

already detached a proper Number of Ships to clear the Chesapeak) submitting to him, if he had not done it, the Propriety of doing it directly.

March 4. I now immediately embarked the Troops destined for this Service; and I directed them to be placed in a Situation, from whence they might proceed to Sea at a Moment's Notice, having Reason every Hour to expect the Admiral's appearing with his Squadron to escort them, especially as I had just received a Letter from him, dated the 2d, to that Effect; and acquainting me that he had that Morning received *undoubted* Intelligence that 1000 French Troops embarked the 25th, to which more were to be added; and that they were supposed to have sailed for the Chesapeak on the 27th.

On the 7th I received another Letter from the Admiral, dated the 4th, saying, "He would move *immediately* with the Ships, sending a Frigate to reconnoitre Rhode Island in passing, and regulate his Measures, with respect to *calling off the Hook*, by what is discovered there; and that he had ordered the Richmond, Orpheus, and Savage, to proceed with the Reinforcement, in case *he should not call off the Hook.*"

From these Letters I was induced to expect that I should either see or hear from the Admiral before the Expedition moved from hence; but, by his Orders to the Naval Commanding Officer in this Port, (of the same Date, and sent, I suppose, at the same Time with his Letter to me of the 4th) "directing him to proceed with the Transports to the *Chesapeak with all possible Expedition*; and if I declined sending any Reinforcement to Virginia, requiring him *positively* to join the *Admiral in the Chesapeak with all possible Dispatch*," it seemed to appear that the Admiral was already failed to that Bay. Captain Hudson, who commanded the King's Ships, understood this also as a *positive Order* for him to *proceed immediately*. I however thought it singular that Captain Hudson should receive from the Admiral such positive Orders to sail immediately to the Chesapeak, when his Letter to me of the same Date (recapitulating these Orders) only says, that he is directed to do so, *in case the Admiral does not call off the Hook*. Having therefore no Means of ascertaining whether the Admiral was gone to the Chesapeak or no, or whether he had even sailed from Gardiner's Bay, or whether the Whole or any Part of the French Fleet had moved from Rhode Island to the Chesapeak, I thought it right to submit to Captain Hudson the Propriety of staying a *little longer*, in Expectation of this Matter being cleared up, either by the Admiral's Appearance off the Hook, or at least a Message from him declaratory of his Intentions, as, during our present Uncertainty, I did not think it advisable to let the Troops go, before I heard again from the Admiral, with which he was so obliging to acquiesce.

I immediately after this wrote again to the Admiral, informing him, that the Expedition to the Chesapeak only waited for his Orders; and earnestly requesting that he would, without Loss of Time, favor me with his *positive Advice respecting this very serious and interesting Subject*; because, as long as I had Reason, from his Information to suppose that Part of the French Fleet were gone to the Chesapeak, I could not think of risking such a Corps of Troops under the Convoy of only Two Frigates, unless I was assured that he was in a Situation to cover them.

March 11. Soon after this Letter was dispatched, Information arrived from Brigadier-General Arnold, dated the 8th, that the Chesapeak was entirely clear of a French Naval Force. By which, being persuaded that the Report of one having sailed thither from Rhode Island on the 27th Ultimo, was not founded, I did not hesitate a Moment to give it to Captain Hudson, as my Opinion, that the Expedition should sail, without Loss of Time, under the Convoy the Admiral had allotted for it; suggesting to him, at the same Time, whether he had not better take with him all the King's Ships now here, or which he might fall in with on his Passage. I was also more strongly confirmed in this Opinion by a Letter I received from the Admiral, dated the 8th, informing me, "That, in consequence of *undoubted Intelligence* received at Two o'Clock that After-

noon, that the French Fleet and Troops are evacuating Newport with the greatest Expedition, and that their Destination is certainly for *Virginia.*"

March 14. This Day a Letter, dated the 11th, at Sea, was brought to me from the Admiral by the Halifax Sloop of War, Captain Bowers, who fortunately fell in with him off Montack Point, the 10th Instant: In Addition to what the Admiral says, Captain Bowers informs me, that the whole French Fleet sailed from Newport on the 8th Instant. I am not without Hopes, that, as the Admiral is clear of all Incumbrance, notwithstanding they had Two Days Start of him, he will overtake them before they get the Length of the Chesapeak, should that be *really* their Destination. But, should the Vice-Admiral be so fortunate to overtake the French Fleet before they reach the Chesapeak, I have every Hope of his Success, which so fine a Fleet, and the Abilities of its Commander, can give me.

From Brigadier-General Arnold's Letters to me, your Lordship will perceive he is under no Apprehensions of any sudden Misfortune: And, with respect to the Rebel Troops marched to the Southward under Fayette, I have no Doubt their Progress (at least by Water) will be impeded, if the Officer commanding the King's Ships in the Chesapeak has availed himself of the Information I have sent him; nor do I think they can arrive near our Posts before the 20th at soonest. The Reinforcement under General Phillips waits only for a Wind to go to Sea. I wish it could have been stronger; but I have not another Transport left: Those sent to Virginia with General Arnold remaining still there, I suppose for Want of Convoy to bring them back.

The best Information which my late Letters from the Southward, and Intelligence from the Rebel Country, enable me to give your Lordship, respecting Lord Cornwallis's Situation, is, That having forced the Passage of the Catawba, and dispersed the Militia who opposed him, his Lordship had penetrated into North Carolina as far as Hillsborough, driving before him the Rebel Generals Green and Morgan, who fled towards Virginia with the utmost Precipitation. And General Arnold's late Dispatches give me Reason to think, that his Lordship has even reached the Banks of the Roanoke.

New-York, March 27, 1781.

MY LORD,

I HAVE the Honor to inform your Lordship, that the Convoy to Major-General Phillips's Expedition having been considerably reinforced by Vice-Admiral Arbuthnot's Orders, sailed for the Chesapeak on the 20th Instant, but contrary Winds having detained the Packet for some Days, I did not think it proper to send her after the Wind came fair, as I was in hourly Expectation of hearing from the Admiral something very interesting.

Having therefore received Yesterday a Letter from him, informing me of his having come up with the French Fleet off the Capes of Virginia, and engaged them on the 16th Instant; I have the Honor to send your Lordship a Copy of his Letter herewith.

I sincerely wish that this Action had fortunately been more decisive than it appears to be; but if the French have been prevented by it from establishing themselves in the Chesapeak, a very great Point is certainly gained.

War-Office, April 28, 1781.

1st Troop of Horse Guards, Valentine Jones, Gent. is appointed to be Surgeon, vice Robert Sinclair.

10th Regiment of Dragoons, Cornet Thomas Lewis, to be Lieutenant, vice Charles John Clavering.

14th Regiment of Foot, Lieutenant Honourable George Ferdinand Fitz Roy, of 3d Dragoons, to be Captain of a Company, vice Francis Percival Elliot.

Ditto, Lieutenant Thomas Dorrington, of 57th Foot, to be Captain of a Company, vice Thomas Hayter.

Independent Company of Foot, Lieutenant George Katenkamp, of 1st Foot, to be Captain.

Ditto, Ensign Honourable — Cranitoun, of 25th Foot, to be Lieutenant.

Ditto, James Whiting Yorke, Gent. to be Ensign.