

Admiral Lord St. Vincent - Saint or Tyrant?: The Life of Sir John Jervis, Nelson's Patron

James DG Davidson

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This biography of John Jervis, who became Admiral Lord Vincent, makes compelling reading. It throws an oblique light on Nelson's personality. St Vincent, who was born twenty-three years before Nelson, and survived for eighteen years after Trafalgar, fundamentally influenced the younger man's career despite the two men being diametrically different characters. Yet without him, Nelson's genius might have been submerged by professional jealousy or emotional fragility.

It was St Vincent's strategy and preparation which positioned Nelson to win his three famous victories, but St Vincent himself made vital contributions not only to the defeat of Napoleon but to the well-being of the Royal Navy. Before he became First Lord of the Admiralty, the Navy had been severely weakened by corruption in the dockyards, nepotism in appointments and the appalling conditions under which the seamen lived and worked.

St Vincent deserves the profound gratitude of the Nation; not only for enabling Nelson to exercise his tactical brilliance, but also for the role he played in preventing Napoleon from invading the British Isles.



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