

Secret & Confidential

Not yet through the Gulph of Florida  
August 25. 1782

Surely my dear friend, we seem somehow or other to be strangely infatuated - The Jamaica Convoy joined us, on the 14<sup>th</sup> in the afternoon, upon which we bore away to the westward the whole night, and though not a single ship of it, was to be seen from the mast head at day light next morning, we continued to run before the wind, till the evening, and then lay to, since which we have totered very much, carrying moderate sail in the day time, and only under our topsails in the night. This looks as if we were inattentive, how the time slips away and how very precious it is to us; and instead of leaving a frigate to take care of, and follow with four or five paltry prizes, they are it seems to be towed all the way to New York in company with the fleet; how exceeding tedious will this make our passage? when not a moment should be lost, whether we find the enemy in force, upon the American coast or, are to seek them in a more southern latitude, dispatch in my humble opinion, in either case, is absolutely necessary and important. When the Spaniards were found so strong, and ready at the Baranna, as to make it expedient, that the Convoy should pass the Gulph before us, the fleet should have cruized, between Cape Antonio, and

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the dry Tortugas, not only for intercepting anything to the Havana, but to have cutt off all intercourse from the Island to the bay of Campeachy, as we had certain intelligence that ships with treasure were daily expected; instead of that we kept to the eastward near the Matanzas, and suffered ships from Cadix to gett in, which sailed in company with two we had taken; and though a clear knowledge whether the Spanish General Don Galvez was left at the Cape, is of the utmost consequence to us, we are still ignorant of that circumstance: But His Majesty's fleet should not have shewn itself off the Havana, or even in sight of Cuba but at some distance in the rear of the Convoy, and the Jupiter, and a frigate sent to reconnoiter, which could not have failed procuring that information so very proper and important to us; For so soon as our formidable fleet was discovered, it is very natural to suppose a close embargo was laid on, and express boats sent off, from the out ports, to stop the treasure ships &c from the main, and not a ship of ours was stationed to the westward of the Havana. I suppose the Convoy is now above forty Leagues a head of us, when we surely should not be further astern, than just to keep sight of the tail of it

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from the mast heads: and as Admiral Pigot did not approve  
of sending a Squadron equal to Vandrenil's, to precede the  
Convoy, I concluded he would leave a sufficient number  
of Ships, with Admiral Graves, to have insured protection to  
the charge under his care into the Latitude of Bermuda  
and then have pushed on himself, with the rest of his  
Fleet, as expeditiously as possible to New York, causing  
the Chesapeake to be looked at by his scouting frigates, for  
admitting he thought it probable, he should find the  
Enemy superior to him, upon the American coast, he  
might have directed the flag officer he had detached  
to look out for him, at any bearing and distance, he pleased  
from Cape Henry, and I think each Squadron would have  
got there about the same time, since he tows the prizes with  
him; and had the commander in chief arrived first  
and judged it right to proceed on to New York, he had  
only to leave a frigate upon the Rendezvous, to give the  
information; but doubtless, from the nature of his orders  
he may have solid & substantial reasons for what he  
does, which I am not acquainted with. a circumstance  
strikes me very forcibly, that seems not to be attended to;

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The Magnificent has been on shore, lost her false keel & Gripe keeps her <sup>hand</sup> pumps going, night and day, without ceasing, and must be hove down, in this situation, she ought by no means to be carried into action; yet she is still with us, though she might at this hour have been at Halifax where I understand she is intended to go, and would probably have joined before we left New York; as it is, she is likely to become liable to an equinoctial Gale, before she reaches her careening port.

I really feel much for Admiral Pigot, and probably have gone too far, in hints I have thrown out to him, though I must confess, he has given me no reason to suppose, he has not taken all I have said in good part, and a single moments reflection must convince him, I meant well; but he seems at present, to have no other Idea, than carrying his fleet altogether to New York, regardless (as circumstances appear to me) how long he is going thither. His situation is much to be pitied, having no one about him capable of affording him wholesome advice, which without any imputation to him, as he has been so long on land, & never hoisted his flag or commanded a Squadron before, I should think could not be unwelcome. I unbosom myself to you my dear General and write without reserve, fully confiding, that I address myself to a real friend. I prepare this, in case a sudden opportunity should offer; and am sorry to tell you, I cannot shake off my complaints and am still confined to my cabin. ever & affectionately yours  
Hood