

**SOME ACCOUNT OF  
SIR ROBERT MANSEL  
KT, PP. 1-107**

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Some Account of Sir Robert Mansel Kt, pp. 1-107 by Geo. T. Clark

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**GEO. T. CLARK**

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SOME ACCOUNT  
OF  
SIR ROBERT MANSEL K<sup>T</sup>,  
VICE ADMIRAL OF ENGLAND, AND MEMBER  
OF PARLIAMENT FOR THE COUNTY  
OF GLAMORGAN;

AND OF  
ADMIRAL SIR THOMAS BUTTON K<sup>T</sup>,  
OF WORLTON, AND OF CARDIFF, IN THE  
COUNTY OF GLAMORGAN.

BY  
GEO. T. CLARK.

DOWLAIS :  
1883.

## SIR ROBERT MANSEL.

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SIR ROBERT MANSEL, Knt., Vice-Admiral of England, Treasurer of the Navy, and Member of Parliament for the county of Glamorgan, is probably the ablest and most distinguished public man whom that county has produced. He was the fourth son of Sir Edward Mansel, of Margam, and Lady Jane Somerset, and displayed much of the mental activity, personal courage, and taste for mechanical pursuits, which shone so conspicuously in the second Marquis of Worcester, his mother's great-nephew, and, towards the latter part of his career, his own contemporary.

Sir Robert followed the profession of the sea, and won early distinction in arms. He served in several expeditions, and commanded in one; and on shore he was an able administrator of naval affairs during the reigns of Elizabeth, James, and Charles. In Parliament, where he sat during the greater part of his mature life, he was listened to as an authority on

navy matters; and though, with his relations paternal and maternal, a zealous royalist, he dared to speak his mind freely, and to oppose the favourite, Buckingham, in his mad career. He passed, not unchallenged, but with proven purity, through a position of great pecuniary temptation; and in an age when official honesty was sufficiently rare, and having had the expending of many thousands of pounds of public money, he lived and died a man of moderate means.

To him also is to be attributed, not, indeed, the original invention, but the first active employment of coal as fuel in the manufacture of glass, and a very considerable development of that useful manufacture. He held under the mischievous system then prevalent, a patent of monopoly of this manufacture, under which he erected glass-works in Broad Street London, at Purbeck, on the Trent, at Milford Haven, and finally at Newcastle on Tyne, where alone the manufacture really flourished, and of which port it has ever since remained a staple. In his own county his name and services have been suffered to fall into complete oblivion, and though his portrait is still preserved in the house of his fathers, neither in his case nor in that of Sir Thomas Button, his celebrated contemporary and kinsman, have the corporations of their native ports of Swansea and Cardiff shown any interest in their fame, or any desire to possess representations of their most, if not their only, distinguished citizens.

Sir Edward Mansel died 5th August, 1585, aged fifty-four, and lies buried at Margam. Lady Jane died 16th October, 1597, and is also there buried. They had eighteen sons and four daughters. Thomas, the eldest, succeeded. Rice was a captain in the army, and was killed in Ireland. Francis founded the line of the Mansels, baronets, of Muddlescombe. Anthony, the fifth son, of Trimsaron, seems, from the State Papers, to have been concerned, in 1631, in concerting measures for the relief of the poor. Philip founded a branch at Henllys, of which was Colonel Edward Mansel in 1685. Of Harry nothing is recorded. Charles, a captain, was killed in Ireland. Christopher and William are unknown. Of the daughters, Elizabeth married Sir Walter Rice of Newton or Dynevor. Cecil married Sir Richard Williams of Llangibby. Mary married Christopher Turberville of Penllyne, sheriff of Glamorgan, 1615; and Ann married Edward Carne of Nash.

Sir Edward was the second possessor of Margam, which had been purchased from the Crown on easy terms by his father, Sir Rice. He sat in Parliament for Glamorgan, and won distinction as a soldier in the great reign of Elizabeth. 21st Sept., 1572, he was knighted, and was active in mustering the forces of the county, of which he was sheriff in 1575. His name appears in the Domestic State Papers of the reign,



chiefly connected with local matters, as in a commission of piracy, rebuilding Cardiff Bridge, and claims of right of wreck upon his shore, about the mouth of the Avan, in which he held his own against the somewhat overbearing claims of the Earl of Pembroke.

Sir Robert seems to have been born about 1573, and probably was sent early to sea. The inducement to enter that profession was, no doubt, the connexion of his family with Lord Howard of Effingham, whose mother, a Gamago of Coyty, was of kin to the Mansels, and who was then Lord High Admiral of England, and, which that office did not always imply, a seaman. His first recorded service was at the siege of Cadiz in 1596, where he served under the Earl of Essex and Lord Howard, and where Sir Walter Raleigh commanded a division of the fleet. This expedition was remarkable for the number of men of rank who served in it as volunteers. There is some doubt whether he commanded the "Acquittance" on this occasion, but however this may be, he was one of those who, with the Earl, forced a way into the town, and one of the sixty officers upon whom Essex conferred the honour of knighthood. Elizabeth, who was sparing in her rewards, censured the Earl's profusion in this respect, but that she approved of the selection of Sir Robert was shewn by her confirmation of it, by herself knighting him in 1596. He was then about 23 years old.

In June, 1597, he was employed under Essex, as captain of the Earl's own ship, in the unfortunate expedition intended to harry the ports and islands of Spain, and in which he commanded, first the "Mary Honora," and afterwards the "Repulse." Among the volunteers who distinguished themselves in this expedition occur the well known South Welsh names of Lawrence Kemys, and Sir Charles and Sir William Morgan. Early in 1599 he was in command of three ships about to be despatched to the coast of Ireland, where Essex was Lord Deputy and Commander in Chief. Here he probably remained, for 29th Aug., 1600, the reason assigned for keeping Sir Robert Leveson in the narrow seas is that "Sir Robert Mansell is but weak."

It was so much the custom in those days to reward services, not by direct payment, but by Crown grants or reversions, that it is possible that Sir Robert was the Robert Mansell, who, 9th July, 1597, had a share in the first fruits of the See of Chichester, on account of which he stood indebted to the Crown.

10th Oct., John Chamberlayn writes to Dudley Carleton that "Sir Robert Mansfeld and Sir John Haydon, two Norfolk knights, have slain each other at tilt with their rapiers. One had six wounds, and the other four." And 15th Oct., "I hear that the Norfolk knights are not dead, though they had double the number of wounds reported." This seems to refer to Sir R. Mansel, who

is on other occasions called Mansfeld or Mansfield, as was his ancestor, Sir Rice; though how he comes to be called a Norfolk Knight is unknown. However, in Nov. 1603, Sir W. Waad writes, "Lord Cecil says he supposes Sir Rob. Mansfeld is in Norfolk." Heydon was about and in trouble, as one of Essex's followers, in Feb. 1601. The duel is mentioned in a private letter from Rowland White to Sir Robert Sydney, 9 Oct., 1600. A doubt also hangs over the name of Sir Robert's antagonist, who has been called Heylron. Heydon, however is a Norfolk name, and curiously enough the will of Sir N. Bacon of Stiffkey, 4 June, 1614, mentions Sir Christopher Heydon, and "my brother Mansell."

Some connexion with Norfolk he certainly had, for he was returned to Parliament for King's Lynn in 1601, when he was employed in guarding the English coast, and in 1608 Sir Wm. Waad, accounting to Cecil for his absence, supposes him to be in Norfolk.

In 1602 Sir Robert printed what is now a rare tract, entitled "A true report of the service done upon certain gallies passing through the narrow seas; written to the Lord High Admirall of England, by Sir Robert Mansel, Knight, Admiral of Her Majesty's forces in that place." On the frontispiece is a large woodcut of a ship of the line, in full sail, at each mast head on a small square flag a plain cross, and on the poop flagstaff a large ensign of the arms of the Lord High Admiral, the