

Barfleur Staten Island Oct^r 12 1781¹⁶

My dear General

Though I had the honor of writing to you the end of last month by a Packet, as also this day to go by the lively King, I cannot let another packet sail of which I have just rec'd notice from Sir B. Clinton, without recapitulating the substance of each letter, to guard against any miscarriage in these precarious times

We arrived off the Bar of this port, from the coast of Virginia on the 19th in the evening and within the Week the next day, when I was told Mr. A. Graves had dispatched the Medea 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

with a strong Squadron as an auxiliary to him?
and can anything more strongly mark a consciousness
that he was afraid to have a plain and
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 illiberal 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, and loyal Subjects in America
also. On the 24th. I attended a consultation of
Generals & Admirals at Sir Henry Clintons, when
it was agreed to attempt by the united efforts of

Army

Army & Navy to relieve Lord Cornwallis in the
Chesapeake, and I proposed to have three or four
Fire ships prepared, by which the enemy's fleet
may possibly be deranged & thrown into some
^{Confusion} and thereby give a favourable opening for
pushing through it, this was approved, and
upwards of 5,000 Troops Rank & file, are to be
embarked in His Majesty's fleet — while this
business was under deliberation, word was
brought that Rear Admiral Digby, with the Lion
& 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
and had the happiness to find His Royal
Highness, and His good Admiral in perfect
Health. I thank God the disabled ships are
now ready, and I hope we shall move
tomorrow if the wind will permit, every moment

my
J

my dear General is precious, and I flattered
myself when we came in, we should now have
been in, or near 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
God grant my fears may prove abortive!
It would in my humble opinion have been a
most fortunate event, had Mr Graves gone off
to the West Indies upon Mr Digby's arrival, as
Commander in Chief by Commission, and I a
sure you will think so too, when I relate one
circumstance only - On the 7th I received a letter
from R: A: Graves, desiring I would meet the
Flag officers, and some Captains, on board the
London next morning at ten o'clock, & acquaint
Captain Reynolds and Captain Cornwallis that
their company was desired also - soon after
we were assembled, Mr Graves proposed an
wishes

wished to reduce to writing the following question
"Whether it was practicable to relieve Lord
Cornwallis in the Cheesecake? This astonished
me exceedingly, as it seemed plainly to indicate
a design of having difficulties started against
attempting, what the Generals & Admirals had
unanimously 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 & improper
question, as it had been already most maturely
discussed, & determined upon, 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
squire should be made to force a junction
with the troops the Commander in chief embarked
in His Majesty's fleet, with the Army under
General

general Earl Cornwallis at York in the
Cheasapeake, and admitting that junction to
be effected, without much loss, and the
provisions landed. I was also of opinion
the very first favourable opportunity of
attacking the Fleet of France should 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
If it shall please the Almighty to give success
to the arms of His Majesty in the business we
are now going upon - we shall I think stand
a tip toe. - word is just instant brought me
from the Quarter Deck, that the Torber & Prince
William are off the Bar - a noble acquisition
and

and makes my heart spring with Joy.

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

Your most faithfull and
obedient humble servant

Sandy Hook Oct: 18 1781

J. M. Hood

We are still here to my unspeakable
concern, but I think we shall be on
our way to the Chesapeake to morrow noon
as the Troops are all on board and the
wind fair - If Lord Cornwallis is able to
hold out, till we can get to his relief
I trust we shall do well, though I cannot
help fearing, from what his Lordship says
in his last Letter of the 11th, that he must be
forced to yield to the vast superior force of
the Enemy -