

May the 24th 1617

Sir

I will not trouble you with any reference of the journey for that this bearer Mr. Willmott can better satisfy you [] if by naritive. Only thus mutch I will say, that after a long and troublesom stay in the Downs it pleased God to send us a speedy and [] journey; hee also can beste tell you ther fortune in the whale fishinge, only likewise, I will say this mutch, they have struck and wer faste to many, but founde them too swifte and stronge for them and many more dede thay chace, of greate bignes, and of divers sortes, but found them lykewise too swifte for them. The shipp came in verry good time, not withstandinge the great and tedious stay it hadd in the downes.

As for the state and fertility of the cuntry I cannot saye mutch, for that I cam to thes Ilandes in sutch time as all the freutes of the cuntree were but growing, not come to perfection, all therfore that for the present I can see, is but the hope of a [dropp?], the cuntree having so many enemees, namely the blaste, the wormes but moste espetially the ratt, of nothing [], they have killed [millions?] and ar now at reasonable quiet, though mutch to be feared, for that ther [] [millions?] moare then they killed, which [wer drawn?] into the unsupplied Ilands, and ilands newe aisyning, with [] care and paines, in watching, settinge of trappes, huntinge with doges, and [] the lands, night and daye, the numbers that they killed ar [] and [] hadd the unplanted or unsupplied islands bene likewise supplied, peopled, and as the reste [] and looked to, they hadd bene utterly casted out of the ilands, [till?] which supplyes be made, the people planted, and neyther be able to feede nor reste them selves in [] [boddy?], nor yet will they bee ever able to give ther undertakers any incouragement, by ther commodities they shall be able to [] and sende for Ingeland, for in the [time?] they ar savinge ther [corne?] from the [] the wormes destroyes ther tobacco (the which is ther only hope nowe lefte, since the whale fishinge hath failed) of the which they have greate store, and of a kinde, never amongst them before.

There is yet another thinge, which I feare, I speake not of any sertainty , I desyer you will judge of it yourself, the Generalty, as I un [] beinge no better supplied by this shipp than it hath heretofore or att the leaste, this laste yere bene, and the [numbers?] of the Generalty [] for that many adventurers hath not supplied ther people on ther shares, as they have formerly done, many of them will surely be so unprovided for, as they wilbe [shirte?] and [] [] at leaste in the which wante they wilbe utterly unable to gett ther livinges, but will of nesessity hange on and hinder others.

This wante of shoes we hope will be supplied, to ther comfort and incouragemente, [wee?] ar for the moste parte, of them selves verry painefull and industrious, the meanes [] thus.

Mr Powell [inserted: Hanmer?] [] people, and other [] from the Gouvernour, to fit him forth for the Weste Indies, with resolution to trade for cattell and froutes for this plantation, the Governor having sworne every man to [sutch?] purpose, I know not what by what chances [but?]they ar now lately com againe and brought with them three small ragged frigats, of very small burthen very wether beaten and leakye, in which he [] some cotten and [] [] [some?] hides, with the which they ar in hope to share them selves, they have also broute

som sakes of mustye meale, some [] of oyle, or [montegoe?], some cheses and [seven?] or six gotes, howe he cam by them I am not certaine, I fere from som runngatt Spaniard or some pukinge frenchman. Mr. Willmott can better satisfy you, but how soever, undoubtedly, the reports of them in England wilbe divers, ther [goinge?] so many men, so diversly conditioned, by this shipp for ther owne cuntrye; all which reports I [am?] asuered will not [scape?] your eares, and I nothinge doubtte but you oute of your owne goodness, love, and respecte to this plantation, will make the beste of them you can, and be reddy, if any shall goe aboute to hurte or dishoner this plantation, to putt to your helping hande for the stay therof, to which purpose, when you shall have herd or red the Governors letters, of the [] he will suerly [], or when you shall have herd Mr Willmotts opinion of it, I doubt not but you will find encouragement ther to. Thus mutch for the state of the cuntry.

Nowe conserninge the freughtes and plantes of the country, they be very faire and hopefull in the gronde, as figes and potatoes the which wilbe in small time innumerable, they increase so faste. The vines doe grow but not so well as the figes, wee have some hope the faulte may be in the transporting of them so farr by [seae?], and that in time they may recover, allso all manner of garden sedes doe prosper well. Ther be other freutes broughte out of the Indies this last yere by Mr Willmott some doe prosper very well as the pine[apple], the planton and the suger canes, others as the cassava, the sope berrie and the Indian hemepe, not so well, we have also cotton seeds Mr. Powell brought, that do prosper very well, and in time is like to come to some good. [] oarange, lemons and appell seeds ar not yet com oute of the gronde. To concludue I thinke what freute so ever shalbe broute oute of any the warme partes of the worlde, will heere prosper the climatt is so [] apte and warme enough.

But now since the whale fishing hath failed, what is lefte to give the undertakers profit and contentement, save only tobackoe, or the hope of warr, unless in the [seae?] and that is only to be com by, by the healpe of devers, whoe muste be hadd oute of the weste indies, to which purpose I have had some spech with Mr Willmott, whoe will undertake God willinge, if you and some of your friends and fellowe adventurers, will furnish him with a good shipp and other conveniences, not only to get thes devers but allso all manner of cattell, freutes, plantes, Indian slaves, the which will be the beste laborers for this cuntry, and also doubttes not but by [] for [] and other thinges which those partes doe aforde, to save a greate parte of the charges to which, if you have any liking (as I could wishe) speake with him, by whome you may better be satisfyed. This I thinke wilbe the [] waye to [safe?] of all manner of charge in supplyes, and to give encouragement and livelyhood to them that you shall here plante. The yonge hefers that wer brought out of England doe prosper very well, of the which kinde, thes islands would maintaine many, to greate relefe. The beese also prosper, but not so well.

I have reserved oute of your store, so many nesesityes as amountes to the some of [7 lb?] [odd mony?] as by the boke sent into Inglan now plainly doth apere

I pray send me 20 [lb?] of stronge twine, with lead corke and cordage fitt for a nett, for the [saltinge?] of mullets, of the which wee have greate store, and in time from them the beste botargoe that I have sene. Mr. Willmott hath sene and eate of them at the Governors table, and I pray if it please you let Mr. Willmott

have the buyinge of those thinges for my nett, he wilbe carefull as well of the buyinge as of the convayinge of them to me.

You have [good?] servants heere, that oute of ther deubtyfull respecte and love to you doe take sutch paines as I wondered at, of whose labors I doubte not but by the nexte ship you shall reseve som freutes, if God [alowe?] Your kindesman, my selfe and the reste in general, have [page torn] helthe. I have 4 people with me. Edward Athan is one of the fower, I am sett downe in Mansfeeldes Tribe, for divers conveniencis, with the which I will not at this time troble you. I pray let us reseve the lottes for the shares in this tribe, by the next ship.

Thus mutch for the presant though I asuer my selfe I have omitted many thinges worthy the remembringe, the which I can no otherwards excuse my selfe then with the shortenings of my time, which omissions I doubte nott but I shall redeme and aquainte you with. In the meane time I commend you to the protection of the allmighty and to your self and your good kindesman Mr. Nathaniell Rich him that is your ever lovinge Char: Wolferston

from the Somer Ilandes
the xxiiii of May as
before I have saied