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This biography of the naval officer and explorer Sir Albert Hastings Markham (1841–1918) was published in 1927 by two relatives (both professional authors), using the detailed journals which he kept from 1862. Markham was the cousin of Sir Clements Markham, the historian and geographer, and was greatly influenced by him. Having volunteered for Arctic service, he was rejected by the Admiralty, but took a period of leave in which he went to Baffin Bay as second mate on a whaler. (His account of this voyage, and several other works, are also reissued in this series.) Though best remembered for his Arctic exploration, Markham was involved in active service in China, the Mediterranean and Australian waters, and in the training of naval recruits. He continued in the Royal Navy until 1906, and in his retirement continued to encourage polar exploration, serving for many years on the Council of the Royal Geographical Society.

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University Printing House, Cambridge, CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

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www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108071673

© in this compilation Cambridge University Press 2014

This edition first published 1927

This digitally printed version 2014

ISBN 978-1-108-07167-3 Paperback

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SIR ALBERT HASTINGS MARKHAM
(From a portrait by George Henry)

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CAMBRIDGE

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1927

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

AUTHORS' PREFACE

It was with extreme diffidence, almost amounting to reluctance, that we consented to write this biography of Sir Albert Markham—reluctance, not because we were in any way averse from the task which has been throughout a labour of love, but because we felt that it should have been undertaken by more competent hands, perhaps by a brother officer in the great Service to which he was devoted.

But since there appeared to be no one at the time to do it, for the aftermath of the War was still hanging as a cloud over the country, we could only accede, feeling at least there were not many living who had known him so long or so intimately as ourselves, or who could have written with such a close knowledge and deep personal love. While the outside world recognised the charm of his courtesy and bright personality and saw in him a keen officer and an intrepid explorer, we, who knew him well, have an abiding memory of his unselfish sympathy and great tenderness of heart.

His early life was not altogether easy to piece together. We had at our disposal only some letters, none of his own; the recollections of his cousin Mrs Clements; and the remembrance of a few incidents related to us by himself.

For the first years of his Naval career there were only his neatly kept log-books, in no sense a journal, and some notes made a good many years ago at his daughter's request.

From the time he was a lieutenant he always kept a voluminous journal, not only when on active service, but during the various expeditions made when on leave. It

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was no easy matter amid a mass of such interesting material to make such a selection as to bring it within the limits of the present volume, and much has had, perforce, to be omitted.

We are greatly indebted to Admiral Sir Edward Inglefield, K.C.B., for his kindness in reading through the ms. and for his invaluable assistance in the technicalities of Ch. xvi.

We are also most grateful for the help given to us by Dr Guillemard of Cambridge, without whose warm and practical interest this book might never have appeared, and to whom we are also indebted for the admirable Index.

M. E. AND F. A. MARKHAM

REIGATE

October, 1926

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