

THE LOSS AND RECAPTURE OF ST HELENA, 1673

by G. C. Kitching

The rivalry that existed between the British and Dutch East India Companies during the first half of the seventeenth century was reflected in the search for ports in the South Atlantic where vessels returning from India might refresh; and indeed, their possession was vital to both Companies, because without them, the fleets of the period could only have reached Europe after overcoming the greatest difficulties and hardships.

St Helena, which had previously been used as a port of call by the ships of all nations trading to the East, had been annexed by the Dutch in 1633, but they had never occupied it, and it continued to be so used until 1659, when it was seized and fortified by John Dutton on behalf of the East India Company which had made it a rendezvous for their fleets with their escorts since 1649.¹ The regret of the Dutch at having abandoned it, preferring their settlement at the Cape, is easy to understand. They had voluntarily given up a peaceful little island with an excellent climate, ample supplies of water, and an ideal anchorage, for a port which in spite of its immeasurably superior internal resources and geographical position, had nothing to recommend it but a melancholy tale of disaster to sailing vessels.² There were, then, plenty of reasons why possession of a remote island, lost in the wastes of the South Atlantic, should have been a prize worth winning; for the Dutch it meant control of the trade route and crippling their rivals, whom, we may be sure, were fully alive to what the loss of St Helena meant.

With the outbreak of war between them in March, 1672, the two nations set about capturing and defending the Island; the Dutch despatching an expedition for the purpose from Amsterdam in April, consisting of the ships *Frybeyt*, *Zuydtpolsbroeck*, *Kattenburgh* and *Swaentje*, to go first to the Cape to pick up soldiers, whilst the English sent out a new Governor, Anthony Beale, with 75 soldiers, gunpowder, 30 'great guns,' and 150 muskets, as reinforcements in the *Humphrey and Elizabeth* (36 guns, Captain Metford), which sailed in July.³

Beale arrived on 16 November and found his little settlement ill-prepared to defend itself from attack.⁴ The truth was that ever since the English had occupied the

¹ Sir William Foster, "The Acquisition of St Helena." *English Historical Review*, July 1919, p. 283.

² T. H. Brooke, *4 History of St Helena*, 1824 edn., p. 426

³ *3 Calendar of the Court Minutes of the East India Company*, Sainsbury, with introductions by Sir William Foster and W. T. Ottewill. 1671-1673. 1932, p. 238.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 239.

island, it had proved to be the ‘home of faction’, a reputation which persisted to much later times. His predecessor, Captain Coney, who had been appointed as Governor in 1669, had soon found himself at loggerheads with the planters led by the Rev. William Nokes, the island’s chaplain and second Member of Council. Nokes had stirred up the people to prefer ‘many large complaints’ at home against the Governor with the result that in June 1672, he was dismissed from his appointment and Beale was sent out in his place. Before Beale arrived, however, affairs had become so disordered that Coney was forced to seek refuge on the ship *Advance* and flee to England, leaving the island in the hands of the mutineers. In the preliminaries to these events Mr Nokes did not escape entirely scatheless as in July he had been sharply reprimanded by the Company, and informed that ‘he was addicted to several vices not becoming a minister of the Gospel’.⁵ Beale, it is surmised from his subsequent history, was not the sort of Governor to defend a mutinous island in the face of the enemy. He was appointed as Deputy-Governor after Munden’s success, and was discharged from the service in 1682.⁶ He was then implicated in the mutiny of 1684, and died three years later poisoned by his slave with ‘ground glass mixed with earth from a grave’.⁷ He left a large estate where his descendants lived for over 150 years enjoying the distinction, during Napoleon’s captivity, of lodging Gourgaud in their family home at Terrace Knolls.⁸

The preparations of the Dutch to attack the island were completed at the Cape early in December, and on the 13th the ships, already mentioned, having brought up their complements to a total of 634 soldiers and 110 guns, sailed for St Helena under the command of Jacob de Gens, where they arrived on the 29th.⁹

Few official histories of military operations can present so different a picture as those written by the Dutch and English on this occasion. Beale, Captain Metford, and the Rev. Nokes maintained that they put up a stout resistance. The Dutch, they said, arrived on the loth and for ten days their assaults on the island’s defences were repeatedly repulsed until the garrison, about 170 strong, was exhausted by its efforts, when ‘the strength of the Island having been confessed’ they were able to make a secret landing ‘in a private place’.¹⁰ From here the invaders arrived in the rear of the

⁵ Ibid. p. 149.

⁶ 3 Consultations of the Governor and Council, St Helena. Public Records, Jamestown, Book I, p. 280.

⁷ Ibid. Book 2, pp. 39 and 218.

⁸ Basil Jackson, *Notes and Reminiscences of a Staff Officer*, 1903, p. 149. W. Forsythe, *Napoleon at St Helena and Sir Hudson Lowe*, 1853, 11, p. 249. Land Registers of the East India Company, Public Records, Jamestown.

⁹ C. R. Boxer, ‘The Third Dutch war in the East’, *The Mariner’s Mirror*, October 1930, pp. 362-6.

¹⁰ *Calendar of the Court Minutes of the East India Company*, Sainsbury, with introductions by Sir William Foster and W. T. Ottewill. 1671-1673. 1932, pp. 239-40.

garrison on New Year's Day 1673, when Beale was compelled to embark the women and children and the garrison and sail away in the *Humphrey and Elizabeth* and *Surat Merchant* (Captain Johnson) to Iseyhe in Brazil, having first spiked his guns and removed all the ammunition and provisions. One woman and some sick soldiers were left behind in the hands of the Dutch.¹¹

Three ships were present in the roadstead during these operations, the *Humphrey and Elizabeth* 36 guns, the *Surat Merchant* 26 guns, and the French ship (the French were allied to the British) *Vantour* 36¹² guns, thus mounting a total of 98 guns against the 110 of the Dutch. The inability of these vessels to interfere with the hostile fleet during the difficult operation of disembarking the landing parties, constitutes one of the most striking omissions in the British version;¹³ and all that Beale and his friends could say was that the 'crews were too weak and sickly to fight'.¹⁴

The Dutch accounts of the action are directly at variance with those of the British. They state they left the Cape on 13 December arriving at the island on the 29th, but owing to contrary winds that they were unable to make an immediate attack. Later they landed 300 men at Old Woman's Valley, who were able to reach the interior of the island and thus march on Jamestown from the rear, when the English all fled on board their ships and sailed away to Brazil.¹⁵

From the history of subsequent events it is possible to reconstruct what really happened. The garrison does not appear to have been more than 170 strong;¹⁶ Beale seems to have been quite incapable of commanding and reducing to order the mutinous inhabitants, 'many of whom were drunk on their guards';¹⁷ and with the exception of a few broadsides fired by Metford as the Dutch fleet came in, no resistance at all seems to have been offered.¹⁸ Tradition assigns the real cause of the loss of the island to treachery, and in this instance it is supported by entries to be found in the Public Records in Jamestown. Mr William Coxe (or Foxe), a planter, seems by some means or other to have got into touch with the Dutch and to have

¹¹ Ibid. p. 239.

¹² C. R. Boxer, 'The Third Dutch war in the East', *The Mariner's Mirror*, October 1930, p. 362.

¹³ Calendar of the Court Minutes of the East India Company, Sainsbury, with introductions by Sir William Foster and W. T. Ottewill. 1671-1673. 1932, p. 239.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Letter from the Court of Directors, The East India Company to the Governor and Council of St Helena, 8 November 1678. Public Records, Jamestown.

¹⁸ C. R. Boxer, 'The Third Dutch war in the East', *The Mariner's Mirror*, October 1930, Appendix xi. Basse's log of the London.

lit a fire to guide them to a landing place in Old Woman's Valley.¹⁹ Here 300 men were put ashore and having killed his slave lest he should provide evidence against him, Coxe then led the party up to High Peak and so on to Jamestown.²⁰ There is no authority in either the Dutch or English accounts for a battle having taken place; and all that occurred was that the English decamped in their ships which had to sail in such a hurry that they were compelled to leave their anchors and cables behind them.²¹ Mr Nokes, however, was able to get his books and papers on board.²² After calling at Iseyhe in Brazil the *Humphrey and Elizabeth* and the *Surat Merchant* arrived safely in England where their captains' actions were made the subject of searching inquiries; Mr Nokes accompanied them, but received no further employment.²³ The English emerge with little credit from this episode, and one cannot but agree that St Helena, an island with natural defences that would deter the stoutest heart, was most shamefully cast away.

The Dutch seemed to have made little effort to secure the rich prize they had won so easily. Jacob de Gens sailed away almost at once with all his ships, leaving a garrison of about 100 strong behind him under the command of Johannes Coon, who later died on the island.²⁴ The capture of the Indiaman, *Anne Catherine*, with 220 slaves and s so elephant tusks, and the exchange of a few broadsides with some homeward-bound ships in April 1673, represents the sum of the Dutch achievements during their four months' occupation of St Helena.²⁵

The loss of the island created consternation in London, where news of it was received on 26 May, a few days after, had the East India Company known it, of Munden's successful attack. Protests were lodged with the King, to whom a very circumstantial account was sent, the Company no doubt recollecting that questions were likely to be asked how so strong a possession came to be abandoned. More than one account states that the news caused so much distress that a special expedition was fitted out under Munden to recapture the island; but as Mr Ottewill points out in his valuable introduction to the Court Minutes of the East India Company, this is clearly impossible as Munden sailed from England in January. Nevertheless, it must be supposed that the East India Company were fully aware of the Dutch

¹⁹ T. H. Brooke, *A History of St Helena*, 1824 edn., p. 80. Letter from the Court of Directors, The East India Company to the Governor and Council of St Helena, 8 November 1678. Public Records, Jamestown.

²⁰ Traditional.

²¹ *Calendar of the Court Minutes of the East India Company*, Sainsbury, with introductions by Sir William Foster and W. T. Ottewill. 1671-1673, 1932, p. 300

²² *Ibid.* p. 246.

²³ *Ibid.* 1674-1676, pp. 26-30.

²⁴ C. R. Boxer, 'The Third Dutch war in the East', *The Mariner's Mirror*, October 1930, pp. 362-6.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

expedition having left Antwerp, and when taking measures to ensure the safety of their homeward-bound ships, by enlisting the support of Royal men-of-war under Munden, the possibility of the loss of St Helena cannot have been absent from their minds; at any rate he carried further reinforcements of soldiers for the island.²⁶

Munden's fleet consisting of the *Assistance* (Captain R. Munden), *William and Thomas* (Captain Thomas Pyles), *Mary and Martha* (Captain Butler), *Levant Merchant* (Captain Hobbs), *Castle* (Captain Thomas Wilshaw) and the *Eagle*, fire-ship, sailed from the Downs on 15 January arriving at about 36 miles to the windward of St Helena on 4 May.²⁷ Here at about 5 a.m. the next day, up popped a 'small Portugal' with Anthony Beale, a few followers, and a slave 'Black Oliver' on board, with the information that the Dutch had captured the island on New Year's Day 1673.²⁸ Beale, whatever else his faults may have been, acted with commendable promptitude on his arrival in Brazil. Ships valued at about £400,000 were expected to be calling at St Helena at this season of the year, so he hired a small Portuguese schooner in which to return to the vicinity of the island with the object of warning the homeward-bound ships of the perils that awaited them should they call there. The possibility of attempts at recapture appear to have been considered, as before he sailed from Brazil he took the precaution of taking with him a slave, Black Oliver, who had an intimate knowledge of the coasts of the island and the tracks leading up to the interior. Oliver was the property of Mrs Coulston; her husband owned the land on which T. H. Brooke's house, Prospect, now stands and was hanged for mutiny in 1684; Oliver had been sold on her arrival in Brazil to an English merchant there, a Mr Jacobs, and from him had been purchased by Beale on behalf of the Company.²⁹

Munden's first act on establishing contact with Beale was to order his fleet to lay to 'lest they be discerned from the island', but it is known that the Dutch had a signal station on 'Peak Hill', the modern Sugar Loaf, from which under good conditions a horizon of at least 40 miles can be obtained, so it may be assumed that they had ample warning of his approach as the weather is logged as having been fine; but they would not, of course, be able to detect his nationality. A council-of-war was then called, when it was decided 'that having for some weeks before made our Field Colours and appointed our officers and every day mustered our men' that an attempt should be made on the island. The plan adopted was for the *Assistance*, being the best sailor, to run inshore at sunset, leaving the rest of the fleet to follow at night,

²⁶ Calendar of the Court Minutes of the East India Company, Sainsbury, with introductions by Sir William Foster and W. T. Ottewill. 1671-1673. 1932, p. 204.

²⁷ Journal of Sir Richard Munden. Pepys's MSS. 2350, 2543. Extracts are published in Calendar of the Court Minutes of the East India Company. The *Eagle* foundered on the voyage out. See Journal.

²⁸ Ibid. Journal of the Castle Wilshaw. Pepys's MSS. 2350 gives 2nd January.

²⁹ Consultations of the Governor and Council, St Helena. Public Records, Jamestown, Book 10, p. 144, and Book 11, p. 15.

and then send in a pinnace with Captain Kedgwin and Black Oliver 'to discover the strength of the road'. The rest of the fleet came up at 1 a.m. on the 5th, and at 7 a.m. Kedgwin returned to report that there were no ships off Jamestown. It was then decided to put 350 men under Richard Kedgwin, with Black Oliver as a guide, on board the Castle and Beale's 'Portugal' to be landed at Prosperous Bay, whilst the *Assistance*, *William and Thomas*, and *Mary and Martha* 'held them in play' at Chapel Valley and the *Levant Merchant* at Sandy Valley, probably the modern Ruperts. Leaving their boats for the landing party, the fleet bore away for Jamestown; but the *Assistance* outsailing the remainder, Munden was soon far ahead passing Ruperts at about 12.30 p.m.; here he was fired on by a small Dutch battery on which he 'bestowed' a broadside. Arriving off Jamestown he was greeted with a hot fire from the 29 guns in the Castle and anchoring within a pistol shot, he proceeded to engage the fort singlehanded. The action was begun at 12.45 p.m., but the rest of the fleet did not come up until 2 p.m. and then overshot the anchorage, drifting on to Breakneck Valley. The *Assistance* was now getting the worst of it and having suffered heavy casualties, Munden cut his cable and broke off the action at 4.30 p.m., joining the remainder of the fleet out of range.

Arrangements were at once made to warp in the rest of the ships so that the action might be renewed the next morning; but the Dutch seeing the *William and Thomas* moving up, hauled down their colours and surrendered at about 6 p.m. on Monday 5 May 1673. Captain Pyles was sent ashore to take the surrender and hoist the 'King's Colours' on the fort, where they have flown ever since, together with a trumpeter to warn Kedgwin that the Dutch had surrendered. In the meantime Hobbs in the *Levant Merchant* had forced the post at Ruperts to surrender and had spent the rest of the afternoon, much to Munden's disgust, in taking possession of the plunder.³⁰

It is unfortunate, but no record can be traced of the fortunes of the landing party at Prosperous Bay.³¹ The beach there is deceptive; landing in modern small boats can only be made at a rock, 'Kedgwin's Rock', and the nature of the beach, made up as it is of large stones, does not lead one to suppose that Kedgwin could have put his force ashore directly on it, particularly with the sea running which on 4 May Munden logged as a 'small gale'.³² If, as the evidence seems to indicate, Kedgwin began his landing at noon, he can hardly have completed it before sunset and the troops then had to scale the precipitous cliff ever since known as 'Hold Fast Tom', a very steep loose crumbling track, the last 100 ft. being sheer.³³ The landing was unopposed; but it may be safely assumed that the Dutch had information of it and this may well have led them to lay down their arms when they did. The fact that they

³⁰ Journal of Sir Richard Munden, and Journal of the Castle Wilshaw. Pepys's MSS. 2350, 2543.

³¹ Personal.

³² Journal of Sir Richard Munden. Pepys's MSS. 2350, 2543. 4 May 1673.

³³ Personal.

had surrendered before he had scaled the cliff, does not detract from the merit of Kedgwin's feat. When Sir Hudson Lowe arrived in St Helena in April, 1816, manoeuvres were carried out at Prosperous Bay and the following account throws an interesting light on Kedgwin's operations:³⁴

On the following morning the Telegraphs announced the approach of the pretended Enemy, at daybreak under the French Colours. We were all under Arms and the dispositions made by Sir George Bingham were such as to prevent, as much as possible, the harrying of our Troops by unnecessary movements. From the spot where I was posted, at 7 o'clock in the morning, we distinctly saw the *Seventy four* and a Brig standing in to Prosperous Bay, and I received an order to move on for the purpose of reinforcing the Troops which had been previously sent to occupy the heights in that Vicinity. A little before 8 o'clock we saw and heard the firing at the party which was effecting a landing, and whilst we waited for further orders intelligence reached us that the whole of them, headed by a Captain in the Navy, were prisoners. The landing was effected at the risk of being drowned, and upon their attempting to ascend the heights a few stones were rolled down near them, to show what they might expect. They then attempted to get back to their Boats, but more stones were rolled down in their way to the sea, so that they were completely pounded. Their Commander then waved a white handkerchief in token of surrender, upon which they were permitted to ascend.

Kedgwin's party eventually marched into the Castle in Jamestown at 11 a.m. on 6 May.

From the prisoners left by Beale, Munden learned that the Dutch fleet was hourly expected; so after making arrangements for putting the fort in order, he sent the *Portuguese* out as a scout and had the fleet warped up to be in readiness at Sugar Loaf, where their flags had been left flying, there to await the enemy ships as they came into port. After many false alarms, some of which were for English ships, he was successful on 11 May in capturing the *Europa*, with Van Breitenbach on board, who was proceeding to St Helena to take over the Government in place of the unfortunate Johannes Coone. This was Munden's only success with the Dutch fleet whilst at the island, and for the remainder of his time he was occupied in fortifying 'Munden's Point' and Lemon Valley, and organizing the local defences. He sailed on 26 May leaving Kedgwin behind as Governor and Richard Field as Deputy-Governor together with a garrison of about 160 soldiers and sailors. The history of Captains Kedgwin and Field is obscure. Kedgwin was borne on the *Assistance* and Field on the *Levant Merchant*, and as they are later described as Captains of Companies of Foot, it seems probable their duties with Munden were to command the soldiers he had with him, thus beginning the association between St Helena and the Royal Marines that exists to this day.

³⁴ Letter from T. H. Brooke, 18 April 1816. Times Literary Supplement, 16 March 1922.

Judged by modern standards Munden must be supposed to have been an impetuous and imprudent commander; and as will be observed from the observations of Mr Gibson, Pepys's clerk, which are reproduced as an appendix, the same view prevailed in the official circles of the period. Present-day tacticians will, no doubt, convict him of every fault and of nearly failing in his object by not concentrating his fleet or not waiting for his ships to come up; but the Empire of the seventeenth century was won not by students of this school of caution, and Munden is a good example of what may be achieved by commanders of energy and courage. He was successful in capturing two more Dutch prizes, the *Allphen* and the *Wapen Van der Veer* on the way to Ascension, where the convoy had been concentrating for the voyage home, and which now amounted to four men-of-war, one fire-ship, three prizes, five East Indiamen and the Portuguese brig *Beale* having been assigned duty with prizes.

The safe arrival of the fleet in English waters was greeted with acclamation; Munden was rewarded with a knighthood, a gratuity of £2500 from the Treasury and £400 from the Company with a medal in gold (valued at £20); his Captains received £50 apiece with the exception of Pyles who obtained £100 and Wilshaw £40; Beale was appointed as Deputy-Governor of St Helena whilst the four soldiers Allen, Catneys, Major and Kennington, who had accompanied him, received £10 apiece. The greatest reward was reserved for Black Oliver who received his freedom and was given land and declared to be a free planter. It is interesting to note that on the land which he was given, there now stands the house that was leased to Balcombe and occupied by Las Cases during the period of his imprisonment.

Energetic measures were taken by the Company to safeguard the island. A new Charter re-granting it was obtained from the King together with a warrant to Kedgwin to hand it over; supplies and soldiers were sent and Field was appointed as Governor, Kedgwin being granted a reward of £100³⁵, a grant of land in Bombay, and special facilities for his passage.

But in St Helena affairs had not prospered. Another mutiny broke out when the people confined Kedgwin 'in the country' and the Government being refused by Field, it was assumed by an officer, Lieutenant Bird, who had been left behind by the *Mary and Martha*. This mutiny was suppressed by returning East Indiamen; but the island was to be the home of mutinies until well in the eighteenth century. Indeed when the possibility of Napoleon being sent there was under consideration, it was strongly represented by the Company that their troops were so disaffected and

³⁵ Calendar of the Court Minutes of the East India Company, Sainsbury, with introduction by Sir William Foster and W. T. Ottewill. 1674-1676, pp. 143, 152, 281.

sedition that King's troops should be sent.³⁶ Another mutiny broke out in 1684³⁷, and it is sad to reflect that one of the first mutineers to be shot was Black Oliver whose name is inseparably associated with the history of St Helena. But the Company by now had become tired of its quarrelsome little island where peace and quiet were so necessary for the safe refreshment of its fleets, and severe measures of repression were adopted, many of the leaders being hanged and their estates sequestered.³⁸

APPENDIX

Extracts from a letter from Richard Gibson to Samuel Pepys dated 7th April (83) forwarding his observations on Sir Richard Munden's Journal describing his voyage and the capture of St Helena. Cambridge Pepys MS. 2350

Honoured Sir,

Pursuant to your commands I have perused and herewith return His Honour Sir Richard Munden's journal kept (as such) by himself in his successful voyage to St Helena, by his taking that, and the Dutch East India ships which I hear he has delivered to His Royal Highness.

As for my opinion thereon my having at no time acted as a seaman; my six years abode ashore; my not having hitherto been more Southerly than 30 degrees North latitude, will (I doubt not) convince your Honour of my inability to give any judgment of a thing I am so much a stranger to, when Solomon (by the improvement he made in, as well as riches obtained by navigation, may possibly be thought as great an artist as any the present, or former age can boast of) has long since told us, that the way of a ship in the sea (amongst other things) is past finding out.

I know what Sir Walter Raleigh says, that it is not truth but opinion, that guides the world without a passport. And Feltham, that men censuring think to be accounted wise, when nothing renders a man so much a fool.

I had the favour to be well known to Sir Richard Munden, and since he has been the happy instrument of good to his country, do heartily wish your Honour's commands had lain remote to this affair; since in perusing his journal, I see more cause to ascribe this success of his to the aspect of his good stars (which it is said give to every man, first or last, a chance for bettering his future) than to his extraordinary skill in navigation or military conduct finding him to fall short in the former under the heads of:

Coasting, or keeping an account of the ship's motion in a tides way; knowledge in making of land, etc.

³⁶ Chairman of Court of Directors to Lord Buckingham. Private 27th July, 1815. India Office. Vol. 162, St Helena Records.

³⁷ Consultations of the Governor and Council, St Helena. Public Records, Jamestown. Book 10, p. 144.

³⁸ Op. cit. p. 129 et seq.

Dead reckoning, or keeping an account of the ship's motion from land out of a tides way. Winds and Weather, keeping an account of their change; increase or decrease; and motion of the sea.

Journal keeping, or history of the voyage.

Navigation, or skill in setting of the several courses distances; to enable him to perfect his dead reckonings every mid-day into one course and distance run, difference of latitude and departure from the meridian.

Currents, enquiry if any; and keeping an account of the swiftness and course.

Observing, or taking the latitude of the sun frequently and well.

And in the latter in two material passages the only opportunity given him all that voyage to shew it.

But before I enter upon a discourse of the several heads before named, I must not omit informing your Honour that the whole is only a transcript unexamined, as any one may perceive that reads it leisurely over, material words left out in several places; blanks not filled up, etc., to be found in this Journal of the 29 January, 1, 7, 8, 19, 20 and 26 February, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 26 and 28 May, 5, 11, 12 and 22 June, 11, 12 and 13 August. The particulars being many I omit their recital leaving their views to your Honours better leisure. Although these mistakes lead me in several places (in my discovery of errors) uncertain under what head to place them; yet doubt not (by what follows) to prove to your Honour that he has not come up to what might reasonably be expected from an ordinary capacity.

As to Sir Richard Munden's skill in journal keeping; the whole cannot enable me to name each ship of his Fleet and who commanded them; what number of men each had or was allowed; what or how they or any one was manned; their routes, time victualled for, etc. Nor do Sir Richard Munden at any time name the power given him over any other ship or person besides the Assistance. Nor the strength in general he had to perform that service. Or of his having or wanting anything necessary to his voyage. Or uses or proposes any method as by speaking with ships he meets in the sea, etc., for gaining intelligence to annoy his enemy or secure himself or friends much less to insert anything (saving the price of cattle at Bonavist and crossing the Equator where he did outward bound) that might be of common use either to himself or others. But on the contrary falls short of a Journal written by one of his Commanders (Capt. Thomas Wilshaw) always in his company as any one may perceive that will take the pains to read both. Sir Richard Munden has delivered his Journal without a title or his name to it so as a stranger by reading it, cannot be informed whose it is. The same error attends his describing St Helena by his giving new names to all forts and bays thereon so as it becomes useless to such as knows not the Island; who cannot by reading Sir Richard Munden's journal find any such names as are in the draft.

Next when Sir Richard Munden went to take St Helena, he knowing there were no Dutch ships in the Road (by his espial over night) and that his men were landed on the back of the Island, thought to have the honour of taking it alone, by anchoring in Chapel Valley an hour and a half before any of his Fleet came to him, thereby encouraging (as he owns) the enemy, and occasioning his having his belly full from the Dutch before, and forcing him to cut and stand out of shot within an hour after his Fleet got in. This might have endangered retaking the Island. Sir Richard Munden tells you that when he came in

sight of South Valley the Dutch on shore saluted him with their 5 guns, and that he forbear to answer them. But immediately after says before he past them he bestowed a Broadside on them. Sir Richard Munden said also that between 3 and 4. p.m. Capt. Hobbs came against South Valley, and that that Fort struck to him presently after firing 3 guns. That Hobbs sent his boat ashore more than once for plunder, but was not so kind to the King's service as to give him notice of the surrender of that place. I find Sir Richard Munden so impatient of the disgrace of being forced to cut and stand out of shot, and not to have the honour of taking the Island alone, that he taxes all his Captains (Butler and Pilos who kept their stations firing at Chapel Valley after he was cut and gone) of negligence for not taking that care that ought to be in letting go their anchors which caused them to lay further off the Fort than they (mincing the matter) or he (speaking truth) was willing (shewing the reason) in regard they did not take any shot from him. However Sir Richard Munden ascribes the surrender of the Island to his reanchoring after he cut and got way out of shot, and not to those ships he left battering against Chapel Fort. Nor to the Dutch their striking to Capt. Hobbs by his own account before 4 when the Island surrendered not to him till it began to be dark. Nor to his men (the truest cause) their being landing on the back of the Island.³⁹

I have one observation more to trouble your Honour with, that by his carriage to his Convoys and Commanders, I believe all his errors proceeded not from ignorance but some from pride. By his not conversing with any of his own or Merchant Commanders (but about crossing the Equator and attacking St Helena) all the voyage; but on the contrary find him slighted (I suppose) upon that accompt. by both which I gather from his journal thus.

I have for your Honour ready tracing the truth of my allegations sent with this a transcript of either journal, placing the days of each (as too often they are) opposite to one another. Sir Richard Munden's on the dexter and Captain Wilshaw's on the sinister side or page, until the 5th May where Captain Wilshaw's journal ends, at his taking a Dutch East India ship and left his own ship to command her; thenceforward Sir Richard Munden's journal is copied on both sides to the end.

The following published works have also been consulted:

Chronicles of Cape Commanders, G. C. McD. Theale, 1882. Extracts-from the Records of St Helena, H. R. Janisch, 1885 and 1908. Report to the Secretary of State on the Records of the India Office, F. C. Danver, 1888. Report on the Records of the India Office, Sir George Birdwood, 1891. The Dominions Colonial Office List, 1935. South and East Africa Year Book, 1936. The Waste Paper Basket of the Owl Club, Capetown, 1925. A Note on St Helena, G. H. Wilson.

³⁹ Gibson, who does not seem to have liked Sir Richard Munden, appears to base his observations here on information not included in the Journals on which he was reporting. Owing to sudden gusts of winds down the valleys on the leeward side of the Island, a sailing ship may often overshoot its mark when anchoring in Jamestown roads. Of these there are several examples recorded in later years.

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The Mariner's Mirror, 36, no. 1 (1 January 1950): 58–68,
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