

nothing to supply the Colony when needed, and little to help itself through the certainty of a more bitter famine next year.

The Company was aware of the heavy obligations upon it and to it. 'Whereas,' it declared to the newly-appointed Councillors of the Colony,

the Company has laid out, expended, and bestowed the most considerable part of their whole stock toward the settling of their intended Colony, the charge thereof ought in all reason and gratitude to be refunded in due time by the Colony to the Company, with a valuable consideration during the non-payment thereof.

The seven men who were thus bluntly told that the purpose of the Colony was profit had been chosen by a special committee, set up at the beginning of the year to determine the type of man most needed as a Councillor. In view of the contentious, jealous band finally selected, it is hard to know what qualities the committee particularly admired.

Major James Cunningham of Eickett was the first to be accepted by the Directors, and would be the first officer to desert. He had served in Hill's Regiment at Fort William, and as a company commander he had marched into Glencoe with that battalion on the morning of the massacre, later carrying Hill's account of it to Edinburgh. He was stiff-necked, egocentric and insolently proud, and his first thought as Councillor was to secure the appointment of his brother William as his secretary. He had never been out of Scotland in his life, had seen no action in the field, and knew nothing of ships or trade. Walter Herries said that he was 'a Pillar of the Kirk', and this may explain his appointment, for by now the Company was doing little without the approval and the prayers of the Presbytery.

Daniel Mackay, who was selected on the same day, was a hot-tempered but conscientious young Highlander from Lord Reay's country, and a hard man to like for he intrigued as busily as he worked. According to Herries he was 'a scrivener's or writer's clerk, newly come out of his apprenticeship', but he was in fact already a practising lawyer, though the Directors might have found one more experienced. The third Councillor, James Mont-

gomerie, was another of Hill's disbanded officers. He had been an ensign in the Scots Guards, said Herries, 'but not liking that office, left it, and carried a brown musket in another regiment.' He was a brave soldier, and if he could make no intellectual or political contribution to the government of the Colony he served it in the best way he knew, against the Spaniards in the field. Even so, his appointment can only be explained by the fact that his grandfather was the Earl of Eglinton, his father a Major-General, and his uncle a Privy Councillor and a Lord of the Treasury.

William Vetch, the fourth appointment, had accepted the office only after several representations, and even now he was sick and doubted whether he would ever be able to get up from his bed. Herries said that he was a man of no trade, 'but was advanced to this post on account of his father who was a godly minister and a glorifier of God.' The father was certainly a legendary member of the Scots hagiarchy, a Lanarkshire preacher who had led a troop of horse against the Episcopacy, been a spy for the Covenanters in Edinburgh, and suffered more than most from persecution and exile. The Privy Council had condemned him to death *in absentia*, and only since the Revolution had he and his family known private peace and security. He had intended that both his sons should follow him into the ministry, and had educated them at Utrecht to this end, but with the accession of William III they became soldiers instead. William joined the Scots Greys, and Samuel became a lieutenant in the Cameronians, sharing their first bloody fight when they drove the clans from the burning streets of Dunkeld. Both young men later served in Flanders, and it was a nagging wound got at Steinkirk that still kept the elder brother to his bed. They were resolute veterans, and loyal friends of Thomas Drummond whom they called their 'entire comrade'. Samuel Vetch,* who had inherited little of his father's piety and unselfishness, was now an Overseer, commanding a 'mixed lot' which included the young volunteer Roger Oswald.

*The father spelt his name Veitch. I have used the spelling used by both brothers and by the Company.

The three remaining Councillors chosen were seamen. Robert Jolly, however, had not commanded a ship for a dozen years or more, having left the sea to become a merchant in Hamburg. His proposal for a Scots company with the monopoly of trade between that city and the Shetland Isles (and with a certain net gain, he was snre, of thirty or forty per cent on every voyage) never got much further than the paper on which it was written, bnt such uninhibited visions of profit, and the help he gave the Company's Commission in Hamburg, probably impressed the Committee for Selection. Labouring the inevitable pun, Herries said that he was 'a jolly Scotch overgrown Hamburger', but in trnth he was a sad and ineffectual man who would have been happier had he kept to his house on the Elbe.

Robert Pincarton, the second seaman Councillor, was of a different warp and weft, and even Herries grudgingly admired him, describing him as 'a good, downright, rough-spun tar, never known before by any designation or state office save that of boatswain.' Boatswain or not, he was the Company's best sea-officer, courageous and uncomplaining, esteemed by his men and respected by the Landsmen. He took pride in his command, the *Unicorn*, in his simple, lonely cabin with its folding-table and linen cloths, its cushions and copper candle-sticks, peppermill and looking-glass. As if he were commanding a man-of-war he dressed his boat's-crew in smart uniforms, every man wearing a velvet cap embroidered with a silver unicorn. He was to have too little time to prove himself as a Councillor, and the Colony was to be the worse for that.

Finally there was Captain Robert Pennecuik, commander of the *Saint Andrew* and commodore of the fleet, and by his own reckoning the only man on the Council with the wisdom and experience to justify the office. He was pig-headed and domineering, suspicious of all but other seamen, and of those too if they challenged his judgement. He had been twenty-one years away from Scotland, and his qualifications for a sea command were that throughout the war he had served, consecutively, as a surgeon, lieutenant, and captain of a bomb-ketch in the English Navy. He was appointed to the Council, said Herries, 'by the

interest of the Kirk party, the better to balance that of the Church, and to keep out Dr M—, a reputed Atheist who would certainly have debauched both.' This anonymous doctor was undoubtedly Munro, who sulked and pouted like a thwarted child, and found excuses for refusing when he was later ordered away to the Colony. Pennecuik's conditions for accepting office were almost despotic, but appear to have been granted by the Directors without argument. He insisted that those placed in authority over him, if ever he were to suffer that ignominy, should at least be men who had seen action afloat. He asked for, and was given, fifteen shillings a day plus allowances for each of his five servants, half-pay when not at sea, and half-pay for life if disabled. He also demanded, and received, 'as much privilege in trade as any commander in the English East India Company'.

These were the strange, ill-assorted men chosen to govern Scotland's noble undertaking. With the exception of Robert Pincarton, and possibly Vetch, none of them had qualities that promised a wise and selfless administration. It is impossible to believe that the country could not find a more experienced lawyer than Daniel Mackay, a nobler spirit than Cunningham, a more skilful soldier than Montgomerie, a less foolish merchant than Jolly, or a more humane commander than Robert Pennecuik. If they had been chosen by lot they might have been more representative of what was best in the nation, but interest and preferment had appointed them, and the method cannot be judged by hindsight since it was the custom of the age, and Scotland has always had more than her tragic share of place-men and committee-men. They were chosen, and at the beginning of July six of them took the oath, William Vetch sending word that he was still 'under the physic'. They took the oath at Leith, and within sight of the fleet.

We do solemnly promise and swear, in the presence of Almighty God, that we shall be faithful and just to the trust reposed in us by the said Company, and shall to the best of our knowledge and skill endeavour to promote to the benefit of the said Company and interest of the said Colony, as we shall answer to God.

Men and ships had been ready since early June, five good

vessels, 1,200 men, and a year's provisions. On the eighth day of that month the first eighty Landsmen were sent aboard the *Caledonia*, *Unicorn* and *Saint Andrew*. During the next few weeks there were delays and hawing, few men being willing, while there was no sign of an immediate sailing, to exchange their quarters ashore for hot and foetid 'tween-decks afloat. At the end of the month the Directors whipped up those laggard officers who had not yet mustered their companies, promising them fourteen-and-a-half pence 'for every man raised here in town, and half a dollar for every man they brought in from the country,' providing they went aboard at once. Roderick Mackenzie issued a coffee-house proclamation on Wednesday, 29 June, 'ordaining that all officers and others who are resolved to proceed on the voyage be on board of the several ships allotted for them before or upon Monday next, at twelve a clock in order to sail.' So the streets of Edinburgh and Leith rattled with drums, the tap and paradiddle of a company call, and the long roll of assembly. Ferries took the men across the firth, and in the three great ships they waited for another two weeks.

Much had not yet been done. There were still quarrels and disputes over the payment promised the laggards, which the Directors now seemed reluctant to make. Unusually low tides made loading difficult. The water aboard the *Saint Andrew* was found to be brackish, and long-boats from the *Unicorn* and the *Caledonia* were sent away to bring fresh casks. Captains for the pink and the snow had still to be appointed, and Pennecuik was confusing everybody with his own preferences. There were small matters, like the petition of Marion Smyth, asking for charity because her only support and her only son, a ship's boy, had been drowned. She was sent twenty shillings. From their miserable cell in the Tolhooth, Bowrie and MacAlexander and Turnbull pleaded for mercy, promising to go with the expedition if they were released. They were sent aboard under guard. William Vetch had not yet taken the oath, though he was still eager to go 'if his health serve him at that time'. The Court of Directors was meeting daily now, in Milne Square and at Leith. Even the Council-General, which had rarely met and usually without a

quorum, now managed to assemble, determining the government of the Colony and issuing instructions to its Council. They were published on 8 July, and if the site of the Colony was still not identified it was at last given a name.

Know all men by these presents, that in pursuance of the powers and privileges granted by the 32nd Act of the 4th Session, and the 8th Act of the 5th Session of this current Parliament, as well as by His Majesty's Letters Patent under the Great Seal of this Kingdom, to the Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies, the Council-General of the said Company have upon mature deliberation, *Resolved* (God willing) to settle and plant a colony in some place or other not inhabited in America, or in or upon some other place by consent of the natives thereof, and not possessed by any European Sovereign, Potentate, Prince or State, to be called by the name CALEDONIA . . .

All powers of government, military and civil, would rest in the Councilors of the Colony, who would have the right to increase their number by not more than six once they had landed and settled the plantation. They were to divide the land into districts of not less than fifty, and not more than sixty free men, 'who shall yearly elect any one Freeman Inhabitant whom they shall think fit to represent them in a Parliament or Council-General of the Colony.' This Parliament, to be called or adjourned at the discretion of the Council, was to make and enact all rules, ordinances and constitutions, and to impose what taxes might be necessary for the good of the Colony. A free man of any nation could trade with and from the Colony, enjoying equal rights and privileges with the Scots if he made it his home, and the conditional word in these splendid declarations was 'Freeman'. Although it was not directly stated, it was clearly understood by the Company and its supporters that this Colony, like all others, could not prosper without the ultimate employment of slave-labour.

All exports from the Colony would be subject to a two per cent levy, payable to the Company in money or goods. The Company also reserved to itself one twentieth of all the lands, and one twentieth of all gold, silver, jewels, gems or stones, pearls,

wrecks, ambergris and precious woods, the remaining nineteen parts belonging to the Colony in return for one hogshead of tobacco yearly (which presumably the Company then intended to give to the King). From 1 January 1702 all goods imported by the Colony from Europe, Asia, and Africa, and in the ships of the Colony or Scotland, would also be subject to a two per cent levy.

Less publicly, the Councillors received their particular instructions. They were to direct the fleet to the land named in their secret sailing orders. There they were to build, plant and fortify, to employ men and ships in the best interests of the Colony. They were to be jealous of the Company's honour, to accept no insults to its flag, and to defend both by force of arms. They were to keep an exact journal of the voyage and the landing and to send this home by the first ship leaving. They were also to maintain proper accounts, to insist upon fair trading, and to ensure that the land was justly divided. The original and egalitarian promise of fifty acres to every man had, not surprisingly, been changed. Officers were now to receive a hundred, and Councillors one hundred and fifty. Given this much, they were warned to take no more, and to grant no more to others, 'to the end that what is taken up may be the better cultivated, and may not be engrossed by a few to the discouragement of other industrious people.'

The Councillors signed an acknowledgement of their instructions at Leith on Tuesday, 12 July. That morning the ships came over from Burntisland and anchored off the southern shore of the Forth. Among the white saltires and the rising suns that flew from sprit and top-mast, a commodore's red pennant was run up to the fore-peak of the *Saint Andrew*, a vice-admiral's snapped above Pincarton's *Unicorn*. It was another day of yellow sunshine, bright on white canvas and red gun-ports, the refurbished gold of stem and stern. The little tenders now had their captains, Thomas Fullarton on the *Dolphin*, and John Malloch on the *Endeavour*, both being men whom Pennecuik had known in the English Navy and who had now been given these commands by

his preferment. Great crowds on the Leith shore watched and cheered the ships until late dusk passed into night, and there was nothing to be seen but the orange glow of stern-lanterns, nothing to be heard but the creak of the yards and lone voices calling the hours of the watch. Ballad-writers had been alert to the pleasing ambiguity of the ships' names, and the author of *Caledonia Triumphans* made good use of them.

Saint Andrew, our first Tutelar was he,
The Unicorn must next supporter be,
The Caledonia doth bring up the rear
Fraught with brave hardy lads devoid of fear;
All splendidly equipt, and to the three,
The Endeavour and the Dolphin handmaids be.

All the Directors were now in Leith, in cramped and crowded quarters, conducting the final business as best they could. For three years there had been a great expenditure of ink and paper that was to enrich the archives of Scotland with both trivia and tragedy, and among the busy writers now the most tireless was Captain Pennecuik. He had not been aboard a day before he sent his clerk ashore for more pens, more ink, more paper. Three miles away, Lord Seafield was also writing, to Carstares, and confessing himself much fatigued by the excitement, viewing the expedition with lacklustre eyes.

I believe, and so does most people here, that it will not succeed so well as expected; but yet no man that desires to be well esteemed of in his own country will be persuaded to oppose what is for the interest of the Company.

The paradox contained its own untruth, for the country was in fact afire, convinced that the expedition could not fail. Edinburgh was full of visitors, the inns and houses of Leith crowded with men and women who had come to say good-bye to a son, a brother, or a husband, to pay valedictory honour to their glorious fleet. The Colony could not fail, not when it was served by such noble young men. *Caledonia Triumphans* spoke out against the scattered faint-hearts, the English traducers.

Nor are these youths the scum of this our land,
But, in effect, a brave and generous band,
Inspired with thirst of fame and soon to have
Titles upon the marbles of their graves.

Twelve hundred men, some boys, a few women. Graves most of them would certainly have within the year, on land and at sea, but no marble headstones. A wooden marker for the more fortunate, and that quickly eaten by ants.

The fleet sailed on the morning tide of Thursday 14 July, the fiction of its secret destination still maintained. Though few men did not know that it was to be Darien, it could not be acknowledged until Pennecuik and his captains broke open their sealed orders. Three packets wrapped in oiled sailcloth, one to be unfastened when the fleet had cleared the firth, the second to be read at such a time and place indicated in the first, and the third to be opened 'when at the place of settlement'.

There were crowds on Castle Hill and Caltoun Craigs, white faces and waving hands at every window on the northern cliff of the city. At Leith, men and women pressed forward to the water's edge, crying, calling, singing. Some knelt to pray, exhorted by the inspired voices of their ministers. A few were bitter with disappointment. At dawn, officers had gone through each ship from stem to stern, from truck to keel, turning out stowaways, wrenching their hands free from rigging and timber, ignoring their imploring voices. Now these unhappy men stood on the quay and the dunes, watching the ships they would willingly have joined without payment or reward. As top-sails cracked and bellied, there was a bray of trumpets from the decks, a rolling of drums, and a great cry from Leith Sands to Castle Hill. The ships passed through the smoke of the *Saint Andrew's* signal gun and turned their golden stern-castles to the shore.

But that day they sailed no more than ten miles, northward to Kirkcaldy where they took up moorings again. There they remained for five days more, while Robert Blackwood and his clerk came over from Leith to check the last of the invoices and bills of lading. He also brought word that William Vetch was still too ill to leave his bed, and the expedition must sail without him.

Aboard the *Dolphin* young David Dalrymple, seaman, stared at the windows and chimneys of Kirkcaldy, trying to pick out his own house. When he could endure his homesickness no longer, he slipped over the tender's stern and into a dory with another deserter, John Wilson the boatswain of the *Dolphin*. They went ashore in the dark.

On the evening of Monday, 18 July, the ships cast off their moorings, lay by all night, and were finally gone in the morning. They sailed on an early tide and into the rising sun.

They did not go without William Paterson. At the beginning of July the Company had asked the Presbytery to order prayers for a fair wind, and to persuade the Reverend Mr Thomas James to change his mind. After a week of emotional argument and equivalent meditation, he agreed to go with the expedition, providing, he said, 'that Mr Paterson did go, believing him to be a propagator of virtue and a discourager of vice, and would be exemplary to others.' The Directors did not see Paterson in this light, or any light at all nowadays. They would rather have done without the man, and they havered for another week. But Mr James was insistent, and so was the Presbytery. Paterson was called before the Directors and asked if he wished to go. He said yes, without hesitation, and was told that the Company therefore accepted him as an ordinary member of the expedition, without office and without authority. When he asked permission to take with him his wife and his clerk, Thomas Fenner, it was grudgingly granted.

On Saturday afternoon they were rowed across to Kirkcaldy, where Pincarton generously found the Patersons a small cabin aboard the *Unicorn*. Sudden good fortune, the warm welcome he received from other colonists, went to Paterson's head. Within the hour he boarded the *Saint Andrew* and told the astonished Commodore that there should be an immediate inspection of all stores, so that any deficiencies might be reported to the Directors and made good before the fleet sailed.

Captain Pennecuik wasted no words. He told Paterson to mind his own business.

3

THE DOOR OF THE SEAS

'Yet we had patience, hoping things would mend ashore'

The First Voyage, July to November 1698

IT began well. There was a strong and favourable wind, blowing so hard that the larger ships sailed with their main canvas reefed. For most of the first day the fleet kept in to the Fife coast, passing between it and the Isle of May. Horsemen from Kirkcaldy had brought news of its departure and there were crowds on the shore at Elie and Saint Monans, Anstruther and Crail, fluttering hands and unheard cries. Before dusk, with Fife Ness on their larboard quarter, the ships were sailing north-east by north toward Bell Rock, spritsails curtseying to the open sea. Hull down by nightfall, their stern-lanterns were unseen by the last crowd on Saint Andrews' sands.

Captains and Councillors had opened the first of their sealed orders long before the fleet cleared Largo Bay. They were to make for the Orkneys and the Atlantic west of Ireland, thus avoiding the curious watch of English cruisers in the North Sea and Channel. At the Orkneys they could take aboard what provisions might be necessary, and from thence they were to make all sail to Madeira. Here the second orders were to be opened, but if wind and weather made this landfall impossible the papers were to be broken out as soon as the fleet reached Latitude 32° North.

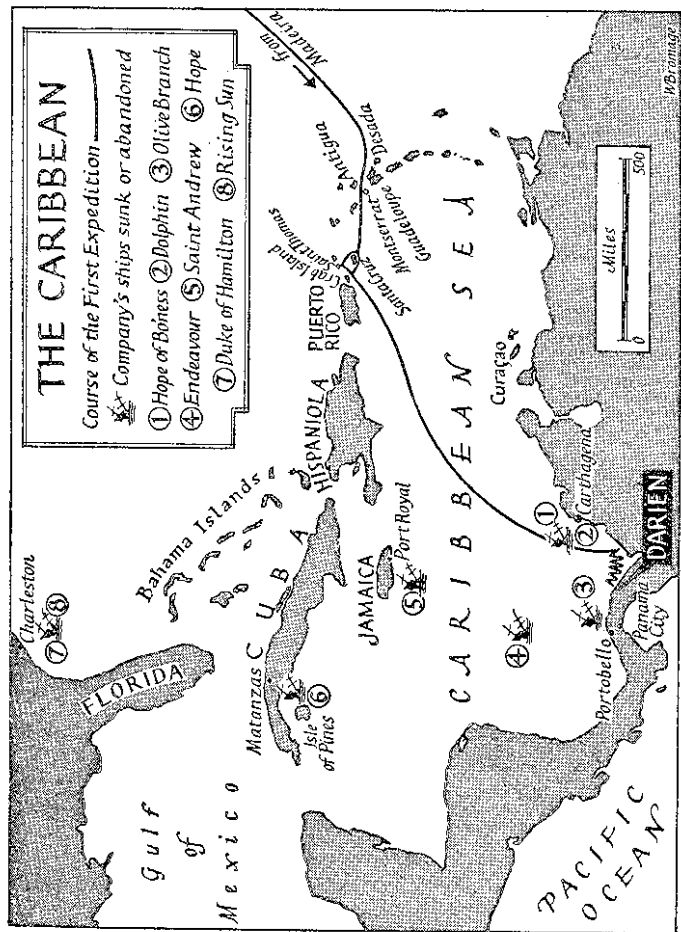
On the fourth day and north of Aberdeen the ships were becalmed, the sunlit air so still that the captains' pennants scarcely moved at the topmast heads. At noon the wind rose and blew gently from the south, carrying the fleet gallantly past Peterhead where the townsfolk fired three guns in salute. The compliment was ignored by Pennecuik. He was in his cabin, presiding over a

THE CARIBBEAN

Course of the First Expedition —

Company's ships sunk or abandoned

- ① Hope of Boiss
- ② Dolphin
- ③ Olive Branch
- ④ Endeavour
- ⑤ Saint Andrew
- ⑥ Hope
- ⑦ Duke of Hamilton
- ⑧ Rising Sun



bitter meeting of all sea-captains and Councillors whom he had called aboard the *Saint Andrew* during the calm. They had brought with them, at his request, a list of their provisions and stores as drawn up by their pursers, and the reading of these produced at first a state of speechless shock and then violent argument. The Directors of the Company had assured the Council that the provisions would be more than enough for nine months, but now the pursers reported that they would not last above six. A great deal had been consumed during the weeks the ships lay at Burntisland, and much of the bread that remained had become damnified, beef and pork had been spoilt by bad stowing. Walter Herries, who presented himself as the originator of all wise decisions and the steadfast critic of all that were bad, later claimed that the reports had been called for at his suggestion. He made his own inspection and said that he 'could not make above five months and a half of any provisions except stock-fish, of which there was a full eleven months and that at four days of the week, but (we) had not above four months butter and oil.'

The squabbling and bickering in Pennecuik's great cabin lasted until nightfall, by which time a heavy fog had come down and the *Caledonia* was lost in it, despite Pennecuik's orders that all ships were to close in to his stern-lights at dusk. Robert Drummond and the two Councillors who sailed with him, Montgomerie and Jolly, were grudgingly allowed to stay aboard the Commodore's ship until the dawn look-out sighted the *Caledonia's* topsails above the sunbright mist. They went away to her in an ill-humour, and with Drummond convinced that Pennecuik was an ignorant fool. The first meeting of the Council had set the pattern of acrimony and suspicion of all that were to follow. Factions were already forming, jealousy and vanity marking the division between landsmen and seamen. 'Our Marine Chancellors,' said William Paterson, in his report to the Directors more than a year later, 'did not only take all upon them, but likewise browbeat and discouraged everybody else, yet we had patience, hoping things would mend when we came ashore.' He had not been present at the meeting, and could have got little comfort

from the thought that had Pennecuik taken his advice at Kirkcaldy the shortages might have been discovered in time.

The Commodore had no choice now but to order his fleet to make for the Orkneys and there wait for more provisions to be sent from Leith. Meanwhile all aboard were placed on short rations. On 24 July as the ships beat up from Duncansby Head to the Orkneys, a fog came down again. First a mist moving gently on a changing wind and then, in a few hours, so thick and white a curtain that nothing could be seen beyond the bowsprit head. For a while they kept within hail, the *Saint Andrew's* lookout singing each ship's name and, if answered with a cry of 'Success!', calling back 'God grant!' When voices could no longer be heard Pennecuik fired a signal gun every half hour, and anxiously counted the muffled musket volleys that replied. Groping blindly under shortened sail, no captain could say for certain where he was, and all were in fear of running aground. There was no thought now of making an anchorage in the Orkneys, if indeed they could be found, only a desperate desire to get clear of this nightmare of fog, rocks and a rising sea. Once, when the fog lifted, there was black land to the north and south, unrecognizable and unknown. Aboard the *Unicorn* some said it was the Orkneys, and others Shetland, and yet more that it must be the Outer Hebrides. On the *Saint Andrew* Pennecuik counted topmasts in the spray, and thanked God and his own skill that his squadron was still together.

But not for long. A sudden gale blew out of the north, cold and bitter from the Arctic and with grey seas running. When wind and sea dropped at nightfall the fog came on again and there was soon no reply to the *Saint Andrew's* appealing gun. The white darkness lasted for three days during which, by some impossible miracle, the ships passed safely between the Orkneys and Shetland. When it lifted, at dawn on 31 July, each vessel was alone in the Atlantic with a skein of gulls. Off the Butt of Lewis, under clear skies and before a north-westerly wind, Pincarton rightly believed himself to be the furthest south of the squadron. He put the *Unicorn* about and told his maintop man to keep a sharp eye to the north. Before ten o'clock the man cried a ship

astern, and Pincarton shortened sail and waited for her to come up. She was the *Endeavour*, a lost child happy to be found, but her master John Malloch knew nothing of the others. Although he would willingly have waited, Pincarton could not ignore a favourable wind, and with the pink to starboard he set course for Madeira. The next day they passed the cloud-head of Saint Kilda, and the sick and miserable landsmen aboard the *Unicorn* stared at the black wall of rock until it was gone and there was nothing about them but the sea.

On 2 August tacking across the mouth of the Minch between Cape Wrath and Lewis, the *Saint Andrew* found the little *Dolphin*, and later the *Caledonia*. Together they sailed south-west and south, believing the others lost.

Little was left now of the high spirits in which the settlers had left the Forth. Some of them were to remember the miseries of that northern voyage more vividly than the horrors they were still to suffer. 'For God's sake,' William Paterson would write to the Directors, 'be sure to send the next fleet from the Clyde, for the passage north about is worse than the whole voyage to the Indies.' Kept below decks by the unsympathetic seamen, sick with the stench of their own bodies and the rolling of the ship, maddened by incessant noise and choked by the fog that seeped through the hatches, angered by short rations and foul water, never clean, never alone, never told where they were or where they might be tomorrow, never seeing the sun and rarely the sky, most of them had lost all heart for the venture long before the ships broke out of the fog. What strength they had they wasted in pettish quarrels, resenting the small privileges of those above them and jealously preserving theirs against those below. During the gales they clutched each other in fear, or closed their eyes and wished for death. No one left any record of how Mrs Paterson and the few other women aboard endured this wretchedness. Only the very young kept their courage. Colin Campbell, whose family had sent him aboard the *Unicorn* under Pincarton's protection in the hope that he might learn enough to make the sea his trade, somehow managed to make daily entries in the journal he was writing for his brother. Nothing a seaman would

admire, he modestly admitted, for there was no man aboard who was ready or willing to give him the simplest lessons in navigation. Patiently he recorded the winds and the weather, the changing latitude, the sight of a distant and unspoken ship, the day when the *Unicorn* lay becalmed and her foretop-men went aloft to repair a trestle-tree that had been broken in the Orkney gales. On 15 August, west of Cape St Vincent, there came to the ship two white pigeons, lifting the hearts of all aboard.

Days behind Pincarton, the other three ships made slower sailing, and at night the *Caledonia* frequently lost sight of the *Saint Andrew's* light. The dawn hours were thus wasted in frustrating delays until Drummond's topsails came over the horizon. Pennecuik believed that Robert Drummond was deliberately dropping behind at night out of wilful spite, and the tempers of both men were not improved by the indignant signals that passed between their ships before they got under way again. Off the coast of Portugal there were frequent calms during which the squadron was idle enough for the land officers on one ship to visit their friends and kinsmen on another. They drank too much brandy, and indulged in too many intrigues. When the Drummond brothers came aboard the *Saint Andrew*, Robert in his blue coat and Thomas in scarlet, they boasted that the entertainment they gave aboard their ship was more generous than the niggardly hospitality a man might expect on the *Saint Andrew*. Pennecuik resented the arrogant contempt and secret smiles of the idling gentlemen who stood on his main-deck in red coats and campaign-wigs, talking of such exclusive matters as family, rank, battles and sieges. He readily believed the gossip brought him by Captain Lachlan Maclean, commander of a land company. This Highlander, who had his own dark reasons for disliking the Drummonds (one of which might well have been a clansman's memory of Glencoe), said that the brothers were forming a cabal and plotting against the Commodore. Pennecuik was hot for court-martialing them at once, but Mackay and Montgomerie persuaded him to wait until the fleet reached Madeira. There, they said, a full Council should debate the affair.

On 20 August, at three in the afternoon and sailing due west,

the *Unicorn* and the *Endeavour* sighted Madeira ahead, but a brisk gale that blew up suddenly kept them beating about for two more days. When they finally came in to Funchal roadstead, below a white castle and green and lemon hills, a Genoese ship at anchor there ran out her guns with trumpets braying. Pincarton went ashore, his boat's-crew smart in their silvered caps badged with unicorns. The Governor said that the Scots had been taken for Algerian pirates, and although he could now see that Pincarton was no rogue he had been told by the English that Scotland was too poor a country to possess such splendid ships. By patient courtesy, by producing a copy of the Company's Act, and by a 12-gun salute providentially fired from the *Unicorn* at the most awkward moment of this interview, Pincarton convinced the Governor that the Scots were what they claimed to be. Twelve guns were fired in reply from the castle, and the islanders came down from their vineyards and their houses with shouts of welcome.

There had been good reason for caution. Aboard the Genoese ship were tempting prizes for a corsair: a bishop worthy of ransom, a bride who was to marry a gentleman of Madeira, and her dowry of £15,000 Sterling. 'Yet the woman,' wrote a Scot whose respect for this vast sum had led him curiously to her cabin, 'was no beauty for all that.' To his amusement, a second Genoese arrived a day or so later with another bride from Lisbon, 'but cheaper and better favoured than the first.'

Pennecuik's laggard ships arrived on 26 August. As soon as they were sighted John Malloch went out to them in the *Unicorn's* pinnace, piloting them into the roadstead and telling the Commodore that despite some early suspicion the Scots were now welcome to water and victual their ships. There was another thunder of salutes from ships and shore, and then Pennecuik turned to matters uppermost in his mind. He called a full meeting of the Council aboard the *Saint Andrew*. The behaviour of the Drummonds since leaving the Forth, he said, had 'smelled of mutiny', and he moved that they be stripped of their commands and set ashore. Young Mackay and Montgomerie, weak from seasickness, weary of Pennecuik's quarter-deck manner, and aware

that they must endure more of both before the voyage ended, were inclined to humour him. But Robert Jolly and James Cunningham, the uneasy traveller of the middle road and the committed member of the Glencoe Gang, argued forbearance. They promised to secure the Drummonds' submission to Pennecuik's authority while at sea, and upon this assurance the Commodore's motion was defeated.

The Scots swarmed ashore, seeking wine, food and entertainment. They ate unripe fruit and were ill. Some officers sold their scarlet coats and plumed hats, their swords or their shoe-buckles to buy meat. They marvelled at the number of lizards they saw, thought the Portuguese were no better than thieves, and observed that in the general poverty of the island a few English merchants seemed to be living remarkably well. Paterson, however, was pleasantly surprised by the kindness of these Englishmen, and he concluded from this that there must be more goodwill toward the Company than the Scots imagined.

He was in a rare and warm state of euphoria, having been elected to the Council in place of the absent William Vetch. Which of the warring factions supported his election, hoping for an ally, is unknown, but they were undoubtedly disappointed for he refused to take part in their childish squabbles. 'I must confess,' he wrote later, 'it troubled me exceedingly to see our affairs thus turmoiled and disordered by tempers and dispositions as boisterous and turbulent as the elements they are used to struggle with.' He was thinking of Pennecuik's jealous feud with Robert Drummond, and of Pincarton's lack of sympathy for both. The mad proposal that the Council should elect a new President each week had been further complicated by the Commodore's noisy claim that until a landing was made he was the supreme and only authority. Paterson said that a weekly presidency was 'a mere May-game of government', and he proposed that each Councillor should hold the office for a month, and that when the colony was reached the Land Councillors should take their turn before the Seamen. They would thus have four months in which to make proper rules and ordinances, to secure a firm government that could not be upset by Pennecuik's irascibility or

Pincarton's ignorance. But he got no support from the other Land Councillors. 'They, like wise men, had begun to make their court, and had agreed beforehand with those of the sea that the presidency should last but a week.'

Though the Scots were able, at a price, to fill their water-casks, the impoverished island had no great quantities of bread or meat to sell. The cargo of the *Endeavour* was exchanged for 27 pipes of wine, nearly three thousand gallons which, it was innocently hoped, could be traded in the Indies. Under threat of severe penalties, the Scots had been told not to discuss their venture with the islanders, or at most to pretend that they were bound for the Guinea Coast. The kindly English merchants were not deceived by this, they deluded themselves instead, and told London that in their opinion the squadron was certainly making for the East Indies.

At noon on 2 September, Pennecuik loosed his fore topsail and fired his bow-chaser. It was the signal to weigh anchor and sail, and as the ships moved out they filled the roadstead with the smoke of thirty-nine saluting guns. Pennecuik was disappointed when the Governor replied with thirty-seven only, but he smugly logged the fact that even these were more than the Portuguese would give to King William's warships.

The *Saint Andrew* was already out of the bay when the Commodore looked back over his stern-rail and saw that the *Caledonia* had shortened sail and put about. When Drummond's pinnace was then seen rowing ashore, Pennecuik fired another gun, hoisted his mizzen topsail and brought the fleet to anchor again. The Council was summoned to his cabin, and Drummond was ordered to attend it with an explanation. He came aboard with his redcoat brother and said that his second mate had offended him, and had accordingly been discharged and put ashore. He outblustered the infuriated Pennecuik, saying that his commission gave him the right to accept or refuse any of his crew, but the Council told him to behave himself, and to take the officer aboard again. He did so with ill grace, and once more the fleet went to sea.

There was no longer any pretence about its destination. The

second packet of sealed orders had been opened, and its contents made known to all.

You are hereby ordered in pursuance of your voyage to make the Crab Island, and if you find it free to take possession thereof in name of the Company; and from thence you are to proceed to the Bay of Darien and make the isle called the Golden Island. in and about eight degrees of north latitude; and there make a settlement on the mainland as well as the said island, if proper (as we believe) and unpossessed by an European nation or state in amity with his Majesty.

If the land were indeed found to be occupied by such a nation, the fleet was to make to leeward until it came to some other part of the mainland that was not claimed or possessed. Except by the Indians, of course.

The fleet was four weeks at sea before it made a landfall in the West Indies. Six days out from Madeira it got in to the Trade Winds, and had fair sailing by day and by night. Four men were dead of the flux before the ships left Funchal, and thirty-six more were to die before Darien was reached. Yet death was a commonplace expected and accepted by all sea-captains on long sea voyages, and by washing their decks regularly with vinegar, by smoking the holds, they believed that they kept sickness to a minimum. The landsmen were less sanguine, and many were unnerved by the suddenness of death. They could take no comfort in their own good health when they saw others, seemingly as well as they, heaved overboard within hours of the first spasm of black vomit. Even so, spirits were generally high, tempers cooled and old quarrels were temporarily mended. There was still hunger, however. Though the Commodore, his captains, and the Councilors dined well, at tables set with English pewter and white linen, the lower the rank the hungrier the man, and at bottom there was harsh privation. When a Dutchman on the *Saint Andrew* broke open another's chest to steal bread he was forced to run the gauntlet, angry men pressing forward to strike a blow as he staggered along the ship's waist.

There were less brutal entertainments. 'This day,' wrote Colin Campbell on 10 September, 'we supposed ourselves to have passed the Tropic of Cancer, and so designed to make merry

according to the English custom.' Pennecuik ran up his pennant to the mizzen peak, fired a gun, and as the ships scarcely moved under shortened sail 'every officer and gentleman who had not passed over the Tropic were ordered to pay a bottle of brandy, or three of Madeira wine, otherwise to be thrice ducked, which some obeyed, others not.' Captains and Councillors came aboard the *Saint Andrew*, dined at one o'clock, drank punch until five, and by six all but Paterson were drunk and asleep aboard their own ships.

The celebration had not been a success. 'The heat of the weather and the punch,' remembered Robert Jolly, 'began to alter the humour of some commanders.' As was usual, drink distorted Pennecuik's judgement and reason, and after the second or third bowl he took some fancied objection to both Mackay and Montgomerie. Having treated them most unkindly, said Jolly in cautious reproach, he proceeded to abuse his first, second and third mate, and then all the redcoat officers aboard his ship. Walter Herries, who had earlier attached himself to Pennecuik and was now thinking he might have made a mistake thereby, took the man aside by the sleeve and told him to remember that he was no longer aboard a King's ship, that these soldiers were gentlemen with influence at home. The word influence always had a sobering effect on Pennecuik, and he at last held his tongue.

The Drummonds and Samuel Vetch watched this childish performance with sour satisfaction. Hating Pennecuik, and pleased to see him making enemies, they also had no respect for the Council or its authority. Jolly said that they began their intrigues again, asking him and Cunningham to insist that the Council be enlarged to include one or more Land Officers, meaning, no doubt, Thomas Drummond and Vetch. If this were done, they said, and 'if any mutiny or disorder should occur (for want of provisions) it might easily be crushed by the command they had over their companies.' It was sound advice perhaps, but Robert Jolly was shocked. He and Cunningham fell back on their authority as Councillors, loftily ordering that no more be said of the matter. The Drummonds and Vetch marked down both men as weaklings, as indeed they were.

And westward again, the wind veering east-south-east to east-north-east, until there came a week of sickly calm during which the air was hot and motionless, thick to breathe and foul to taste. Pitch bubbled between the ships' timbers, and there were sometimes two or three deaths a day. Officers and Volunteers, Planters and Seamen, a surgeon's mate and a midshipman, a cooper and a carpenter's boy, quickly ill, quickly dead, and quickly turned overboard with a short prayer. The Councillors were alarmed and ordered an issue of wine as a prophylactic, but it was of little use. The diarists briefly recorded each sad departure. About 2 a clock in the afternoon one of our seamen called Alexander Alder died of a consumption, and thrown over . . . this day Robert Hardy, a gentleman in Captain Dalyell's company . . . John Stewart, gentleman . . . Smith, a seaman . . . a Sergeant of Captain Colin Campbell's . . . died of a fever . . . of a flux . . . heaved over board . . .

In the forenoon of 28 September one of the leading tenders hoisted a jack and an ensign, the long-desired signal, and soon the look-outs on all the ships were crying land, land ahead. There had been hope of it for days, started by the flying-fish that hung above a bow-wave, by a man-of-war bird lazily circling. 'We saw in head of us,' wrote an anonymous diarist aboard the *Saint Andrew*, 'the island of Dezeada, in English the Land of Desire, so called by Columbus being the first land that he did see when he came to these seas.' It was passed to larboard in the late afternoon, and beyond it the island of Guadaloupe was a purple shadow dissolving into the night. To its waters was committed the body of Andrew Baird, seaman, dead of the bloody flux that day.

The fleet made little way during the night but at dawn, sailing west by north before a freshening wind, it passed between Antigua and Montserrat. At noon it was abreast of the tiny isle of Redonda which reminded Pennecuik, in a moment of uncharacteristic sentiment, of the Bass Rock in the Firth of Forth. Homesickness was endemic. Surrounded by the Leeward Isles, green jewels bright in the sun, the Scots searched for a rock, the prow of a hill, a curving bay or a cluster of trees that could warm

them with the memory of home. At three in the afternoon they passed Nevis, hoisting their ensigns in an answering salute to an unknown vessel anchored offshore, and with more imagination than truth they told each other that the wedge-shaped island was like Castle Rock in Edinburgh when seen from the Roads of Leith. That night the body of Walter Johnson, surgeon's mate, was slipped overboard. Sick of a fever, he tried his own skill upon himself, 'got his hands on *laudanum liquidum*, took too large a dose thereof, and so he slept till death.'

By noon the next day the fleet was seven leagues to the south-east of Santa Cruz, a windless day and the sails bleached white against a deep blue sky. As the landsmen leant idly on the ships' rails, watching the gannets that flew suicidally into the rigging, the Councillors and the Captains came aboard the *Saint Andrew*. They met in Pennecuik's stifling cabin, its stern windows opened wide to catch the faintest movement of the listless air outside, the reflected sunlight rippling across their tired faces. The Commodore grumbled again about the Drummonds and would have forced a vote in favour of setting them ashore as soon as possible, but once more Jolly and Cunningham persuaded the rest of the Council to leave this unhappy matter until the colony was reached. There was a more important decision to make. By their second sailing orders they should now steer for Crab Island,* but they had also to find a pilot who could take them to Darien. Since Paterson was the only man there who had been in these waters, and since it was hoped that he would know and find such a man, his advice may have influenced the proposal finally accepted. It was agreed that the fleet should separate, the *Dolphin* and the *Unicorn* (with Paterson aboard) sailing north and east about Santa Cruz for the Danish island of Saint Thomas, and the others making north and west about for Crab Island. The ships parted after sunset, each firing a farewell gun, the smoke of it white and luminous in the indigo dusk.

On 1 October the *Unicorn* and the tender anchored in seven fathoms off Saint Thomas, and were still being saluted by the guns of the fort when Pincarton and Paterson were rowed ashore.

*Ile de Vieques, between Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

The lonely Danes made the Scots welcome, giving them sugar-cane, pineapples and rum, but Pincarton was uneasy. Four English sloops from Jamaica were lying off the island, and one of them came up to take a closer look at the *Unicorn*, making no signal and sending no boat until the second day when her captain himself came aboard. He said that he was Richard Moon, bound from New York to Curaçao with a cargo of provisions, and Paterson immediately recognized him as a man he had known many years before. They embraced each other warmly, and Moon agreed that since Crab Island was nearer than Curaçao it would be plain good sense for him to go there and exchange his provisions for any goods the Scots had.

Ashore in a tavern Paterson also found a pilot, the buccaneer Robert Alliston, now sadly old, white-haired and garrulous. He still had a good conceit of himself, however, confident that he could set the Scots down on any part of the Main they wished. He drank a lot in Pincarton's cabin, talked with maudlin regret of the old days, of the bitter changes that had taken place. Did Paterson know that Captain Sharpe – Batt Sharpe who sacked Portobello and who crossed the Isthmus with Dampier and Wafer – did Paterson know that after escaping a hanging in England Captain Sharpe had now been taken by the Danes and thrown in prison for ninety-nine years? And where was it they wished to settle, Darien? He remembered it well.

Still uneasy about those other Jamaican sloops, Pincarton weighed anchor after four days, sailing out to a roar of seventy guns from his own ships and the walls of the fort.

Pennecuik's squadron had sighted Crab Island on 1 October, tacking about it for twenty-four hours before dropping anchor. It was almost entirely covered with rich green trees, and uninhabited except for the monstrous crabs that gave it its name, but when Robert Drummond took the *Caledonia* on a cruise about it he found a Danish sloop hidden in a narrow bay. Despite his liberal hospitality to Pincarton, the Governor of Saint Thomas had quietly sent this ship to enforce Denmark's claim to Crab Island, her captain further emphasizing the point by setting up a tent ashore and manning his country's flag. Pennecuik answered

this by pitching his own tent beneath the trees on the opposite side of the island and by flying his pennant, the Company's standard, and the saltire of Scotland. According to his journal the Danish protest was more of a formality than a threat,

they were obliged so to do to please their Court, but wished with all their hearts we would settle there, for then they would have a bulwark betwixt them and the Spaniards of Porto Rico who are very troublesome neighbours.

Whether he believed this or not, to impress the Danes and to flatter his own vanity he also landed a redcoat guard of sixty men, their arrogant drums beating against the hills at dawn and dusk.

On 5 October, a day of thunder, lightning and great rain, Pincarton's ships arrived with the Jamaican sloop. Richard Moon took a hard look at the loading-lists and the displayed samples of wigs and stockings, shoes and slippers, plaiding and hodden grey, needles, nails and horn-spoons, Bibles and Catechisms, and decided that he wanted none of them, certainly not at the ridiculous prices the Scots were asking. Nor would he part with any of his provisions for drafts on the Company's agents in New England. He would sail on to Curaçao, he said, and there exchange his cargo for slaves. Paterson saw the danger, and he told the Council that if Moon spread a report that the Scots were over-pricing their goods it would not encourage other traders to visit the Colony. It would be better to sell at a loss and avoid the risk.

To all this I was answered that they were not obliged to take notice of any particular man's assertion as to the over-valuing or ill-buying the goods, but rather to believe the prime cost was as in the Company's invoice; and that they would not be so imposed on by Captain Moon.

Moon shrugged his shoulders and made ready to sail. It was of small consequence to him what these madmen thought or did, but before he left, and upon Paterson's earnest appeal, he promised to bring or send provisions to the Colony when once it was settled. If the Scots had not found a friend, Paterson had at least saved them from making an enemy.

Pennecuik's high-handed contempt for Richard Moon had

turned the Council against the trader. Sitting in his tent, a glass in his hand, his wig on the back of his chair, and a scarlet sentry at his door, the Commodore was the same loud-mouthed bully he had been afloat, convinced that he and those sea-captains of his party knew what was best for all. Paterson realized that his earlier hope that things would mend ashore had been mistaken.

Though our Masters at sea had sufficiently taught us that we fresh-water men knew nothing of their salt-water business, yet when at land they were so far from letting us turn the chase that they took upon them to know everything better than we.

Pennecuik had now been abandoned by Herries who was exercising his talent for intrigue and malicious gossip on the Drummonds and Vetch. Again the Commodore demanded a court-martial, insisting that the brothers and their friend be set ashore on Saint Thomas, and again Cunningham and Jolly turned the vote against him. Paterson's respect for the Drummonds (though these hard men had only contempt for him) also persuaded the Council that it could ill afford to lose them, insufferable though their conceit might sometimes be.

The water-casks were full and it was time to leave. Though their sailing-orders had given the Scots leave to settle the island if it were found to be unoccupied, no one thought the point worth disputing with the bold Dane, his tiny sloop and his fourteen armed men. The fleet sailed in the forenoon on Friday 7 October after heaving overboard the bodies of James Paterson, gentleman, and Thomas Dalrymple, planter, both dead of the flux. Above the noise of water, wind, and singing ropes, the Scots heard the sad crying of sea-fowl, the excited chattering of monkeys in the retreating trees. One man was left behind. Michael Pearson had stood guard ashore with Captain Maclean's company, and had thought of what had so far happened and what yet might come when the fleet sailed. He was seduced by the gentle beauty of the island and he ran away to the woods with his musket.

For three weeks the fleet sailed south-west across the Caribbean toward the Isthmus. It was a bitter time of foetid calms

and violent gales. None of the seamen had known such storms, winds that blew up suddenly out of the heat, seas that heaved above the topsail yards, and lightning so bright and sustained at night that it all but blinded the boatswain of the *Saint Andrew* when he looked up to it in wonder. Twenty-five lives were lost to fever, flux and despair, and among them was the young wife of John Hay, a lieutenant in Captain Charles Forbes's company. She was turned overboard from the *Unicorn* in the early morning as another gale was rising, and her valediction was a rending report as the main-topgallant sail parted from its yard. On all the ships the sick lay below in their own filth, tormented by the pitching of the deck and the endless noise of the wind. There was little water to ease their burning thirst, for that taken aboard at Crab Island had soon turned foul, and whether they lived or died seemed of little importance when all aboard expected to be drowned at any moment. They had come to the edge of the world and there was no land, though old Alliston, standing by the helmsman of the *Saint Andrew*, swore that it was near, very near. And then suddenly, dramatically, it was there.

'About two a clock this morning,' wrote a diarist on Monday 17 October, 'we saw with the lightning black, high stones like land. We lowered most of our sails till break of day, at which time we found it to be really land, so prodigiously high. . . .' A dark escarpment rose out of the spray, a menacing wall from sea to sky, and the water that broke over the sprit-sail heads was strangely yellow. Alliston recognized this inhospitable coast, naming it to Pennecuik who wrote the words down phonetically in his journal, *Nostra Signiora della Popa*. It was Spanish land, said the buccaneer with unhappy memories of the times he had walked through Spanish blood, and close by Carthagena. That afternoon, as the fleet turned westward seeking Darien by elimination rather than by good pilotage, the wind dropped and the sea was calm. Still golden yellow, the water rolled like rich cream in the wake of the ships, and Alliston said that it came from some great river to which he gave no name. But it was the colour of hope, of gold, of rich promise.

Two more weeks passed. The winds that carried the ships west-

ward during the day turned against them at night. There were long hours of dispiriting calm, minutes of wild squalls during one of which the *Dolphin* lost her main-topmast and almost foundered. Sometimes there was land to larboard, high cliffs, the startling green of distant forests, a white fort, the long roll of dangerous surf. And the dying continued. Three midshipmen of a fever, soldiers of the flux, a young Volunteer of 'a decay'. There died Adam Bennet, son to Sir William Bennet of Grubbet, and Adam Cunningham, brother to Sir William Cunningham of Caprington, both young men of eager ambition who had pressed their families to secure them service with the Company. There died Henry Charters, a cheerful young Volunteer, and there died an English seaman called Malbin. But the death which moved men to tears, particularly Paterson, was that of the Reverend Mr Thomas James, who had refused to sail without his friend. Four guns were fired over his body as it slipped into the sea.

Toward the end of the month the ships were able to make little way. A great current, which may have been a movement of the sea or the outflow of another river, dragged them eastward and they were forced to tack wearily against it. At last, on 26 October they dropped anchor in ten fathoms with a green ribbon of land to starboard. Alliston would not, or could not say what it was, but he plainly hoped it might be Darien. A boat was sent away from the *Unicorn* in search of fresh water. When it returned, its casks were still empty, the crew having found no stream, but they brought instead a great pelican, a hundred dead gannets and a live lizard with a licking tongue.

The fleet moved westward again for two days. The smell of laud was thick on the air, and there were distant sounds at night. By day dolphins escorted the ships, arching their iridescent backs, but no one had the strength to catch them. A strange malaise fell upon all. Sickness increased, seven more young men died, though the decks were frequently washed with vinegar and the holds purified with smoke. Alliston stubbornly insisted that they must soon come upon the Gulf of Darien and Golden Island, but few believed him. And then, at eight o'clock in the evening

of Friday 28 October he swore that they were there. Off the larboard bow of the *Saint Andrew* was a bar of dark trees, a line of surf or crystal sand. The *Caledonia* and the *Endeavour* stood out to sea as sentinels, but the other ships dropped anchor where they were.

Before dark two canoes came out from the shore, and almost before the Scots were aware of them several painted Indians had come boldly up the flagship's side to her waist. They were friendly and unafraid, their bows unstrung in their hands and their lances lowered, but at first they said nothing, staring shyly at the Scots with gentle eyes. 'We gave them victuals and drink,' wrote Pennecuik, 'which they used very freely, especially the last.' More accurately the Scots deliberately made the Indians drunk, although this was unnecessary, for they were anxious to talk once their shyness passed. They had a few words of English and some indifferent Spanish which Benjamin Spense was called up to interpret. They had seen the Commodore's red pennant flying from the *Saint Andrew's* fore-peak and had taken it for the English flag, which they had seen many times above the ships of their buccaneer friends. It is doubtful whether they understood the difference between an Englishman and a Scot, if Spense attempted the explanation, for they said that they had been expecting the ships for two years and were happy to see them now that their people were at war with the Spaniards. By midnight they were in a drunken stupor, and were left lying in the scuppers until morning when they were sent away with some old felt hats, knives, and a few twopenny looking-glasses. 'With which,' wrote Pennecuik, 'they seemed extremely pleased.'

By morning, too, Alliston had changed his mind. The ships were not in the Gulf but two leagues eastward of Caret Bay, which was itself some miles from Golden Island. The Commodore sent three of his boats to the Bay where their crews found the same Indians they had entertained the night before, offering gifts of cocks, hens and a wild turkey. More valuable even than these was the Indians' assurance that Golden Island was three or four leagues to the west. After turning over two gentlemen who had died of the flux, the ships weighed anchor, joined the *Caledonia*

and *Endeavour* out to sea and sailed westward in fair weather.

At four o'clock in the afternoon of Monday 31 October as the bodies of David Hay and John Lucason were turned over from the *Unicorn* and the *Saint Andrew*, the blue cap of Golden Island was cried ahead. By dusk the ships had come within a league of it, dropping anchor in twenty-five fathoms. That night another young Volunteer died, and although there was a rank smell of death aboard the ships there was also a great feeling of relief, a lightening of the heart, as if all believed that the sickness and the dying were now ended.

The fleet moved in to the island at dawn, anchoring again within half a mile of it. The sea-fowl in the sky were as thick as windblown leaves. The great rock, rising above the five small ships, was topped with glistening trees, and the only break in its black cliffs, the only landing-place was a narrow inlet of sand. Alliston remembered it well. Here had been the rendezvous of the buccaneers before their overland raid on Santa Maria in 1680. Here gathered sun-browned men from many ships, his own among them. Captain Sharpe had tied green and white ribbons to his rallying flag, Cook had drawn a hand and sword on his, and Sawkins had painted his scarlet banner with yellow bars. There had been great fires, the sound of sword on stone, dreams of blood and gold long since ended by old age or a hangman's rope. If Alliston remembered all this with regret, he kept the thought to himself. His work, for what it had been worth, was now done. By luck rather than skill he had brought the Scots where they had wished to come.

That afternoon Pennecuik called the Councillors to his cabin. Whether there was, or was not, a great Gulf of Darien as they had been told, Golden Island was certainly a reality. The lifting of the morning haze had shown the mainland some miles off, and this was undoubtedly theirs to settle. To the south-east could be seen what might be the entrance to a natural harbour, and since there was no safe anchorage off the island it was agreed that it should be immediately explored.

Pennecuik went away to it in his pinnace. He discovered that it was a wide bay formed by a narrow peninsula of high ground

that cut it off from the sea, and on either side of its entrance were tall hills which even his limited knowledge could recognize as excellent sites for defensive batteries. The blue water of the bay was still, scarcely moving on its shore of sand, and beyond the mangroves that bordered it was an unbroken forest, rising and falling, rolling toward the emerald ridge of distant mountains. The pinnacle went in past a sentinel rock at the entrance and shipped oars. The Scots looked at the green trees, the grey-legged mangroves, listened to the strange calls of unseen birds, and marvelled at the wonder of the land.

When Pennecuik saw a white flag waving on the far shore he ordered the pinnacle in toward it, and then shipped oars again as twenty Indians came out of the trees with bows and lances in their hands. Scots and Indians stared at each other, until the latter unstrung their bows and threw down their lances, beckoning to the pinnacle. Pennecuik told one of his seamen to swim ashore, which the man did reluctantly no doubt, and when he came back he said that the Indians wished to be friends, that one of their great captains would visit the ships the next day.

That night, before dawn, there died Thomas Fenner who had been Paterson's good and faithful clerk.

'This harbour . . . capable of containing a thousand sail'
Caledonia, November 1698

THE great captain who came over the side of the *Saint Andrew* on the morning of Wednesday 2 November was a sturdy little Indian with an unsmiling face. His name was Andrcas, or so he was called by the Spaniards from whom he had also acquired his clothes and the hidalgo gravity of his expression. His painted chest was covered with a loose red jacket, his thighs by white drawers from which jutted the silver cone of his manhood, and his golden nose-disc gleamed in the shadow of an old, wide-brimmed hat. He was accompanied by a bodyguard of twelve men who stood boldly about him in the ship's waist, their brown eyes

looking back into the curious stares of the Scots. They were all stark naked, wrote Hugh Rose in his journal that night, 'only a thread tied round their middles, to make fast another that kept on a small piece of plate upon the end of their yards.'

Benjamin Spense greeted them with Castilian compliments. Andreas looked at the scarlet coats and blue, the white faces framed by monstrous curls of false hair, the dark sheen of muskets and the glitter of steel, bleached canvas, tarred ropes and decks reeking of vinegar. What did the strangers want? 'We answered,' said Pennecuik,

our design was to settle among them, if they pleased to receive us as friends: that our business was chiefly trade, and that we would supply them from time to time with such commodities as they wanted, at much more reasonable rates than either the Spaniards or others can do.

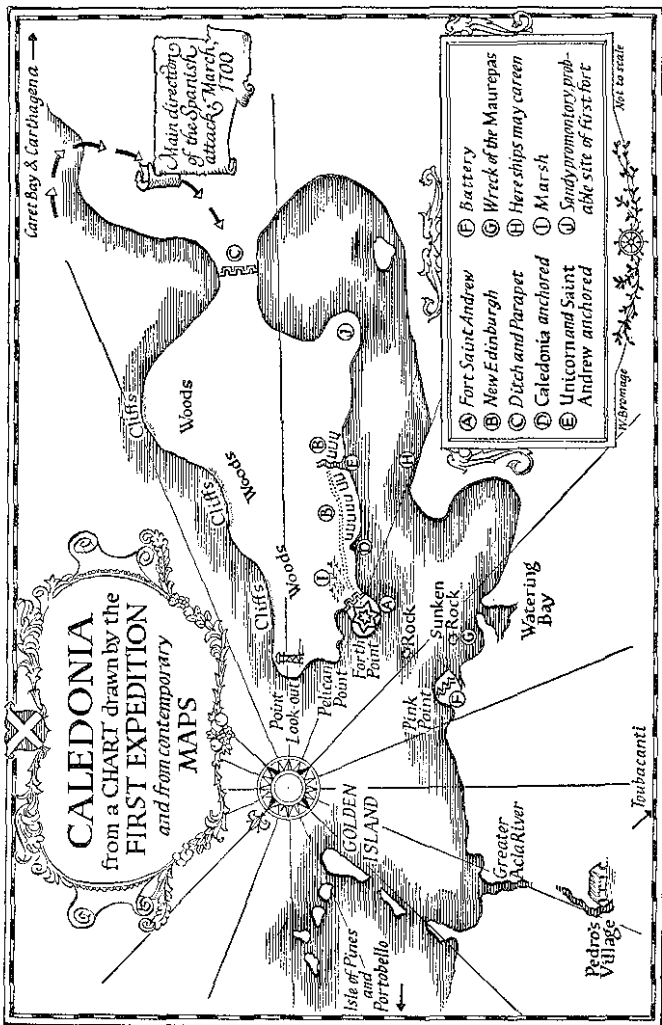
Were they friends of the Spanish? Not friends, said the Commodore, nor yet at war with them, but ready to resist them by force of arms if any affront were given. Andreas was pleased by this. He decided that the Scots were privateers, and he chattered about his two good friends, the buccaneer captains Swan and Davies, at whose side he had fought long ago in the overland raid on Santa Maria. Mr Spense's translation kept up with these nostalgic reminiscences as best it could until Pennecuik coldly cut them short. The Scots, he said, were not rognes but traders. Andreas took the rebuke with good humour, since it was soon followed by gifts. He went away with the Scots flag flying from the prow of his canoe, and upon his head a fine new beaver hat, richly embroidered with golden galloon.

Relieved by the Indians' assurances of friendship, though he would never believe that they were not idle thieves, Pennecuik sent the *Saint Andrew's* boats away to explore and make soundings of the harbour. The next day he wrote a full account of their discoveries in his log and ordered Hugh Rose to copy it faithfully in his journal, since this was to be sent to the Directors as soon as possible.

The green bay was almost two miles in length, shelving from six to three and a half fathoms, a mile or so across at the most,

and with a narrow entrance no wider than a random cannon-shot. In the middle of this sea-gate was a black rock, three feet above water on a still day but hidden by breaking waves when the wind blew hard. 'This looks terrible to those who know not the place well, but on both sides is a very good and wide channel.' There was a second rock further in and for most of the time it was under water, a constant hazard to ships and boats. The narrow peninsula forming the northern side of the bay was covered with trees, tall cedars, manchineels and sapadilloes through which the wind sang with such gentle sweetness that a sentimental Landsman, dreaming in the sunlight, immediately called them the Shades of Love. For most of its length to seaward the peninsula was a high and unscalable escarpment, plunging into deep water. No European fortress had such a defence. On the bayside it rose less steeply, with level ground, and with a small promontory of sand where boats might be safely beached. 'This harbour,' said Pennecuik, with insane exaggeration that can only be explained by his desire to impress an ignorant Court of Directors, 'is capable of containing a thousand sail of the best ships in the world. And without great trouble wharves may be run out, to which ships of the greatest burthen may lay their sides and unload.'

The southern shore of the bay was bordered with red-legged mangroves, thick and impenetrable, and beyond them, almost immediately it seemed in that hazy heat, rose the blue and green mountains of the continental divide. There appears to have been no argument, no dispute about the proper site of the Colony. The land about the bay, as far as their feet might take the Scots and for as long as their swords could hold it, was to be Caledonia, but here on the peninsula would be built the town of New Edinburgh, here above its sandy promontory would be Fort Saint Andrew. The choice of this crooked finger of land, for strategic reasons at least, was a wise one. A single ship might hold the sea-gate against a fleet, helped by land-batteries on both points. The peninsula was well-watered by streams that sprang in bubbling joy from the feet of the cedars, whereas across the bay, according to Pennecuik, there were dry riverbeds only. At its eastern



X
CALEDONIA
 from a CHART drawn by the
FIRST EXPEDITION
 and from contemporary
MAPS

Caret Bay & Carthiagena →

Main direction
 of the Spanish
 attack, March,
 1700

Cliffs
 Woods
 Cliffs
 Woods
 Cliffs
 Woods

Point
 Look-out

Pelican
 Point

Forth
 Point

Pink
 Point

Sunken
 Rock

Wacera
 Bay

Isle of Pines
 and
 Portobello

Greater
 Acliar
 River

Pedro's
 Village

Toubacanti

- (A) Fort Saint Andrew
- (B) New Edinburgh
- (C) Ditch and Parapet
- (D) Caledonia anchored
- (E) Unicorn and Saint Andrew anchored
- (F) Battery
- (G) Wreck of the Maurepas
- (H) Here ships may careen
- (I) Marsh
- (J) Sandy promontory, probable site of first fort

Not to scale

end the peninsula narrowed to a strip of land little more than 130 paces wide. If this slender neck were cut by a rampart and a sea-filled ditch a single company of resolute men might stand off an army.

'And here you lie land-locked every way,' wrote the Commodore optimistically, 'that no wind can possibly hurt you.' No one at this time realized that the prevailing winds blew from the north, that they might close the sea-gate for weeks and prevent the clumsy ships from leaving the harbour. The bay was a trap, created by and quixotically sprung by Nature.

Within a day of his first visit Captain Andreas returned, this time with his wife and sister. The women wore linen mantles of white, with strings of beads on their arms and necks and golden crescents in their nostrils. They said nothing, were submissive to Andreas, but stared at the Scots with bold eyes. Pennecuik reported that the first woman was the Captain's 'travelling wife', adding that the little man had four in all, and that the Indians were allowed as many as they wished. 'He was still on the pump as to our designs, but when he found our accounts all of a piece he told us that the English, after they had been friendly with them, had several times carried away their people.' Which would suggest that the Indian had more cause to be suspicious than the Commodore. Andreas said that he would have brought another captain with him, a man called Pedro, but he was uneasy and would not approach the Scots 'till he was better assured of our integrity'.

That morning the fleet weighed anchor and sailed into the bay. Pincarton's helmsman made a poor job of it and ran the *Unicorn* on to the sunken rock, tearing off some of her sheathing. She was got off with difficulty, but she leaked abominably thereafter and was never thoroughly seaworthy again. The Council met aboard her in Pincarton's cabin under the uneasy presidency of James Montgomerie, the first of the Land Councillors to occupy the chair, and although Pennecuik still maintained that his authority should override all he grudgingly acknowledged that the soldiers now had a right to be heard. For once he made no demand for the court-martial of the Drummonds and Samuel Vetch, under-

standably since the rest of the Councillors decided that Thomas Drummond should be given the responsibility for organizing and erecting defensive works ashore (though they would not allow the man to select his own sites). Pennecuik could not bring himself to write Drummond's name in his log however. 'All the Land Captains being consulted,' he said, 'it was resolved to build a battery on the west side of the entrance to the harbour.'

Forty men from each ship were put ashore on the peninsula, to clear the ground for New Edinburgh, to cut down trees from the Shades of Love, and to build huts for the sick. Another party was set to digging graves, above the high water mark and out of the sun. Death had not abandoned the expedition. Lieutenant Inglis died of a fever as he lay on deck listening to the strange sounds of a new world. The gunner's boy of the *Caledonia* was drowned unseen as he swam in the blue water below her stern. The bloody flux killed an Englishman named Jenner, Henrique Ghaup a musician, and James Clerk a Volunteer. And William Simpson, the printer, lost his devoted boy to a fever that was at least mercifully quick in dispatch.

William Paterson's loss was sudden and heartbreaking, though he never referred to it in the report he wrote for the Directors. Within a few days of the death of his clerk, his wife died of the flux and was buried on the peninsula to a droppng salute from the *Unicorn's* guns. Thus, with no record of what she might have thought or felt, passed this loyal woman whom Walter Herries described as 'a red-faced coffee-woman'. His report of her death was even crueller. Paterson had carried her to Darien, he said, and 'at her first landing thrust her about seven feet underground to make the possession, *de facto*, of New Caledonia more authentic.'

Paterson hid his grief, turning to the business of the Colony. He had lost his fight to extend the presidency to a month, and now he tried to get the settlement and the fort moved to a more sensible place. 'The sea Councillors,' he said,

were for a mere morass, neither fit to be fortified nor planted, nor indeed for men to lie upon. I know no reason they had for it, unless it might be to save one of their boats the trouble, once in two or

three days, to bestow three or four hours to supply the Landmen with water.

It was two months before experience, the schoolmaster of fools he said, taught the Councillors that they had made a mistake, and the fort was re-sited on other ground.

From the first day the boats went ashore with the working-parties it was clear that the men were almost too weak for the prodigious task of building a town and a fort. The want of enough food was bitter, and the privations of a long and sickly voyage had affected all. Their rations, that 'scrimp allowance' as Paterson called them, had been meagre enough aboard ship, but then, at least, there had been no obligation to work long hours in damp and exhausting heat. There was no fresh meat, the barrelled beef and pork were green and malodorous. Some men caught fish in the bay, shot wild-fowl and monkeys, bought plantains and fruit from the Indians, but most of them had no more than what they were sparingly given. 'And this,' said Walter Herries, 'was not fit for dogs to eat, but it was a mercy we had a good many Highlanders in our legion who were not used to feed on much of God's creatures that's hallowed.' Upon Pennecuik's orders the provisions were kept aboard the ships and landed when necessary, or when he thought necessary. 'Our marine masters,' complained Paterson,

continually pretended other urgent business, and so could hardly spare their boats to bring the provisions ashore, and many of the most needful things that I know were only designed for the shore were detained on board under pretence they belonged to the ships.

The old division between Seamen and Landsmen was thus further widened by anger and envy. Aboard their ships, away from the poison of noxious mists and rotting vegetation, better supplied with provisions and drawing their water from those southern rivers Pennecuik had said were dry, the sailors avoided the worst of the fevers and fluxes that harassed the men ashore. Sixteen more Landsmen died in November, including the remaining minister Adam Scott. His spiritual influence over his dismayed congregation had become increasingly tenuous as men

turned from his arid exhortations to a more stimulating comfort. Drunkenness was common, the only escape from hunger, from weariness, and from bewildered anger. Brandy was freely given to the sick, as much to cheer their departure as to help their recovery. In one evening the Planters drank all the beer issued to them for a week, and all they could win on a throw of dice or the turn of a card, passing happily into a stupor that shut out the cries of the sick, the whispering of the surf, and the unnerving night-sounds of the forests. Once a week they were also given a quart of wine to be shared among each mess of five men, and this too was gambled for and quickly drunk by the winner. The officers, with more liberal rations, were more frequently drunk. Captains received two quarts of wine a week, said Herries, and on the day of issue 'went as merry to bed as if they had been in their winter quarters at Ghent or Brussels.'

Drink also brought more Indian captains to the peninsula and the ships, for the Scots were generous with their hospitality. They sometimes pressed brandy upon these simple people as men will indulge an appealing child with sweets, and sometimes made them drunk in the malicious hope that they would fall into the water as they stumbled overside to their canoes. Andreas came again and dined with the Conncillors, his new hat on his head and his travelling wife at his side, her brown arms and neck heavy with rosy beads. On a fourth occasion he came with a fleet of canoes that were decked in leaves and feathers, bringing a chief called Ambrosio to whom he showed great respect and whom he obviously expected the Scots to honour likewise. This Ambrosio was a strong and vigorous man of sixty who controlled the Darien coastline from the River of Pines to the San Blas Islands. He had been fighting the Spaniards all his life, and he said that if Pennecuik gave him a hundred men, with arms for 2,000 of his own, he would drive the Spanish 'not only out of the mines, which are but three days journey, but even out of Panama itself'. He had good reason for hoping that the Scots would join him in his absorbing life's work. A week or so before the fleet's arrival he had attacked a small settlement of priests on Golden Island, slaughtering them all. He did not tell Pennecuik

this himself; the Commodore heard it from a wandering Frenchman whom Ambrosio brought with him. Pennecuik gave no promise of help, and he privately thanked God that the massacre had taken place before the Scots' arrival, otherwise Spain would undoubtedly have held them responsible.

With Ambrosio was his son-in-law and sub-chief Pedro, a brisk young man who was as gay as Andreas was grave. French gaiety, Pennecuik called it disapprovingly, understanding the reason for it when he heard that Pedro frequently entertained French privateers in his village. He had once been a slave in Panama City, had not forgotten that harrowing experience or forgiven it, and was as hot for cutting Spanish throats with Scottish swords as his father-in-law. He spoke French well, and was thus able to talk to many of the Scots officers without the aid of Mr Spense's Spanish. He quickly made a friend of Lieutenant Robert Turnbull, a bright-hearted, courageous young man who, alone among the Scots, took the trouble to learn something of the Indians' language. Pennecuik did not know what to make of Pedro. Polygamy was one thing, understandable if not commendable, but the man was not only married to Ambrosio's daughter but also to his own daughters by her, 'which is allowed here, yet it seems it's believed a crime, since if they have any children during the life of their mother they are burnt alive, the children, I mean.'

From these captains the Scots learned that there was no great King or Emperor of Darien, no Golden One such as Paterson had once believed, though there was a legend of a barbarous tyrant who beheaded men for pleasure and allowed no one but himself to have more than one wife. He was murdered one night by a group of his followers who resented the pleasure and envied the privilege, and since then the land had been divided unequally among a number of chiefs, great and small, whose power and influence seemed to depend on their success in the field against the Spaniards. Captain Diego, who held the coast eastward from Caledonia to Caret Bay, commanded 3,000 warriors and was more esteemed than Ambrosio. He had been at war with Spain since he and some of his clan broke out of the mines where they had been working as slaves. Pousigo, the brother-in-law of Andreas,

was a powerful shaman, a 'clergyman' Pennecuik called him, and although he possessed little land his influence was great. Corbet, whom the settlers never met, was an ally of the French and had joined them in their recent attack on Carthagena, but the other captains thought little of him. Nicola might have been a valuable ally had the Scots taken the trouble to send him gifts and seek him out. He was Ambrosio's rival, a wise, brave, and good-natured man who could not only speak Spanish but read and write it as well. He also had a surprising knowledge of European affairs. He had once been a pet of the Spaniards, but had broken with them when the Governor of Portobello stole his prized musket. Since then he had wasted his talents in fruitless raids, in the killing of Spaniards whenever and wherever he found them.

At the sea-gate end of the peninsula were three promontories. The largest, which the Scots called Forth Point, was a sandy thumb of land and a few feet only above sea-level. To the north of it, across a small bay, was another which was named Pelican Point. The third was the highest, the end of the northern escarpment of the peninsula, and this was called Point Look-out. Here a wooden tower was built, wherein a watchman was posted by day and night. Two weeks after the fleet's arrival he reported a strange ship standing to westward, and the following day she dropped anchor off the Isle of Pines to the north-west of the harbour mouth. It was another twenty-four hours before her captain was rowed into Caledonia Bay. He came up on the *Saint Andrew's* quarter and boarded her, giving his ship's name as the *Rupert*, a French vessel taken as a prize during the war, and his own as Richard Long with the King's commission to search for sunken treasure in these waters. Mr Secretary Vernon had found a use for the man, though exactly what that was neither of them was ever indiscreet enough to put to paper. The Scots greeted him cordially, although they were not pleased by the visit of an English ship so soon. She was not unexpected, however. Some days before, the Indians had reported her furtive presence off the coast.

Long dined aboard the flagship and the *Unicorn*, and proved

that he had a greater capacity for brandy and Madeira than Andreas, Pedro or Ambrosio. He sat late with Pennecuik and Pincarton, explaining that he had cruised along the coast but had made no landing, and had no wish to claim any part of it for England. He asked questions about the settlement, its strength and intentions, and he did not think it necessary to tell Pennecuik and Pincarton that he was obliged to inform James Vernon of all that he learned from them. Also understandably, he did not admit that while down the coast he had told the Indians that if they were attacked by these Scots privateers the King of England would protect them.

Pennecuik decided that he did not like the man, and that night in his journal he wrote a judgement upon Long that other men might well have used about himself. 'We could by no means find him the conjuror he gives himself for.'

On the evening of 17 November, with Long drunk and asleep aboard the *Unicorn*, the Council decided to accept Ambrosio's invitation to visit his village, and the next day, after the Quaker had returned to his ship, there was a squabbling argument over who should go. Pennecuik of course, there was no debate on that. Jolly was elected, but was sick and proposed Cunningham, Vetch, and Thomas Drummond. Pennecuik objected strenuously, and won his point by the strength of his voice rather than the power of his argument. It was finally agreed that the mission should consist of the Commodore, Pincarton, Cunningham and Mackay. They left at eight o'clock in the morning of 19 November, four ship's boats, a strong force of armed men, the Company's banner and the flag of Scotland. They got no further than the Isle of Pines that day, for the wind turned north to a stiff gale and they were glad to run in to the lee of the *Rupert* and board her.

The English Quaker liberally returned Pennecuik's hospitality, but the Scots found him even less attractive aboard his own ship than he had been aboard theirs. 'Whatever the King or Government of England may have found in Captain Long,' wrote Pennecuik, 'we know not, but to us in all his conversations he appeared a most ridiculous, shallow-pated fellow, laughed at and

despised to his very face by his own officers, and continually drunk.' The questioning and the answering were now reversed, but the Scots were unable to discover the real purpose of Long's commission. Indeed, from his stumbling letters to London it is plain that he was not sure himself, whether he was truly to search for treasure, whether he was merely to report on the Scots settlement, or whether he was to claim the country for England and turn the Indians against the Caledonians. James Vernon got little in return for the ship and money that had at last been given to the importunate man.

When the gale dropped the next morning, Pedro arrived in a piragua, happy to guide the Scots to his father-in-law. They left in the forenoon, making frequent soundings along the coast westward until they came to a broad bay which Pennecnik, with his customary flair for exaggeration, thought might easily harbour 10,000 sail, with deep-water keys alongside which the greatest vessel in the English Navy might safely moor. It was an old meeting-place of the buccaneers, and there were marks ashore where they had once careened their ships. For a moment he thought of uprooting the settlement from Caledonia Bay and transferring it here, but he decided that it would be an ill place to defend, having no sea-gate and no high ground for batteries.

A guard was left on the boats, and the rest of the party marched inland for a league to Ambrosio's village. It stood on the bank of a river, ten or twelve small huts dominated by the captain's house - a great building of cane and plantain leaves, ninety feet long, thirty-five feet broad, and thirty high. Ambrosio was waiting fifty paces from its door, smiling, and surrounded by a bodyguard of twenty men all wearing fringed cloaks of white linen and carrying feathered lances. In the background a band of musicians played sweetly on reed pipes, while others hummed, and still more danced about the Councillors in a manner that reminded them of the graceful movements of their own Highlanders. 'Ambrosio saluted us kindly,' said Pennecnik, 'and gave us a calabash of liquor almost like lamb's-wool, which they call Mislow: it's made of Indian corn and potatoes.' They were taken into the cool shade of the great house where Ambrosio and Pedro

lived with their wives, their children and forty dependants. Pedro proudly introduced Ambrosio's grandmother and communal cook, a surprisingly young-looking woman for the 120 years she was said to have lived. The Scots politely doubted her age, whereupon Ambrosio called up representatives of the six generations from her body, himself among them, and added that her age was nothing, it was common enough for his people to live thirty or forty years longer. 'Yet it is observed,' said Pennecuik naively, 'those who converse often with Europeans and drink our strong liquors are but short-lived.'

The Scots spent the night at the village, sleeping in the great house which, for some reason, reminded them of a church. In the morning they broke their fast with plantains, potatoes and wild hog, after which Ambrosio and Pedro went in to the forests and shot the largest partridges the Scots had ever seen, pressing them upon their guests with disarming promises of love and friendship.

The Councillors returned to the settlement on 23 November. The *Rupert* had weighed anchor three days before, which infuriated Pennecuik for he had hoped to send dispatches home with her. He soon had other matters to anger him. His report that there was no better place than Caledonia Bay for the settlement brought both Vetch and the Drummonds into open opposition. In as many words they said that he was a fool. The ground chosen for the town and the fort was dangerous and unsuitable, and the work already done, little though it was, had been wasted. Pennecuik refused to listen to them, and bullied all the Councillors but Paterson into agreeing that the building should continue as originally planned.

And then there was the problem of Major James Cunningham of Eickett. Behind his stiff-necked arrogance and punctilious manner he was an ineffectual member of the Council, uncertain which faction his duty and his interest inclined him to, now a member of the Glencoe Gang and now cannily neutral, and usually declaring for that party which could cause him the least inconvenience. He had finally decided that the best interest was his own, and that lay as far away from Caledonia as he could place it. 'He became so uneasy,' wrote Paterson, 'and so pos-

sessed (as we thought) by unaccountable conceits and notions that he gave us no small trouble, and at last would needs forsake not only his post but the Colony.' He wanted to go home, and he was determined to go home with the first ship. Pincarton and others thought that he ought to be placed in irons, or at least disciplined until he came to a proper recognition of his duty, but even upon this the Council could not agree. He continued to nag and complain on the edge of all debates.

He was not alone in his desperate wish to be quit of this wretched land. At the end of November, on the eve of Saint Andrew's Day to make the crime more disgraceful, ten Planters broke open the magazine aboard the *Unicorn* and deserted with all the weapons they could carry. A captain and four subalterns were sent after them in one of the flagship's boats to Caret Bay, where it was assumed they had gone. The incident spoiled the flavour of the Saint Andrew's Day supper which Pennecuik held for the Council, although Captain Andreas enjoyed it. He had been invited with intent, the Scots now suspecting him of correspondence with the Spanish at Portohello. 'We taxed him home with it,' said Pennecuik, by which he meant that the Indian was given all the brandy he wished and then questioned. He agreed that he had been friendly with the Spaniards and that they had made him a captain of their native levies, but he had accepted the friendship and the office because he was afraid of them. They had recently told him that the Scots were privateers 'who had no design to settle but to plunder both Spaniards and Indians, and be gone in two or three months.' Pennecuik assured him that they were there to stay, that they would protect him and his people and give him a commission in their service, and that all they wanted from him in return was 'all his right to this part of the country'. He gave it to them with drunken generosity, and went happily home in his canoe.

On 1 December the deserters were brought back. They were put in irons and given nothing but bread and water.

'From henceforward . . . we do call ourselves Caledonians'

Caledonia, December 1698

WHERE was the fine weather which Lionel Wafer had said should now be favouring this promised land? There were days when Hugh Rose had no spirit to record anything more in his journal than the miserable fact that it was still raining. *Much thunder, lightning and rain. . . . Great showers of rain with much wind. . . . The weather very bad which hinders the work. . . . These twenty-four hours there has fallen a prodigious quantity of rain. . . . Much wind and rain. . . . Wind and rain as above . . .*

Weak from fever and flux, depressed by a heavy melancholy, exhausted by daytime heat and shivering at night beneath the dripping palmetto roofs of their huts, the Landsmen looked bitterly through this slanting rain to the ships. The sea-captains were jealous of the health of their crews, and wisely allowed no man ashore except under close watch. Even so, the sailors were frequently ill, although their chances of recovery were higher. Aboard the *Unicorn* young Colin Campbell survived a severe fever, blessed be God, but it had left his hands weak, as his brother could no doubt see from the unsteadiness of his writing. Shipboard life was dull, and there were times when he envied his namesake and clansman 'Captain Colin', an officer of Argyll's who commanded one of the companies ashore. Yet he had no real wish to leave his friend Henry Erskine and land on the peninsula.

There is nothing to be had there, and besides, if I did then Captain Pincarton would never own me nor speak to me any more, as he did to another gentleman who was recommended to his care.

Many men were writing such letters, and keeping journals against the day – pray God let it be soon – when a ship left for Scotland.

The Council at last agreed that the site chosen for the fort was unsatisfactory, and ordered another to be built on the sandy pro-

montory of Forth Point. Although he was no engineer, Thomas Drummond was again the only fit man to organize the work, and he, said Paterson,

according to the tools he had, did beyond what could be reasonably expected from him, for our men, though for the most part in health, were generally weak for want of sufficient allowance of provisions and liquors and the irregular serving of their scrimp allowances.

Drummond was remorseless in the iron discipline he imposed upon his men, and spared his own body less than he did theirs. He was a hard man to like, having no compassion, but there were few who did not respect his ability and strength, and what talk there was about his dark service in Glencoe was kept to a guarded whisper. Indeed, what had been deplored in his behaviour at home might here have been regarded as evidence of resolute leadership. The fort he started to build was to be as simple and as effective as he could make it with the tools, labour and materials available, and large enough to hold a garrison of a thousand men – a star-shaped, palisaded wall made from a double row of wooden stakes packed with earth, cut with embrasures for the forty guns that would be brought ashore from the ships. The earth for the palisades would come from a wide moat, open to the bay and flooded by the tide. On the landward side, and beyond the moat, would be a *chevaux de frise* of sloping planks spiked with iron. All this, it was hoped – with the ditch that was being dug across the neck, with the land-batteries on the sea-gate and with the ships in the bay – should be strong enough to protect the Colony against anything but a formal siege-train, and it was not likely that the Spanish would have such ordnance.

On 3 December the uncertain friendship of Captain Andreas was cemented by a treaty. He came aboard the *Saint Andrew* in the forenoon, with a wife or two and a bodyguard in sodden white smocks. A platoon of soldiers, equally drenched, saluted him from the ships' waist, and beneath an awning on the poop-deck the Councillors sweated in their heavy clothes and itching wigs. The treaty, written fairly on parchment by Mr Rose and decorated with gold-striped ribbon and the Company's seal, was

read aloud by the Clerk and translated into Spanish by Benjamin Spense. It commissioned Andreas as a captain in the service of Scotland, and promised him the protection of the Colony against all his enemies. It was then handed to him, together with a basket-hilted broadsword and a brace of pistols. He accepted them with the grave bow he had learnt from the Spanish, swore that he would use the weapons in defence of the Scots, and presented in return a sheaf of brightly-feathered arrows. The flag-ship's seven waist-deck guns fired a salute, and everyone retired hurriedly to the roundhouse for a glass of wine. According to Herries, one glass led to another, and another. 'Captain Andreas went ashore with his flag flying and the other designs of his honour, except the Commission which I found the day following crammed into a locker of the roundhouse where empty bottles lay.'

A week later, a smartly-manned longboat came through the sea-gate just as the watchman on Point Look-out was reporting a ship, or perhaps two, at anchor in the haze of rain by Golden Island. A French lieutenant climbed aboard the *Saint Andrew* with a flourish and told Pennecuik that he was from the *Maurepas*, a merchantman of forty-two guns, commanded by Captain Duvivier Thomas who had King Louis' commission to sail and trade in these seas. The other ship, he said, was a 22-gunn Dutchman. The news he brought of the Spanish was alarming. Their Windward Fleet, the *Barliavento*, was fitting out at Carthagena for an attack on all European privateers, and its cruisers had already snapped up two English turtling sloops which bad weather had blown within range of their guns. The *Maurepas* and the Dutchman would be grateful for the protection of the Scots' ships and harbour until the *Barliavento* had sailed by to Portobello. The Council gave it willingly, and the next day Captain Thomas came in by longboat. He was as hearty a drinker as Richard Long, but carried himself better, and was able to tell the Scots 'all the news of the coast, and that the President of Panama had given an account to the Governors of Carthagena and Portobello of our arrival.' Wildly over-estimating the strength of the Scots, they believed that the settlement was a bridgehead for an

intended attack across the Gulf of Mexico to the mouth of the Mississippi. 'This obliges us,' wrote Pennecuik that night, 'to make all possible haste in our battery, and to get our ships in line of battle across the mouth of the harbour.'

Despite the rain, the sickness and the exhaustion, the Scots were heartened by the news the Frenchmen brought. Even Hugh Rose, normally a cautious body, was moved to vainglory. 'Our men are very hearty, and seem to long for a visit from Jaque, that they might have a just pretence to their gold mines not far off.' The thought of gold, the hope of gold, of great fortunes to be won by the sword, excited the Scots more than a wretched life growing plantains or trading hoddens grey. The greater the risk of fever and death, the stronger their desire to be quickly rich and quickly away. When the *Maurepas* and the Dutchman came into the bay, dropping anchor behind the Scots' line of battle, a rumour spread that the Frenchman's hold was full of treasure taken in the raid on Carthagena. The Frenchmen did not deny it, or confirm it, they were too busy drinking and feasting.

The day their ships came in, the *Rupert* was once more sighted to the north-west. Long sent a boat with news that the *Barliavento*, now at sea, consisted of seven great sail and a number of tenders full of soldiers. He was soon gone again, apparently in fright and not waiting for his longboat to return. When questioned by Pennecuik, its crew revealed that the Quaker had been behaving very oddly. He had put a landing-party ashore and joined the Indians in a senseless attack on a trading-post east of Portobello, killing seven Spaniards. He had then sent messages to all the Indian villages, 'to tell them we were a pack of thieves and robbers, being only a parcel of disbanded officers and soldiers, and that nobody would protect us.' The Commodore was glad that the battery on Forth Point was completed, with sixteen 12-pounders mounted. 'We are now in such a condition,' he said, with an arrogance that wearied Drummond and Vetch, 'that we wished nothing more than that the Spaniards would attack us.' This braggart self-confidence, which most of the Scots shared, was increased when Ambrosio came with a warning that the

Spaniards were mustering 600 veteran soldiers and 200 Indian levies at Santa Maria and Panama City for a landward attack across the Isthmus. 'It's feared with us,' wrote Hugh Rose, 'that they will not come, but whatever be in it, the work goes well on, the men working with much vigour and resolution.'

The Council met in dissension and argument. Each new President spent much of his week's office undoing the work of his predecessor, or hampering what he believed would be the intentions of the next. Paterson was less worried by the thought of a Spanish attack than by the shortage of provisions, the urgent need to secure fresh supplies from Jamaica. They were, he said, in a prison for want of sloops or brigantines, coastal vessels for trade, and he was delighted when an English sloop slipped into the harbour on 20 December. Captain Moon had kept his promise to an old friend and had sent a colleague, Edward Sands, with a cargo of beef and flour. The Council's gratitude was shortly phrased and shortly given, it then began to argue about the proper value of the goods to be traded for Moon's supplies.

At least there was now a real chance of sending letters and journals back to Scotland. An earlier hope that the *Maurepas* might take them as far as Jamaica had been soon destroyed by her captain's plain reluctance to leave either the harbour or the pleasant drinking-companions he had found among the Scots. Edward Sands said that he would take the papers to Jamaica, and any messenger the Council appointed to carry them. The question now was: who shall go? The decision would be important, the choice involved inevitable risks for all the Councillors remaining. The first man from the Colony to reach Edinburgh would have an uninterrupted audience with the Council-General and the Court of Directors. His prejudices, the complaints of his faction, his account of the settlement would be accepted by virtue of his office, despite what might be written in Hugh Rose's journal or the Commodore's letters. Daniel Mackay was anxious to go, and was lobbying for the election. Cunningham, whose conceits and notions had now become unbearable, thought that he should go, that he would go whether chosen or not. Walter Herries had tired of the Colony, as everybody had tired of him,

and he had already transferred himself, his servant, his baggage and a purse of gold-dust aboard the *Maurepas*, but nobody thought seriously of his candidature. Paterson, with the interested support of Cunningham, proposed Samuel Vetch and two other Land Officers, but Pennecuik noisily quashed that. He would not have one of Thomas Drummond's friends at large in Milne Square, and to prevent it he decided to support Mackay, having no reason to believe the young lawyer bore him any ill-will. For the next two or three days both of them spent as much time as they could aboard the *Unicorn* appealing for the support of Pincarton and Robert Jolly.

Inevitably, the man finally chosen belonged to no faction. If he could not be trusted to favour one party before another, he might at least report impartially upon all. Alexander Hamilton, the Accountant-General of the Colony, was a sober, sensible man who had kept apart from the more acrimonious disputes of the settlement. He was still accepted reluctantly by some of the leaders within the Council and out. Paterson thought they could ill afford to lose the man's knowledge of the cargoes and stores, and said that his departure would cause even more disorder and confusion. The Drummonds and Vetch objected to him because they believed him to be a friend of Robert Jolly, whose weak, vacillating humours they now detested.

Cunningham was also told that he might go with the sloop. The other Councillors had given in to his nagging, as men agree to the extraction of an incisor, considering the relief from pain against the loss to their appearance. 'After weighing his temper,' said Paterson,

they consented to his going, but thought it were prudent to part with him in friendship than otherwise, lest any that might espouse his humour in Scotland should prove a means of retarding or frustrating our needful supplies.

He was given a letter of recommendation, but it was made clear to him that Hamilton, not he, was the emissary.

Now there was a great writing of letters throughout the Colony, a parcelling of journals and small gifts – an arrow, a

silver disc, the wing-feathers of a parakeet, a wondrous sea-shell, a pressed flower. Though many were homesick, disillusioned, despairing, at the least full of doubt, there was an almost unanimous desire to reassure their friends and families, to pretend that New Edinburgh was not a mean huddle of palmetto huts, that Fort St Andrew was not an unfinished palisade, that sickness and death were not commonplace. 'Being in haste,' wrote Colin Campbell to his brother, 'else I would have writ to my mother, and other friends, but let me be remembered to all.' Surgeon Mackenzie's letter to Haldane of Gleneagles said nothing of his distressing failure to check the fever and flux, it glowed with praise of the abundant land, and only at the end betrayed the colonists' fear that Scotland would forget them and abandon them. 'I very heartily wish that a mistaken notion . . . may not occasion the old mother to oblivate her new-born babe before it is fit for weaning and in a condition of doing for itself.' One phrase occurred again and again in many of the letters, in Hugh Rose's journal and Pennecuik's log, as if there had been some agreement to use it and it alone. Mackay used it when he wrote to the Earl of Leven. Darien, he said, was 'one of the fruitfulest spots of ground on the face of the earth'. And being a Highlander, with an ability to confuse hope with certainty, he added that

it will make the Scots nation more considerable in the balance of Europe than ever, and you'll have such a settlement in the Indies in a few years as scarce any European nation could brag of.

Writing to the Earl of Panmure, one of the Councillors-General, Pennecuik blithely said that all things had succeeded beyond expectation, and that nothing could go wrong if the Company's friends in Scotland did as much for the Colony as Heaven had already done. To another Councillor he wrote of gold mines within three days' march, of a country that was 'one of the most fruitful and healthy upon earth'. He sent them trinkets for their wives, nose-plates and rings which Ambrosio had given him. And also

a little instrument of silver which I beg your Lordship will not expose to the view of the fair sex, for if they measure the country by the

magnitude of that instrument I am sure they'll have no inclination to visit these parts.

All members of the Council signed a brief letter to the Court of Directors which was to go as a cover for the journals and dispatches. Although it declared that God Almighty must have preserved the country for their occupation, that its 'fruitfulness' was unequalled anywhere, it ended on a note of uneasy urgency. Supplies were needed, provisions and stores, and it was hoped that they would be sent with the least delay. 'But however it be, by the help of God we shall not fail to do our utmost . . .'

As the year ended, bad weather delayed the departure of the sloop. Obstinate winds closed the harbour, and although Edward Sands could have warped her out he was unwilling to risk his ship in the gales beyond. The *Maurepas* had been forgotten by all except Herries, who was still aboard her. On the evening of 23 December there was not a sober man among her officers and crew, and most of them were still drunk the next morning when Captain Thomas unaccountably weighed anchor, set his topsails and mainsail and moved toward the sea-gate. Great rollers were coming through it, but by fool's luck his helmsman managed to ride them well until the wind dropped abruptly. The ship swung to leeward and on to the sunken rock.

Pennecuik, who had been watching in astonishment from the *Saint Andrew*, ordered his longboat away and was rowed across to the *Maurepas*. He took command with a rare decisiveness, calling for more boats and hauling the Frenchman off the rock. Little serious damage had been done, and when the ship had weathered the point he advised Thomas to drop his bow and stern anchors and wait for a gentler sea. Forty-five minutes later both cables broke, which was what Pennecuik should have foreseen, the ship spun about and back on to the rock, this time tearing a great hole in her hull. She sank slowly, her timbers parting and her masts snapping, but Pennecuik bravely stayed aboard until he had seen Thomas lashed to a raft. He then stripped off his clothes and walked from the deck into the water. 'Naked as I was born, with much ado I swam ashore. The seas broke over me, under each of which I was at least twenty seconds,

and indeed two such more had done my business.' He found Thomas along the beach, half-drowned, and ordered him to be hung up by the heels until the water had run out of his lungs. Nearly half the crew of the *Maurepas* had been lost, including all her officers with the exception of Thomas and a lieutenant, and the angry survivors would have cut the throats of both had not Pennecuik sent them aboard the *Saint Andrew*.

There they were to remain for the next two months, and never, thought the Scots, were men 'more ungrateful, unreasonable, and uneasy'. They had good reason to be. According to Pennecuik, there had been 60,000 pieces of eight in gold and silver aboard their ship, and 30,000 more in trading goods, and the thought of this, lying out there in the bay, would plague the greed of the Scots for weeks. Thomas made some attempts to dive for the treasure, without success, and gave up when Pennecuik promised him that all that came ashore from the wreck would be his. He was cheerfully unconcerned when a package of letters was washed up on the beach. Some were for delivery to the Indian captains, threatening them with the anger of France and Spain if they continued to support the Scots. Others were from Spaniards of Carthagena and Portobello, promising the support of the Indies for the Dauphin's claim to the throne of Spain when His Catholic Majesty, who had been making a long business of dying, finally expired.

Walter Herries also escaped from the wreck. Though he lost his baggage, and his unfortunate servant, the purse of gold-dust was in his pocket when he swam ashore.

Christmas was a day of rest, and was celebrated by a great feast aboard the *Saint Andrew*. Andreas and Ambrosio were both invited, nobody realizing or caring that each had a hearty dislike of the other. They were civil enough at first, but as the bottles passed they began to quarrel. Herries was there again, and his story may perhaps be believed against the indignant denials of others who were not. From a wordy quarrel the Indians went on to hrawl, until they were separated by Pennecuik. Drunk himself, he was still jealous of his own dignity and the solemnity of the day. The next morning no one could remember much of what

had happened, and it was assumed that both Indians had gone happily away in their canoes some time before dawn. And then Andreas was found in the hold below the main hatchway, unconscious and with a bloodied head. Little was done for the man. He was hauled up to the waist and left on deck until his wives and his bodyguard came to collect him.

Once the desperate, self-indulgent carousal of Christmas was over, the year ended on a high and noble note. Edward Sands said that he would sail on Thursday, 29 December, and on Wednesday the Council hurriedly published a declaration constituting the settlement as a Colony of the Company of Scotland. Drawn up and written by Hugh Rose, it repeated the substance of the Act and the Company's right to the land. It established that all who were then, or who might thereafter come to be associated with the Colony were free men, with equal privileges, immunities, and rights of Government. It declared 'a full and free liberty of conscience in matter of Religion, so as the same be not understood to allow, connive at, or indulge the blaspheming of God's holy name.' Freedom and liberty of conscience are words that always have the inherent and expedient qualifications of the age which uses them, and in this case no one took the first to mean that the Colony would not buy or employ slaves, or that the second included the toleration of Papists.

The declaration was read to all as they stood on the wet earth about New Edinburgh, to tired men and sick men in stained scarlet, yellow duck and rusty broadcloth. They were told that not only were they here in 'one of the most healthful, rich and fruitful countries upon earth', but that they were also to live by reason, by the Scriptures, and by the example of the most wise and just among nations. From truth and righteousness would come the blessing of prosperity.

And now, by virtue of the before-mentioned powers to us given, we do here settle and in the name of God establish ourselves; and in honour and for the memory of that most ancient and renowned name of our Mother Country, we do, and will from henceforward call this country by the name of Caledonia; and ourselves, successors, and associates, by the name of CALEDONIANS.

There was little but this to show for the first two months. An uncertain foothold on an exposed peninsula, a ragged village of huts and an uncompleted fort. The price paid so far had been high, though it seems to have been accepted stoically. For dispatch to Edinburgh, Mr Rose had drawn up a list of those who had died, seventy-six between 23 July and Christmas Day. The greatest number in one group were Planters, men with little stake in the Colony except the obligation to defend it and the hope of fifty acres when the land was broken. For many of these the venture had been no more than an alternative to a beggarly life as a disbanded soldier. Few of them, certainly not the Highlanders who were cut off from the rest of the settlers by their knowledge of no language but Gaelic, shared the youthful zest of the Volunteers. Both ministers had died, and since 20 November the Colony had thus had no one to intercede on its behalf with a quixotic Almighty. There had died the trumpeter whose music had been a solace, two surgeon's mates from exposure to their patients, five young midshipmen and the junior mate of the *Saint Andrew*, whose splendid name was Recompense Standburgh. The last name on the list was Thomas Fullarton, captain of the *Dolphin*, who 'died suddenly after warm walking'. He had eaten and drunk well at the Christmas feast, taken a stroll to clear his fuddled mind, and was dead of the flux before nightfall.

'No doubt,' wrote Roderick Mackenzie when he published the list later in Edinburgh,

everyone will justly regret the loss of his own nearest friend. . . . As even a greater number of so many as went might have died by this time, had they all remained at home, so it may be some satisfaction to the nearest friends of the deceased that their names shall stand upon record as being among the first brave adventurers that went upon the most noble, most honourable, and most promising undertaking that Scotland ever took in hand.

The sloop sailed, taking with her Hamilton, Cunningham, and Walter Herries. The decks and yards of the ships, the high ground of the peninsula were crowded to watch her going. The watchman on Point Look-out was the last to see her as her sail went down over the horizon to the north.

'An Address to His Majesty in such terms as shall please him'
Edinburgh, August to December 1698

WHEN Robert Blackwood returned to Edinburgh from Kirkcaldy on the afternoon the expedition sailed, he brought the shocking news of the desertion of young David Dalrymple and John Wilson, both of the *Dolphin*. The Directors were incensed, and particularly noted that the boy had gone with two months' advance pay in his pocket. Before the Court resolved anything else it ordered that the deserters be pursued, arrested, and prosecuted with the utmost severity. The incident was a clashing note, and spoilt the harmony of the fleet's departure. The Company's affairs were at stake in the arena of Parliament House, and it would have been a comfort to know that its ships had sailed without fainthearts and cowards. There was also John Dickson, the clerk who had gone with Blackwood to Kirkcaldy, and whose deplorable book-keeping had caused the delay in sailing. He was told to bring his accounts to order before the end of October or forfeit half of his year's salary.

The seventh session of Parliament had assembled. The King's servants had come to town from London or their estates, determined to defend their paymaster against the Company's adherents who wished to send him an angry Address of protest, one which complained most bitterly of the behaviour of his Agent in Hamburg. His Majesty's Commissioner, the Earl of Marchmont, was especially concerned for the honour of the king he had served with devotion and loyalty. He had once been 'handsome and lovely', but tireless service had aged him prematurely and much of the work of bribery, corruption and oratorical persuasion would necessarily fall upon Seafield as President of Parliament. When this Ogilvy came to Edinburgh he looked anxiously from the window of his coach, doubtful of the welcome he might receive. He was relieved, he told Carstares, to see 'many coaches and horsemen ... most of the nobility and parliament men ... and a very great confluence of the common sort', all

apparently, greeting him with joy. He was thus hopeful that things would go well for the King. Reason and persuasion, of course, would not be enough. 'We do treat and caress the members, and have our friends at work doing all they can with them.'

Softer than silk would be that caress of gold. This Parliament was a paradox. Though it introduced legislation of the most humane and enlightened nature, it was also one of the most corrupt in Scotland's history. Eight years before, William had told his Scots Secretary, Lord Melville, that he was to be generous to those who would favour the King's cause, that 'what employment or other gratification you think fit to promise them in our name we shall fulfill the same.' Few public men resisted such bribes, and fewer still protested against them or saw that the nation suffered by them. The sickness was endemic. 'Let no man say,' Fletcher would write, 'that it cannot be proved that the English court has ever bestowed any bribe in this country. For they bestow all offices and pensions; they bribe us, and are masters of us at our own cost.'

But within a parliamentary government it was still necessary to bargain with the as yet unbribed, to persuade or corrupt the honest men. The Address before the Estates boldly asked the King to give the Company of Scotland that support and protection the Act demanded. Seafield and Marchmont, Argyll and Queensberry, could not hope to see it voted out of Parliament Hall, but they could soften its language – take out its sting, as Argyll proposed – and delay its dispatch. This they had to do without loss of reputation, for although the King was their master he could not save their windows from being broken. 'God knows what trouble this matter is to me,' Seafield told Carstares, 'and what anxiety is upon my spirit to get fairly out of it, which I am hopeful I shall.'

The debate opened on 1 August with long speeches on behalf of the Address as drafted. One was made by Tweeddale, and another by Tullibardine who was still trying to ride two horses and in opposite directions, to be the King's faithful servant in London and the Company's supporter in Edinburgh. Seafield listened to him without alarm, knowing just how far the young

man might run when his pockets were filled with the right metal, or his ambition diverted by brighter promises. To the President this debate was tiresome, but not greatly to be feared. A month before the fleet sailed he had shaken the support of many peers in the Company's party by letting them know of the King's resolve that 'no man who opposed him should enjoy either place or pension'. He had since been buying others on the lower benches of the Estates, taking a boyish pleasure in outwitting or outbidding the Company. 'I have gained the Commissioner for the town of Brechin, under my Lord Panmure's nose.' Argyll also boasted of having won over some purse-greedy members of the Hamilton clan. 'All the heads of the opposite party are broke,' Seafield reassured Carstares, 'except the Earl of Tullibardine, and I believe his wings are clipped.'

The case for the Address was presented with passion and urgency. The country had subscribed a great sum of money. Fine ships, brave men, and rich cargoes were already on their way to found a Colony. If the Company did not get the support and encouragement it deserved from Parliament, if its privileges and immunities were not confirmed by the Throne, if the King did not protect his Scottish subjects then the noble undertaking would be ruined.

For a week the supporters of the Address spoke without serious opposition. The King's men, from whom Seafield had expected an early return on the payments made them, were silent. Many of them were probably waiting for a lead from him or Argyll, but others were uneasy, uncertain of the volatile passions outside Parliament Hall. The anger of the people, their resentment of English arrogance and English contempt, their joyous pride in their Company, separated them from their time-serving representatives. A few months later, Andrew Fletcher would put his people's defiance of the English into angry words.

They must not think that we have so far degenerated from the courage and honour of our ancestors as tamely to submit to become their vassals, when for two thousand years we have maintained our freedom, and therefore it is not in their interest to oppress us too

much. If they consult their histories they will find that we always broke their yoke at the long run.

'I waited a considerable time,' Seafield wrote to Carstares, 'but none of the King's servants speaking anything, I thought it needful to speak my mind freely; and yet I did it so as that my enemies could catch no advantage of what I said.' He blandly acknowledged that of course it was important for the Company and the nation to prosper jointly. If he had any quarrel at all with the undertaking it was upon the matter of the assistance which should, or should not be given to it. The demands for an extension of the Company's monopolies, for a new Act confirming its privileges, for the gift of ships by the King, were extravagant and foolish. Let the Colony be properly settled, let it then be seen how things marched. It had been unwise to give the King's Secretary and the King's Commissioner no foreknowledge of what they were now being asked to place before him, for 'there might be many proposals made of greater advantage to the Company than these, and it would be cross and contrary to press a vote.' He further disarmed the major complaint of the Address by explaining at length how he and others had persuaded the King to restrain his Resident in Hamburg from putting obstacles in the way of the Company. 'I think that since His Majesty has done so much in this matter you would not offer to give him further trouble concerning it.'

A motion by the Company's friends to put the Address to a special committee was hotly debated for three hours, during which, said Seafield, 'I did not so much as sit down.' He intervened persistently, with adroit argument and soft threats, persuading the uncommitted and subtly reminding the bought men of their obligations. He did not oppose a committee, believing it would be more manageable than the whole house, and persuaded the Members to pass the matter to the existing Committee of Security rather than elect a new one. He was pleased when the Directors appeared before it to press their demands. 'I hope it shall turn to our advantage,' he told Carstares, 'for this does plainly make appear that (they) proceed by way of humour, and

have no regard either to the honour of the King or the satisfaction of his servants.'

When the Committee reported to Parliament the debate became a formality. There would still be an Address, a sop to the self-respect of the Estates and the pride of the nation, but it was now easy to turn it from a protest into a declaration of loyalty. The resistance of the Company's party had been broken by the bribes and threats of the King's servants, and Seafield retired exhausted from the battle, leaving the rout to the light cavalry of Argyll and Marchmont. The Address was rephrased and accepted unanimously. The sting had been removed and there was now what Marchmont called 'an address to His Majesty in such terms as shall please him.' It thanked William for his gracious assurance that the kingdom's trade would be suitably encouraged, and it humbly recommended the Company to his favour, without suggesting how he might bestow it. Argyll sent copies of the original and final version to Carstares in Flanders. 'You'll see it clipped as much as possible of what might choke,' he said. 'It is now in the King's power to establish his servants who have always been faithful to him.' And that, in the opinion of those servants perhaps, was all that really mattered.

Throughout autumn and into early winter the Company's committees were engaged, in a desultory manner, with preparations for a second great expedition to Darien, and they were in no haste to send a ship with those supplies the Council had so urgently demanded in letters from Madeira. In September the *Rising Sun* arrived from Amsterdam, dropping anchor by Greenock on the Firth of Clyde. There she would stay for months, her bare yards black against the water of the Gair Loch and the snow-hills of Dunbarton. At one time it had seemed as if Scotland would never see this fine ship with the emotive name, upon which Willem Direcksone had expended such skill and art. When the ice melted and released her from his dock, the Company's Dutch creditors had detained her against the money owing them. The Company had sent Stevenson orders to sell her and realize what he could, but she had been saved by generous advances

from some of the richer stockholders and by the prospect of a second call on the subscribers at Martinmas.

In Edinburgh it was as if the great orgasm of the fleet's departure had left the Directors listless and benignly unconcerned. They were late for meetings at Milne Square, if they attended at all, and it became necessary to fine them sevenpence if they were not there promptly at nine, and to withhold their *sederunt* fee of twenty shillings entirely if they could not arrive before a quarter past. There were other distressing matters. James Smith, thought to be safe in the King's Bench Prison, London, escaped therefrom one night with the aid of his gaoler and was never to be seen again. Dr John Munro was troublesome, complaining that although he had worked two years for the Company, and had brought his family from Caithness to Edinburgh at great expense, he had received no salary at all. The Directors may have been unimpressed by his protestations of loyal and diligent service when they discovered that the apothecaries who had supplied medicines for the expedition, and whose accounts he should surely have settled, were now clamouring for their money. Erskine and Gleneagles also wanted to be paid for their expenses in Hamburg. And finally there were English and French ships lying in the Forth and Clyde, taking on bonded servants and provisions for their own plantations, to 'the manifest prejudice of the Company'.

There was no news of the fleet, no reason for hope or despair, no encouragement and no dismay. But the spirit of the nation was high. At his print-shop in Parliament Close, James Wardlaw published *A Poem upon the Undertaking of the Royal Company of Scotland*.

Admire the steady soul of Paterson;
It is no common genius can persuade
A Nation bred in war to think of trade.

'I represented how sad and scandalous our condition was'
Caledonia, January and February 1699

DON ANDRÉS DE PEZ, General Commanding the Windward Fleet of His Most Catholic Majesty, was troubled by wild rumours from Spain, by the indecision of the Council of the Indies in Madrid, and by the failure of the provincial governors to realize that his splendidly-styled squadron was in a lamentable condition. Apart from the tenders, he had four warships only, and when they finally sailed from Carthagena at the beginning of January they could limp no further than Portobello. There, he said, they would have to stay. His flagship, and one other, leaked so badly that they would have to be careened before he would take them to sea again, and this work could not be completed before April. The maintenance of the fleet, which was Spain's only defensive force on the Main, was costing 8,000 pesos a month, and this did not include the pay of the soldiers in the tenders. Don Andrés had been given no exact account of the strength of the Scots in Caledonia, and he was alarmed to hear from Spain that a second expedition had already sailed to reinforce them.

Since it would be madness to take his tenders and his two sound ships out of Portobello for an attack by sea, he proposed a sensible alternative to the Conde de Canillas, President of Panama. He would bring 500 of his soldiers over the Isthmus to Panama City, and they, together with all the men the President might gather, could attack the settlement from the south. The Conde accepted the proposal, not because he believed it would be possible to destroy the Scots, but because, as he later explained to his King, 'we should alarm them, and let them know that in this kingdom there was force and inclination to oppose them.' Having thus excused failure before trying for success, he mustered two companies of gentlemen volunteers and waited for de Pez.

The expedition was miserable, wretched and useless. The soldiers

and the volunteers were carried eastward by boat along the southern coast of the Isthmus until they reached the Gulf of San Miguel. There, at the mouth of the River Savana, was waiting a cloud of Indian levies in whose canoes the Spaniards were to travel into the heart of the Isthmus. Once the stores were loaded, however, there was no room for men, and the soldiers had to march along the bank, sweating in the moist heat, hacking desperately at the thick undergrowth. Leaving the river they entered the jungle, moving northward and climbing. In the foothills of the continental divide, with tall, green mountains rising before them, they reached Toubacanti. This was an outpost which the President had established three months before upon the first news of the Scots' arrival. A crude, palisaded fort, it was manned by four companies of militia under Campmaster Don Luis Carrizoli, and they now brought the strength of the expedition to 1,500 men. Still not sure that he was strong enough to engage the Scots, the President decided to advance over the mountains. Each man was to carry a basket containing rations for ten days, as well as his arms and ammunition. Though he thanked God for the fine weather, de Canillas remembered the nightmare misery of that march.

We had first to cross a river shut in between cliffs and full of boulders. We could not avoid it, and had to march through the actual bed of the stream. It took two days and the men were much knocked-up, because of the weight of the supplies to which was added that of muskets, arquebuses and rifles, bags of shot and fifty balls which the soldiers carried loose. The most lamentable part of it was the men fell frequently, which wet the food they carried. . . . We came to the end of the river, which is at the foot of the southern slope, and despite the fact that the men were much exhausted, lest the subsistence give out entirely at dawn next day we began to ascend the range, which is extremely impenetrable. We mastered it in that day's march and reached a very marshy place, only two leagues distant from the enemy's settlement.

The Divine favour, which the President believed had sent them good weather, now deserted them. That night it began to rain, and the river which fed the marsh turned it to flood, washing

away the shelters which the soldiers had built. It rained for three days without ceasing. A party of Negro slaves who arrived on the second day from Toubacanti, with baskets of sodden biscuits and cheese, were half-drowned and terrified by the loss of their lances. There was now no spirit in the soldiers. They had marched fifty leagues from the Gulf of San Miguel and the country frightened them. Most of the men brought by Don Andrés were lately come from Spain, and the memory of the dry, red earth of their homes was an exquisite torment in this green ocean of leaves. The Indian levies, who may have been enjoying the misery of their masters, told them that the Scots had laid cunning ambuscades ahead. At night, from vespers until dawn, they heard the regular thumping of a gun from the settlement, and believed that at any moment there might be a volley of musketry from the dark trees. By day they crouched on the earth, unable to dry their arms and ammunition, staring at the rain-cloaked mountain heads, and praying for the order to be gone. Their officers passed the time in fruitless councils of war. The President had lost his voice from exposure and exhaustion, and the others could talk of nothing but how they might save both their lives and their honour.

At Caledonia, since the departure of Edward Sands' sloop, little had been done to finish the town and the fort, and nothing at all to break the land. In the irritation of the heat and the persistent rain, the Council was still quarrelling childishly. With Cunningham gone, said Paterson, there was now a need to elect a new member, or even more. 'I represented to them separately how sad and scandalous our condition was.' Without a powerful majority, which would be possible if the Council were enlarged, there could be no hope of authoritative government, an end to factional bickering and a beginning to their proper business. He won Jolly and Montgomerie to this point of view, and they agreed to support his motion. But both were weak men. Montgomerie had a young and inexperienced soldier's admiration for Thomas Drummond, and he may have been reluctant to provoke the man's dislike if the new member were not one of the Glencoe Gang. He was also influenced by Mackay who, currently in Pennecuik's favour, was inclined to do what pleased the

Commodore. Montgomerie withdrew his support from Paterson, whereupon Jolly, who was President that week, lost his courage too and quashed Paterson's motion before it could be put, there being no seconder.

Robert Jolly had his troubles. Like all the Councillors, except the self-sacrificing Paterson, he lived aboard ship, having comfortable quarters on the *Caledonia*. He liked to think he was an honest, plain-spoken man, and certainly he was frank enough about his own importance. He sometimes thought that he was in command of the ship, or that at least his office empowered him to give orders to her captain. Robert Drummond endured this for the length of his patience, which was invariably short, and then told Jolly that since he was master of his own ship the Councillor could take himself, his baggage, and his servant ashore. Jolly lordly refused, and went off to a meeting of the Council. While he was away, he later complained in a pathetic memorial, 'Captain Drummond caused to break down all his apartments, so therefore Captain Jolly was obliged to go aboard the *Unicorn*.'

The Council was angered by this affront to the dignity of one of its members, although Pennecuik maliciously reminded Jolly that his soft-headed intercession had prevented the Drummonds from being put ashore at Crab Island. He was advised to lay a formal complaint against Robert Drummond but he refused, lest it be thought, he said self-righteously, that he desired the command of the *Caledonia* for himself. His quarrel with Drummond was further embittered by a dispute over an invoice for the goods aboard the ship, in which each appeared to be accusing the other of theft. It was a complicated, confused squabble of which the details are not important, only the sadness that men with such responsibility should have been concerned with such trivialities.

Paterson's great dream of a trading *entrepôt* had come to this, and what opportunities there might have been at the beginning were now lost. Wafer and others, perhaps even Paterson, had warned the Company that the Colony would need weatherly ships for coastal trade, but the Scots ships were of little use to windward and were thus idle in the harbour when they were not

actually imprisoned in it by the northerly gales. The few North American ships and the Jamaican sloops that came curiously to the Colony had provisions to sell and goods to trade, but none of them, as the Council ought to have realized from its experience with Moon at Saint Thomas, wanted anything from the fleet's bizarre cargoes, certainly not at the rate of exchange the Scots were still asking. They preferred money. Gold was something the Company had not thought of sending, nor could have sent.

At the beginning of February, when the gales began to moderate, it was decided to send the *Dolphin* on a cruise to Curaçoa and Saint Thomas, to trade for a sloop, rum, sugar and provisions. Paterson opposed the decision. On the voyage out, he said, the snow had proved to be the worst of all to windward. It was also unwise to send, as was proposed, both Pincarton and John Malloch, the new captain of the *Dolphin*. What could be done by both could be equally well done by one, and the Colony had few good sea-officers. Finally, their present circumstances were bad enough without sending so much valuable cargo to sea on a hazardous adventure. 'But to all this I was answered in the usual form, that I did not understand.' The *Dolphin* sailed, with Pincarton and Malloch, a good crew and a cargo of trade goods worth £1,400 Sterling.

A few days later Richard Moon's sloop came into the bay. With him was his partner Peter Wilmot, and neither of them wished to sell or trade. They had come to recover the provisions bought from Sands, declaring that the goods given him in exchange could be bought at less the price in Jamaica. Moon said little, perhaps being ashamed of the matter, but Wilmot insisted that the Scots had over-valued their goods by forty per cent, and that if they would not make the balance good he would take back the provisions. After some clamours, said Paterson, the Council offered thirty per cent, which Wilmot accepted.

He would not let us have any more of his provisions at that rate, but parted with us, complaining that he should be a loser. It vexed me not only to see us part with such a parcel of provisions, but also for the effect it might have to discourage others.

Any rise there had been in the Colony's morale was lowered by this, and it dropped still further when Captain Pedro sent word that the Spaniards were about to attack the settlement. It had been known for some days that they were in the timbered hills to the south, and the gun which had been fired at regular intervals during the night from the battery on Forth Point had been designed to keep up the Scots' courage as much as to frighten the attackers. Now Pedro said that they were within two leagues of the bay. There was an immediate alarm, drums beating the Assembly inside the fort, trumpets sounding aboard the ships. The Council met, and for once wasted no time in quarrelsome debate. James Montgomerie was elected to lead 100 soldiers to Pedro's village, and Robert Drummond was ordered to muster sixty fit men from the crews of the *Saint Andrew*, *Unicorn* and *Caledonia* and to follow Montgomerie as soon as possible. 'If you shall be attacked by an enemy before you join him,' he was told, 'you are hereby ordered to take or kill such as wrongfully attack you.' The small force of soldiers, and the use of sailors as a reserve, suggest that fever and sickness had seriously weakened the military strength of the settlement. Neither Thomas Drummond nor Samuel Vetch was given command of the expedition, and though this may have been due to Pennecuik's stubborn hatred of both, more probably the Council decided that they would be better used in the defence of the peninsula if Montgomerie were overwhelmed.

Montgomerie left at dusk on 5 February and reached Pedro's village before midnight, his men exhausted by the weight of their arms and ammunition, their thick uniforms, the marshy ground beneath their feet and the tangle of branches before their faces. On their way they met two frightened Indians who said that the Spanish had already taken possession of the village. Montgomerie halted, and sent the Indians to make certain. When they did not return he pressed on valiantly, and found the village deserted except for a group of wailing women. An hour later Pedro came in, happy to see the Scots in arms at last, and said that about twenty-six Spanish soldiers, with fifteen or more Indians and Negroes, were camped in a plantain grove a few miles

off. He made no apology, nor explained why he had earlier reported that there were 300 of them. These were frightening enough, and the courage of Captain Diego, who arrived shortly afterwards, was no bolder.

When he was told that the Spanish had posted no sentinels, Montgomerie detached forty men to guard the village, and advanced cautiously on the grove with the rest of the company and a large party of Indians. He arrived on its outskirts toward five in the morning, and although the sun was rising it was still dark beneath the thick roof of leaves. He drew up his sixty men in an extended line with bayonets fixed and muskets cocked, intending a sudden, surprise attack. This resolute action restored the courage of the Indians on the flanks and to the rear of the Scots, and they hooted in defiance. Surprise was lost. Montgomerie ordered his drummer to beat, and led his men in a threshing advance. The Spaniards were gone when they reached the clearing, their fires still burning, their meagre provisions abandoned. Montgomerie ordered his hungry men to take what they wanted, and wondered what next he could or should do. A decision was made for him by a spatter of musketry ahead where Pedro's screaming warriors had come up with the Spaniards' stubborn rearguard. Montgomerie's drummer again beat the advance and the Scots went forward. They saw no enemies in the mist, in the slanting columns of sunlight, only the flash of muskets. And then there was silence. The Spaniards were gone.

In the growing light, young Montgomerie calmed his Indian allies and counted his dead and wounded. In the mud he found the bodies of Ensign Alexander Swinton and a private soldier called Andrew Jaffrey. Two more officers were wounded, a sergeant and nine men, including Drummer James Forbes who had beaten the advance in the confusion of the plantain grove. That night in Pedro's village, Montgomerie wrote a proud report to the Council. He did not put his own name among the list of wounded, but admitted that 'I'm a little hurt myself in the thigh.' The Spaniards had taken to the hills and he did not think it safe to pursue them, for there was a larger force there which, he was told by the Indians, was intended for an attack on the settle-

ment. He was impatient to know what to do, 'not doubting but your care and speedy measures will prevent any danger we may be in by the smallness of number.' The council recalled him to the Peninsula, and he went back in triumph.

In fact the Conde de Canillas had abandoned any design he may have had for an attack, and the Spaniards whom Montgomerie had routed had been a thin rearguard with orders to watch rather than fight. High on the green ridge of the cordillera, drenched by mists and rain, their stomachs knotted by wet bread and rotting cheese, the Conde's dispirited men could scarcely stand. At the interminable councils of war his officers quarrelled and protested, accepting the inevitability of retreat but delicately jealous of their honour. The confusion was at last resolved by a company commander from the Panama garrison, Don Juan Martinez Retes de la Vega. Thirty-one years of campaigning in Flanders as soldier, sergeant and officer, from the siege of Charleroi to the withering crossfire in the breach at Maastricht, had proved his courage and honour and taught him a simple lesson: the wisest soldier, the best soldier was he who knew when to retreat. Moreover, His Majesty would be well served by a withdrawal, for if they remained the Conde would lose an army and thus be robbed of future victories it would undoubtedly win. 'And that this is his feeling,' wrote the clerk who was taking down Don Juan's words for later dispatch to Madrid, 'and what he offers as his opinion, he declares and swears by God our Lord, and the sign of the Cross which he made with his own right hand.' Other officers, including Carrizoli, hurriedly supported de la Vega, and the Conde gratefully ordered a retreat to Toubacanti, to the coast and Panama City. When he sent his report to the Council of the Indies he wisely said nothing of the skirmish with Montgomerie's men.

Cheered by their small victory, the Scots still lived in fear that one morning the blue and yellow of Spanish uniforms would appear out of the trees to the south. It was partly this fear, and partly their naïve belief that no one could contest their presence once their right to Darien had been reasonably explained, that persuaded the Councillors to make a civil approach to the

Spanish. They sent formal letters by the Indians to the Conde de Canillas and the Governor of Santa Maria, informing both of the nature of their settlement and its proper establishment by Act of the Parliament of Scotland. They enclosed safe-conducts for any Spanish officers who might come to treat, and asked for the return of similar courtesies. They said that they had a Spanish prisoner, Domingo de Bada, who had been taken by Montgomerie on his return to the peninsula, and 'whom we have and will continue to treat with all kindness and civility.' De Bada was no soldier, a frightened merchant who had been trading with the Indians, and from fear or simple conviction he had told the Council that all the people of the Spanish colonies were delighted by the arrival of the Scots. He did not say why.

With the letters on their way, the Colony was certain that it was safe from attack, at least until a reply was received. The long rainy season was now slackening, though the ground was still sodden and life ashore still wretched. But the sun was bright, and sometimes shone for a whole day without a single cloud. Four days after Montgomerie's fight, the watchman on Point Look-out cried two ships to the north-west. They were Jamaican sloops, one commanded by Edward Sands and the other by his friend Ephraim Pilkington. Despite the orders of their owner Wilmot, or perhaps in defiance of them, they had brought a small quantity of provisions which they were willing to sell. Beyond this, they were ready to put their ships at the service of the Colony, Pilkington to trade along the coast and Sands to go turtling. Paterson was delighted, aware that both men were doing this more out of regard for him than respect for the Council. Two days later, two more Jamaicans arrived, and their masters were less obliging. One of them had a cargo of provisions consigned to Paterson, and the other had beef and flour to sell. They were 'purse-proud fellows', said Paterson, and when the Council havered over the price they said that they would sell for money only. They broke off the bargaining and turned their attention to what Paterson believed had been their main purpose in coming, the salvaging of treasure from the *Maurepas*. They were ordered away, and they sailed with the provisions still in their holds.

Pilkington was gone on his commission, and his departure encouraged the Council to send out the *Endeavour*. She sailed with John Anderson as Master, Alliston as supercargo, trade goods worth £100 Sterling, and ambitious orders to touch at Jamaica and New York for provisions. Gales and storms drove her leaking hull back to Caledonia.

There was a listlessness over all the settlement, sometimes too heavy for despair. Thomas Drummond drove his men hard to their work, but got no more energy from them than damnified bread and rotting meat could supply. Paterson was unwell, a steel spirit that had been bent by the death of his wife was now bending further under sickness, but he would not spare himself. 'I had then some fits of intermittent fever; but, however, I put force upon myself as much as possible to be present in the Councils, lest some rash act be committed or an innocent man suffer.' His mind, reaching the point of collapse, was bewildered by the squabbling of the other Councillors, and since he still would not drink he could not join them on the occasions their carousing gave them a brief and obscene unanimity. They met ashore more frequently now that it was dry, beneath the palmetto roof of the largest but, sitting with comic dignity in their embroidered clothes, their swords and baldricks, sweat on their unshaven cheeks. There had been a great quarrel between Pennecuik and Mackay over some forgotten issue, and the others moved to and from each other in the macabre dance of their factional disputes. There were only five of them, and they still would not accept Paterson's urgent advice to increase the number.

Though the Indians brought welcome gifts of fruit, plantains and fowl – which were eaten by the Council and officers – Andrcas and Pedro no longer came to the peninsula, and there were rumours that both were dead. Ambrosio sent occasional messages of continuing goodwill, but would not leave his village. Diego was persuaded to come, late in February, for gifts and the signing of a treaty that had been written by Hugh Rose, sealed with bright red wax, and tied with ribbon of watered silk.

TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP, UNION, AND PERPETUAL CONFEDERATION, agreed and entered into between the Right Honour-

able the Council of Caledonia, and the EXCELLENT DIEGO TUCUAPANTOS and ESTRARA, Chief and Supreme Leader of the Indians, Inhabitants of the lands and possessions in and about the rivers of Darieno and Matoleme . . .

It promised freedom of trade, mutual assistance in danger, succour in distress, courts of justice, and an explanation of all its clauses should they be in future doubt. It also invited the other chiefs of the Isthmus to apply for membership of the alliance. It was read aloud, interpreted and explained to Diego, and then signed by the Council. Diego put his mark to it happily, and went away with a copy in Spanish. He left with a warning. 'He advises us,' Pennecuik wrote to a friend in Scotland,

to prepare for the worst, believing that the Barliavento Fleet, as soon as they are in a condition, will be upon us. But this we do not fear, being assured that their General, who is said to be a man of no courage, had positively denied to attack us, his master the King of Spain having no war with the Scots.

Apart from being a natural braggart, the Commodore had also been reassured by a dispatch the Council had just received from Don Luis Carrizoli, the militia commander at Toubacanti. With elegant politeness it thanked the Scots for their letters which he would forward to the Governor and the President. Until he heard from them he would naturally suspend his activities against the Colony, and would not molest its emissaries. The Scots could dispose of Domingo de Bada as they thought fit, and thus 'God preserve you, Illustrious Council, whose hands I kiss . . .'

Warmed by the courtesy of the letter, the Council did not see that it was a mere acknowledgement from a postmaster, a franking of their own letters. Nor could it be known that, far to the north in Mexico, Don Joseph Sarmiento de Valladares, Conde Moctezuma, Viceroy and Captain-General, the most powerful man in the hemisphere, had recently received news of the settlement and had made up his mind what to do about it for the glory of Spain and the salvation of the Church. 'These orders, unless something new changes them,' he would soon write to his commanders, 'will be to exterminate the Scottish pirates for the reasons which have dictated my resolution, the greatest one being

to destroy the heresies which the Scots may introduce amongst the ignozant people.' Sarmiento was less confident than this breath of fire might indicate. The Isthmus was the unguarded heel of the empire, and the past of Drake and Morgan had shown how few men were needed to cut the tendon of its rivers and roads. He had been told that there were already 4,000 Scots on Darien, and that 6,000 more were at sea to reinforce them. In a wild moment of alarm he believed that even the Philippines might be in danger.

Still waiting for his ships to be careened at Portobello, Don Andrés de Pez might have wondered what he was expected to do about that.

The Scots' hope of an amicable settlement with the Spanish was not only worthless, it was also short-lived. On 26 February Ephraim Pilkington came back with his sloop, the *Maidstone*. He had not sold a bolt of cloth, a wig, or a pair of darned hose along the coast, and this was not the worst of what he had to report. The *Dolphin* had been taken by the Spaniards, he had seen her in Carthagena Bay.

Paterson had been right in his warning. The snow was clumsy to windward and impossible to handle. Within twenty-four hours of leaving Caledonia a strong gale drove her eastward to Carthagena, and despite Malloch's efforts to turn her out to sea she would not respond. She struck a rock in the lee of Pointa de Canao, throwing Pincarton against the helm and breaking one of his ribs. Badly holed and leaking quickly, there was nothing that could be done with her but take her in to the shore and under the guns of the fort. As she went aground and heeled over, her crew knew what was now awaiting them. A shouting crowd gathered on the esplanade below the white city, and soon the Governor came down in a gold and varnished coach. He sent out a boat to the crippled ship, and Pincarton went ashore first, his ribs strapped and his mouth bitter with humiliation. He asked the Governor if his men might return to the *Dolphin* to save her cargo, and Don Diego de los Rios Quesada, who was probably still shocked by her sudden and unexpected arrival, gave him that permission.

'But before we could get to the boats,' said Pincarton two years later, reporting to the Directors whom he had never expected to see again, 'we was hindered from going on board, and sent up to the town with a strong guard, and separately put in a dungeon and in irons.'

'If a man were sick, no victuals for him that day . . .'

Caledonia, March and April 1699

THE Councillors' reaction to the loss of the *Dolphin* was both splendid and ridiculous. As if they were the government of a powerful nation, with a fleet and ready battalions to enforce their will, they demanded the immediate release of the ship and crew under pain of their terrible displeasure.

Lieutenant Alexander Maghie, because he was a smart young fellow said Pennecuik, was sent to Carthagena with this demand. He left aboard the *Maidstone* on 11 March (his departure being delayed by the usual argument in Council) with a drummer, a guard of honour, and a flag of truce. In the letter he carried, the Spanish Governor was reminded of the treaties signed by Great Britain and Spain in March and July 1670, by which each was bound to respect the rights and subjects of the other. If the *Dolphin* and her crew were not released, if Mr Maghie suffered any indignity whatsoever, then Caledonia would 'by force of arms, both by sea and land, set upon, take and apprehend any of the men, ships, goods, moneys and merchandise of His Catholic Majesty.'

Maghie was ordered to wait twenty-four hours for a reply, and then to leave with or without it. He returned to the Colony ten days later, his Highland blood inflamed by several affronts to his country's honour and his own pride. He had gone ashore at Carthagena in a canoe, his drummer beating at his side and his flag of truce in the prow. A file of soldiers marched him through the sun to the Governor's house, and there he was kept in an ante-room until the Governor and his council found the time and

inclination to receive him. Don Diego broke open the letter, read it quickly, scowled at its threats of reprisal and bloodshed, and threw it to the floor. It was joined, unread, by a copy of the Act which Maghie next gave him, and by copies of the Letters Patent granted to the Company. The Scots, said Don Diego when he could find his voice, were rogues, pirates and cuckolds, and he called for a guard to throw this one into prison. The soldiers were at the door when Don Martino de Saballe, commander of the Spanish forces at Carthagena, gently interceded for Maghie, asking the Governor's leave to lodge the boy that night at his own home. Don Diego grudgingly agreed.

De Saballe was a kindly man, or perhaps more subtle than the Governor. He was impressed by Maghie's spirited courage, and reasoned with him in Latin, their only common language. He suggested that if the Scots did not insist upon the return of the *Dolphin's* cargo (which he would not admit the Spanish had salvaged) he might persuade the Governor to release her crew. In the morning, however, Don Diego's humour was no better, and was worsened by Maghie's loyal but tactless demand to see Pincarton and his men. Not only could they not be seen, shouted the Governor, they would stay in prison for as long as the King's Majesty pleased. Moreover, had his soldiers been in a better condition – and this, no doubt, with a resentful eye on De Saballe – he would long ago have driven the Scots from Darien. But let them not take too much comfort from their present security. He was fully resolved, Maghie reported, 'to gather such a force by sea and land as would quickly, at one blow, root us all out of this place.'

At last the young Highlander was allowed to leave, and for that he probably had De Saballe to thank. In Carthagena harbour were the flagship and three others of Benbow's West Indian Fleet, and before the *Maidstone* sailed Maghie paid a courtesy call on the Admiral. John Benbow had as yet received no orders from London about the Scots, and saw no reason why he should ruffle the Spaniards' feathers, particularly since he was at this moment selling them a cargo of Negro slaves. Yet he was civil to his angry visitor, politely read the Company's Act which Maghie carried

like a talisman, and generously wished the Company well. He said that he would press none of its servants into his ships, and would do what he could for the *Dolphin's* crew. 'At my going over the side he said we had a great opportunity before us, and bid us remember that fortune always favours the bold.' All of which could only have confused Maghie. He had been told by De Saballe that Benbow had assured the Governor that the King of England disapproved of the Scots settlement, and would not support or protect it.

The Councillors now had the choice of stomaching the Governor's insults or honouring the threats they had made. To his surprise, Ephraim Pilkington was invited to take the *Maidstone* out on a reprisal raid against Spanish shipping. The Letters of Mark, signed by Jolly as President, were attractive enough: twelve full shares of all booty for the hire of his sloop, and two and a half for himself, 600 pieces of eight or six slaves for any of his crew seriously disabled, and the choice of one in three of all the prizes taken. Though no man of war, there was little profit for Pilkington in Caledonia Bay, and he accepted. He left on the next favourable wind, captured nothing, sank nothing, saw nothing, and was back in the harbour within a few days.

The only comfort in Maghie's return had been that the *Maidstone* brought with her a New England brigantine she had sighted off the coast, east of Caret Bay. This was the *Three Sisters* which Scots sympathizers in New York had fitted out and loaded with salt mackerel, butter and flour for their countrymen on Darien. This scanty cargo would not last more than a few days, but the realization that they had not been forgotten raised the settlers' spirits for a short while. There were now several trading-sloops in the Bay or at anchor off Golden Island. Moon and Wilmot had returned in one called the *Neptune*, and with them another commanded by a Matthias Maltman. They still demanded money only for their provisions, but sober, reasonable men might have persuaded them to accept goods. There were no such men on the Council now: even Paterson was fretful, captious and disillusioned. Pennecuik was fighting a nagging illness with brandy, his temper ragged, his mind dark with suspicion. He

quarrelled with Moon almost immediately, accusing him of carrying off one of the colonists on his last visit, a homesick boy called Skelton. He arrested one of Moon's boats, declaring that he would hold it and its crew until the boy was returned. There then followed a heated wrangle, boats going to and fro across the Bay with ultimatums like emissaries between warring camps. Ashore, the Planters watched this tragi-comedy with bewildered apathy, their skins yellow and scabrous for want of the good food in the ships' holds. Paterson called upon some inner reserve of strength, persuaded Moon to give up the boy and Pennecuik to be content with an apology. It all ended, he said, 'in a little hector and Billingsgate'.

But it had not ended. Daniel Mackay, who had been ill with a fever for some days, now returned hot-faced to the Council for his week as President. Still delirious, he said that Maltman's sloop was sailing under a Spanish commission, and that there were three Spanish merchants aboard her at this moment. He demanded the Councillors' signatures to an order authorizing Robert Drummond to arrest the ship, her master and her crew, as a reprisal for the imprisonment of Pincarton and the insufferable insults to young Maghie. When Paterson protested, Mackay turned on him in fury. 'I'll warrant you'll not meddle,' he shouted, 'because your friend Wilmot is concerned!' Paterson surrendered and reluctantly signed the order. Away went Drummond's boats from the *Caledonia*, with a great show of swords, muskets and pistols. They found no Spanish commission, only papers that plainly indicated that the sloop was truly a Jamaican. Hiding in her hold, however, were two frightened Spanish passengers whom Maltman was carrying to Portobello. Drummond brought them off in triumph, together with £100 in pieces of eight which he found in Maltman's cabin. The Council appropriated the money, using it to pay the master of the *Three Sisters* for his mackerel and butter, but Paterson was miserably unhappy.

I said that I would write home about this matter, and then left them. God knows, my concern was not upon my own account, or any humour of my own, but the true love of justice and the good of the Colony.

Recognizing that an excuse might be needed for this little act of piracy, Pennecuik said that Maltman's crew were a 'parcel of barbarous fellows'. They had recently raided a Spanish island to the leeward of Carthagea, captured a rich friar in his cell, whipped him, and hung him up by the heels until the blood was black in his face. Which may have been true, but scarcely supported the claim that Maltman was sailing under a Spanish commission.

Ashore in the rotting huts of New Edinburgh there was increasing horror. 'Our men did not only continue daily to grow more weakly and sickly,' said Paterson, 'but more, without hopes of recovery.' By the beginning of March there were 200 graves in the cemetery, and now ten or twelve new ones were sometimes dug in a day. In Samuel Vetch's company there had been twenty-three Gentlemen Volunteers of whom one only, Roger Oswald, was still alive. The survivors, yellow skeletons in torn scarlet, stared at each sunrise with surprise, unable to explain their hold on life or understand their comrades' loss of it. One surgeon, Herries, had left with Hamilton. Another, Andrew Livingstone, had been captured with the *Dolphin*, and a man could now fall sick and die before Hector Mackenzie or his overworked assistants could be told that he was ill. The best a man might hope for was that his friends would be strong enough to dig him a grave, that he would not be left unmourned, his body thrown into the bay when the water-boats went back to their ships. There is now no way of knowing which of many tropical fevers it was that daily weakened and reduced the demoralized settlement. Patrick MacDowall, who would bring a ship to the relief of the second expedition next year, wrote a clinical account of the illness he survived.

It was a very severe spotted fever, my whole body being entirely pale red. My extremes was worst and some places about my wrists and ankles altogether red. But all was without either itching or inflammation or any sort of exturbance above my skin. I had an hellish, vicious, bad, intolerable taste, so that everything I took was with the greatest reluctance imaginable. I had, in the beginning, an extraordinary desire of vomitting, and accordingly drunk warm water

which did make me vomit up some base, yellowish, bitter, unpleasant choleric sort of stuff of which I found great ease. I continued very ill for four or five days. I took with it a great headache, soreness of my eyes, and weariness of all my joints and bones, which continued all the time with me. I was very inclined to fainting all the while of my sickness, and a considerable time afterwards it brought me so extraordinary weak that I am not yet able to walk alone now. I had blistering plasters applied to my neck at the time of my sickness, and other plasters to my temples, of both of which I found very much good, but our Doctor would neither bleed nor vomit me, though I was still very pressing to have both or either done.

A few men remained loyal to the hope and enthusiasm they had brought with them from Scotland. Lieutenant Robert Turnbull had fallen in love with this land, with a devotion that neither hunger nor despair could destroy. As late as April he wrote to his friend, Erskine of Carnock, in language of extravagant hyperbole. Darien was a green paradise where fruit fell from the trees without the pain of plucking them, where magnificent forests ran with gentle deer, where the songs of bright-feathered birds sweetened the evening air above rivers of silver-scaled fish. He believed in this Colony. He longed for 'honest Councillors' who would make it a success, men such as his friends Thomas Drummond and Samuel Veitch. He was not just a dreamer. He urged Carnock to tell the Company to send nets for fishing, sensible working-tools, more kettles, coarse yarn for tropical clothing, and good shoes, many shoes 'for this country burns them'. And if women must come, let them be those who knew how to cook, to launder, to nurse the sick.

But most of the settlers had long ago lost any interest they might have had in the land or the Colony. Like Roger Oswald, they wished only to survive, to be gone, to return home. Afraid of his stern father in Lanarkshire, Oswald could not tell him of this misery and despair. He wrote instead to his cousin Thomas Aikman, a Writer in Edinburgh, hoping that he would explain to an unrelenting parent. He was penniless, he said, and like most of the others was thus without the means or influence to buy more food. The salt mackerel brought by the *Three Sisters*, the turtles

meddlesome rule of five quarrelling men. The Councillors no longer had the respect and confidence of the settlement. Oswald called them 'superlative Doges', and was probably repeating the general gibe. When he left Edinburgh he had been placed under the protection of Robert Jolly, but 'I was never a straw obliged to him, though he promised great things to my father.' Worse than this neglect, Jolly had taken from him a sow and four sucklings, the loss of which he remembered bitterly in his hunger.

Oswald did not know why the Almighty should grant him his life and yet take it from others, but he praised and thanked God for this mercy.

Though I preserved my life, yet I kept not my health. I was troubled with fever and ague that I raved almost every day and it rendered me so weak that my legs were not able to support me. . . . Our bodies pined away and grew so macerated with such allowance and hard work that we were like so many skeletons.

Drunkenness increased, there was no shortage of spirits or wine, and a cunning man could get all that he wished. A little was medicine, enough was solace, and excess was suicide. The Council issued brandy as a bribe, and sometimes as the only reward it could give. Toward the end of March a bearded, exhausted white man was brought into the settlement by a party of Indians, and it was some time before the Scots realized that this horrifying caricature of their own form was Andrew Livingstone, the surgeon who had sailed with the *Dolphin*. How he had escaped and travelled from Carthagen a no one recorded, and perhaps his bewildered mind could not remember, but in recognition of the courage he had shown he was given four gallons of brandy 'for his own proper use, over and above the common allowance'. Since wine and brandy assured the oblivion of temporary stupor, and for some a peaceful slide into death, Paterson had little success in his efforts to persuade the colonists to abstain altogether. He promised them that the price of the allowance would be placed to their credit in the Company's accounts, but only one man – an officer called Gordon – accepted the offer. He was still petitioning for the money many years later.

Faced by the smouldering hostility of the settlement, and aware

that it must be placated before it burst into a flame of mutiny, the Councillors finally decided to increase their numbers. Even this decision was not made without dispute and sulks. Since his recovery from a fever which all but he had thought would kill him, Daniel Mackay had been noisily active in Council, and it was during his week as President that he persuaded Paterson (who needed little persuasion) and Pennecuik (who must have needed a great deal) to move and second a motion to appoint four new members to the Council. Mackay's suggestion was not disinterested. It had been decided earlier that the *Three Sisters* should leave as soon as possible with letters for Scotland, and Mackay was anxious to carry them, but while there were so few of them it would have been unwise for one of the Councillors to go. When the motion to increase was put by Paterson, James Montgomerie protested without explanation and withdrew in a huff. Robert Jolly also objected, arguing with obscure logic that the smaller the number the greater the ease of government and the wiser its rule. Moreover, since no Councillor would receive a salary until the Colony was well established and thriving, it would be improper to involve the Company in extra expense. Receiving no support for this paradox, he also withdrew. 'Although we sent our Secretary several times,' said Paterson, 'entreating them in a friendly and respectful manner to give their attendance and assistance in Council, yet they refused, and altogether forsook us.' They were both tired of the Colony and wished to go home.

With doubtful legality, the remaining three voted on the motion themselves. The new men were probably suggested by Paterson, accepted by Mackay who knew that they would be happy to see the last of him, and hopelessly opposed by Pennecuik. They were all officers - Thomas Drummond, Charles Forbes, Colin Campbell, and Samuel Vetch. The Glencoe Gang now dominated the Council, and although Montgomerie had once been their comrade-in-arms at Fort William and one of their faction in the Colony, he still would not come to the Council. He was perhaps jealous of them, and resented the fading of his little battle-honour before the blaze of their red coats.

The increase in numbers brought no harmony to the Council. Supported by Vetch, Thomas Drummond did not hide his contempt for Paterson, and was the instrument of his brother's hatred of Pennecuik. Though they were bitterly concerned for the condition of their starving men, Forbes and Campbell had no skill in debate or government, and their only value to the Council was that their presence restored a little of the Planters' respect. Not sure that he could survive an open breach with the Drummonds, Pennecuik began to quarrel with Mackay. The Commodore divided all men into 'brave boys and lads' or 'lubberly rogues and rascals', and he had recently moved the Highlander from the first to the second category. He remembered that Mackay had once taken Pincarton's part against him in some childish dispute, that on another galling occasion he had persuaded him to apologize to Jolly and invite the lubberly rogue to dinner. When Ephraim Pilkington brought the *Maidstone* back from her fruitless cruise against the Spaniards, Pennecuik reminded the Council that he had opposed the idea of reprisals and that Mackay had hotly supported it. He badgered the sick man at every meeting, wasting hours in abuse and recrimination. He opposed the motion that Mackay should carry dispatches to the Company and then, realizing that the vote must go against him and that he would thus have a vengeful enemy abroad in Edinburgh, he shamelessly put about and came up on another tack. He visited Mackay's sick-bed with blustering good cheer, pressing upon him a letter of recommendation to the Directors in which he asked that Mackay be given a guinea a day should he travel home through England, and that they bear all his expenses while he was in Scotland. Mackay cynically accepted the letter, and their uneasy friendship was restored. There were suspicions later of a darker compact between them.

The Councillors now met regularly ashore, in Paterson's hut or one shared by the officers. They could be seen through its open walls, wigs removed and coats loosened, the air thick with tobacco smoke to fight off clouds of insects, Mr Rose's pen scratching at paper, and the noise of shouting voices. No longer separated from the colonists by the water of the bay and the closed door of

a ship's cabin, they lost some of their august superiority, and were seen and heard to be what they were – jealous, contentious and human. This, as much as a growing discontent in the Colony, led to the first of several seemingly unrelated incidents that took the settlers and the seamen to the end of their ragged patience and a sad and abortive mutiny.

Encouraged by the presence of their officers on the Council, some of the Planters went hopefully to the door of the hut and asked for more food. If their miserable rations could not be increased, they said, then the Colony should be abandoned. Pennecuik blandly told them that there was not a month's supply left in the ships, and therefore not enough to provision them for a withdrawal. He refused to accept the proposal, which was supported by other Councillors, that the stores should be brought ashore from the *Saint Andrew* and lodged in the fort, confident that Robert Drummond would allow none to be unloaded from the *Caledonia*. The Planters went away confused by what sounded like a sentence of death, and they were further angered when Robert Jolly, hearing of the Commodore's reply, came out of his sulky retirement and said that there were enough provisions for three months at the present allowance, not including the oat-meal set aside for the sick.

The Commodore denied it, and no one could persuade him to release an inventory of the stores aboard his ship. He was acting altogether strangely. His seamen were filling the water-casks of the *Saint Andrew*, and a rumour quickly spread that he intended to weigh anchor and leave the settlement to starve. Robert Drummond believed it, and with the same concern for his own safety ordered the *Caledonia's* casks to be filled and the ship put in trim for sailing. When both vessels began to take ballast aboard, John Anderson of the *Endeavour* hurriedly did the same. Ashore, the Planters watched in stupefied amazement, and the Council did nothing.

'About this time,' wrote Jolly in his memorial,

Captain Pennecuik invited aboard several of his best and trustiest friends to whom, after dinner, he proposed that, seeing victuals were like to be expended and ships destroyed, he thought it most expedient

that the *Saint Andrew* and the *Caledonia*, well-manned and provided with provisions, should be fitted out for a design.

This design, it was implied, would be a privateering cruise, but to those best and trustiest friends – and to the rest of the colonists when they heard of it – it sounded like desertion and cowardice. Pennecuik hurriedly withdrew the suggestion, protesting that he was thinking only of the good of the settlement. The affair had a paradoxical effect on morale. ‘The greatest number of the Colony,’ said Jolly,

were positively inclined that rather than forsake the place before they have recruits, or hear from Scotland, that they will be satisfied with the quarter or third, yea rather than sail, half abatement of their ordinary allowance of provisions.

It was a noble declaration of faith, but it made hunger no easier to endure.

The only sea-captain who showed any concern for the sick and the starving was William Murdoch, Pincarton’s first mate, who now commanded the *Unicorn*. When the others were taking on water and ballast, he ordered his yards to be stripped and the ship prepared for careening, hoping that the men ashore would understand that he did not intend to desert them. He and his crew also volunteered to take their boats out in search of turtles, and invited the other ships to join them, but they, said Jolly, ‘busied in fishing the French wreck and catching of small fishes with their twined nets, appropriated all they took for themselves.’ The *Unicorn*’s boats had extraordinary luck, sometimes returning at sunset with a dozen or more great turtles, one alone being enough to feed 100 men on the peninsula.

Murdoch had a rough integrity, and a stubborn wish to do what his ‘honest Captain Pincarton’ would think was best for his ship and the Colony. ‘I stood in defence of the ungrateful Company’s interest,’ he would write with pride seven months later, ‘and in support of the Colony against their Glencoe Council when few of their men of honour had the soul to do it.’ He sympathized with Jolly, now aboard the *Unicorn*, and with Montgomerie, and when both were formally expelled from the

Council he bluntly declared, with more generosity than justification, that they had been unfairly treated. He detested Pennecuik whose sole ambition, he thought, was that 'the world might hear of his grandeur'. He had called Cunningham a 'greeting beast', and now, when he heard of Mackay's wish to carry the dispatches home he made no secret of his contempt for the Highlander's 'vain stomach'. Understandably, he was popular with his own crew only, and the grateful Planters ashore. His innocent involvement in the mutiny was a disaster for him, and ended his loyal service to the Colony.

He heard of it one evening when he returned with his turtling boats. Going aboard the *Endeavour* to take a glass of wine with John Anderson, he found the master alarmed and troubled. One of Pennecuik's officers, said Anderson, had that day approached him with a scheme to take over the *Saint Andrew* with drawn swords and bent pistols, and to sail her out on a buccaneering cruise. Though Anderson had refused to join the plot and had reprimanded the officer (whom he would not name), he was reluctant to inform the Council, thinking, perhaps, that Pennecuik might somehow be involved. 'I told him that it was dangerous to conceal it,' wrote Murdoch, 'and that I going aboard presently should have the opportunity to declare it to Captain Jolly, which I did.' Jolly advised him to keep a good watch, and that if any of the other ships attempted to clear the bay he should open fire on them with the *Unicorn's* guns. According to his own memorial, Jolly then told Montgomerie and Paterson of the plot, but the Council's report, which Paterson signed, said that he kept the information to himself. Probably he did, in the machiavellian hope that Pennecuik would be brought down and disgraced when the mutiny failed.

A few days later, the Council ordered Murdoch to beach the *Unicorn* for careening and to put all his crew ashore in the fort. Though he had intended careening her himself, he decided that this must be an attempt to prevent him from opposing the *Saint Andrew's* departure. His stern sense of duty, his respect for the only government of the Colony, albeit the Glencoe Gang, would not permit him to refuse an order. He resigned his command

instead and told the Council that he would serve it no longer. He asked permission to go aboard the *Maidstone* or the *Three Sisters*, and to leave for Scotland with whichever sailed first. Jolly and Montgomerie, fearful of their safety ashore, were already aboard Pilkington's ship.

The President of the week, Daniel Mackay, invited Murdoch to Sunday breakfast, which he refused. There followed an invitation to dine, which he again refused when he saw that the other guests were all members of the Highlander's clan. He lost his temper with Mackay and told him that neither flattery nor bullying would change his mind.

On Monday the Council sent for me and flattered me which I took little notice of, upon which Mackay produced my saucy note, as he termed it, and called me a hundred rogues, rascals and villains. I was remanded about and told they would force me to serve them.

At ten in the evening of the next day he was again called before the Council, accused of disobedience, and placed under guard in the fort. Jolly, who had also been summoned, wisely pleaded illness, but it did not save him. A file of musketeers took him out of the *Maidstone* and across the bay to the *Caledonia* where Robert Drummond 'used him like a dog' and locked him in the surgeon's cabin. He was accused of taking aboard the *Maidstone*, as his own property, half a hogshead and two ankers of brandy, as well as a cask of Madeira, all the rightful property of the Colony.

In the confusion of evidence, the deliberate obscurantism of its reporters, the truth of this miserable comedy cannot now be discovered, for each man recorded only what he thought to be true, or what he wished the Company and his countrymen at home to believe. Yet it is possible that Murdoch came closest to understanding when he said that he was kept a prisoner until Mackay sailed for Scotland 'lest I should force a passage with him and spoil his embassy'.

On 11 April, still weak from another attack of fever, Mackay went aboard the *Three Sisters* and left with her before sunset. The dispatches he carried from the Council, the sad letters home,

had one common theme – an appeal for help, for food, for reinforcements. Those that were private were also bitter with complaint against the Council, the idle Lords, the Doges, the Glencoe Gang. Murdoch, who knew something of these complaints, and who would be in Scotland when the letters should have been delivered, later hinted at that compact made between Mackay and Pennecuik at the moment of their reconciliation. He said that Mackay opened many of the letters on the long voyage home, and destroyed those ‘that gave account of the truth’. But by the time of writing this his hatred of Mackay was venomous, and it may have clouded his good sense. ‘Wherever I meet him, if he was guarded by the ghost of the great Mackay, and all the Macraus and Mackays in the Highlands, it shall not save his carcass.’

Throughout it all William Paterson had been weakly acquiescent. Sick, tired, closer still to losing his reason and unmercifully bullied by Pennecuik and Thomas Drummond, he signed all that was placed before him. But his conscience was troubled. When Murdoch was released from the fort, five days after the sailing of the *Three Sisters*, Paterson went to him and wept. ‘He hoped I would not take in ill part his pronouncing that unjust sentence against me,’ said Murdoch, ‘the Council had obliged him to do it to please Pennecuik.’ He begged Murdoch to reconsider his resignation, and to take service with the Colony again, but the seaman refused.

On 17 April, Jolly was also released, and he joined Montgomerie and Murdoch aboard the *Maidstone*. Jolly said that seamen from the *Caledonia* came aboard the ship at night, asking Pilkington for rum and sugar, offering salt-blackened coins which they had fished from the French wreck. The *Maidstone* sailed in the afternoon of 20 April, but the wind fell once she was clear of the harbour and she was forced to drop anchor. Before sunset, the *Caledonia*’s pinnace came up under the sloop’s stern, demanding Murdoch’s presence at a Council meeting aboard the flagship. He went with reluctance, and upon an assurance that Pilkington would wait for his return.

He discovered that the plot he had long ago reported to Jolly

'There was none of us but would afterwards be ashamed . . .'
Caledonia, April to June 1699

A PARLIAMENT was at last elected and called. It was too late to be effective, and most of the Council had long been cynical about its value. 'We found the inconvenience of calling a Parliament,' Mackay had written to Roderick Mackenzie, 'and of telling the inhabitants that they were freemen so soon. The thought of it made them insolent and ruined command.' But it was that insolence and insubordination which finally made a parliament necessary, if only as a token to stiffen the spirit of the colonists and persuade them that they were not servants but partners in the noble undertaking. The election was held toward the end of April, eight representatives chosen in the rain from eight ill-defined districts of New Edinburgh. Watching under guard from the palisades of the fort, Murdoch had been delighted by the open annoyance of the Council when the Caledonians rejected its nominees and elected 'an honest subaltern or soldier rather than a knavish captain'. Admirable though this was as an expression of political enlightenment, it would before long be fatal to the Colony.

The delegates were called on 24 April, and met beneath the dripping roof of the largest hut in New Edinburgh. Under the guidance of the Council and the presidency of Captain Colin Campbell, they enacted thirty-four Rules and Ordinances for the government of the Colony, the establishment and execution of justice. Those settlers who were not working crowded about the hut, drenched by the rain, listening to the reading of each clause and the voting upon it. The Preamble, as read by Hugh Rose, gave 'the Council and Deputees assembled in Parliament' the right to appoint its president, clerk and officers, and to govern under the following ordinances and rules which had 'the full force and effect of laws within this Colony and its dependencies by land and sea'.

It was clearly affirmed that such laws were based on the

precepts, examples, commands and prohibitions of the Holy Scriptures, and the Caledonians were warned that blasphemy, profanity and disrespect toward the Colony's officers would be punished by hard labour and a diet of bread and water. Hard labour at the public works would also be the punishment for slander, quarrelling and brawling. Death was the penalty for murder, rape, robbery, house-breaking, treason and correspondence with the Colony's enemies. It was also the just punishment for mutiny and sedition, disobedience and the violation of the Council's safe-conducts, for duelling and assault (be that only the striking of another with a stick, whip or sheathed sword), for kidnapping and the abuse of a freeman's liberty. More constructively – and here Paterson's liberal mind can be detected at work – the civil rights of the Caledonians were defined and protected, proper justiciary courts and juries ordained, their duties laid down. No man could be imprisoned for more than three months without trial. The property of a freeman could not be restrained for debt unless there were proof of intent to defraud. No judge or juryman could sit upon a case in which he was in any way interested. Corruption, bribery and the perversion of justice were to be punished as theft, but 'benefits received, good services done, shall always be generously and thankfully compensated.'

The first act of the eight Members reflected the mood of the men who had elected them. They appointed a committee to search all the ships for provisions, to make a correct inventory of them, and to organize their transfer to the fort. Both the *Caledonia* and the *Saint Andrew* were found to be well-supplied, and their fortunate crews living above the meagre rations of the Landsmen. Pennecuik and Robert Drummond were outraged by the search, declaring that their word alone should have been enough, and although the masters of the *Unicorn* and the *Endeavour* obediently sent their provisions ashore, the Commodore and his truculent Vice-Admiral delayed and finally did nothing.

The food supplies (though 'spoiled and rotten' said Paterson) proved to be more than the worst that had been feared, but what there was could not last long. Few men were strong enough for

the arduous boat-work of turtling, and the Indians rarely came now with gifts of fowl and plantains. When the *Maidstone* sailed, Pilkington had promised to direct any merchantman he sighted to the Colony, and to return himself as quickly as he could with beef and flour. But the days passed and no one came. In the bay was a sloop which had come with the *Maidstone* on her first visit, and which Pilkington had left behind in the Colony's commission, without crew or master. The Council and Parliament had decided to send it to Jamaica with what money there was. It would also carry letters. Lying in his hut, sick and desperate with fever, Paterson asked the surgeon to bleed him and so give him the strength and clear mind to write to Roderick Mackenzie.

I hope ere this comes to hand that Scotland will be sufficiently concerned and busy to support us who are now at the head of the best and greatest undertaking that ever was to the Indies. I assure you that if they do supply us powerfully and speedily we shall in a few months be able to reimburse them all and make the Company the best fund of any in Europe, but if through poorness of spirit, and little humour and jealousies, as well as delays, this little thing should be neglected, then what we have sown others will reap the fruit of, which I hope not to live to see.

In the clear mind that wrote this there was perhaps more delirium than the fever into which it once more relapsed.

The sloop left on 3 May under the command of Henry Paton, second mate of the *Unicorn*. He was told to buy what food he could with the money given him, and to return with all haste. There followed days of spiritless lethargy, of unending rain that washed the earth from the palisades of the fort and turned the mean streets of New Edinburgh into runnels of mud. The Council quarrelled with Pennecuik, and gave no advice or direction to its despised Parliament. A French sloop came, with orders from the Governor of Petit Guaves to examine the wreck of the *Maurepas*. Her master did this indifferently, sold the Colony a few provisions, and then left. When he was gone the Caledonians must have asked themselves if the man were a fool, or had been amusing himself maliciously at their expense. He had told them

that he admired this country for its riches and benign climate, that he would come and live among them, and so would 500 other Frenchmen.

About the middle of the month, desperate for information and food, the Council sent out a piragua. It went eastward along the coast and was back within the week with news that stunned the Colony. It had spoken with a Jamaican sloop and begged her master to sail to the Colony. He would not, and why he would not was plain in the printed sheet which the piragua brought back to the Council. On Sunday, 9 April, Sir William Beeston the Governor of Jamaica had published a Proclamation he had signed the day before.

IN HIS MAJESTY'S NAME and by command, strictly to command His Majesty's subjects, whatsoever, that they do not presume, on any pretence whatsoever, to hold any correspondence with the said Scots, nor to give them any assistance of arms, ammunition, provisions, or any other necessaries whatsoever, either by themselves or any other for them, or by any of their vessels, or of the English nation, as they will answer the contempt of His Majesty's command, at their utmost peril.

The unprecedented publication of such a proclamation on the Sabbath was explained on Monday. Two sloops, freighted with provisions and about to sail for Darien, were stopped before they could clear Port Royal.

Throughout all the English colonies, from the border of French Canada to the Caribbean, Governors and Lieutenant-Governors had issued the same Proclamation in obedience to orders sent them by James Vernon. The reasons given by the Secretary were that His Majesty had been unaware of the true intentions of the Scots, that the colony of Caledonia was contrary to the spirit and the word of the treaties he had signed with his allies, that Darien was possessed by His Most Catholic Majesty and therefore the settlement was a breach of the Company's Act and of England's friendly relations with Spain. The phrasing of such fine-edged, diplomatic hypocrisy was one of Mr Vernon's most adroit exercises in clerking. He and his royal master were well aware that in September, 1697, the English Commissioners for Trade had

advised the King that Darien was not possessed by Spain, that it ought to be seized by the Crown of England 'with all possible dispatch lest the Scotch Company be there before us, which is of utmost importance to the trade of England.'

The news of the Proclamation destroyed what was left of the colonists' morale. They could now expect no supplies, no food, no relief. They believed that England's unequivocal hostility explained their countrymen's failure to reinforce them. 'That the long silence,' said Paterson, 'proceeded from no other cause but that they were brow-beaten out of it, and durst not so much send word to us to shift for ourselves.' Their miserable failure and hopeless future were now plain even to the most optimistic. They were weak and hungry, and only a few had escaped fever and flux. Of the 1,200 who had left the Forth ten months before, between three and four hundred were now dead. Forty more lay in the dungeons of Carthagená, or might well be dead too for all the Colony knew. There was nothing to show for their work but a ridiculous huddle of huts and an uncompleted fort. They were ruled by quarrelsome men who wasted their time in ignoble intrigues. It was raining, and would rain for another six months. Their shoes were rotten, their clothes ragged, their skins itched with inflamed sores, they could scarcely swallow their maggot-ridden food. For weeks they had wished to be gone, and now this Proclamation persuaded them that they might go without dishonour. Through their honest subalterns and soldiers in Parliament they demanded to be taken away.

So properly expressed, the demand could not be dismissed as insubordinate and mutinous, and on the Council there was none but Paterson to oppose it. Thomas Drummond had been suffering from an intermittent fever since March, and before his election he had asked for, and been refused, leave to return to Scotland for the good of his health. Though his self-respect was injured by the thought of surrender, his family pride wounded by his brother's belief that the Colony should be abandoned entirely, he was now contemptuous of the wretched colonists and agreed that the settlement should be deserted, if only temporarily. The other soldiers on the Council accepted his leadership. Paterson

again had himself bled, and came bravely from his bed to fight the motion.

When I saw there was no talking against our leaving the place, I persuaded them what I could, that first rumours of things of this nature was always most terrifying and that happily our native country knew nothing of all this; and if they did not, but remained firm to the design, there was none of us but would afterwards be ashamed of our precipitant forwardness is going away upon this occasion.

He was told that the Landsmen were too ill and weak to defend the ditch or the fort, that if there were a Spanish attack they would be overrun. He agreed, but suggested instead that the colonists should be taken aboard the ships, which might then lie off the coast until help arrived from Scotland. The Council seemed to agree with him, and issued orders for the loading of the ships. Not unnaturally, a rumour spread that the settlement was to be abandoned and that the fleet would return to Scotland. Paterson protested, demanding a public denial, but the Council said nothing, and it is probable that Pennecuik and Robert Drummond intended to make all sail for home once their ships were clear of the bay. By the beginning of June the Colony was demoralized and disordered, without proper leadership or clear decision. Paterson struggled to prevent the general unease from becoming panic, putting 'lets and stumbling-blocks' to the obvious preparations for departure. He said that when Henry Paton returned from Jamaica the sloop should be manned by thirty of the fittest men, cruise off the coast, 'and live upon turtling and fishing till we should see if any recruits or news came from Scotland.' He volunteered to remain with it. Thomas Drummond supported the proposal, but said that he would stay. Paterson should go home and tell the Company how matters stood with its noble undertaking.

And then, on 5 June, Paterson's weakened body collapsed, his mind fled into the wildest delirium yet. The next day a French ship came into the harbour, and her captain brought terrifying news. He had come from Carthage, he said, where a new Governor had recently arrived from Spain. This man had placed

his predecessor, Don Diego, under arrest and was mounting a great force of ships and soldiers against the Colony. Now the last of the Scots' resistance crumbled into panic, officers and men fighting for a place in the boats on the shore. By 10 June most of the company commanders, and all of the Councillors with the exception of Paterson and Drummond, were aboard the ships with their servants and baggage. Little attempt was made to organize the evacuation, and it took a week of mounting fear and confusion. The planters boarded what ships they could, angrily demanding that they set sail at once. The guns which had been mounted in the fort would have been abandoned but for Thomas Drummond. Gathering a few men by force and threat, he tore a breach in the palisades that had cost so much in labour and death, and dragged the guns down to the boats, standing by with an armed guard until they were ferried out to the flagship.

Ashore in his hut, in a delirium for most of the time, soaked by the rain that ran through the roof, Paterson was ignored.

None visited me except Captain Thomas Drummond, who, with me, still lamented our thoughts of leaving the place, and praying God that we might but hear from our country before we left.

Though Drummond had little respect for Paterson, and was usually scornfully impatient with him, he recognized the sick man's courage at this moment and honoured it with his loyal attention. In one of Paterson's rare periods of consciousness, the grenadier captain brought him news of a disquietening rumour aboard the *Saint Andrew*. Pennecuik, it was said, had no intention of sailing to Scotland. He proposed a cruise along the coast as buccaneers, saying that since the Scots had been called pirates and were certain to be hanged as such if caught by the English or Spanish, they should take what profit they could and be damned. Moreover, if the ships went home to Scotland the seamen need not expect an ungrateful Company to pay the wages owing them. Paterson sent a desperate message to the other Councillors, imploring them to meet him ashore and to place Pennecuik under guard if the report were true. None came, and

those who troubled to reply said that they were too ill to leave the ships.

Paterson remembered little of the last two or three days. On 16 June he was hurriedly carried aboard the *Unicorn*, probably by Drummond or Turnbull. His few articles of clothing, the sad relics of his wife's possessions, were brought out that night, 'almost all of them damnified and wet, which afterwards rotted most of them.' Like a thwarted child, he vainly asked for several brass kettles and sixteen iron pots, loaned to him by a friend in Jamaica and now left behind in the ruins of his hut. He became angry in his fever, demanding the immediate payment of £71 Sterling which he had spent on sugar, tobacco and resin for the Colony. In such a mood of sick petulance did he leave his great dream for ever.

On the morning of 18 June a northerly wind making it impossible for them to sail through the sea-gate, the *Caledonia*, *Unicorn* and *Endeavour* were warped out of the bay. They lay by off Forth Point and Thomas Drummond was rowed across to the *Unicorn* from his brother's ship. He brought papers which he was anxious for Paterson to sign. 'I was very ill and not willing to meddle,' remembered Paterson, 'but he pressed it, saying there could be no quorum without me. Upon this I signed.' He could recall little of what the papers said, but he thought there were orders for the ships to sail to Boston or Salem in New England, for the Councillors aboard to sell what goods they could for provisions, and to carry the remainder to Scotland. Pennecuik's bold scheme for a buccaneering venture, if indeed he had truly proposed it, was forgotten. They were going home.

When Drummond got back to the *Caledonia* a sunset gale blew her and the *Endeavour* out of sight to sea. Ineptly handled by her weary crew, the *Unicorn* was struck broadside by a wave that smashed her long-boat in the waist and tore her away from her bow anchor. She ran in to the lee of Golden Island where she dropped anchor from the stern and rode out the night in danger and fear. The next morning the *Saint Andrew* was sighted to the east, under full sail and making for the open sea. She ignored the *Unicorn's* signal and was soon hull down. Without the

strength to weigh anchor, the *Unicorn* cut her stern cable and followed.

Behind in Caledonia Bay were left decaying huts, muddy tracks, the slipping palisades of Fort Saint Andrew, and six men. Too exhausted to fight their way to the boats, they had been left to die at their own request. 'Poor silly fellows,' Roger Oswald called them, having crawled to the shore himself, 'who being so weak did not dare adventure themselves to sea.' The Indians, who had watched the departure of the ships with sad incomprehension, came out of the trees and offered them shelter. These six men would have been surprised to know that they, alone of all the colonists, would later be admired and respected by their countrymen.

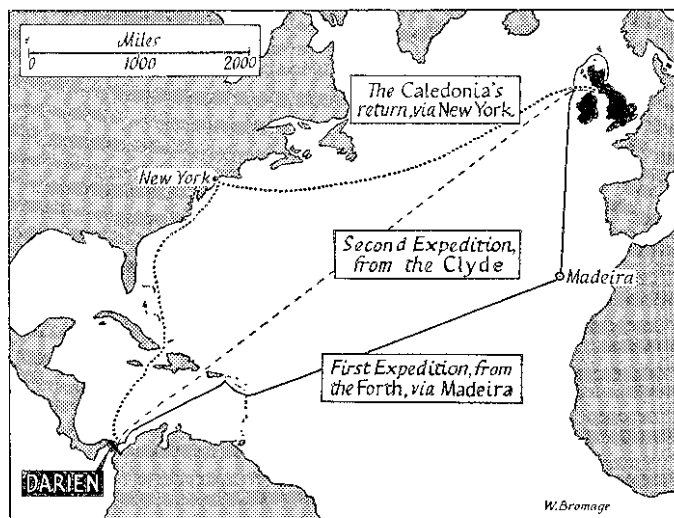
Some weeks later a Spanish brigantine slipped cautiously into the bay. Her captain, Juan Delgado, went ashore and wandered among the ruins of 100 empty huts. He counted the twenty-four embrasures of the fort and a dribble of cannon-balls by the breach in its palisade. He counted the graves too, 400 in battalion ranks and two inside the fort. He sent an armed party into the forest. It came back with four frightened Indians and a white man, one of the abandoned Scots. Delgado treated him with gentle kindness.

Before they left, the Spaniards destroyed what they could of Fort Saint Andrew and burnt the huts of New Edinburgh.

'Most of them dead, the rest in so lamentable a condition'
Jamaica and New York, July to October 1699

ROBERT DRUMMOND'S orders, as signed by a quorum of the Council on 18 June had been to make the best way he could 'in company with the rest of the ships'. He waited for none of them. Yet the little *Endeavour* was able to keep the *Caledonia's* topsails in sight for twelve days, and sometimes come within a cable's length of her stern, despite a dying crew and timbers that threatened to split under every wave on her larboard quarter. On 1

July her master, John Richard, made desperate signals to Drummond, asking for help. The pink's mainmast was sprung and she was taking in water forward. Without waiting for a reply, Richard ordered his crew and his frightened passengers into the



boats. As the *Endeavour* went down by the head, Drummond reluctantly put his ship about and picked up the survivors. Most of them would soon wish that they had been mercifully drowned.

Two hundred and fifty Planters had crowded aboard the *Unicorn*, lying below decks on the rotting mockery of useless trade goods. Before she left the lee of Golden Island her water had turned sour. Her provisions, the smell of which made starving men retch, would scarcely support half the numbers aboard, though death would soon balance that accounting. Waiting in the bay, her crew had caught the fever and the flux brought aboard by the Landsmen, and now she could muster no more than half a dozen seamen to a watch. John Anderson, who had been given command of the ship when Murdoch left, put the fittest

Landsmen to work aloft and below, and crowded on as much sail as the weather would allow. That weather was bad, skies of awful thunder-heads, sudden squalls, changing winds that could send men into the shrouds three or four times within an hour. South of Jamaica the *Unicorn* came up with Henry Paton's sloop, on its return voyage to Caledonia. The two ships, lay close, their masters shouting across the heaving seas. The *Unicorn's* news was plain by her presence, by the white faces of the haggard men at her rail, and Paton reported no more than had been expected. Because of Beeston's proclamation, he had left Port Royal without provisions. The weather parted them, but the sloop put about and followed the *Unicorn* like an uneasy dog.

That night a violent gale struck both ships. The sloop weathered it, but the *Unicorn* lost her foremast and mizzen top and sprang so many leaks that her waist was awash. Anderson ordered all but the unconscious and the dying to the pumps. By dawn the sea was calm, the wind soft, and in the pellucid light of a fine day the *Unicorn* was astonished to see the *Saint Andrew* two leagues off, her mainsails set and the sun golden on her stern. Closer still was Paton, silently ignoring all cries for help. Anderson could not haul up his main courses, the signal of distress, but he fired the two guns which should follow, and upon this the *Saint Andrew* came slowly up and lay by within half a league. Anderson went away to her in his boat, hoping that she would give him men to clear his decks and rig a jury-mast. Penneuk was ill, lying in his cabin and peevishly indifferent to all misfortunes but the impertinence of his own sickness. He refused to help, and only after Anderson's entreaties and the insistence of Councillor Colin Campbell would he sign an order to Paton, telling him to stand by and give what aid he could.

When the wind rose the next day, the *Saint Andrew* left. The sloop remained within hail of the *Unicorn* for another twenty-four hours, and then, said Paterson, 'notwithstanding her orders in writing, and Paton's repeated oaths to Captain Anderson that he would not leave us, they sailed away from us at fair daylight.' It was a week, providentially of calm weather, before the *Unicorn* could get under way again. There were now not more than

twenty Landsmen who could stand on their feet, Anderson having driven them mercilessly to the pumps while his seamen cut away the wreckage and erected a jury-mast.

It is possible that the *Saint Andrew* could have given no help even had her commander been willing. Her seamen were as weak as, if not weaker than the *Unicorn's*. All her sea-officers were dead or dying, and she was soon commanded by Colin Campbell. Resolute soldier though he was, he knew more about picquet-guards and enfilade fire than he did about binnacles and whip-staffs. Shadowed by a wary cruiser from the Barliavento Fleet, she was seven terrible weeks at sea before she came in to the lee of Jamaica and dropped anchor off Blewfields. The fever brought aboard in Caledonia Bay had burnt furiously below her stinking decks. One hundred and forty men had died in the passage. Somewhere, some day or night, Robert Pennecuik had joined them, carried from his fine cabin in a canvas sbroud, thrown overboard with the minimum respect and ceremony due to a member of the Council and Parliament of Caledonia, a Commodore of the Fleet of the Company of Scotland. In none of the letters and journals of the survivors is there any regret for his death.

'I know not in all the world what to do,' Campbell wrote to his friend Rorie Mackenzie,

for I am certain the scamen will mutiny and play the devil, for they have not a week's bread, and besides they expect to have their wages here. . . . They are the damnest crew that I ever saw, for such of them as are not lazy are most confoundedly mutinous.

Uncharitable though his opinion was of these sick and starving men who had brought him to a safe landfall, Campbell did his best to find them food. He went ashore and took horse to Port Royal where, in a fine white house above the fort, Sir William Beeston welcomed him cordially. A glass of wine, a pipe of tobacco and an exchange of courtesies, however, were all he was prepared to give the Scot. 'He could by no means suffer me to dispose of any goods for supplying my men, although they should starve.' Apart from the orders he had received, Beeston was also afraid of the Spaniards who had been taking reprisals

against Jamaican merchantmen, in the outrageous belief that there was no difference between an Englishman and a Scot. They had attacked a sloop off Crab Island, blowing away her master's jawbone as he swam from his ship, detained two more in Cartagena, and robbed another of her cargo of slaves. Beeston knew that the angry shipmasters of his island would not tolerate any help being given to the *Saint Andrew*. But he was not without sympathy. 'The Scotch are quite removed from Caledonia,' he reported to London, having carefully questioned Campbell, 'most of them dead and the rest in so lamentable a condition that deserves great compassion.'

Stifling his bitter pride, Campbell then called on John Benbow whose fleet was at anchor in the harbour. The Admiral would give him no provisions and no help in bringing the *Saint Andrew* to a safer anchorage at Port Royal. The Company's agent in Jamaica, Doctor Blair, was a frightened man and pleaded illness as an excuse for not receiving Campbell.

Thus the Scots were forced to beg or steal. Their ship rotted where they had brought her to anchor, the sick without attention and the daily dead pushed hurriedly into the bay. Many of the crew deserted, taking ship with merchantmen or the bitter alternative of Benbow's fleet. For want of bread to eat, the Landsmen who could struggle ashore signed themselves away as bonded servants to the plantations. Few, if any, would return home again. Campbell lived out the summer aboard the ship, rejecting advice to lay her up in harbour while he still had men to handle her, hoping for relief from Scotland. That autumn there was a virulent epidemic throughout the Caribbean, and no island escaped it. On Jamaica it was the worst the English had known, and the thin and yellow skeletons aboard the *Saint Andrew* were helpless before it. 'The Scotch that came from Caledonia,' reported Beeston, 'are so many dead that at last they are forced to lay up the ship for want of men to carry her away.' Campbell went ashore, living on charity and on drafts which Blair finally honoured. He still believed that relief would come.

The *Caledonia* reached New England in seven weeks, dropping anchor at Sandy Hook on 8 August. She had lost 105 men

on the voyage, and eleven more died before she came up to New York two days later, foul with the smell of death, vomit and excrement. Of the 150 still alive, a third were sick, including the Drummonds and Samuel Vetch, and the remainder weak from exhaustion. Until he went down with fever, Robert Drummond and the officers had driven their crew and passengers with a pitiless brutality which the survivors remembered more vividly than the endless gales, the groans of the dying, and the prayers that were cried in the night. Three Scots merchants of New York, who went aboard the ship when she arrived, met afterwards in shocked horror and wrote a passionate letter of protest to Scotland.

Was there ever a more horrid barbarity than in the passage they exercised toward their poor men, who no sooner fell sick but were turned out on deck, there exposed to most violent rains; and though the most of their provisions consisted in flour, yet they whose distemper was the flux must have nothing but a little sour oatmeal and a little water, nor their share of that neither. When they complain, to condole or comfort them – sweet Christian-like consolation! – ‘Dogs! It’s too good for you!’ Their visits from officers and surgeons were, in the morning, questioning, how many are to be thrown overboard? Answer four, or perhaps five. ‘Why,’ reply they, ‘what, no more?’

Aboard the *Unicorn* conditions were worse, though from sickness and over-crowding, not brutality, for Anderson was a compassionate man. Making little way under her jury-mast, and leaking badly, she was driven westward of Cuba and then beat to windward along the coast until she found shelter by the port of Matanzas. Anderson took his pinnace ashore in a green bay to look for water. He found instead a Spanish fort, with twenty-four guns gaping from its walls. He managed to escape under a spatter of musketry, but left behind Benjamin Spense who had had little opportunity to exercise his skill in languages and now stepped forward to greet the Spaniards in their own tongue. Anderson got the ship out of the bay with great difficulty, pursued by an armed piragua and the rolling fire of the fort’s guns.

Northward went the *Unicorn*, past the Florida Keys and up

the coast of Virginia, running ashore several times and hauling off by some miraculous strength of will and body. On 13 August she reached Sandy Hook, and the next day came in to New York. 'Under God,' said Paterson, 'owing the safety of the ship and our lives to the care and industry of our commander, Captain John Anderson.' With a leaking, dismasted ship he had indeed served the Company well, but at a high cost. Sixty of the 100 men left aboard were sick or dying. Councillor Charles Forbes had been turned over in Matanzas Bay, out of range of the Spanish guns. There was not a captain, lieutenant or subaltern left, and few of their soldiers. 'We lost near 150, most of them for want of looking after and means to recover them, in which condition we had no small loss and inconvenience by the death of Mr Hector Mackenzie, our chief surgeon.' He had died, said Paterson who loved him, as a result of 'his unwearied pains and industry among the people on shore as well as on board, for many weeks together.'

But these things Paterson would not write for months yet. He was now gravely ill and could do nothing for himself, nor be removed from the little cabin built for him. From the moment he had been carried away from Caledonia he had slowly relinquished his interest in life. All had gone – his wife, a dream, his friends and companions, and it is possible that he felt so deep a responsibility for the omnipresence of death that he fled from it into silly regret for the loss of some brass kettles and iron pots. In a little while even those were of no importance. His spirit was still, his eyes clouded, his mind gone. The same three Scots who had visited Drummond's ship later came aboard the *Unicorn*. 'The grief has broke Mr Paterson's heart and brain,' they said, 'and now he's a child.'

Recovering from fever and writing to his brother William, Samuel Vetch had no sympathy for Paterson. He said that all misfortune and disaster might be blamed on the man's 'knavery or folly or both'. Robert Drummond, also recovered and writing his first report to the Directors, blamed no one by name and Providence only by implication. The responsibility for any future calamities, he further implied, might well be the Company's.

I am afraid I shall have a hard pull to get the ship home, for my people are still dying, being all weak: and men is very scarce here to be had. . . . With God's help, fourteen days or three weeks hence I design to put to sea. I am not capable by writing to give you an account of the miserable condition we have undergone, first before we came off Caledonia, being starved and abandoned by the world, as also the great difficulty of getting the ship to this place.

The claim that he might put the ships to sea within three weeks was insanely optimistic, and perhaps he did not believe it himself. He could scarcely muster enough seamen to make one crew for the Atlantic passage, even should he be able to provision the ship. And the matter of provisions was his greatest problem. There was a strong Scots settlement in New England. The principal traders of East and West Jersey, Pennsylvania and New York were Scots, and there were more of them to the south in Maryland and Virginia, but although they were rich, influential, and a growing political power, they were watched with intense suspicion. The Proclamations had frightened them, and had effectively choked any more practical sympathy like the dispatch of the *Three Sisters* to Darien. The Navigation Acts had always been strictly enforced against them – one of their ships had recently been arrested in the Thames – and they were often accused of treason and Jacobite plots. Governor Jeremiah Basse of Jersey, a bigoted Anabaptist minister who sometimes behaved as if he were still fighting the Civil War, believed (with some justice) that many of them were in collusion with pirates. He spoke of the Scots as if they were a creeping disease in the colonies, 'their numbers yearly increasing whilst the interest of our nation seems so much declining.'

The Governor of New York, Massachusetts and New Hampshire was Richard Coote, Earl of Bellamont, a high-spirited, impulsive Anglo-Irishman in his early sixties, rightly regarded by his friend the King as 'honest and intrepid'. He hated corruption and bribery, and had an aristocrat's fine contempt for most of the colonials who attempted to influence his government. The practice of Law in New York, he said, was in the hands of scandalous characters, one of them a dancing-master, another a glover,

and the third a Scot who should have been hanged for blasphemy in Edinburgh. He suffered badly from the gout, and was sometimes sorry for his lack of charity when in pain. He worked from five in the morning until ten at night, and preferred the company of his *valet de chambre* to that of his lazy officers. He was sorry for the Caledonians, but his orders were to give no assistance and he was determined to obey. In any case, he had other things on his mind at this moment. He was away from town, concluding a successful treaty with the Iroquois, and when he returned he would have to deal with the pirate William Kidd. This unfortunate, pock-marked Scot had once been given the Governor's commission as a privateer, had interpreted it as a licence for piracy, and had come back to New England with £1,000 in gold, several ingots of silver, and a handsome enamelled box of jewels which he boldly sent to Lady Bellamont. The Governor impounded the gift and threw its presumptuous donor into prison. He was further outraged when he heard that Kidd had once intended to join his fellow-countrymen in Caledonia. There was no doubt what the Governor's enemies in London would make of that. The Commissioners of Trade had recently censured him for allowing five New England ships to carry provisions to Darien, and they had yet to receive his tart reply that the five were in fact one brigantine, the *Three Sisters*, and she had sailed before he had taken up his appointment here. From the savage lodges of the Iroquois on Lake Cayuga, he sternly reminded Lieutenant-Governor Nanfan of the Proclamation against the Scots and his obligations thereunder.

John Nanfan, a kinsman of Lady Bellamont and no doubt owing his office to her husband, was a fussy, indecisive man who would have been happier had the Earl left his Indian friends and returned to deal with the Scots. Though he loyally disapproved of the Caledonians, and knew that he should be firm with them, he was moved by their deplorable state. 'They are so weak from pure fatigue and famine,' he wrote to Bellamont. 'They have no money, so I desire you will let me know how far the law will allow the barter of stores. Their miserable condition is enough to raise compassion.' The Governor was not a hard man, and his

gout had been improved by the less indulgent diet his surgeon had advised, and by the astringent air of Massachusetts Bay where he was now in gubernatorial residence. 'You know how strict my orders are against furnishing the Caledonians with provisions,' he wrote, 'Yet if you can be well assured these ships will go directly for Scotland you may furnish them with just provisions enough for their voyage.'

Unfortunately, Nanfan could be well assured of nothing. Until he heard from Bellamont he had allowed the Scots to buy immediate necessities on credit, and this had emboldened them to ask leave to provision their ships entirely, offering trade goods in exchange. Robert Drummond, it was true, swore that he intended to return to Scotland, but his brother Thomas was said to be seeking a sloop or a brigantine which he proposed to sail back to Darien. He and other officers, particularly Vetch and Turnbull, also offended Nanfan by their insolent pride. They had been lodged ashore by sympathizers who were delighted to embarrass the Governor, and they walked arrogantly abroad in ragged scarlet, touching their swords at every smirking glance.

Most of the Caledonians aboard the ships could no longer afford pride. Day by day one or more of them died from the fever or the flux. Except for a few gentlemen, and those who were certain of obtaining credit, they were not allowed to land. Roger Oswald went ashore on his hands and knees to find a merchant who was willing to lend him money against his father's name. 'I drew the bill sore against my will, but one of them I was obliged to do - either to lose my life or draw that bill.' Others less fortunate still ate the sour meal that had kept them alive for so long, or now died for want of better. The August days were hot and airless. Across the East River, New York was neat and sunlit like a canalside town in Holland, tall houses of many-coloured bricks, gabled roofs of crimson tiles. The smell of food. The sound of wheels on cobbles, the cries of children. The sight of women walking. Some men slipped down the bow cable at night and swam or rowed ashore, disappearing into the Colony, swearing that they would never go to sea again in the Company's ships, never return to Darien, nor yet to Scotland if that must be.

Paterson was carried from the *Unicorn* to friendly lodgings. As he slowly recovered from what men called his 'craziness', he asked Nanfan for permission to bring ashore his 'wearing clothes and linen, household linen and goods, with some books', and was allowed to have them upon his promise that he would not leave New York except for Scotland. Other gentlemen were also given their small baggage, upon the same assurance and once it had passed through the Customs House. Like the men who had deserted the ships at night, some of them had decided that they were done with Scotland and its Company.

Robert Drummond's three weeks passed, and two weeks more. Neither ship was provisioned, nor her crew fit to take her out into the autumn gales of the Atlantic. Thomas Drummond was restless, not for the voyage home but for a bolder venture. His sense of duty urged him to return to Darien. As it had once compelled him to pistol a Glencoe child without remorse, to cry on murder with a shout of 'What of our orders?', so now it drove him to an act of piracy. He persuaded his brother and Samuel Vetch to agree to the seizure of one of the merchantmen lying in the East River. He would then sail it to Caledonia and hold the settlement until relief arrived.

The ship they selected was appropriately named *Adventure*. Her master, John Howell, had brought her up the East River on 9 September with half her crew dead of the fever, and now, with a pilot aboard, he was awaiting Nanfan's permission to take her further up for provisioning. She was also Scots, and this may have persuaded the Drummonds that there was some legality in what they proposed, that the Company's Act gave them the power to take, hold, and possess any ship of Scotland they desired. Howell was invited to dine aboard the *Caledonia*, and when he came he was given a glass of wine and asked to what port he belonged. To Glasgow, he said. 'Then you belong to us,' said Robert Drummond, 'we seize you and you are our prize.' Too astonished to answer or protest, Howell listened silently to the reading of an order, signed by the Council of Caledonia, declaring his ship taken and under the command of the *Caledonia's* guns.

A boat's-crew, armed with cutlasses, went away to the *Adven-*

ture where the Dutch pilot, Peter Wessel, was told to bring her under the lee of the *Caledonia*. Despite the pistol at his temple, he refused, and the Scots weighed anchor and brought the ship up themselves. They then set Wessel ashore, and he was soon hammering on Nanfan's door. Howell was taken aboard his ship by Robert Drummond and locked in his cabin, guarded by two soldiers with drawn swords. And then, at dawn, the Drummonds and Vetch lost some of their courage, sending for Howell and asking him what he thought of the situation. Would he go ashore with them and declare that he had willingly surrendered his ship to the Company of Scotland? Willingly, he said, but once ashore he too was appealing for Nanfan's protection.

At ten o'clock in the morning of 14 September the Drummonds and Vetch were summoned before the Lieutenant-Governor and the Council of New York at Fort William Henry, where they denied the charges laid against them by Howell and Wessel. Samuel Vetch wrote a deposition for all, having the most plausible pen. It was all a misunderstanding. Upon their honour, there had been no intention of seizing the ship. They had taken command of the *Adventure* because her master and pilot were drunk, and there was a risk of her running afoul of the *Caledonia* in the night.

We extremely regret that there should ever have happened anything that should have given the least umbrage to a misunderstanding betwixt us and the Government for which (as our duty is) we have all the respectful deference imaginable.

If there had been any rudeness to Howell and Wessel, any indiscreet behaviour, it had been committed by the common seamen of the *Caledonia*, not by the gentlemen who signed themselves in truth and sincerity.

William Paterson was persuaded to write a brief postscript to this disarmingly ingenuous fiction. It sadly indicated the weakness of his will, the anguish of his spirit, and the desperation of his wish to save the Company from further disgrace. 'Although I was not present upon the occasion, yet I fully consent and agree to the submission.'

Nanfan believed none of it. He wanted to make an example of Robert Drummond, but he was not encouraged by the colony's Attorney. By an exasperating coincidence, the man was also a Scot. 'All he would say,' Nanfan later complained to Bellamont, 'was that it was no better than felony, and he was sorry his countrymen should be so imprudent, but no advice how to act or what to do, although I pressed him as earnestly as I could.' He reluctantly accepted the Scots' deposition, promising himself that he would arrest Robert Drummond at once should the rogue ever come ashore from the *Caledonia* again. Drummond wisely kept to his ship.

Defeated in their attempt to seize one vessel by force, the Drummonds decided to acquire another more circumspectly. They were helped by two rich merchants of New York, Stephen Delancey and Thomas Wenham, who may have been particularly amused by the raid on the *Adventure*, the foundations of their now-respectable fortunes having been laid by the Madagascar pirates they had once financed. They were willing to supply the Scots with a sloop, the *Anna*, and to fit her out with stores and provisions for a return to Caledonia, although her destination could not, of course, be made public in New York. In return, the Scots agreed to put ashore a large part of their trade goods as security. As long as these did not change hands, but remained in a warehouse under the care of a Company's servant, it would be difficult for Nanfan to prove that Delancey and Wenham were giving aid in breach of the Proclamation. The only illegal act would be the departure of the *Anna* without proper clearance.

She quietly slipped her moorings after sunset on Friday, 20 September, and under her new name, *Ann of Caledonia*, was gone from the East River before the Crown officers were aware of it. Her commission had been in Thomas Drummond's pocket for more than a week, and had been signed by Vetch and the weakly acquiescent Paterson while Robert Drummond's boarding-party was rowing away to the *Adventure*. He was to sail south, to find the relief expedition which must surely have left Scotland, and to inform it 'of our circumstances, of the nature

and situation both of the harbour and landing'. The sloop's master was Alexander Stewart, and he was ordered 'exactly and punctually to obey the said Thomas Drummond in everything as you shall be answerable.'

The few Landsmen whom Drummond had chosen to go with him were all young, resolute, and free from sickness. Some of them had served with him in Argyll's and were enthusiastically loyal to his leadership. They burned with the humiliation of their retreat, anxious to restore their country's honour and their own self-respect. Robert Turnbull, whose love for the green land of Darien had grown more intense in his absence from it, had been hot for the venture since it was first proposed, but he was almost left behind. He was staying with friends on Staten Island when the sloop sailed, and he pursued her stern-lantern through the night in a small boat until he came up with her. In his lodgings he had left a small nugget of gold, a nose-piece once worn by an Indian woman, and a fine parrot which he had somehow kept alive during the terrible voyage from Caledonia. He hoped that Robert Drummond would carry these small gifts safely to Scotland, and deliver them to Erskine of Carnock.

When Nanfan heard of the sloop's departure, he wrote to Bellamont in fear and frustration. 'The Caledonians, by and with the advice and assistance of their countrymen, have played us not fair.' This was all he could say, lacking the courage to tell the Earl about the *Adventure* or the *Anna*. Bellamont was angered by the prevarication and demanded a full account of all the Caledonians had done, pointing out that this was surely ten times more important than what Nanfan usually wrote in his dispatches. The Governor would be glad when all these troublesome Scots were gone, but he had no sympathy for his whining subordinate. 'I wish you had not burnt your fingers with them, and broke the instructions I sent you from the Secretary of State.'

Robert Drummond was ready to leave for home. He was daily losing men by death and desertion, and although Vetch had petitioned Nanfan for aid in arresting the deserters, the Lieutenant-Governor had been churlishly unhelpful. It was hopeless now to think that both ships could make the Atlantic crossing, and at

had seen, both in general and in particular. That particular was his cousin by marriage, Margaret Livingstone. Her father, Robert Livingstone, was one of the most powerful Scots in New York, with a great estate on the east bank of the Hudson and a merchant-house connected by marriage and contract with such influential families as the Van Cortlands, Van Rensselaers and Delanceys. It was Livingstone who had given the Scots credit when their ships arrived, and had provisioned the *Caledonia* for its departure. Though he had done this for profit, he also considered it his duty as a political opponent of Bellamont, and a moral obligation to those kinsmen who had served on Darien. One of them, a nephew, was Andrew Livingstone, the surgeon of the *Dolphin*.

When Vetch married his plain-featured, sharp-nosed cousin, her father gave them a house and a lot on Pearl Street, a fine residence with a high roof and two stacks of chimneys said to be worth £1,000. Vetch set himself up as a merchant, and since the Company never discovered what happened to the goods left in his charge it was assumed that he had converted them to his own use with the assistance of Wenham and Delancey. The detestation and contempt of his countrymen at home, the hatred of those who had sailed with him from Caledonia, the shocked pain of his family, did not trouble him, at least openly. He prospered, became rich and influential, a Colonel of Militia and the Governor of Nova Scotia, until his ambition overreached his talents and he was ruined by political enemies who had once been his friends. He fled to England. Thirty-three years after he had deserted the Company and his comrades he died a lonely debtor in the King's Bench Prison.

The *Caledonia* sailed on 12 October. Of the five ships that had left the Forth fifteen months before, only she returned to Scotland. She carried no more than 300 men, and some of those would die before she reached the Clyde.

4

THE KEY OF THE UNIVERSE

'It will be wonderful to see the Sun rise in the West'
Edinburgh and London, January to August 1699

IN London the Attorney-General was considering his answer to a question put to him on behalf of certain interested subjects of East New Jersey, where a Scot had recently been appointed Governor. Could a Scotchman hold such office in the Plantations, or was he disqualified therefrom by the Act regulating frauds and abuses? It was three weeks before Sir Thomas Trevor gave his opinion :

That a Scotchman born is by Law capable of being appointed Governor of any of the Plantations, he being a natural-born subject of England in judgement and construction of Law, as much as if he had been born in England.

In Edinburgh that last week of January, the Directors of the Company (who would have been as angry as the rest of their countrymen to hear that they were subjects of *England*) were giving their final instructions to Captain Andrew Gibson of the brigantine *Dispatch*. Three months after receiving the Council's letters from Madeira, urgently appealing for provisions, they were at last sending a small cargo of biscuits, flour, pork, stock-fish, oil and brandy. Gibson's orders were to sail his little ship by the most expeditious route to Darien, to take no insults from the men-of-war of any nation, and to defend himself by force of arms if necessary. With him sailed William Vetch, now recovered from his sickness, anxious to join his brother, and eager to take his seat on the Council of Caledonia. The brigantine weathered the northern passage, but was hit by gales as she came down the

Hebrides and was finally wrecked on the isle of Texa, two miles off the coast of Islay. All she carried was lost, and her crew swam ashore with nothing but what they wore.

For the next month the Company was leisurely engaged in the purchase of another small ship, the *Marion of Leith*. She was renamed the *Olive Branch* when her owner was at last persuaded to part with her – or with fifteen-sixteenths of her, though his prudent foresight in retaining the last fraction for himself was to be a misjudgement. She was soon joined in Leith Road by a chartered ship, the *Hopeful Binning*. As the weather improved, deep-laden lighters began to fill their holds with casks of biscuit, barrels of ale, meal, tobacco, raisins and sugar, bolts of cloth and cases of hardware.

Though much of the delay in reinforcing the Colony was due to the astonishing complacency of the committees for this and for that, there were less controllable causes and the Directors had referred to them in the letters carried by the *Dispatch*. 'We have had a scarcity of corn and provisions here since your departure, even to a dearth, and poverty of course occasioned thereby.' Scotland had moved closer still to famine, to privation and epidemic disease. It had little enough for itself, and was reluctant to spare some of it for those distant adventurers who must now be enjoying the fruitful pleasures described in Mr Wafer's book, lately off the press. The stockholders were loyal to the Company, if not disinterested, and with few exceptions they had answered the Company's third call on the subscriptions at Candlemas. In their turn, to reward such faith, the Directors declared a small dividend on the first call.

A stronger encouragement to any doubters was that physical manifestation of the Company's glory, the *Rising Sun*. Still moored off the mouth of the Gair Loch, her splendid lines and gilded hull were noble in the sun of an early spring. The sight of her, and the thought of others soon to sail with her, moved a modestly anonymous Lady of Honour to compose some romping stanzas which she called *The Golden Island or the Darien Song, in Commendation of All Concerned in that Noble Enterprise of the Valiant Scots*.

We have another Fleet to sail,
the Lord will reik* them fast;
It will be wonderful to see
the Sun rise in the West.

Some are noble, all are great,
Lord bless your company,
And let your fame, in Scotland's name,
o'er spread both land and sea.

The friends and relations of the great and noble already gone, however, were wondering what had happened to them, and their growing anxiety burst into extravagant joy on 25 March when Alexander Hamilton arrived by express from England. He carried a large sealed packet of letters and dispatches from the Colony, and a crying, shouting mob of men and women waited at the entrance to Milne Square for a glimpse of his fever-yellow face. He had travelled in haste from Bristol, where a West Indian ship had brought him, as eager to outstrip Major Cunningham of Eckett as he was to bring the good news. He was greeted warmly by the relieved Directors, who questioned him closely and then made public as much of the dispatches as they thought politic. Resolved, wrote Roderick Mackenzie in the minutes

... that this Court shall order a compliment to the said Mr Alexander Hamilton as being the first person who has brought the welcome news.

Resolved, that the Ministers of this city and suburbs thereof be acquainted with the good news to the end that they may in their discretion return public and hearty thanks to Almighty God upon this occasion.

The compliment given to Hamilton was a purse of one hundred guineas, and he was further granted two guineas a week during his stay in Edinburgh. In token of its gratitude and pleasure, the City Corporation made him a burgess and a gild-brother. Two days later, after the dispatches had been thoroughly studied, the Directors sent deputations to the Lord Chancellor, Lord Provost, the Governor of the Castle, humbly asking for public

*blow.

demonstrations of joy. The guns of the Half Moon Battery were fired across the North Loch and the Grassmarket, bells rang above a *feu de joie* from the muskets of the Town Guard, bonfires were lit by Holyroodhouse and the Netherbow Port, and at night all the windows of the Royal Mile glowed with happy candles. Riders were sent to every city in the kingdom, ordering more gunfire, more bells, more candles.

Major Cunningham arrived in the midst of the riot and celebration, having travelled home by way of London. He was in an ill humour, and resented the rewards given Hamilton, who was no member of the Council after all. He caught at the sleeves of the Directors with his tale of misfortune, of his 'considerable travelling charges and expenses in coming hither by way of Jamaica and England'. He was perhaps an embarrassment to them. If the Colony had been successfully established what was one of its Council doing in Scotland? He had persuaded the City to elect him a burgess and a gild-brother too, and this made it impossible for the Directors to ignore him or censure him for desertion. Upon his assurance that he intended to return to Caledonia, they gave him £200 Sterling. He then retired to his estate and never went back to the Colony.

Hamilton's news had lifted the wave-top of the nation's enthusiasm, and Milne Square was once more crowded with eager volunteers. The King's servants were alarmed by the passion of the people, its undercurrent of hostility to England and the Throne, though none of them could see what should be done about it. 'It is an unaccountable thing,' Lord Marchmont wrote to Carstares, 'to find so great a disposition in people to go thither as there is. God knows what shall come of it.'

Six weeks after Hamilton's arrival, and three after the Company heard of the loss of Gibson's brigantine, the *Olive Branch* and the *Hopeful Binning* sailed from Leith with provisions, stores, and 300 men and women to reinforce the settlers. The Directors had been sending letters of advice and admonition by every ship they thought might touch at Jamaica, and with the *Olive Branch* they now sent the promise of spiritual encouragement. 'There is so general an inclination to supply you with

whatever is needful that you need not doubt but suitable care will be taken to provide good ministers for you.' In the meantime, since the Colony was without clergy, it was hoped that the Councillors would do what they could to discourage all manner of vice, and to inspire the colonists by their own sober, discreet and religious behaviour. At that moment the Caledonians, having just heard of the English Proclamations, were encouraged and inspired by their Council's plain intention to be gone from the Colony as soon as possible.

As a cool spring moved into a wet summer, once more with no promise of a good harvest, preparations for the second expedition were increased. 'Question not,' the Directors wrote to the Council, 'but the *Rising Sun*, and four ships more of considerable burden, will sail from the Clyde with a greater number of men than went along with yourselves.' In the meantime, remembering Hamilton's unhappy report of squabbles and dissension, they implored the Councillors 'to be one in interest and affection, and to have a watchful eye over any that may be of such clattering, mutinous, and pernicious temper as Herries has proved to be.' For Surgeon Herries, having made his own way to London from Jamaica, was now reported to be writing a scurrilous attack on the Colony, for his English paymasters no doubt. The man's abominable impertinence went beyond honour and imagination, and the Directors were astonished to hear that he had committed Haldane of Gleneagles to gaol in London, holding him responsible for wages allegedly owing by the Company. Gleneagles was released on his own bail, left England at once for Edinburgh, and asked the Directors to indemnify him. They did so with reluctance.

None of the news from England was good. The settlement of the Colony had openly angered the Government there, and the King's continued silence was alarming, though that naïve Lady of Honour had declared that 'he did encourage us against the English will.' It was rumoured in London that some of the Councillors-General, notably the Earl of Annandale, were bought and employed by the English for 'undoing the African Company'. James Johnston, out of office since his dismissal from

the Secretaryship in 1696 but still in William's favour, warned his 'dear Chief' the Earl to be more circumspect. 'Whatever becomes of the Company, any Scotchman that shall have a hand in undoing it will be detested by all mankind.' Though he had once believed the undertaking to be an act of Providence, Johnston now thought that its failure might be for the best, ultimately producing 'a union of trade betwixt the kingdoms'.

Scratching away by night, secure in his office from a nagging wife, James Vernon had been waiting impatiently for some formal protest from Spain, knowing that this would allow him to declare England's innocence and Scotland's guilt. When envoys to the Spanish dominions complained of snubs and insults he told them to reply boldly, to say that the Colony was no responsibility of England. 'I don't know but we have taken more care to render it ineffectual than they have done, while their silence encourages the undertakers.' On 3 May he got his wish. The Spanish Ambassador called upon him and delivered a wordy memorial of protest. His Most Catholic Majesty, Charles the Sufferer – that victim of inherited syphilis, dropsy and epilepsy, now mercifully approaching his last year of dying – declared that the Colony of Caledonia was an insult to his kingdom, an invasion of his domains in America, and a violation of the treaties between himself and his cousin of England. After such a scowling start, the memorial ended amiably with the hope that William would take such measures as he found convenient to put an end to the settlement. Vernon accepted it politely, explained the difference between an Englishman and a Scot, and assured the Ambassador of His Majesty's continuing affection and friendship for the King of Spain.

Some token action was taken. Vernon advised the Lord Justice of Ireland to be vigilant in preventing the departure of any ship to Darien, and in Madrid the English envoy, Alexander Stanhope, patiently told a sceptical Royal Council that Scotland was independent of England under the Crown, 'and for this reason must be handled with much prudence and circumspection.' Vernon was relieved that the Spanish protest had been so mild, and he thought he knew why. Spain might soon need England's help.

Upon his desk where he laid the memorial was a dispatch from Dover, written by the spy John Macky. Couriers from France had reported that Charles was already dead and that Louis XIV would soon claim the vacant throne for his grandson. 'We should be glad to hear something to the contrary,' Vernon told the English envoy in Brussels, 'for the 50,000 men that lie ready in Flanders look to us as if they smelt a carcass and are ready to enter upon the inheritance.'

In Scotland the Spanish protest aroused a flurry of anger and contempt quickly lost in the greater surge of enthusiasm for the second expedition. Enclosed with the dispatches from the Colony had been a chart of Caledonia Bay, and this was now copied, printed and circulated as a crudely inaccurate map. It gave a wondrous reality to what had been until now a misty conjecture, and the wording of its imaginative legend excited envy and cupidity. '*Place where upon digging for stones to make an oven, a considerable mixture of gold was found in them. . .*' Men were eager to advise the Company, though they might get no closer to the Colony than this map and the paper on which they wrote their earnest contributions. The Duke of Hamilton, that popular friend of the undertaking, was sent a cure for those colonists who might eat poisoned fish. The bones of the fish itself, said the recipe, should be burnt, ground to a powder, and then drunk in a glass of wine. The Duke was also pleased to submit some of his own thoughts on the construction of New Edinburgh.

It must be observed on the building of the town that all the principal streets must go from north to south, and that those you are obliged to make which cross east to west must be as narrow as possible, because the sun looks plumb on them all day long. . . . There must be wells or cisterns in three or four different places, lest the enemy should poison the water by a bomb when but in one place.

This was sound advice, but when it was being written, in the Duke's great home by Holyroodhouse, Captain Juan Delgado was burning what was left of New Edinburgh.

August came, and the Court of Directors moved westward and

took up lodgings in Greenock and Glasgow so that they might be near the Company's fleet. Their confidence had been momentarily shaken by the news of the English Proclamations, which reached them at the beginning of the month, but they had quickly recovered. The nation, too, when its anger subsided, took the Proclamations as a challenge. The Lord Advocate, Sir James Stewart, watched the excitement with a son's eye. 'You cannot believe,' he told Carstares, 'how great an edge is upon persons of all degrees here for that plantation.' A week later, when the Directors went to the Clyde, he was more depressed. 'I am truly grieved at this matter. The nation is bent one way, and the King is of another persuasion; and whether it succeed or not it is like to have ill consequences.' Unless matters took another turn, by which he meant that unless the Company met with a crippling setback, the King's servants and the King's cause in Scotland could not prosper.

Four ships now waited in the Clyde. Direcksone's handsome flagship had been joined by the *Duke of Hamilton* and the *Hope of Bo'ness*, both of 300 tons or more and both chartered. The fourth vessel, the *Hope*, was smaller and owned by the Company. It was the *Rising Sun* that attracted most of the people who came down the firth to see the fleet. Made of good Berlin oak and 450 tons in burden, she was more than 150 feet long from her fore-castle head to the carved caryatids on her stern. She was armed like an Indiaman with thirty-eight guns, twelve, eight, and four-pounders, their ports painted red and encircled with golden laurels on the after-deck. She glowed with the gold of her name. One rising sun burst into gilded rays beneath her sprit, and another below her stern. All her golden carving was rich and elaborate, curling leaves, convolutes and whorls twined about her windows, poop-deck rail, roundhouse and captain's barge. Her yellow-panelled cabin was luxuriously furnished - bed-curtains of Bengal cloth, fringed, canopied and tasselled with gold, gilded handles to the doors, five tablecloths of yellow damask in a chest of orange wood, eighteen ells of linen napery, two large looking-glasses framed in gold, dark red earthenware, blue cups of polished pewter, and spoons of yellow horn.

The man chosen to enjoy the lonely splendour of the cabin, to command the ship and to be commodore of the fleet, was James Gibson. The sea-going partner of a rich merchant-house he owned with his brother, he was a Director of the Company, a large holder of its stock, and until recently its agent in Amsterdam. He had seen the ship's keel laid in Direckson's yard, watched her grow, taken wine aboard her with Peter the Great, and sailed with her to the Clyde. From her beginning he had been certain that he would and should be her commander. Others were less sure that he merited it. 'Some good people in Scotland,' wrote the Reverend Mr Francis Borland, 'took occasion to remember and reflect upon his former cruel and inhuman carriage toward those poor prisoners whom he transported to Carolina in 1684.'

The minister of Glassford in the Covenanting parish of Avondale, Borland had himself been chosen to go to the Colony. In July, the Commission of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland had met in Glasgow, listened to an inspiring and relevant sermon (upon the text Hebrews 11:8, *By faith Abraham, being called of God, obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went*), chosen four ministers for Caledonia, and given them their instructions. In addition to Borland, they were Alexander Shields, Archibald Stobo and Alexander Dalgleish, all good men in the faith and of proven worth. Upon arrival, they were told, they should immediately set a day apart for public thanksgiving, and should then constitute themselves as a Presbytery by electing a Moderator and a Clerk. Thereafter, with all speed and the consent of the people, they should select the most pious, prudent and judicious among the settlers to be Elders and Overseers of the community, holding parochial sessions and Diets of the Presbytery as often as occasion required. 'And thus we commit you, and our Lord's great and glorious work in your hands, unto His own powerful, wise and gracious conduct and blessing.'

Of the four ministers only Borland would return to Scotland, and it is history's good fortune that he was a tireless scribbler. He was also a bigot, a prig, and an intolerant critic of human frailty, convinced that the Almighty guided him in righteousness and damned those who did not follow. If Gibson had transported

Papists and Episcopalians, instead of Covenanters, Borland might not have deplored his inhumanity toward them. He had been particularly chosen because he had spent some time in the Dutch colony of Surinam, though this had given him little sympathy for other men and no understanding of the peculiar temptations they suffered in such remote places. His dear friend and mentor was his companion Alexander Shields, minister of the second charge of Saint Andrews, and a strong man in the service of the Lord. Shields was still young, but for most of his life he had been persecuted for his beliefs, and had at one time been a prisoner on the Bass Rock in the Firth of Forth. His physical courage was exceptional: as chaplain to the Cameronians he had sung psalms with them in their advance at Steinkirk, and sustained them with prayers in the trenches before Namur. He had been a field preacher with James Renwick and had vindicated that ardent Covenanter's work in *The Hind Let Loose*. In his study at Saint Andrews he left behind a manuscript life of Renwick, and would never live to see its publication.

The last of the supplies were being loaded by gabbards from Glasgow and wherries from Greenock, the same diverse cargoes of hardware and haberdashery that had been sent with the first expedition. And bayonets and powder. Raisins and sugar. Brandy and beer. All entered in his ledger by Peter Murdoch, the Company's agent in Glasgow, with a neat index so that the Committee for Equipping might know at a glance how many pounds of bees-wax or casks of brimstone, firkins of black soap or kegs of nails were aboard the ships. The Directors worked industriously, rose early, and consumed prodigious quantities of claret when they entertained each other at dusk. Their euphoric self-satisfaction was disturbed only momentarily by some unpleasant news from London. Montgomerie and Jolly, back from Caledonia by way of Jamaica and Bristol, had arrived there and had as yet sent no word that they were coming north. Writing to Paterson, the Marquis of Tweeddale said that he could not think what the villains would have to say for themselves. They were reported to be preparing a petition for presentation to the Duke of Hamilton, but His Grace, having had notice of their behaviour in letters

from the Colony, would be on his guard against it. The arrival of both men in England reminded the Directors of the sad lack of unity in Caledonia, and they wrote long letters to the now extinct Council, recalling earlier admonitions against 'jealousies, animosities, factions, heart-burnings and disagreements'. Such evils the colonists should zealously renounce with the help of their new ministers, even though they were 'penned up in a corner close together, in a state of lazy idleness'.

And let them be of good cheer, a great number of reinforcements was coming with these letters, including men whom the Company understood were desperately needed. For the defence of the fort there was John Jaffray to be Fire-master and Bombardier. Captain John Wallace and Thomas Kerr were engineers of renown from Flanders, and the former something of an artilleryist as well. He had recently examined and fired thirty-six leather guns, the gift of Lord Elcho, and declared them in good condition. For the proper management of the precious metals that would seem to be found in every stone upturned, the Company was sending a goldsmith, Robert Keil, and also John Hunter who was 'perfectly versed in the art of coining money and the making of mills for the edging of money'. David Dovalc was coming to help his friend and co-religionist Benjamin Spense, having a remarkable fluency in Spanish, Portuguese, French, Dutch and English, as well as some of the Indian tongues of the Darien coast. Upon the recommendation of the Duke of Hamilton Robert Johnson had been appointed to employ his new method of teaching the Indians both English and Scots. And George Winram had gone aboard the *Hope* with his 'stills and other necessaries, for the distilling and fermenting of several sorts of liquors'.

A hundred women were sailing with the expedition at the Company's expense, and as many more were willing to pay £4 to a private speculator who was proposing to charter a sloop or brigantine for the purpose. Most of them were loyal wives, and all but a few of them are now nameless. There was Mrs Stobo, wife of the minister. There was Mrs Jaffray, sailing with the Fire-master and their daughter Mary, Mrs Johnson and her son.

There was Mrs Bell and there was Mrs Merston who did not know that they were in fact widows, for the husbands they hoped to join in Caledonia, like the men of other wives aboard, were long since dead in their water-logged graves.

The captains, lieutenants, ensigns and soldiers were again discharged men of the disbanded regiments of Leven and Strathnaver, Mackay, Hill and Argyll. Many of them had been waiting impatiently about Milne Square since the Company refused their services a year ago. More than a third of the common men, according to Francis Borland, were from the mountains, Highlanders whose lack of English and scandalous contempt for the discipline of the Presbytery were to fill him with disgust and pity, the pity being reserved for himself. William Dunlop, Principal of the University of Glasgow, asked the Company to take as volunteers 'some young men who passed their course at the college and are desirous to go to Caledonia'. They were accepted, on condition that one of their masters accompanied them, and that Dunlop advanced them £10 for the purchase of small necessities.

The cadet sons of twenty-two leading families were given commissions as lieutenants or ensigns. Others, of no eminence but proud lineage, asked to go as Planters or Volunteers until their valour and industry won them a commission. One of these was Lauchlan Bain, whose father was a tacksman in the Mackay country, and his promotion would be as rapid as his following disgrace was irrevocable. Among the company commanders was another Colin Campbell from Argyll's, and two more of his clan were lieutenants. Another overseer was Lord Mungo Murray, a brave and selfless member of the house of Atholl. Captain Andrew Stewart was the landless brother of the Earl of Galloway, but carried with his commission the Company's promise that if he purchased 'some considerable share of the stock this Court shall for his further encouragement assume him to the number of Directors'. Among all the officers of the companies there was once more a scattering of splendid names, predominantly Highland - Carmichael and Campbell, Farquhar and Grant, Ramsay, Colquhoun, Mackay and Urquhart, Murray, Gordon, Menzies and Ross. At least one father was inflamed by the fire of his son's