

finished July 20

Barthelemy Johns Road Antigua July 13 1781

My dear General

On the 8th Instant the Santa Monica arrived in
Carlisle Bay Barbadoes, with an account that the
French fleet, consisting of 26 sail of the Line & six
frigates, having under their convoy near 200
sail of Merchant Ships, left both Royal Bay
Martinique on the 5th and steered to Leeward supposed
for St. Domingo - but whether the whole will go
thither, or a part only, with the outward bound
Trade which De Grape brought from Brest, and
the rest proceed with the Trade of these Islands
towards Europe, so soon as they get through
the Mona passage, and after keeping together
to a certain distance, whether a pretty strong
Squadron, will not steer for America, time alone
can make clear to us. From a strange fatality

that

that seems to have attended the operations of
His Majesty's Fleet in these seas, for some time
past, not four ships in the whole, are in a fitt
state to go to any distance, with a view of
meeting the Enemy, being totally destitute of
Spare masts, yards, Sails, and every other species
of Stores, and the topmasts of several ships now
an end, are crippled - This occasioned my
receiving orders on the 9th to proceed without
loss of time, with seven ships of the Line, the
Santa Monica & Henry Schooner to this Island,
to take on board the wants of the Squadron,
and to order those to be got ready, for the
other ships of Sir George Rodney's Fleet, and
having dropped the Frigate & Schooner at
English

English Harbour yesterday morning, to hasten the
Stores to me. I anchored here in the afternoon

When I left Sir George Rodney, he talked of
sailing that evening for St. Lucia, and from thence
in 48 hours for St. Eustatius, where I think it
probable we shall join, as I shall tarry here
not a moment longer than is absolutely necessary
for receiving on board the Stores that are
demanded. The Pegasus came to me last
night, from St. Eustatius, where she was sent, after
seeing the Scourge Brig. clear of the Islands, with
Sir George's Duplicates for the Paquet, which was
waiting there for them. Captain Stanhope tells
me, he left the Brig. on the 6th of this month, three
days after they sailed from Barbadoes, fifty Leagues

to

to the eastward of this Island, so that I set her down
in some port of England, before the first of August, if
she meets no interruption from the Enemy on her
passage; and as the Packet sailed from ^Sustatus
on the 9th in which are some letters of mine to you, she will
not be many days after the Scourge I dare say.

July 20th. Sir George Rodney arrived here
the 18th full of complaints, will see no one
being unable to do business, and yet cannot
bring himself to declare his intentions of
going home, and to put His Majesty's Fleet
under my command - By which the King's
Service suffers. The Report is, that I am going
with a Squadron to America - Indeed Sir George
hinted such a measure to me at Barbadoes,
if I am to go the sooner the better; as it appears
to me of much consequence to be up on the Coast
before the Enemy. I will have the honor of writing
you again in a few days, by another Packet. I am
ever my dear General, most faithfully yours.

Thos. Hood