

Our passage hither was very prosperous for the weather, but in other respects tedious and miserable. Our company very uncomfortable, consisting for the generality, especially the officers and volunteers of the worst of mankind, if you had scummed the Land and raked to the borders of hell for them, men of lewd practises and venting the wickedness of principles: for these things God was provoked to smite us very signally and severely with a contagious sickness which went through the the most part and cutt off by death about sixty of us on our ship and near a hundred on the rest of the fleet, the most since our departure from Montserrat. I cannot with this send you a particular list of the dead because I have not gathered them yet but the most lamented by the better part of us were Mr Alexander Dalgleish, minister, the Laird of Dunlop, Capt. Wallace engineer, and several others of the best sort. The means contributing to the encrease of this sickness and mortality were our too great crowds in every ship, straitening and stiffling one another, our chests of medicines ignorantly or knavishly filled and as ill-dispensed by our chirurgeons [surgeons], our water in wooden bound casks very unsavoury and unclean, our beef much of it rotten, many things redundant which were useless and many things needful wanting. It is a wonder of mercy that so many of us escaped and that at length we arrived at our port in safety tho in great sorrow three weeks ago by November 30. We had heard at Montserrat the colony was deserted but did not believe, tho some of us feared it all along. Arriving at this bay, we found the nest was flown. The ground that was cleared was all grown up again with Mangroves. The little fortification standing waste their batteries and huts all burnt down (which some said was done by a Frenchman, others by an Englishman) and nothing of shipping there but two little sloops from New England and New York . . . They told us the Colony had deserted the 20th of June last for sickness (having destroyed themselves by working excessively on the fortifications) and for fear of want of provisions, that the St Andrew with her men was gone to Jamaica and the Unicorn and Caledonia to New York . . .

Upon this sad emergent our council sat and called for advice all the Captains together. Some proposed the ministers should be called and that

it wer fitt to begin with prayer. This motion was not intertained. They had long debates about sustaining the commissions of some councellors . . . The Question being put considering all difficulties: our provisions much diminished, not to hold out long, our wanting tools either for fortifying or planting axes, saws, mattocks etc. or whether we should settle or not it carried nemine contradicente [unanimously]: Resettle.