Curaçao Febr. 22nd: 1804

Dear Sir;

I feel much distress that the absence of the Squadron has so far exceeded what we had reason to expect. But it was impossible to foresee the opposition we have met with. The information respecting the force in the Island is perfectly correct. The enemy have only 150 regular troops and not more than 100 men on board the Frigate. In my public dispatch where I mention the escape of the French from St. Domingo to this Island I mean the Inhabitants, who have taken up arms since our arrival, and not any regular troops. These aided by the Crews of two Privateers in the port, make the number more formidable than I expected. I understand that the enemy have sent to St. Domingo and Guadaloupe for a reinforcement, and are determined to hold out until the answer arrives. On raising the Siege on the 4th of next month, I shall have provisions left to complete the Blanche and Piquet to 5 weeks, and hope, as I am now destroying all the Granaries in the Island, that they will soon be obliged to call in our assistance. Being aware that the services of the Theseus and Hercule may

be wanted elsewhere, should I receive certain information that the enemy can hold out beyond the 4th I shall raise the Siege before that time and embark all the Cannon: A close Blockade will in their present state, answer every purpose; the Island produces very little, and that little destroyed, it cannot maintain 40,000 Inhabitants for any length of time. Had I fortunately been provided with a Mortar I have little doubt but the Island had surrendered ten days since, or had I luckily found the Vanguard on her Station, the addition of her Tarrow and Marines would have enabled me to cut off the Water on the Eastern side, and the place must inevitably have fallen. The Frigate is a very fine one, this being her first voyage; she has received considerable damage from our shot, and has been once on fire.

Should the expedition after all, not meet with that success that we wish, and had reason to expect, I hope you will believe Sir, that every thing has been done for the good of His Majesty's service, and that it is one of those circumstances that fall beyond the reach of human foresight.

Believe me

Believe me.

Dear Sir,

Your most obedient

humble Servant

Wm Bligh.

To.

Sir John Thos: Duckworth K^t B^t.

Captain Bligh's
Private letter
respecting Curacoa