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GROG

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DOCUMENTS.

GROG.

(CONTRIBUTED BY L. G. CARR LAUGHTON.)

" Said to be short for Program, and to have been applied first to Admiral Vernon, from the fact of his wearing a program cloak, and afterwards transferred to the mixture which he ordered to be served out instead of neat spirit.

" Vernon's order, dated August, 1740, is still extant. The statement that he wore a program cloak, and was thence nicknamed ' Old Grog ' first appears explicitly in Grose, *Dict. Vulg. Tongue*, 1796, but derives some support from Trotter's allusion in 1781.

Thus the New English Dict. The allusion by Trotter is in lines
" Written on board the *Berwick* :—

" A mighty bowl on deck he drew
And filled it to the brink ;
Such drank the *Burford's* gallant crew,
And such the Gods shall drink ;
The sacred robe which Vernon wore
Was drenched within the same ;
And hence its virtues guard our shore,
And Grog derives its name."

The allusion seems fairly explicit, but after all it is of comparatively late date, and earlier references to Vernon's cloak, and his nickname, and of the transfer of the name from the man to the drink, would be useful.

There is no doubt about Vernon's order, and, as it does not seem to have been printed before, here is the text of it :—

" By Edward Vernon, Esq., Vice-Admiral of the Blue, and Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's Ships and Vessels in the West Indies.

" Whereas it manifestly appears by the return made to my general order of the 4th of August, to be the unanimous opinion of both Captains and Surgeons that the pernicious custom of the seamen drinking their allowance of rum in drams, and often at once, is attended with many fatal effects to their morals as well as their health, which are visibly impaired thereby, and many of their lives shortened by it, besides the ill consequences arising from stupifying their rational qualities which makes them heedlessly slaves to every brutish passion, and which having their unanimous opinion cannot be better remedied than by the ordering their half pint of rum to be daily mixed with a quart of water, which they that are good husbands may from the savings of their salt provisions and bread

purchase sugar and limes to make more palatable to them. You are, therefore, hereby required and directed, as you tender both the Spiritual and Temporal Welfare of His Majesty's subjects and preserving sobriety and good discipline in His Majesty's service, to take particular care that Rum be no longer served in species to any of the Ship's company under your command, but that their respective daily allowance of half a pint a man for all your Officers and Ship's company be every day mixed with the proportion of a quart of water to every half-pint of rum to be mixed in one scuttled butt kept for that purpose, and to be done upon deck, and in the presence of the Lieutenant of the watch, who is to take particular care to see that the men are not defrauded in having their full allowance of Rum, and when so mixed it is to be served to them at two servings in the day, the one between the hours of 10 and 12 in the morning, and the other between four and six in the afternoon. And you are to take care to have other scuttled butts to air and sweeten their water for their drinking at other times, and to give strict charge to your lieutenants in their respective watches to be very careful to prevent any Rum or other spirituous liquors being privately conveyed on board the ship by your own boats, or any others, as both you and they must expect to answer for the ill consequences that may result from any negligence in the due execution of these orders. For which this shall be your warrant. Given under my hand on board H.M. ship the [*Burford*, 21st August, 1740.']

The order exists at the Public Record Office only in the form of a copy, which is neither signed nor dated. It is endorsed : 'Copy of an Order for preventing Drunkness (*sic*), 21st Aug., 1740,' and with a note that it was enclosed 'in Mr. Vernon's of 7th Oct., 1740.'

It will be noticed that the traditional account, as rendered by Trotter, associates the change with the name of the *Burford*. It is not clear, from printed sources, that Vernon was in the *Burford* at the time. She was his regular flagship, but in the early part of the year he had his flag in the *Strafford*, the *Burford* being left at Jamaica, probably to refit. But on 2nd April the *Burford* rejoined the fleet, and it is reasonable to suppose that Vernon hoisted his flag again on board her. She was a 70 gun ship : the *Strafford* a sixty. The flag was certainly in the *Burford* on 12th Sept.

The Dict. of National Biography [s.t. Vernon] says of this order that "It was perhaps the greatest improvement to discipline and efficiency ever produced by one stroke of the pen, and though, as issued by Vernon, only a station order, was very quickly accepted throughout the service and adopted by the Admiralty."