

of Troops for this Garrison, and a Quantity of Military Stores, I judged it most for the Public Service, especially as I knew the Enemy's Squadron was to the Southward, not to return to Madras to land the Sick and Scorbatic of these Two Ships, but to proceed direct for Trincomalee, and there to land the Reinforcement and Military Stores, as well as the Sick of the Sultan and Magnanime, without either seeking or shunning the Enemy.

In Pursuance of this Resolution I stood with the Squadron to the Southward, and on the 6th of April fell in with a French Ship, last from Mauritius, having on Board Dispatches from France for their Commanders in Chief by Sea and Land: This Ship was chased on Shore and burnt near Tranquebar, the Officers and Men escaping with the Dispatches.

On the 8th, about Noon, I came in Sight of the Enemy's Squadron, consisting of 18 Sail, in the N. E. Quarter, and continued my Course for this Place. On the 9th, 10th, and 11th, the Enemy fell in Sight. On the 11th, having made the Coast of Ceylon, about 15 Leagues to Windward of Trincomalee, I bore away for that Place. On the 12th, at Daylight, the Position of the Enemy's Squadron being altered by my bearing away, so as to give them the Wind of ours, I discovered them crowding all the Sail they could set after us; and their Copper-bottomed Ships coming fast up with the Ships in our Rear, I therefore determined to engage them.

At Nine in the Forenoon I made the Signal for the Ships in our Squadron to form the Line of Battle a-head on the Starboard Tack, at Two Cables Length Distance from each other, the Enemy then bearing N by E. distant about Six Miles, and the Wind at N by E. they continued manœuvring their Ships, and changing their Positions in their Line, till Fifteen Minutes past Noon, when they bore away to engage us; Five Sail of their Van stretching along to engage the Ships of our Van, and the other Seven Sail steering directly on our Center Ships, the Superbe, the Monmouth her Second a-head, and the Monarca her Second a-stern. At Half past One the Engagement began in the Van of both Squadrons; Three Minutes after I made the Signal for Battle. The French Admiral in the Hero, and his Second a-stern the L'Orient, bore down on the Superbe within Pistol shot. The Hero continued her Position, giving and receiving a severe Fire for Nine Minutes, and then stood on, greatly damaged to attack the Monmouth, at that Time engaged with another of the Enemy's Ships, making Room for the Ships in his Rear to come up to the Attack of our Center, where the Engagement was hottest. At Three the Monmouth had her Mizzen Mast shot away, and, in a few Minutes after, her Main-Mast, and bore out of the Line to Leeward. At Forty Minutes past Three the Wind unexpectedly continuing far northerly, without any Sea Breeze, and being careful not to entangle our Ships with the Shore, I made the Signal for the Squadron to wear, and haul their Wind in a Line of Battle a-head on the Larboard Tack, still engaging the Enemy. At Forty Minutes past Five, being in Fifteen Fathom Water, and apprehensive lest the Monmouth might, in her disabled State, drift too near the Shore, I made the Signal for the Squadron to prepare to anchor. At Forty Minutes past Six the Enemy's Squadron drew off in great Disorder to the Eastward, and the Engagement ceased, their Admiral having shifted his Flag from the Hero to the French Hanibal, on Account of the Hero's disabled State; and soon after I anchored with the Squadron, the Superbe close to the Monmouth, in order to repair our Damages, which, on Board the Superbe and Monmouth, were very great in the Hulls, Masts, Sails and Rigging; and almost all the Ships had suffered considerably in their Masts, Sails and Rigging.

Much about this Time the French Frigate La Fine, being ordered, I suppose, to tow and assist their disabled Ship the Hero, fell on Board His Majesty's Ship Isis, and had actually struck his Colours to her; but taking Advantage of the Darkness of the Night, and the State the Isis was in, just come out of Action, in which she had a Number of Men killed and wounded, and otherwise ill manned, the Frigate got clear of the Isis, and escaped.

An Account of the Number of Officers and Men killed and wounded on Board the several Ships of the Squadron, is herewith enclosed.

On the Morning of the 13th, at Daylight, I found the Enemy's Squadron had anchored about Five Miles without us, in much Disorder and apparent Distress, but they had lost no Lower Masts: Both Squadrons were busily employed in repairing Damages, drawing into Order for Defence, the Enemy seeming to apprehend an Attack from us, and I myself uncertain if they would not renew the Engagement, in order to get Hold of the Monmouth. In these Situations both Squadrons continued at Anchor till the 19th in the Morning, when the Enemy's got under Sail with the Land Wind, and stood out to Sea close-hauled, and at Noon tacked with the Sea Breeze, and stood in for the Body of our Squadron, as if with Intent to attack; but after coming within Two Miles of us, finding us prepared to receive them, they again tacked and stood to the Eastward by the Wind; and I have not since been able to learn certainly where they are gone. Having refitted the Monmouth in the best Manner our Situation would admit, with Jury, Main and Mizzen Masts, I sailed with His Majesty's Squadron for this Place on the 22d, and anchored here on the Evening of the same Day, immediately landing the Reinforcement and Military Stores destined for the Garrison, and the Sick and Wounded.

In this Situation of the Squadron and its Men, I thought it best for His Majesty's Service to remain at Anchor here, and to set about the Repairs of the Hull, Masts and Rigging of the several Ships, whilst the Sick enjoy every Benefit of Fresh Meat, Vegetables, and Wine, on Shore, for their Recovery.

I have the Satisfaction to inform their Lordships, that I shall be able to remast the Monmouth by the End of this Month, from the spare Stores on Board the several Ships; and that the Damage they sustained in the last Engagement will be every Way made good about that Time.

Abstract of the Killed and Wounded on Board His Majesty's Ships, viz.

Ships.	Killed.	Wounded.	Total.
Superbe,	59	96	155
Exeter,	4	40	44
Magnanime,	—	7	7
Monmouth,	45	102	147
Monarca,	7	28	35
Worcester,	8	26	34
Burford,	6	36	42
Eagle,	—	22	22
Hero,	2	13	15
Sultan,	—	9	9
Isis,	6	51	57
	137	430	567

Among the Killed were the following Officers, viz.

Superbe. Two Lieutenants, Master.
Monmouth. One Lieutenant of Marines.
Worcester. One Lieutenant.
Burford. One Lieutenant of Marines.

Names not mentioned.

Extract of a Letter from Sir Edward Hughes to Mr. Stephens, dated on Board His Majesty's Ship Superbe, in Trincomalee Bay, June 2, 1782.

I HAVE the particular Pleasure to advise you, for their Lordships Information, That His Majesty's Armed Transport the Royal Charlotte joined me in this Bay To-day, and brings Advice of the safe Arrival of His Majesty's Armed Transports the San Carlos, Resolution, and Raikes, with the Porpoise Storeship, at Madras. On their Passage round Ceylon, they were chased by Four Ships of the Enemy's Squadron, Eighteen of which they saw at Anchor off Batacalo, a Dutch Port on this Island, about Twenty Leagues to the Southward of Trincomalee, but lost them in the Night, from which and other Intelligence I have good Reason to believe the Whole of the French Squadron under Mons. Souffrein is now there.

Extract