

Duplicate of last, but with an additional P.S. inserted
dated Ap. 2.

Private

Barfleur by Gros Islet Bay S. Lucia 31 March
1752

My dear General

As I feared, foretold, and laboured much to prevent,
The French Armament is safe in that Royal Bay, by
making Descada, and going between Dominique and
Martinique. If I had been asking the greatest
Boon for myself, I could not have been more
earnest in my entreaties to Sir George Rodney
upon my returning here from the Line de Sac. on
the 7th Instant, to divide his force, station one
half off Descada, and the other off Point Salines
but he would not listen to it. said, the french
ever made point Salines, when they came in
any force - I replied Guichen did not do it, and
he came, with 16 or 18 sail, nor did the Spaniards
which came afterwards, and added, that
admitting there was the greatest probability, that
the Enemy's expected Convoy would make point
Salines, and but a bare possibility of its making
Descada

Descada, I took the liberty of submitting to his consideration, whether it would not be prudent to guard against the possibility; for allow the armament to come into these seas, fourteen sail of the Line strong, which I can scarce believe you can have two Squadrons each of eighteen sail, which will give ship for ship, and admit of four sail to play upon the Transports & Storeships which are of great importance when taken or destroyed — To this, Sir George was perfectly silent.

On the 8th. The *Paquet* arrived, with the Feb^r mail, which had taken a Brig from Bourdeaux bound to Martinique, the day after she left Falmouth and was informed by the prisoners, that the armament from Brest, was then about to sail and as a *Dane* had arrived here in 29 days from Spithead, I could not help suggesting to Sir George, whether the French Convoy, might not be
Daily

daily expected? His answer was, oh no, he was
sure it would not sail before march; I gave in,
to the probability of it, but observed, it was very
possible to happen otherwise; and as the greatest
part of his fleet, was as ready for service, as
they could be, till our storeships & victuallers
arrived, I expressed my wishes in the strongest
terms, to be allowed to cruise off Descada
and from that to the Island of Dominique—
After receiving different orders, each making the
number of the ships to go with me, more or less,
than another, I went to sea on the 16th with 11
sail, but was limited from five to ten leagues
directly to windward of point salines— on the
next day, I spoke with Cap^t. Ford, of La Nymphe frigate
from Antigua, where a ship was arrived which
sailed from Spithead under convoy of the Princess
Caroline

Caroline, on the 11th of last month, and parted
company the same night in a snow storm, and
on the 14th she was spoke with, by the Arethusa, and
received written information from Sir Richard Pearson
that he had fallen with 12 or 14 french Ships of
the Line & six frigates, having under convoy 100
sail of Transports & storeships, bound to the West Indies

I dispatched Captain Lord to Sir George Rodney
without detaining him a moment; on the 20th in
the afternoon, I saw Sir George to Leeward
and at midnight received from him the arrangement
N^o.s for cruising, and at the same time a private
note from Sir George; to which I replied, that I
rejoiced most exceedingly, he had been pleased
to extend his ships so far to the northward, for that
the commander of the french Squadron must
be a mad man, to think of coming in sight of
St. Lucia, knowing, as he must, the strength of the
British

British fleet, which he must expect would be upon the watch: But at 8 am on the 22^d, not more than thirty hours after I got Sir George's cruising arrangement, he sent me the letter n^o. 2, which I trouble you with, to shew the very great unsteadiness of the man; and as a further proof of it, he did not send Commodore Affleck & the two sixty four's ^{the northward} until the 26th. nor do I believe from every thing I can collect, that even a single frigate was at anytime stationed off Descada; for the first intelligence Sir George Rodney received of the arrival of the french armament, in Port Royal Bay on the 20th, was, by an english officer, who came from Martinique to S^t. Lucia, in a cartel, and did not get to the Formidable, until the 28th. We may from Luck of which we have not hitherto been blest with a common share, yet do something, I and I pray God we may, to retrieve our

our

our Country's misfortunes; but I am afraid we cannot expect it, from judgement, or by acting upon any rational, well digested plan, which the present situation of our Royal Master's affairs makes absolutely necessary; to act by whim & Caprice will never do; But if we have the good fortune to be able to bring the enemy to fair battle, I am not out of hope, but the year eighty two, may still prove a truly glorious one, for the Arms of Great Britain. Every endeavour in my humble opinion should have been had recourse to, and every risque have been encountered, for intercepting the Great Armament could we luckily have effected that, (and without all manner of doubt we might) the main difficulty would have been surmounted
and

and the enemy have been destroyed and
humbled; But turn one's eye now, which
way one will, difficulties, and those in the
extreme, stare us full in the teeth - However
a lucky hour in Battle, assisted by the hand
of Providence, may do wonders for poor
old England - But how Sir George Rodney
could bring himself, to keep his whole force
to guard one path, when half of it, was
fully equal to the service, and to leave another,
[which appeared, not only to me, but almost to
every officer in His Majesty's Fleet, the most
probable the enemy would take] without any
guard at all, is matter of the utmost - -
astonishment to me. I have really fretted
myself ill - for nothing my dear General

Short

short of a miracle, can I fear now, retrieve
~~now~~ the affairs of the nation in these Seas, as I
think the Enemy will not meet us, numerous
as they will be when joined, if they can avoid
it. On the 28th in the evening, I received
orders to proceed to this Bay, and anchored
with my division, at Sun rise the next morning—
Sir George and his division came in yesterday
but Admiral Drake still remains out, which I
am sorry for, and wish he was in also; that
the whole of the fleet might be ready to act
together, on the spur of a moment; for I cannot
see the least service his division can do, between
the Diamond Rock and this Island, beyond
that, of watching the Enemy at Fort Royal, which
frigates would perform to the full as well; and

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I think in the present hour, no unnecessary risque
should be run for crippling a ship of the line, as
every one will most assuredly be wanted, and their
not being kept together, with as few wants as
possible, may be of the utmost bad consequence

The force of the Enemy lately arrived at
Martinique is three ships of the line & three frigates
with six thousand troops; four sail of the line
parted company with the above, and are gone
to the Cape, and five of the line, with three
thousand troops to the East Indies, all sailed from
Port together on the 10th or 11th of last month.

Thirteen sail of Spanish ships of the line, with nine
thousand troops, are said to rendezvous at
Guaico, and are there to be joined by the
four french ships lately gone to the Cape, as well
as by De Grasse / who had yesterday thirty three
of the line in North Royal Bay, in the most perfect
readiness for sea / and the Marquis De Bonville from
Martinique

Martinique - all this in my humble opinion makes
it highly necessary for Sir George to keep his whole
force together, after giving a substantial convoy, to
the 14th Regiment, Storeships, Victuallers & Trade,
destined for Jamaica, and I think the sooner they
are gone the better, in order to push after Delpasse
the moment he starts - Sir George Rodney's force
in the whole, now the Magnificent & Agamemnon are
come, including the North America Ships: is thirty nine
Sail of the Line, but two, the Shrewsbury & Intrepid
cannot be put in the Line, nor is it indeed safe to
send either to sea, except with Jury masts. for a
passage to England; Both have been very much
cut up in battle, and their pumps never stand still
in harbour. Though I am writing a short, but most
faithfull narrative of what is doing here, I know
not when an opportunity may offer of sending my
letter

Letter, but I like to be prepared upon all occasions,
when I can, as I may not have many hours notice
of a ships sailing, and may then have duty to do,
which must unavoidably prevent my writing.

I do not recollect, that I have told you, of my
having on board the Barfleur two very excellent
Pipes of Madeira for His Royal Highness Prince
Frederick.

I have the honor to be my dear
General, with great truth & affection

Your most faithful and
Obedient humble servant

P.S. April 2^d.

Yesterday morning the Marlborough I was with
came in, wanting two Topmasts &
in the evening the Alcide with a sprung
Foremast & Mainsprit, & the St. Albans
with a sprung mainmast. These disasters
have occasioned Admiral Drake to be called
This is shutting the stable door after the
steed is stolen.

P¹. In further support of my reasoning for the Fleet's
being divided - I observed there could be no objection
from the Count De Grape, for should he venture to come
out, in whatever force he may, & go to the northward of
Martinique - the Squadron off Descada, could find
no difficulty in making a junction with the southern
one, and if he should go out to the southward of
Martinique, the Squadron off Point Salines, could as
easily make a junction with the northern one, so that
nothing of danger could be apprehended, from the
Enemy at Fort Royal, from a Division of the Fleet

JH