

My dear General

Barfleur Sandy Hook Sept. 20. 1781

We arrived off this Port last evening, and got
within the Hook this morning, I was in hopes to
have had the pleasure of finding the Princess
here, and my disappointment is great that
she is not yet come.

I was this morning told Mr. Graves
had dispatched a frigate to England on the 17th,
but gave the information no credit, not
thinking it possible, he could, ^{have} done so, without
communicating his intentions to me, but I
was mistaken in my man; was ever such
unhandsome proceedings from one officer
to another of the same rank, and who came
with a strong Squadron, as an auxiliary to
him? And can anything more clearly move
a consciousness, that he was afraid, to have

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a plain & faithfull narrative of his negligence
and inattention to his duty, sent home, before he
had told his own lame story? he is universally
censured, and this illiberall conduct of his,
can do him no good in the end, as Truth
will sooner or later always prevail

No officer ever had more glorious prospects
before him, of rendering great and important
services to his King & Country, and it was not
possible for any one, more unaccountably to
have overlooked them, by which I fear he has
brought irretrievable distress not only upon
great Britain, but upon His Majesty's brave
officers, Troops, & loyal subjects, in America also.

On the 24th I attended a consultation at Sir Henry
Clinton's of Generals & Admirals, when it was
agreed to attempt, by the united efforts of Army
&

and Navy, to relieve Lord Cornwallis in the
Chesapeake - and I proposed to have three or
four fireships prepared, by which the enemy's
fleet, may possibly be deranged and thrown
into confusion, and thereby give a favourable
opening for pushing through it; this was approved
and upwards of 5,000 Rank & file are to be
embarked in the Kings Ships. While we
were deliberating upon this business, word was
brought, that Rear Admiral Digby, with the
Leon and Canada, were off the Bar, and
as the wind was unfavourable for their
entering the Port - I went out to the Prince
George, next morning early, to pay my Duty to
Prince William, and had the happiness to find
His Royal Highness, and His good Admiral
with

with all on board in most perfect health.

Thus far, I wrote you by a Packet, which sailed about ten days ago; — Oct^r 12th —

I thank God, the disabled Ships are now ready, and I hope we shall move tomorrow, ever, moment my dear General is precious, and I flattered myself when we first arrived we should now have been well on our way to the Chesapeake; but the repairs of the Squadron have gone on very tedious indeed, which has filled me with apprehensions that we shall be too late to give relief to Lord Cornwallis — If it should so happen the consequences will be dreadful — God grant my fears may prove abortive! It would in my opinion have been a most fortunate event had M^r. Graves gone off to the West Indies, upon

M^r

Mr. Digby's arrival as commander in Chief by
Commission, and I am sure you will be
of the same opinion, when I relate one
circumstance only - on the 7th I received a
letter from R. L. Graves, desiring I would meet
upon a consultation, the Flag Officers, and some
Captains, on board the London, the next morning
at ten o'clock, and acquaint Capt. Reynolds
& Captain Cornwallis, that their company
was desired also - soon after we were
assembled - Mr Graves proposed, and wished
to reduce to writing the following question
"Whether it was practicable to relieve Lord
Cornwallis in the Chesapeake - This astonished
me exceedingly, as it plainly indicated a
design of having difficulties started, against
attempting, what the Generals & Admirals had
agreed to, and given under their hands, on the

24th of last month, and occasioned my replying
immediately, that it appeared to me, a very
unnecessary, and improper question, as it
had already been discussed & determined
upon, to be practicable, and to be attempted,
with all the expedition possible; that my
opinion had been strong & clear, which I was
ready to put my name to, that an attempt
under every siege should be made, to force
a junction with the Troops the Com-mander
in chief embarks in His Majesty's Fleet, with
the Army under General East Cornwallis,
at York, in the Chesapeake; and admitting
that Junction to be effected without much
loss, and the provisions landed; I was also

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of opinion, the very first favourable
opportunity of attacking the French Fleet
ought to be embraced: Though I must own
I have no opinion of the ability of our
present commanding officer - he may be
a very good theoretical man, but he is
certainly a bad practical one, and most
clearly proved himself on the 5th of last
month, to be unequal to the command of
a great Squadron - word is just brought me
that the Torbay & Prince William are off the Bar,
a noble acquisition truly, and rejoices my heart
exceedingly

I am my dear General
with great truth & affection, your most faithful
& obedient humble Servant

14th Nov. 1757