and there was so completely blocked in, that on the 17th August it surrendered to Elphinston's much superior force without bloodshed. Elphinston has written home requesting to be recalled as soon as convenient. The letter ends thus, "I desired my sister to find out where you are, and write a full history of your life and conversation. With my best good wishes to Mrs Nelson, believe me, my dear Horace, ever and affectionately yours, T. Pringle."

Admiral Pringle commanded at the Cape from October 1796 to 1798, when he was succeeded by Admiral Christian. In February 1799 he was appointed Vice-Admiral of the White, and in January 1801 of the Red (MSS. of Admiral Pringle in the British Museum).

Admiral Pringle died on 8th December 1803 (S. M.). The estate of Weens in Roxburghshire, which he bought in 1796, was sold by his trustees in 1804.

In 1783 the E.I.Co.'s ship *Duke of Atholl*, while lying off the coast of Madras, blew up, 10 officers and 127 seamen being killed, including Lieutenant Pringle of the *Active* (*Annual Register*).

In 1804 at Malta Lieutenant W. Pringle of the *Madras* exchanged into the *Agincourt*.

In 1805 Lieutenant David Pringle of the *Centurion* died at Plymouth a few days after his arrival from the East Indies. He had been absent eleven years. He was the 3rd son of David Pringle of Belhaven, now of Hatton in Fife (S. M.).

In 1808 among the British ships taking part in the capture from the French of the island of Martinique was the *Pultusk* commanded by Captain G. Pringle (Clowes' *Royal Navy*).

In 1847 Captain Pringle, R.N., married at Effingham, Surrey, Emily daughter of the late Professor Malthus (G. M.).

"JOHN, NELSON'S COXSWAIN, died at his residence Newton Bushel, Devon, on 5th December 1863, having attained the great age of 103 on 19th May last. The deceased veteran had only been ill about a month. Prior to his illness, although he was rather infirm, still his mental faculties were unimpaired, and he used to display those social qualities which so greatly distinguished him in early life. On his birthday for several years past he was in the habit of driving round the town in company with his wife, and the old and respected couple were the observed of all observers. He was by birth a Scotsman, having been born in Fife, and on attaining the age of 21 he joined the Royal Navy, and in 1784 became Coxswain to Nelson, who then commanded the *Boreas* in the West Indies. While in the service he took an active part in many of our celebrated naval battles, and amongst others those of the Nile and Trafalgar. He had a pension granted him, and at the ripe age of 92 he married his second wife" (*The Times*, 8th December 1863).

VICE-ADMIRAL JAMES. See Torwoodlee, 1797-1846.

REAR-ADMIRAL JOHN-ELIOT

was a son of Colonel John-Henry Pringle of the Coldstream Guards (whom refer to). In 1855 he served in the Baltic, commanded the *Vulture* on the east coast of Africa and in 1878 in the Persian Gulf. In July 1882 Arabi Pasha's rebellion led to the bombardment of Alexandria and the occupation of the Suez Canal by British Ships, including the *Falcon* commanded by Captain Pringle. In January 1885 Khartoum was taken by the Mahdists, General Gordon killed, and the Soudan fell

into their hands. To restore British prestige ten war-ships, including the *Falcon*, with 13,000 troops were sent to Souakin on the Red Sea to keep the Mahdi in check.

On 6th March 1908 died Rear-Admiral John Eliot Pringle of Broke Hall, Naeton, Ipswich, aged 65 years. He left estate valued at £28,000. Subject to the life-interest of his wife he left his portrait of William Pitt, the younger, by Sir Joshua Reynolds, to the National Gallery, but not in the National Portrait Gallery, and his Chatham and Pitt papers to the Master of the Rolls as representing the Public Record Office, for the use of the nation and historical research (*The Times*, 13th July 1908).

September 1913, Mrs Eliza Innes Pringle of Rutland Street, the Admiral's widow, and relict of Mr G. B. Crawley, left estate valued at £76,000 gross, with net personality £57,000. She left ten-hundredths of her estate upon trust for her daughter Inez Countess of Cavan, *née* Crawley, who was married in 1893 (*The Times*, 15th September 1913).