

E
271
.G77

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.
Chap. E 271
Shelf. G 77
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



TWO LETTERS

RESPECTING THE CONDUCT OF

REAR ADMIRAL GRAVES

ON THE

COAST OF THE UNITED STATES,

JULY TO NOVEMBER, 1781.

BY WILLIAM GRAVES, Esq.,

OF THE INNER TEMPLE.



MORRISANIA, N. Y.:

1865.

ONLY 100 COPIES PRINTED.

No. 10.

Henry B. Sawfor

E 3-1

1877

PRESS OF J. M. BRADSTREET & SON

INTRODUCTION.

THE following Tract, concerning a very important event in the War of the American Revolution, was written by WILLIAM GRAVES, Esq., the eldest brother of Admiral THOMAS GRAVES, and privately circulated for the purpose of defending the latter from the serious charges which were brought against him, subsequent to the surrender by Lord CORNWALLIS at Yorktown.

Concerning the author of the Tract, very little is known beyond the facts that he was the eldest son of Captain THOMAS and ELIZABETH (*Budgell*) GRAVES; that he was a member of the Inner Temple, a Master in Chancery, and during several years a member of the House of Commons, representing the borough of East and West Looe, in Cornwall; and that he died at his Chambers, in the Inner Temple, in June, 1801, aged seventy-seven years.

The present edition of the Tract is as perfect a fac-simile of the original as can now be made; and, with a hope that it will prove useful to those who shall be engaged in the study of the military history of the United States, it is respectfully issued.

H. B. D.

MORRISANIA, N. Y.,
April 4, 1864.

T W O

L E T T E R S

F R O M

W. G R A V E S, Esq;

RESPECTING THE CONDUCT OF

R E A R A D M I R A L G R A V E S,

I N

N O R T H A M E R I C A,

From the beginning of JULY to that of NOVEMBER, 1781.

B

* * These Letters were originally designed for *The Morning Chronicle* of the 21st and 22^d of January, 1782, at the opening of the session of Parliament; but the publication was laid aside for several particular reasons, and, among others, from a probability of the Admiral himself being soon in England. The present impression is merely for private use, to avoid the trouble of making transcripts for intimate friends. The facts are as fully, correctly, and impartially given, as any materials which the compiler could get at enabled him to give them; although he is persuaded that, for want of communication with the Admiral, his case is not done justice to, and that this is a very imperfect state of it.

L E T T E R I.

SIR,

MY reason for troubling you with this letter is what has been both publicly and privately propagated, with much industry, to the disadvantage of a very near relation, who by being abroad must be entirely ignorant of what is said at home.

Upon the first day of this session of parliament (as I was soon informed, and read also the next morning in the Morning Chronicle of the 18th of November, 1781,) it was asserted by Lord Denbigh, that "Rear Admiral Graves had received repeated advices from Sir George Rodney in May, July, and August last, of an intended French naval expedition to the Chesapeak, with a recommendation to collect his whole strength, and meet Sir Samuel Hood off the Capes of Virginia; that Sir Samuel proceeded there in due time, dispatched immediately a frigate to Admiral Graves to let him know his arrival, waited afterwards nine days for his coming, and, being then tired, sailed with his own squadron for New York, looking by the way into the Chesapeak and Delaware, where he could see neither friend nor foe; that he found Admiral Graves at Sandy Hook, not even preparing to sail; and that at last, when the Admiral moved from thence towards the Chesapeak, he left four ships of force behind him." To this, the common report made his lordship add, "the Admiral had the like information and directions from the Admiralty,

“but that he had equally difregarded them.” No fuch assertions were hazarded in the Houfe of Commons: although, on the St. Eufatius day, Sir George Rodney ftated the merit of his own proceedings in the Weft Indies, and the advices which he had fent to the commander in chief by fea at New York, and fpoke in the higheft terms of Sir Samuel Hood. And in the laft letter from Sir Henry Clinton, dated the 13th of November, he writes, “Had it been poffible for the fleet to have failed at the time it was firft imagined they would have been able to do, I have not the leaft doubt that Lord Cornwallis would have been relieved by the joint exertions of the navy and army, and I therefore cannot fufficiently lament that they could not have been made fooner.” And this refers plainly to that General’s letter to Lord Cornwallis, of the 24th of September, informing his lordfhip, “that the relief would fail the 5th of October*.”

Now, Sir, as the Admiral, whilft in North America, could not be apprized of what was paffing here, and, by being removed from thence to Jamaica, cannot for a long while have any intercourse with this country, I think it my duty to lay before the public fo much of his proceedings, relative to thefe charges, as I have any good ground for afcertaining.

The *firft* of Sir George Rodney’s advices was this.

“Sandwich, St. Eufatius, 3d May, 1781.

“S I R,

“A very confiderable French fquadron having arrived at Martinique from Europe on the 29th of laft month, I think it my duty to give you information thereof, that you may be upon your guard fhould they vifit the coafts of America, in which cafe I fhall fend every affiftance in my power.

“I have the honour to be, &c.

“G. B. R O D N E Y.”

It was addreffed to Vice Admiral Arbuthnot, fent by the *Garland*, Captain Chamberlayne, and arrived (as I am informed,) at New York the 19th of June, whilft Mr. Arbuthnot was there. On the 5th of July the Vice Admiral failed for Europe; and the naval command in North America fell of courfe to the next fenior officer, Rear Admiral Thomas Graves, the fhips of the line there at this time being feven†.

* See London Gazette, December 16, 1781.

† London 90 guns, and 8 carronades,				
Bedford	} 74		America	} 64
Robuffe			Europe	
Royal Oak			Prudent	

About the 19th or 20th of July came advices from the Admiralty, by the *Hornet*, of some ships with money and supplies for the rebels being upon the seas for Boston. In consequence of which, Rear Admiral Graves, then lying ready without the bar at Sandy Hook with six ships of the line, failed so soon as the wind permitted, which was the 21st, ordering the *Adamant* of 50 guns, that only wanted water, to get supplied, come over the bar, and follow him; which she did, and joined him the next day at sea. The *Royal Oak* likewise, which had been sent on the 6th of June by Mr. Arbuthnot to Halifax to careen, came from thence about this time, and joined the squadron near St. George's Bank on the 28th of July: the probability of a rencontre with the Rhode Island fleet, then called eight ships of the line, had made this assembly of the whole New York squadron very desirable.

From this cruise they returned to Sandy Hook the 16th of August, and the next day went over the bar to refit as soon as possible; but the *Robuste* and *Prudent*, being extremely infirm, were ordered into dock; the former (not being coppered) to be stripped and caulked, and her bottom thoroughly examined; and the latter to take in new masts, those which she had being unserviceable and unsafe, their wounds in the action of the 16th of March having opened during the late cruise, and endangered their falling.

Whilst Admiral Graves was at Boston, Sir George Rodney's *second* dispatch arrived at New York, of which I could get from him* no other than the following general minute.

“ Sandwich,

* In consequence of what fell in the House of Lords, the same night (as we were dividing in the House of Commons,) I asked Sir George Rodney for the dates and particulars of his three dispatches to North America, when, with great frankness and politeness, he told me, “I should have copies of them, for he thought I had a right to them,” telling me withal, “that the dispatch of the 7th of July was the most material of all.” The next day he gave me a running minute of them; but on my reminding him of his promise of copies, he assured me he would have such made and sent to me. After waiting several days, I called twice at his house for the purpose; and, not finding him at home, I wrote two or three notes to refresh his memory; but from the hurry (I suppose) of business, he omitted to send to me any copies. However, the St. Eustatius affair brought him to the house; when he stated his several advices, and appeared to have transcripts of them: I applied to him, as we were rising, for those transcripts; and he then, after turning over all his papers three or four times, drew out several, and gave them to me. I did not at that time look into the contents, but did so the next morning, when I found the dispatch of the 7th of July to be only missing: whereupon I wrote directly to Sir George to mention the omission, and pray it might be supplied. In answer, he sent a very genteel note (December 5,) saying, “The copy of his letter of the 7th of July was in his letter-book left at Plymouth, but a copy was, he believed, sent to the Admiralty.” Upon this I wrote to Mr. Stephens to beg a transcript, assuring him, if I had it from him, I would not print it. I had no answer; but, on meeting him ten days afterwards, he told me he had made a *diligent rummage* among their papers at the Admiralty, and it could not be found. So soon as I heard of Sir George getting to Plymouth, I wrote again to intreat the favour of a copy of this letter of the 7th of July from his letter-book: I have had no answer. Being aware of his multiplicity of business, I wrote at the same time to a friend there to wait upon Sir George and his Secretary for the purpose: the latter, (Mr. Paget,) upon being applied to, said he would look out the copy, if there was one, and send a transcript the next morning; but this not being done, my friend went to Sir George himself, at the Commissioner's house, December 24, who received
C him

“Sandwich, Carlisle Bay, 7th July, 1781.

“ Acquainting Vice Admiral Arbuthnot, that the French fleet, under De
 “ Grasse, had quitted Martinique with the trade of that island, and were un-
 “ doubtedly gone to Cape François; that in all probability they would after-
 “ wards proceed to the Chesapeake; therefore recommending it to him to join,
 “ with all his force, the squadron I should either bring or send to his assistance
 “ off the Capes of Virginia, stationing frigates to look out for that purpose,
 “ and to give my squadron the necessary information relative to affairs in
 “ America.”

This dispatch (of which I wish I could give the very words, that they might speak for themselves,) was brought to New York by the *Swallow* sloop, Capt. Wells; and Commodore Affleck, who then commanded the port, within twenty-four hours, sent the Captain to sea with it again in quest of Admiral Graves. A privateer coming within sight of Captain Wells, he pursued and took her with spirit; but falling-in afterwards with three privateers, he was obliged to run the *Swallow* ashore upon Long Island, and, to prevent his dispatches from coming to the hands of the enemy, he sunk them without opening. He got back again himself at last to New York, but not till after the arrival of Sir Samuel Hood at Sandy Hook, and then waited upon Admiral Graves: the Admiral was much dissatisfied with him for having gone out of his way to chafe when carrying dispatches; but I hear the Captain says he was neither apprized nor aware of there being any importance in his dispatches.

I cannot learn that any information or directions upon this head came from Europe to Admiral Graves. None of his cruizers, though many were out, brought him any intelligence from the Capes of Virginia or the Chesapeake either of Sir Samuel Hood or the enemy; nor did any arrive from Sir Samuel himself. This officer came to Sandy Hook the 28th of August, under a fresh of wind, with fourteen sail of the line, and his frigates followed the next day. By him Admiral Graves had the first account of the French West India fleet being failed for, and probably gotten to, some part of the North American coast; but Sir Samuel did not know their strength, and came with a full persuasion that our force was a match for theirs, and represented his own ships as fit for sea for a month. On the evening of the same 28th came advices of De Barras having left Newport in Rhode Island with his squadron the Saturday before (the 25th.)

The Admirals consulted with the General; and Rear Admiral Graves instantly determined to seek the enemy, and to sail with the first wind for the

him with his usual politeness, assured him of his good intentions towards, and his great desire to serve, Admiral Graves, whose character he well knew was most unjustly injured; and, after passing several high encomiums upon him, told the gentleman that if any copy of this letter was in his possession, he would certainly send it to him when he got aboard: but no copy has been sent, and Sir George is failed from Plymouth.

chance

chance of falling-in with one of the French squadrons before joined by the other. He had got five of his ships of the line and one fifty quite ready. The only ships besides of two decks at New York were the *Prudent* and *Robuste*, the former of which had all out, and was careening, and the other had no masts; and neither could be equipped within ten days. It would have been a great satisfaction to the Admiral to have been able to take these two ships, not only from their rate, but because they were commanded by the Captains Burnett and Cosbie, who had so lately distinguished their valour under Mr. Arbuthnot in the very same seas.

A line of battle was delivered the 30th; and, the wind serving on the 31st, the whole fleet made the best of their way for the Chesapeake, without any interruption, but from the complaints of the West Indian Squadron, the *Terrible* on the third day of sailing making the signal of distress. The fleet brought-to; when the *Terrible* was found to have come from the Leeward Islands with five pumps at work, the *Ajax* but little better, and the *Montagu* a leaky ship; that some of the rest had sprung masts, and several were very short of water and bread. These defects were supplied as quickly and as well as the situation would admit, and the fleet proceeded with the utmost expedition.

In the morning of the 5th of September, between 9 and 10 o'clock, as the mouth of the Chesapeake began to open, the frigate ahead descried the enemy on the furthest side of the bay. They were discerned from our great ships between 10 and 11 at anchor within Cape Henry in Lynnhaven Bay, and were judged to be about fifteen ships of the line. At noon, whilst we were running in, they were discovered to be getting on their way. About a quarter after 1 o'clock the signal was made for the leading ship (in Sir Samuel Hood's division) to lead more towards them, and our fleet continued to approach as fast as possible in a line abreast, as far as the shoal of the middle ground would let us, it being then changed for a line ahead, the wind on our starboard quarter, until our rear came abreast of the enemy's van, they being at this time standing out of the bay in a line ahead. About 2 o'clock their fleet disclosed itself fully to our view, and were found to consist of twenty-four large ships of the line; upon which it was taken univervally for granted that De Grasse must have been joined by De Barras. About 11 minutes after 4 our fleet wore, which gave the van to Mr. Drake, and the rear to Sir Samuel Hood; and the Admiral continued to press on his fleet as much as he could, and frequently repeated the signal for leading more towards them. About three quarters after 3 o'clock he flung out the signal for a line ahead at a cable's length; and soon after, our line seeming to be pretty well formed, the five vanmost ships of the enemy to be very particularly extended, and as many of their rear not clear of Cape Henry, so that we could act against them with the advantage of three to two, the Admiral thought it a favourable moment for attacking them, and accordingly made the signal for each ship to bear down and engage her opponent, filled his own main-top-sail, and bore down; and three minutes afterwards repeated the signal for closing with the enemy. At eleven minutes after 4 he

hauled down the signal for the line ahead, that it might not interfere with that for engaging close, and about a quarter after 4 the van and centre entered into action. All the ships however not appearing sufficiently extended, the Admiral at 22 minutes past 4 hoisted anew the signal for the line ahead, but within 5 minutes took it in, and never let it out again during the day, and then directly made the signal afresh for close action, which about a quarter after 5 he likewise repeated*. Nevertheless, the seven rear or sternmost of our ships, from some cause

* To prevent any misrepresentation of mine, through want of seamanship, I shall here give a transcript of the proceedings aboard the London, as minuted down at the time by the Admiral's secretary, who sent me a copy; although it will be intelligible, I am afraid, to none but sailors.

“ An account of the proceedings of the fleet, under the command of Rear Admiral Graves, in
“ an action with the French fleet off Cape Henry, on the 5th of September, 1781.

“ Half past 9, A.M. the wind at N.N.E. the *Solebay* made the signal for a fleet in S.W.
“ At 10 Cape Henry bore W. six leagues. Half past 10 made the signal to prepare for action.
“ Signal to call in all cruizers. At 11 discovered a fleet of large ships at anchor near Cape
“ Henry, supposed to be the enemy. Made the signal for a line of battle ahead at two cable's
“ length. At noon the King's ships getting into their stations. Cape Henry W. $\frac{1}{2}$ S. four or
“ five leagues. Moderate and fair weather. Half past 12 discovered the enemy's ships getting
“ under sail. Three quarters past 12 made the signal for the line ahead a cable's length.
“ At 1 hauled down the signal for the line ahead, and made the signal to form an E. and W.
“ line at a cable's length. At 8 minutes past 1 made the signal for the rear division (Admiral
“ Drake) to make more sail. The weather inclinable to be squally, took a reef in the topfails.
“ At 20 minutes past 1 made the signal for the leading ship to lead more to starboard. 25
“ minutes past 1 repeated the signal for the rear of the fleet to make more sail. Half past 1 the
“ *Centaur's* signal to keep her station. 35 minutes past 1 the signal for the leading ship to lead
“ more large or towards the enemy. 39 minutes past 1 made the *Resolution*, *America*, and
“ *Bedford's* signals to get into their stations. At 2 found the enemy's fleet to consist of 24
“ ships of the line and 2 frigates, their van bearing S. three miles, standing to the Eastward,
“ with their larboard tacks on board, in a line ahead. 4 minutes past 2, finding our van ap-
“ proaching too near a shoal (called the Middle Ground,) made the preparative signal to veer.
“ 11 minutes afterwards made the signal and wore together; brought-to in order to let the
“ center of the enemy's ships come abreast of us. 21 minutes past 2 made the *Bedford's* signal
“ to get into her station. Half past 2 made the signal for the leading ship to lead more to star-
“ board (in order to approach the enemy). 40 minutes past 2 made the *Salamander's* signal to
“ prime. 52 minutes past 2 made the *Royal Oak's* signal to keep the line. 55 minutes past
“ 2 made the *Ferrible's* signal to get into her station. 56 minutes past 2 made the *Princess's*
“ signal also, and at 3 the *Alcides* signal likewise. At 17 minutes past 3 repeated the signal
“ for the van ships to keep more to starboard (or towards the enemy). At 27 minutes past 3
“ made the signal for the rear of the fleet to fill. Half past 3 made the signal for the ships
“ altern to make more sail. 34 minutes past 3 made the signal for the ships in the van to keep
“ more to starboard (or towards the enemy). 46 minutes past 3 made the signal for a line
“ ahead at a cable's length. The enemy's ships advancing very slow, and evening approach-
“ ing, the Admiral, judging this to be the moment of attack, made the signal for the ships to
“ bear down and engage their opponents; filled the main-topfail, and bore down to the enemy.
“ 3 minutes afterwards repeated it. At 11 minutes past 4 hauled down the signal for the line
“ ahead, that it might not interfere with the signal to engage close. At a quarter past 4 the
“ van and centre of our fleet commenced the action. 22 minutes past 4 hoisted the signal again
“ for the line ahead, the ships not being sufficiently extended. 27 minutes past 4 hauled down
“ the signal for the line ahead, and made the signal for close action. 40 minutes past 4 the
“ *Royal Oak's* signal to keep her station. 41 minutes past 5 the *Montagu's* signal to get into her
“ station.

cause of which I am ignorant, did not come into the engagement; and by the return they appear to have had no men killed or wounded, nor any the least

station. 20 minutes past 5 repeated the signal for close action. Half past 5 the rear division bore down (Sir Samuel Hood). 35 minutes past 5 made the *Solebay's* and *Fortunée's* signals to come within hail. 15 minutes past 6 the Admiral sent the *Solebay* to the ships in the rear, and the *Fortunée* to those in the van, with orders for the ships to keep in a parallel line with the enemy, and well abreast of them, during the night. 23 minutes past 6 the signal for the line ahead at a cable's length, and hauled down the signal for close action. Half past 6 the fire ceased on both sides. A quarter past 7 made the night-signal for a line ahead at two cable's length afunder. At 9 the *Montagu* hailed, and said she could not keep the line, being so much damaged. At 10 the *Fortunée* informed the Admiral that the *Shrewsbury* had the Captain and many men wounded, and first Lieutenant killed, both her topsail yards shot away, and was then employed getting one up. The *Intrepid* was much disabled in every respect. The *Princess's* maintopmast so much wounded as to expect it every moment to fall. At 7 Cape Henry N. W. 3 leagues.

“ Found our main and foremasts dangerously wounded, standing and running rigging much cut, inner gammoning of the bowprit shot through, sails much damaged, three guns dismounted, one of which was thrown overboard, four men killed, and eighteen wounded. “ The wind from N. N. E. to N. E.”

I have likewise seen the journals of two of the officers of the *London*, sent to the Admiralty, which confirm the truth of this minute.

L I N E of B A T T L E.

Frigates.	Rate.	Ships.	Commanders.	Guns.	Men.	Killed.	Wounded.	Guns dism.	Division.	
Santa Monica to repeat.	3d	Alfred	Capt. Bayne	74	600	—	—	—	Sir Samuel Hood, Bart. Rear Ad- miral of the Blue.	
		Belliqueux	— Brine	64	500	—	—	—		
		Invincible	— Saxton	74	600	—	—	—		
Richmond	2d	Barfleur	{ Sir Samuel Hood Capt. Alex. Hood }	90	768	—	—	Thomas Graves, Esq; Rear Admiral of the Red, Com- mander in Chief.		
		Monarch	— Reynolds	74	600	—	—			3
Solebay	3d	Centaur	— Inglefield	74	650	—	—			
		America	— Samuel Thompson	64	500	—	—		3	
		Refolution	— Ld. Robert Manners	74	600	3	16			3
La Nympe to repeat.	2d	Bedford	— Thomas Graves	74	600	8	14			
		London	{ Rear Admiral Graves Capt. David Graves }	98	800	4	18	3		
<i>Adamant</i>		Royal Oak	— Ardefoif	74	600	4	5		3	
		Montagu	— Bowen	74	600	8	22	3		
		Europe	— Child	64	500	9	18			3
Salamander fire ship.		Terrible	— Hon. Wm. Clem. Finch	74	600	4	21		3	
		Ajax	— Charrington	74	550	7	16	3		
Sybil to repeat.		Princessa	{ Rear Admiral Drake Capt. Knatchbull }	70	577	6	11		Fran. S. Drake, Esq; Rear Ad- miral of the Blue.	
La Fortunée		Alcide	— Charles Thompson	74	600	2	18	3		
		Intrepid	— Pye Molloy	64	500	21	35			3
		Shrewsbury	— Mark Robinfon	74	600	14	52		3	

The Alfred to lead with the starboard, the Shrewsbury with the larboard tacks on board.

D

damage :

damage: the centre and rear of the enemy were therefore able to advance in support of their van, which had borne away; but the *Ville de Paris* avoided closing with the *London* as much as possible. The firing ceased with the day.

The van of the enemy had been broken, so that (as I apprehend) had all our line been able to go into battle at once, according to the Admiral's intention, something decisive must have happened. Many of the French ships might perhaps have been forced ashore, as well as prevented from coming up to the assistance of their van; and their fleet upon the whole (superior as it was) beaten, or at least obliged to have fled off the coast.

The next day Captain Duncan of the *Medea*, who was sent to look into the bay, returned, and reported that he had seen two large ships with two decks, and one small, come to an anchor off York River, and five sail more working down the Chesapeak, and that two other large ships of war were discovered going from Elizabeth River to Hampton Road.

The 8th, the *Iris* rejoined the fleet, after cutting away the French buoys in Lynhaven Bay; and on the same day arrived the *Pegasus*, Captain Stanhope, from the West Indies, with Sir George Rodney's *third* and last dispatch, which was what follows.

“Gibraltar, at sea, 13 Aug. 1781.

“SIR,

“Herewith I have the honour to enclose you intelligence which I received
 “from St. Thomas's the night before I sailed from St. Eustatius, and to ac-
 “quaint you that I left Sir Samuel Hood preparing to sail with all possible
 “dispatch with 12 sail of the line, 4 frigates, and a fireship, for the Capes of
 “Virginia, where I am persuaded the French intend making their grand effort.
 “Permit me, therefore, to recommend it to you to collect all the force you
 “can, and form a junction with Sir Samuel there. You will, I hope, ere this
 “reaches you, have heard of his approach by his fastest sailing frigate, which
 “I directed him to dispatch for the purpose of looking out for intelligence off
 “the Chesapeak and Delaware.

“The French fleet under Monsieur de Grasse, when they left the Grenades
 “to collect their convoy, consisted of 26 sail of the line and two large ships
 “armed en-flûte; and I imagine, at least 12 of those ships, and in all proba-
 “bility a part of Mr. de Monteil's squadron, will be in America; and it is
 “not impossible they may be joined by some Spanish ships.

“It is certain that the enemy intend to make an early campaign in the West
 “Indies after the hurricane months; I have therefore directed Sir Samuel
 “Hood to return immediately after the full-moon of October, and I must re-
 “quest not only that he is on no account detained beyond that period, but
 “that you will add to his force what line of battle ships can possibly be spared
 “from the service in America during the winter season.

“Besides

“ Besides the Squadron Sir Samuel Hood brings with him, two line of battle ships, which I sent to strengthen the convoy to Jamaica, have my orders to proceed from thence through the Gulph, and join him at the Chesapeake without delay.

“ I have the honour to be, &c.

“ G. B. RODNEY.”

This dispatch was addressed to Vice Admiral Arbuthnot, or the commanding officer for the time being, of his Majesty's ships employed in North America.

The *Terrible* now made the signal of distress full in view of the enemy; but they did not attempt to renew the engagement, though the wind often favoured them, and the English lay-to for the purpose; and, when the wind once favoured the latter and they tacked upon the enemy, so soon as the English van reached their centre, they broke their line, and made off. The two fleets, however, continued in sight of each other until the 9th, when the French took advantage of the wind during the night to press sail, and lose sight of the English.

On the 10th the *Terrible* was stripped, and the 11th, after dark, set fire to, our fleet being then off the coast of Virginia, to the Southward of Cape Henry, from whence it immediately afterwards bore up again for the Chesapeake, where they found the French had gotten in, and Mr. De Barras arrived from Rhode Island, his squadron having entered the bay on the 10th, whilst the two fleets that had combated were at sea.

With advice of the foregoing material events, Rear Admiral Graves now dispatched the *Medea*, Capt. Duncan, to England, with positive orders not to wait for private letters, nor touch at New York, nor to lose one moment's time on his passage on any account.

The 16th, the *Prudent*, from New York, joined the fleet upon its return towards Sandy Hook, where the whole anchored on the 19th, when their re-equipment and repair were set about with the utmost alertness.

The 24th, in the evening, Rear Admiral Digby came in from Europe with the *Prince George* of 90, *Canada* of 74, and *Lion* of 64 guns, and brought Admiral Graves his first notice of his destination, by the delivery of Admiralty orders, dated before the middle of July, for him to proceed with the *London* to Jamaica, and put himself under the senior officer on that station, if senior to himself.

The 11th of October arrived the *Torbay* of 74, and *Prince William* of 64 guns, from that island, in pursuance of Sir George Rodney's orders.

The utmost, and very uncommon, exertions had been made throughout the naval department to get the ships ready again for sea, but some cross accidents intervened to retard them; in particular, the *Alcide* fell aboard the *Shrewsbury*, and carried away her bowsprit and fore-yard, just as she had repaired her damages in the late fight. All, however, except the *Shrewsbury*, *Montagu*, and *Europe*, get down to Sandy Hook the 17th, when the Admiral gave out his line of battle; the next day they embarked their troops; and on the 19th, the three

last-named ships joining the rest, and taking in their lot of foldiers, the whole armament proceeded for the Chesapeake. It consisted of 25 ships properly of the line, there being three ships of 90 guns (with six or eight additional carronades in each), fourteen of 74, one of 70, and seven of 64, besides two of 50*, with 7149 land-forces on board, to which the general would have added another regiment or two, but there was not room for them.

On the 24th, when near Cape Charles (the hithermost headland of the Chesapeake,) the scouting vessels brought intelligence of the surrender of Lord Corn-

* L I N E of B A T T L E.

The Princessa to lead with the starboard, and the Bedford with the larboard tacks on board.

Frigates.	Rate.	Ships.	Commanders.	Guns.	Men.	Divisions.	
Sybil	3d	Princessa	{ Rear Adm. Samuel Drake Capt. Knatchbull }	70	577	Rob. Digby, Esq; Rear Admiral of the Red.	
Britannia		Alcide	— Charles Thompson	74	600		
		Lion	— Fooks	64	500		
		Canada	— Hon. Wm. Cornwallis	74	600		
Peverence to } repeat signals. }	2d	Pr. George	{ Rear Admiral Digby Capt. J. Williams }	96	768		
	3d	Resolution	— Lord Robert Manners	74	600		
L'Enfer fire-ship Felicity		Intrepid	— Pye Molloy	64	500		
		Montagu	— Bowen	74	600		
Rattlefreak Carysfort Volcano fire-ship	4 th	Warwick	— Hon. G. K. Elphinston	50	350		Thomas Graves, Esq; Rear Ad- miral of the Red, and Commander in Chief.
	3d	Pr. William	— G. Wilkinson	64	500		
		Centaur	— Inglefield	74	650		
	Europe	— Child	64	500			
		Robuste	— Cosby	74	600		
Orpheus to re- } peat signals. }	2d	London	{ Rear Admiral Graves Capt. Kempthorne }	98	800		
	3d	Royal Oak	— Burnett	74	600		
Amphion Conflagration fire-ship.		America	— Samuel Thompson	64	500		
		Shrewsbury	— Knight	74	600		
		Torbay	— Gidoin	74	600		
Blonde	4 th	Adamant	— David Graves	50	350		
Lively Salamander fire- ship.	3d	Ajax	— Charrington	74	550	Sir Samuel Hood, Bart. Rear Ad- miral of the Blue.	
		Prudent	— Barkley	64	500		
		Monarch	— Reynolds	74	600		
Pegasus to re- } peat signals. }	2d	Barfleur	{ Rear Adm. Sir Samuel Hood Capt. Alex. Hood }	96	768		
	3d	Invincible	— Saxton	74	600		
Ostrich		Belliqueux	— Brine	64	500		
		Alfred	— Bayne	74	600		
La Nymphe			{ Commodore Affleck Capt. Thomas Graves }	74	617		
Santa Margaritta		Bedford					

wallis

wallis some days before. His Lordship had opened a treaty the 17th, settled the terms the 18th, and signed them the 19th.

At this period the enemy's fleet consisted of 34 sail of the line, formed into a crescent, with the *Ville de Paris* in the centre; and they lay at the entrance of York River, between the sands called the Horse-shoe and York-spit, where our ships must have had the disadvantage of banks, shoals, and tides, to limit and obstruct their operations. However, we stood close into the back of the sands, to offer them battle, for two successive days. The Admiral would indeed have been glad, his men of war being now in good order, to have tried the fortune of another action in free water, as he knew, if well fought, it must at least have so maimed De Grasse, as to disable him from acting this winter against our Leeward islands; in the same manner as he would have been incapacitated from coming to North America, had he been defeated or crippled in the West Indies: let the victory fall of either side. But the French shewing no disposition to come out, our fleet hastened back on the 29th to land the troops, and anchored again on the 2d of November at Sandy Hook; the Admiral having previously detached the Ranger sloop to the Leeward Islands, to apprise them of the state of things. The General and Admirals held a consultation upon their return: Sir Samuel Hood declared, he should not go over the bar, but must return forthwith to the West Indies: a separation was resolved. Rear Admiral Graves resigned the command of the North American fleet to Mr. Digby*, and, agreeably to the Admiralty orders, sailed on the 10th, at 6 in the morning, singly, with the *London* for Jamaica; on the 11th Sir Samuel Hood went off with 18 ships of the line and several frigates; and the old, decayed *Robuste* and *Europe* were allotted for the next convoys to England.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

Inner Temple,
29th January, 1782.

W. GRAVES.

* He being the next below, as Mr. Rowley, at Jamaica, is the next but one above, Mr. Graves, on the list of Rear Admirals of the Red.

E

LETTER

L E T T E R II.

S I R,

Inner Temple, 20th Jan. 1782.

AS the Comte De Graffe is the hero, who has lately gained so much credit by sea for the enemy, at our expence; and as the blame for his career not having been stopped has been lain upon Rear Admiral Graves; I think it will be proper to hear what the Count himself says of the stand which was any where made against him, in the course of his naval campaign; for, the whole having been one connected chain, if any link had been broken, he could not have gotten to North America. I mean to give an abridgment of his own narration, and add the original, word for word, at the end, putting references (by capital letters in the margin,) from my summary to his detail. Where, indeed, mention is made of Sir Samuel Hood and Sir George Rodney, I shall subjoin short notes, and cite our several London Gazettes, containing their circumstantial respective relations. Impartiality may be expected from an enemy towards individuals who have acted against him, if not towards their state; and comparison is a common method of settling the respective merits of concurrent officers, where the circumstances have been somewhat similar. On these accounts; as also because the world has been led to believe that the whole demerit of our late misfortunes in the Chesapeak was to be derived from the negligence of Rear Admiral Graves, and from his want of circumspection; and that nobody besides could be questionable for the insufficiency of our opposition to the Count, or for his getting into that bay at all, notwithstanding he had brought both his fleet and army from the West Indies, where different Admirals had commanded, and met with him: I find it necessary to relate the whole of his voyage. I should, in truth, be inexcusable for giving a partial, when I could give a complete, relation of his operations, as they had one uniform tendency, towards the accomplishment of his last great achievement. Nevertheless,

verrtheless, I shall do this briefly. “* The Compte De Grasse left Brest the “ 22d of March, and on the 29th of April drove off, under his fire, 18 English “ ships of the line which had blocked Martinico for fifty days; their advantage “ in speed, and the part which they took of running before the wind, obliged “ the Count on the third day to give up their pursuit†; in order to go to

* See the original, No. (1).

† Sir Samuel Hood, in his representation of his cannonade, states De Grasse's ships to be at first 19 of the line, with two armed *en flûtes*; but that, after the firing began, they were joined by the ships from Fort Royal (without saying how many; most accounts say 4); that the action became general about noon, but at a great distance; that, after much manœuvring, the two fleets were at 6 in the evening four miles distant from each other, the French then consisting of 24 ships of the line; and that the next day (the 30th of April), at 25 minutes past 12, he “judged “ it improper to dare the enemy any longer to battle, and thought it his indispensable duty to “ bear up, and that he made the signal for it at 8 o'clock.” But it appears from his subsequent relation, that the enemy however did not cease from firing at some of his ships until 7 o'clock the next morning (the 1st of May), from which the *Torbay* of 74 guns received a good deal of damage: so that the two accounts differ more in the manner of telling than in substance; for what the French calls *flying with the wind in the poop*, the English terms *bearing up*, but both mean withdrawing or retiring from fight. All Sir Samuel's ships came into action, and in his own four men were wounded.

LINE of BATTLE, given out the 8th of April, 1781.

Alfred to lead with the starboard, and the Shrewsbury with the larboard tacks on board.

Frigates.	Rate.	Ships.	Commanders.	Guns.	Men.	Killed.	Wounded.	Division.
Amazon	3d	Alfred	Capt. Bayne	74	600	—	2	Sir Samuel Hood, Bart. Rear Admiral of the Blue, and Comman- der in Chief.
		Belliqueux	— Brine	64	500	—	—	
		Alcide	— Charles Thompson	74	600	1	4	
		Invincible	— Bickerton	74	600	2	4	
		Monarch	— Reynolds	74	600	—	—	
Lizard, to re- peat signals. }	2d	Barfleur	{ Sir Samuel Hood Capt. Knight }	90	767	—	4	
		Terrible	— Fergufon	74	600	—	—	
		Princessa	— Sir Thomas Rich	70	560	—	3	
		Ajax	— Symons	74	550	3	4	
Pacahunta, to repeat signals. }	3d	Resolution	— Ld. Robert Manners	74	600	1	8	
		Montagu	— Houlton	74	600	—	4	
	Gibraltar	{ Rear Admiral Drake Capt. Knatchbull }	80	667	5	16		
	Centaur	— Knott	74	650	10	26		
	Ruffell	— Sutherland	74	650	6	16		
	Pr. William	— Douglas	64	500	—	6		
	Torbay	— Gidoin	74	600	1	27		
	Intrepid	— Pye Molloy	64	500	1	23		
Shrewsbury	— M. Robinson	74	600	6	14			
Mem. In case any line of battle ship or ships should be called away, the ship that would have followed the one absent is to take her place.				36	161			

“Fort

“ Fort Royal in Martinico. After staying forty-eight hours, he feigned an
 “ attack upon St. Lucia that he might carry Tobago, which was taken in the
 “ face of Rodney himself, who with 22 ships against 24 would only be a wit-
 “ nefs, taking care to keep a respectful distance, and constantly refusing a
 “ combat, which the French offered him with a good grace*. The fleet pro-
 “ ceeded then to St. Domingo. The 16th it anchored at the Cape; on the
 “ 23d the *Intrepide* of 74 guns blew up; and so did the *Inconſtante*†. The
 “ 5th of Auguſt it failed again, and, paſſing before the Havannah through the
 “ Bahama Straits, anchored on the 30th‡ in the bay of Cheſapeak. The *Cato*
 “ of 50 guns, the *Guadaloupe* of 24, ſeveral ſloops, and a great number of
 “ transports, were at this time ſecuring to the Marquis de la Fayette ſub-
 “ ſiſtence and communications, and rendering him maſter of the ſea.

“ The Count immediately diſpatched the *Concorde* to notify his arrival off
 “ Cape Henry, and embarked in ſmall craft the 3300 land-forces which had
 “ been diſtributed among the 28 ſhips of war that compoſed his fleet. The
 “ *Glorieux*, *Aigrette*, and *Diligente*, chaſing ahead, when he entered the (C)
 “ bay, diſcovered the *Guadaloupe* frigate and *Loyalift* ſloop at anchor under
 “ Cape Henry, and purſued them to the entrance of York river: the ſloop was
 “ taken; and the *Glorieux*, accompanied by the two frigates, anchored at the
 “ mouth of the river to block it, and was reinforced the next day by the *Vail-*
 “ *lant* and *Triton*. The river James was alſo taken poſſeſſion of; the *Experi-*
 “ *ment*, *Audromache*, and ſeveral ſloops, were placed there; the higher part of
 “ this river, in which the diſembarkation was to be made, is eighteen leagues
 “ diſtant from the anchoring ground in Lynhaven bay, where the fleet lay
 “ waiting for news from General Washington and the return of its boats, when
 “ on the 5th of September, at 8 in the morning, the look-out frigate made the
 “ ſignal for 28 ſail in the Eaſt, directing their courſe for the Cheſapeak; the
 “ wind being in the N.E. It was a little afterwards perceived to be an enemy’s
 “ fleet, and not the Count de Barras, who was expected: they were under a
 “ prefs of ſail, and very ſoon near enough to be eaſily diſtinguiſhed to be
 “ ranged in line cloſe to ſtarboard, their ſhips of force in their van. The (D)
 “ Count de Graſſe immediately gave orders to prepare for battle, and for get-
 “ ting on way. At noon, the tide ſerving, the ſignal was made to ſet ſail,
 “ and to form an expeditious line in getting on way. This was done in leſs (E)

* Sir George ſays, “ his reaſons for not attacking them were becauſe they had it in their
 “ power to entangle his Majesty’s fleet among the Granadillas, to decoy them into the channel
 “ between Granada and the Spaniſh main, where the currents are ſo rapid, that his fleet might
 “ have been drove far to leeward, while the enemy had it in their power to anchor under the
 “ batteries of Granada.” See *London Gazette*, 4 Aug. 1781.

† Of 40 guns, by *Bell’s Universal Neptune*.

‡ Monſieur Rochambeau ſays, “ He received letters from the Count De Graſſe, which in-
 “ formed him of his arrival in the bay on the 28th of Auguſt; that the Count, after the fight, re-
 “ entered it on the 11th of September, when he found De Barras there, who had come in the
 “ 10th, bringing with him the beſieging artillery in ten transports; and that two Engliſh fri-
 “ gates (the *Iris* and *Richmond*) found themſelves between the two fleets, and were taken.” See
 “ *Supplement à la Gazette de France*, 20th Nov. 1781. No. (II.) Letter (M).

F

“ than

“ than three quarters of an hour, notwithstanding the absence of 1800* men
 “ and 90 officers, employed in the disembarkation of the troops; and the Count
 “ de Grasse gave a verbal order to Mr. de Monteil, Commodore, to take the
 “ command of the rear†.

(F) “ The English came from the wind, and had kept it by forming on a line
 “ close to starboard. At 2 o'clock they wore, and lay upon the same tack
 “ with the French, without being ranged however in parallel lines, the rear
 “ of Admiral Graves being infinitely to the windward of his van. At 3 o'clock
 (G) “ (after some manœuvres) the leading ships of the two fleets approached
 “ each other within musket-shot. At 4 the action began in the van with a
 “ brisk fire, and successively the ships in the main body came in for their share.

* In De Grasse's letters to Rochambeau, he calls them no more than 1500. See the account of the latter (No. II.) at letter (N).

† His line was the following:

Ships.	Guns.	Men.	
Le Pluton - -	74	800	
La Bourgogne - -	74	800	Le Sieur de Bougainville.
Le Marfeillois - -	74	800	
Diadème - -	74	800	
Refléchi - -	64	550	
Auguste - -	80	987	
St. Esprit - -	84	987	
Caton - -	64	550	
Cesar - -	74	800	
Destin - -	74	800	
La Ville de Paris - -	106	1200	Le Comte de Grasse.
Victoire - -	74	800	
Le Sceptre - -	74	800	
Northumberland	74	800	
Palmier - -	74	800	
Solitaire - -	64	550	
Citoyen - -	74	800	
Scipion - -	74	800	
Magnanime - -	80	887	
Hercule - -	74	800	
Languedoc - -	84	1000	Le Sieur de Monteil, Chef d'Escadre.
Zélé - -	74	800	
Hector - -	64	550	
Souverain - -	74	800	

Their number of guns and men I have taken from *Bell's Universal Neptune* (principally), where the *Caton* is set down as of 64, and, from her being put into the line, I suppose she must be a different ship from the *Caton* of 50, which Mr. de Grasse before mentions to be in one of the rivers attending upon de la Fayette, and never afterwards has taken notice of as having re-joined him; although he specifies the return of the *Glorieux* of 74 guns. The last ship of the line, together with the *Triton* and *Vaillant* (of 64), the *Experiment* and *Caton* (of 50), *Concorde* (of 36), *Aigrette* and *Andromache* (of 32), *Diligente* (of 26), and *Guadaloupe* (of 24), at this time were up the rivers York and James.

“ At 5, the wind, having continued to shift, threw the French van too far to (H)
 “ windward, and the Count, being anxious to make the action general, and to
 “ dispose the enemy so to do, ordered his van to bear up a second time: that
 “ of Admiral Graves being roughly handled, he took advantage of the wind,
 “ which rendered him master of the distance, to avoid being attacked by the
 “ French rear, which was making its utmost efforts to get at his rear and centre.
 “ The setting of the sun put an end to the combat. The English kept the
 “ wind, and, having preserved it the next day, employed themselves in refit-
 “ ting. The 7th, at noon, the French getting the wind, the Count approached
 “ the enemy, and manœuvred in the evening to keep the wind during the
 “ night. The 8th, at day-break, Admiral Graves availed himself of a shift of
 “ wind to get to windward; the Count wore his fleet, and (after various ma-
 “ nœuvres of both fleets) the wind was yielded to the French, from whom the
 “ English had gotten to a distance with all their sail set. The night gave the (I)
 “ English again the wind; but in the evening of the 9th, the Count gained
 “ it by his management, and by the advantage of being able to make more sail
 “ than the English squadron, his ships having suffered less. The Count then
 “ perceiving the difficulty of forcing Admiral Graves to an engagement, and
 “ fearing lest some shiftings of wind might not permit him to get before him
 “ to the Chesapeake, took the part of returning there to continue his opera-
 “ tions, and take aboard again his crews. The *Glorieux* and *Diligente* rejoined
 “ him the 10th at night. The 11th the *Iris* and *Richmond* frigates fell into
 “ his hands, and his fleet anchored under Cape Henry, where the Count de
 “ Barras* had arrived the evening before.
 “ The French fleet was composed of 24 ships and 2 frigates; Admiral
 “ Graves, reinforced by Hood, had 20, of which two were three deckers,
 “ and 9 frigates or sloops†. By their own confession, five of their ships have

* His squadron consisted (according to Mr. Arbuthnot's account, of March 20, see *London Gazette*, 24 April, 1781), of the following ships.

Le Duc de Bourgogne	} 84	La Concorde	36
Neptune		La Surveillante	32
Conquérant	} 74	Le Furet	30
Ardent		Le Sensible	28
Eveillé	} 64	La Charlotte	20
Jafon			
Provence			
Romulus	} 40	Des Corvettes.	

And I believe the *Sagittaire* of 50 had joined him since.

† See Admiral Graves's account, *London Gazette*, 6 October, 1781, by which it appears he had — — 2 of 90 (with 6 or 8 carronades in each).

12 of 74

1 of 70

4 of 64

1 of 50 (the *Adamant*); but this last was not in his line, nor engaged. For his line of battle see p.

“ been

“ been considerably mauled, and particularly the *Terrible* of 74, which they
 “ burned the 9th at night, she not being able to keep above water. The 15
 “ first ships of the French line were all that took any share in the action, and
 “ had only the same number to fight, the 5th in the English rear having refused
 (K) “ to come within reach.

“ The 18th the Count De Grasse quitted the anchoring ground in Lynn-
 “ haven bay, and took that beyond the Middle Ground and Horshoe banks;
 “ his fleet anchored in line of battle within, and at the outlet from, these two
 (L) “ banks, ready to moor, if Admiral Graves, reinforced by the arrival of
 “ Digby, had attempted to relieve Lord Cornwallis: there were also three
 “ ships appointed to go and moor themselves at the entrance of James river.

“ The 17th of October Lord Cornwallis desired a suspension of arms for
 “ twenty-four hours; two only were granted; and then he desired to capi-
 “ tulate; a day was employed in discussing the articles, which were signed the
 “ 19th. At the posts of York and Gloucester were found 1500 English sea-
 “ men, and about 40 vessels, of which one ship was of 50 guns[†], which has
 “ been burnt, and 20 transports, that have been sunk: in the number is the
 “ *Guadaloupe* frigate of 24 guns.”

The foregoing relation is not a boasting parade of his own exploits, and con-
 firms several of the passages advanced by me.

From the whole course of facts related in this and the former letter, and the
 comparison of the English and French relations, the world must now judge
 whether the Count de Grasse might have been stopped in his triumphant pro-
 gress; and, if so, in which of the stages with the most advantage; as well as
 which of our naval commanders exerted himself, in fact, the most for the pur-
 pose; and consequently where, and on whom, the principal blame, if any,
 should be laid, all circumstances considered.

It is evident from Sir George Rodney's last dispatch, of the 13th of August,
 he never apprehended that more than a part of De Grasse's and of De Mon-
 teil's squadrons would go to North America; for which reason (I suppose) he
 sent the *Torbay* and *Prince William* to Jamaica, merely to strengthen a convoy,
 and came home himself in the *Gibraltar*, that vast and powerful ship, which
 would certainly have borne the short passage to New York, as she stood the
 long one to England. It turned out, however, that De Grasse brought all the
 ships of the line of his own and of De Monteil's squadron[‡] to the Chesapeake,
 excepting

* In my relation I represent seven of our ships not to have been engaged, and this was the
 fact; so that the fifteen French ships had no more than twelve English to contest with.

† The *Charon* of 44.

‡ The squadron of De Grasse and De Monteil consisted (I believe) of the following ships:

	Guns.			Guns.
* <i>La Ville de Paris</i>	106		* <i>Auguste</i>	} 80
* <i>Le Languedoc</i>	} 84		* <i>Magnanime</i>	
* <i>St. Esprit</i>				

* *La*

excepting the *Actionnaire* of 64 guns, left at St. Domingo for a convoy, and the *Intrepide*, which blew up there.

Had therefore Sir George's second dispatch, of the 7th of July, found Rear Admiral Graves at New York, by arriving before he went off Boston, and had the Admiral, in consequence of it, proceeded immediately with his whole squadron for the Capes of Virginia, to look out for Sir Samuel Hood's from the Leeward Islands, without waiting for any farther advice of or from him, one of these two English squadrons separately, or both conjunctly, by cruising thereabout, might have fallen-in with De Grasse; in either of which cases, we should certainly at that time have had 27 French ships of the line, and one, if not two, of 50 guns to encounter, and could have had no other possible accession ourselves than the *Robuste* and *Prudent*, which were in dock at New York when the action took place. But on the other hand, at the time of that action, their *Glorieux*, *Triton*, and *Vaillant*, with the *Experiment* (and I believe the *Caton* of 50 guns,) were up the rivers of the Chesapeake attending their army, together with 1800 men and 90 officers of the crews of their other 24 ships of the line, all of which would have been in the fight had it happened on De Grasse's first arrival off the Capes.

Had our fleet deferred sailing from New York for a week or ten days, in order to wait for the *Prudent*, De Barras would have been joined to De Grasse and De Monteil, and we should have had then the united force of their three squadrons, excepting the *Triton* and *Vaillant*, to contend with; for the *Glorieux* rejoined De Grasse the 10th of September, the very day that De Barras arrived: so that the enemy would have had 34 ships of the line, instead of 24, in the battle; and we but the same 19 and the 50 which composed our strength on the 5th of September, with the addition of the *Prudent*, for she joined the fleet on the 16th, and could not have reached us sooner.

		Guns.			Guns.
*La Bourgogne	}	74	L'Actionnaire	}	64
*Le Cesar			* Caton †		
* Citoyen			* Hector		
* Destin			* Reflexi		
* Diademe			* Solitaire		
§ Glorieux			§ Triton		
* Hercule			§ Vaillant		
Intrepide			§ Le Caton		
* Marsillois			§ Experiment		
* Northumberland			L'Inconstante		
* Palmier			§ La Courageuse		
* Pluton			§ Aigrette		
* Sceptre			§ Andromache		
* Scipion			§ La Diligente		
* Souverain			§ La Guadaloupe		
*La Victoire	Plieusieurs Corvettes.				
*Le Zele	Un grand nombre de Transports.				

* In the action.

§ Out of the action up the rivers.

|| Burnt.

† Quere whether this be or not the same ship with the *Caton* of 50 guns.

G

For

For these reasons, chance seems to have rendered the moment of our conflict as opportune as it could have been, that is, when the enemy's force to oppose us was the least; and had we succeeded on the 5th of September in defeating De Grasse, and driving his ships from the coast, De Barras could not have landed the French artillery, and his squadron would probably have been impounded and captured in the bay. It is not therefore without reason that Admiral Graves, in his letter to Lieutenant-Colonel Simcoe (which I have seen), said, "the 5th of September *was*, I confess, a moment of ambition with me."

The story of Sir Samuel Hood having been nine days off the Chesapeake, waiting for the Admiral, is so impossible to be true, under the circumstances before related, that it deserves notice again only to be exposed.

With respect to Sir Henry Clinton's assurance to Lord Cornwallis, that the relief by sea would be ready on the 5th of October, I can say nothing; not knowing what ground Sir Henry had for such assurance. And with regard to his not having the least doubt but that, had it been then ready, it would have been effectual; the world must judge from any antient or recent achievement of a similar nature, in naval history, how far 25 English ships of the line, with two fifties, were capable or likely to have forced 34 French ships of the line (of superior strength) situated advantageously. If it be supposed that the English could have evaded the French main fleet anchored off York river, by clinging the southern shore of the Chesapeake, running up James river, and landing the troops before that fleet could advance thither; I will only desire the map to be looked into, and the probable information to the enemy of our approach from their scouting vessels, together with the smallness of the distance from the mouth of one river to that of the other, and the time requisite for the disembarkation of our 7000 troops, to be considered. But if, by gross inattention in the French, such a project could have been executed, let me ask what probably would have been the ultimate fate of the whole English fleet, after being once gotten up James river, and there blocked by more than 38 ships of war of the enemy?

This is all which I shall trouble you with on the part of a flag officer now in seas very remote, who, from being conscious of having done his duty, to the best of his abilities, for his Majesty's service, in most critical circumstances, cannot have the least suspicion of any artifice being used to disguise or conceal facts, in order to make the world mistake him for the cause of the late misfortunes in the Chesapeake. The returning of Mr. Arbuthnot sooner, and the going of Mr. Digby later, than was intended, were solely the occasion of Mr. Graves having any the least command in chief in America for a moment: and had it been possible to have sent Mr. Digby both earlier and stronger, the last unfortunate scene, which we all lament over, would never have happened at all.

I am, Sir, &c.

W. GRAVES.

P. S. On

P. S. On the last day before the recess of the House of Commons, according to the newspapers, Admiral Keppel said, "he had ever been of opinion, that if a proper use had been made of the force under Admiral Graves, Mr. De Rochambeau would never have been suffered to land in America, and the disaster of Lord Cornwallis would have been prevented." I suppose the Admiral must allude to the time of the Rear Admiral's sailing for North America. The fact was this. On the 20th of March, 1780, he had notice of a command, and shortly afterwards orders to get 8 ships of the line at Spithead ready for sea. By the 8th of April he was ready, and moved to St. Hellens. Several accidents happened to some of his ships, and he got to Plymouth with a part of them only on the 10th; and, not having the number of ships specified, he could not sail on the 11th with Mr. Walsingham, who then put to sea from that port. His squadron was afterwards reduced from 8 to 6 ships of the line; and on the account of Walsingham's convoy, which had returned from apprehensions of an enemy, the Rear Admiral was directed to wait for and attend them to a certain latitude. This prevented his sailing when he would otherwise have done so; and mischief happened to his reduced squadron by a storm on the 7th of May, whilst lying in Plymouth Sound waiting for the convoy. At last, however, by orders dated the 13th of May, he was directed to sail with six particular ships of the line, and one frigate, without Walsingham; and he accordingly put to sea on the 17th of that month at 8 o'clock in the evening, after sun-set, with the first practicable wind, which becoming soon foul, he beat against it for three days, and at last cleared the channel; after which he lost no other time on his passage than the shifting of the prisoners of a large French East Indiaman, which he had fallen upon and captured by the way, necessarily took up, and, in eight weeks exactly, arrived at New York, that is on the 13th of July; and there he put himself under the direction of Mr. Arbuthnot, agreeably to his last orders. The squadron which sailed from Brest on the 2d of May, at 5 in the morning, and consisted of 8 ships of the line and a frigate, got on the American coast the same day, or but one day sooner. And Mr. Digby, with 3 ships of the line and a frigate, has been lately nine weeks and four days in going from Plymouth to New York, although by the Gazette it appears that he lost not a moment on the way, and fell in with nothing.

N.B. The foregoing narration is as just as the means within my power have been able to render it; but I shall forthwith send a copy to Rear Admiral Graves at Jamaica, that he may correct the nautical errors, if any, and supply the deficiencies in point of fact and reasoning.

21st January,
1782.

W. G.

E R R A T A.

- Page 4. l. 11. "fooner —;" which refers, &c.
5. l. 20. *r.* off Bolton.
8. (note) l. 28. *r.* board.
13. l. 17. *Ranger* should be in Italics.
15. l. 10. strike out the comma after "margin."
16. after No. (1) add, p. 25.
17. l. 27. *r.* 27 fail; and last line of note, after letter (M) add p. 31.
18. (note) l. 2. after (N) add p. 32. La Ville de Paris should be 110 guns; Languedoc 80; Hector 74.
20. (note) La Ville de Paris should be 110 guns; Le Languedoc, St. Esprit, and Auguste 80 guns, and Magnanime 74 guns.
21. add *Hector at bottom of the first column, and strike it out of the second.
Ibid. col. 2. l. 16. *r.* Plusieurs.
22. l. 36. *r.* solely.
26. l. 3. *r.* l'air.—l. 6. *r.* debouqua.—In l. 28. strike out the comma after composoit.
28. l. 28. *r.* entreprirent.—l. 32. *r.* donné.

(No. I.)

S U P P L E M E N T

A LA

G A Z E T T E de F R A N C E.

Du MARDI, 20 NOV. 1781.

“ *Precis de la Campagne de l'Armée Navale aux Ordres du Comte
“ De Grasse.*”

“ **L**E Comte de Grasse parti de Brest le 22 Mars, avec un convoi de cent
“ cinquante voiles, après une traversée sans exemple pour sa brieveté,
“ chassa le 29 Avril à coups de canon dixhuit vaisseaux de guerre Anglois qui
“ avoient bloqué la Martinique pendant cinquante jours; la superiorité de
“ leur marche, & le parti qu'ils prirent de fuir vent arriere, forca le troisieme (A)
“ jour le Comte de Grasse de renoncer à leur poursuite pour aller au Fort
“ Royal de la Martinique. Après y avoir passé quarante huit heures, on feignit
“ une entreprise sur Sainte Lucie, lorsqu'on ne vouloit qu'enlever Tobago.
“ Cette colonie fut prise en presence de Rodney lui-même que, avec vingt deux
“ vaisseaux contre vingt quatre, ne voulût qu'etre temoin, observant de se tenir à
“ une distance respectueuse, & refusant constamment le combat que les François
“ lui ont présenté de bonne grace. Tobago etant approvisionné de tout ce qui (B)
“ lui étoit necessaire, l'armée se rendit à Saint Domingue avec un convoi de
“ deux
H

“ deux cents voiles, pris à la Grenade, à la Martinique, & à la Guadeloupe.
 “ Le 16 Juillet elle mouilla au cap, ile de Saint Domingue. Le 23 l'*Intrepide*
 “ de 74 canons fut en l'air par le feu pris dans une barrique de tafia. Le
 “ même accident arriva à l'*Inconstante* sur l'ile à vache.

“ Le 5 Août l'armée apparceilla de St. Domingue, & dirigea sa route pour
 “ passer devant la Havanna, afin d'y prendre de l'argent; elle débouqua en-
 “ suite par le canal de Bahama. Le 30 Août elle mouilla dans la baie de
 “ Chesapeake. Le Marquis de la Fayette commandoit à Jamstown un corps
 “ d'Americains qui observoit les mouvemens du Lord Cornwallis, dont les
 “ forces étoient plus considerables; ce dernier occupoit la poste d'York, sur la
 “ rive droite de la riviere de ce nom, & celui de Gloucester sur la gauche, vis-à-
 “ vis d'York. Le *Caton* de 50 canons, la *Guadeloupe* de 24, plusieurs corvettes
 “ & un grand nombre de transports, assuroient ses subsistances, ses communica-
 “ tions, & le rendoient maître de la mer. Le Comte de Grasse fut instruit de
 “ tous ces details le soir même de son arrivée par un officier que le Marquis
 “ de la Fayette avoit posté, au cap Henri pour l'y attendre.

“ La fregate la *Concorde* depechée à St. Domingue par le Comte de Barras,
 “ chargée des depêches des Généraux Washington & Rochambeau au Comte
 “ de Grasse, lui faisoit connoître la situation de leur armée, & les succès que
 “ les ennemis avoient dans la Virginie & le Maryland sous les ordres du Lord
 “ Cornwallis, que l'on pouvoit surprendre si les forces maritimes devenoient
 “ superieures à celles des ennemis.

“ Le Comte de Grasse, persuadé de l'importance de secourir ces deux pro-
 “ vinces, d'y entreprendre la prise du Lord Cornwallis dans les postes qu'il oc-
 “ cupoit, & de se rendre maître de la baie de Chesapeake, depêcha sur le champ
 “ la *Concorde* pour annoncer son arrivée sur le Cap Henry, embarqua 3300
 “ hommes aux ordres du M. de St. Simon, lesquels furent repartis sur les
 “ vingt huit vaisseaux de guerre que composoit son armée. Le retour de
 “ la *Concorde* à Newport annonça aux Généraux Washington & Rochambeau
 “ les dispositions du Comte de Grasse. Ces généraux firent alors marcher leur
 “ armée sur la riviere d'Elk, qui se jette dans le Nord-Est au fond de la baie
 “ de Chesapeake.

“ Le Comte de Barras fut aussi prevenu des mêmes dispositions; ce Général
 “ fermement persuadé de l'avantage qui resulteroit de sa réunion à l'armée du
 “ Comte de Grasse dans la baie de Chesapeake, se disposa à s'y rendre, non-
 “ obstant la liberté qu'il avoit de pouvoir agir en chef dans la partie du
 “ nord.

(C) “ Le *Glorieux*, l'*Aigrette*, & la *Diligente* chassoit en avant de l'armée lors-
 “ qu'elle entra dans la baie; ils eurent connoissance de la fregate la *Guadeloupe*
 “ & de la corvette la *Loyaliste* mouillée au Cap Henri: ils les poursuivirent
 “ jusqu'à l'entrée de la riviere d'York. La corvette fut prise; le *Glorieux*
 “ accompagnée des deux frégates mouilla à l'embouchure de la riviere pour en
 “ former le blocus, & fut renforcé le lendemain par les deux vaisseaux le *Vail-*
 “ *lant* & le *Triton*: on s'empara aussi de la riviere de James qui se jette dans la
 “ Chesapeake,

“ Chefapeak, quatre lieues plus au sud que celle d'York. L'*Experiment*,
 “ l'*Andromaque*, & plusieurs corvettes furent portées dans cette rivière, de ma-
 “ nière à couper la retraite du Lord Cornwallis sur la Caroline, & protéger en
 “ même temps nos canots & chaloupes sur lesquels s'embarquerent les 3300
 “ hommes du M. de St. Simon, pour les transporter dans le haut de la rivière
 “ de James, à la distance de dix-huit lieues du mouillage de Lynnhaven, oc-
 “ cupé par l'armée navale. Le M. de St. Simon y arriva le 2 Septembre, le
 “ M. de la Fayette le 3, avec le corps qu'il commandoit, & ils se porterent le
 “ lendemain sur Williamsbourg, qui n'est qu'à cinq lieues d'York.

“ Le théâtre de cette importante opération étoit donc une espèce de pres-
 “ qu'île d'environ quinze lieues de l'Est à l'Ouest, & de quatre à cinq du nord
 “ au sud, formée par les rivières York, James, & la baie de Chefapeak. Les
 “ postes de Jamestown, Williamsbourg, ancienne résidence des gouverneurs de
 “ la Virginie, York & Hampton, se trouvent dans cette presqu'île.

“ L'armée attendoit au mouillage de Lynnhaven les nouvelles de la marche du
 “ Général Washington, & le retour de ses canots & chaloupes, lorsque le 5
 “ Septembre à huit heures du matin, la frégate de découverte signala vingt-sept
 “ voiles dans l'est, dirigeant leur route sur la baie de Chefapeak : les vents
 “ étoient de la partie du Nord-Est. Il fut peu après reconnu que la flotte sig-
 “ nalée étoit ennemie, & non le Comte de Barras qu'on attendoit : ils forçoient
 “ de voiles & furent bientôt assez près pour que l'on appercût facilement qu'ils
 “ se rangeoient sur la ligne du plus près tribord, en faisant passer les vaisseaux (D)
 “ de force à leur avantgarde. Le Comte de Grasse au moment où ils furent
 “ signalés ordonna de se disposer au combat ; de faire revenir les bâtiments à
 “ rames qui étoient à l'aiguade, & de se tenir prêts à appareiller. A midi la
 “ marée permettoit de mettre sous voile, le signal en fut fait ainsi que celui de
 “ former en appareillant une ligne de vitesse. Les capitaines mirent dans leurs (E)
 “ manœuvres une telle célérité, que nonobstant l'absence de près de 1800
 “ hommes & 90 officiers employés au débarquement de troupes, l'armée fut
 “ dans moins de trois quarts d'heure sous voile, & sa ligne formée dans l'ordre
 “ suivant : le *Pluton*, la *Bourgogne*, le *Marseillois*, le *Diadème*, le *Reflechi*, l'*Auguste*,
 “ le *St. Esprit*, le *Caton*, le *Cesar*, le *Destin*, la *Ville de Paris*, la *Victoire*, le
 “ *Sceptre*, le *Northumberland*, le *Palmier*, le *Solitaire*, le *Citoyen*, le *Scipion*, le
 “ *Magnanime*, l'*Hercule*, le *Languedoc*, le *Zélé*, l'*Hector* & le *Souverain*. Le
 “ *Languedoc* monté par le Sieur de Monteil, chef de l'escadre blanche & bleue,
 “ se trouvoit directement en avant de la *Ville de Paris* ; le Comte de Grasse
 “ voyant qu'il n'y avoit point d'officiers généraux à son arrière garde lui donna
 “ un ordre verbal d'aller en prendre le commandement.

“ Les ennemis venoient du vent ; ils l'avoient conservé en se formant sur la
 “ ligne du plus près tribord. A deux heures ils virèrent tous ensemble vent (F)
 “ arrière, & prirent les memes amures que l'armée Française ; dans cette po-
 “ sition elles se trouverent au meme bord sans cependant être rangés sur des
 “ lignes paralleles, l'arrière garde de l'Amiral Graves étant infiniment au vent

- (G) “ de font avantgarde. A trois heures les vaisseaux de tête de l’armée Françoise se trouvoient, par la variété des vents & des courans, trop au vent pour que leur ligne fût bien formée. Le Comte de Graffe les fit arriver de deux quarts, à fin de donner à tous ses vaisseaux l’avantage de combattre ensemble ; ils retinrent le vent lorsqu’ils furent suffisamment arrivés ; les deux têtes des armées s’approcherent alors à la portée de la mousqueterie. A quatre heures le combat commença à l’avantgarde, commandée par le Sieur de Bougainville, avec un feu très vif, & successivement les vaisseaux du corps de bataille y prirent part. A 5 heures les vents ayant continué de varier jusqu’à 4 quarts, plaçoient encore l’avantgarde Françoise trop au vent. Le Comte de Graffe desiroit ardemment que l’engagement fût général, & pour y disposer l’ennemi il ordonna une seconde fois à son avantgarde d’arriver ; celle de l’Amiral Graves étoit très mal traitée, & cet Amiral profita de l’avantage du vent qui le rendoit maître de la distance pour éviter d’être attaqué par l’arrière garde Françoise qui faisoit tous ses efforts pour atteindre la sienne & son centre. Le coucher du soleil termina ce combat. L’armée Angloise tint le vent, & l’ayant encore conservé le lendemain, elle employa cette journée à se réparer. Le 7 à midi les vents changerent à l’avantage de l’armée Françoise. Le Comte de Graffe s’approcha de celle de l’ennemi & manœuvra le soir pour conserver le vent dans la nuit. Le 8 à la pointe de jour l’Amiral Graves profitoit d’une variation de vent qui le favorisoit pour s’élever au vent de l’armée Françoise qui étoit alors dans l’ordre de l’échiquier sur la ligne du plus près babord, courant les amures à tribord : le Comte de Graffe s’en aperçût, fit revirer son armée tout à la fois, & elle se trouva par ce mouvement en ordre de bataille bien rangée, allant sur l’ennemi qui étoit à bord à contre sur une ligne mal formée, & paroissoit nonobstant sa mauvaise position vouloir disputer le vent. Le Comte de Graffe fit signal à ses vaisseaux de tête de passer très près en avant de ceux des Anglois. Ils entreprirent alors de se former par une contremarche vent devant, pour présenter, sur le même bord que l’armée Françoise, une ligne de combat. L’Amiral Graves s’aperçût combien cette manœuvre étoit dangereuse ; en ce qu’en la continuant elle eut donné à l’armée Françoise l’avantage de l’attaquer, son mouvement à moitié formé. Trois vaisseaux avoient seuls comencé cette manœuvre lorsqu’il fit arriver vent arrière à son armée pour se former sur son arrière garde ; cette manœuvre céda toutàfait le vent à l’armée Françoise, dont les Anglois s’étoient éloignés à toutes voiles. Dans la nuit du 8 à 9 une variation leur rendit le vent. Dans la soirée du 9 le Comte de Graffe le leur gagna par sa manœuvre, & par l’avantage de pouvoir faire plus de voiles que l’escadre Angloise, ses vaisseaux agant moins souffert. Dans la nuit du 9 à 10 les ennemis disparurent. Le Comte de Graffe voyant alors la difficulté de forcer l’Amiral Graves au combat, & craignant que quelques variations de vent n’eussent permis à l’ennemi de le devancer dans la baie de Chesapeak, prit le parti d’y retourner pour y continuer ses opérations, & reprendre ses équipages.
- “ Le

“ *Glorieux* & la *Diligente* se rallierent à l’armée le 10 au soir. Le 11 les deux
 “ frégates le *Richmond* & l’*Iris*, forties la veille de la baye de Chesapeake où
 “ elles avoient été couper les bouées de l’armée du Comte de Grassé, tomberent
 “ entre ses mains: son armée mouilla cette meme journée sur le Cap Henri où
 “ le Comte de Barras étoit arrivé la veille.

“ L’armée Françoisé, à l’affaire du 5, étoit composée de 24 vaisseaux & de
 “ deux fregates; l’Amiral Graves, renforcé par Hood, avoit 20 vaisseaux, dont
 “ deux à trois ponts, & 9 fregates où corvettes. De leur propre aveu, cinq
 “ des leurs ont été considérablement maltraités, & particulièrement le *Terrible*
 “ de 74, sixieme vaisseau de leur ligne, auquel ils mirent le feu dans la nuit
 “ du 9 au 10, ne pouvant plus le tenir sur l’eau. Les 15 premiers vaisseaux
 “ de la ligne Françoisé furent les seuls à prendre part à l’action; ils n’eurent
 “ aussi qu’un pareil nombre de vaisseaux à combattre; les cinq de l’arrière
 “ garde Anglois ayant refusé de se metre à portée.

“ L’armée Françoisé a perdu, dans cette affaire, les Sieurs de Boades, capi-
 “ taine de vaisseau, commandant le *Reflechi*, Dupé d’Orvault, lieutenant de
 “ vaisseau & major de l’escadre bleue; Rhaab, enseigne de vaisseau, Suedois,
 “ sur le *Caton*; de la Villeon, officier auxiliaire, sur le *Diademe*; 18 ont été
 “ blessés, & il y a eu environ 200 hommes tant tués que blessés.

“ Pendant cet intervalle, l’armée Americaine & Françoisé étoient parvenues
 “ à l’embouchure de l’Elk. L’avantgarde aux ordres du Comte de Custine,
 “ embarquée sur des bateaux du pays, arriva le 19 à Williamsburgh: le reste
 “ de l’armée, aux ordres du Baron de Viomenil, ayant marché jusqu’à
 “ Baltimore s’y embarqua sur des fregates & transports, envoyés par le
 “ Comte de Grassé. Le 24 tout fut réuni à Williamsbourg; les Généraux
 “ Washington & Rochambeau y étoient dès le 13, étant venus par terre, &
 “ n’ayant que deux aides de camp à leur suite. Le 18 ils se rendirent à bord
 “ de la *Ville de Paris* pour concerter avec le Comte de Grassé sur les moyens
 “ d’agir. Le Comte de Grassé quitta alors le mouillage de Linhaven, où les
 “ vaisseaux ne font pas en sûreté, & alla prendre celui que est au delà du banc
 “ de Middle Ground & d’Horse-shoe; son armée y mouilla en ligne, en dedans
 “ & au débouché de ces deux bancs, prête à s’emboffer si l’Amiral Graves, ren-
 “ forcé par l’arrivée de Digby, eût essayé de secourir le Lord Cornwallis;
 “ d’ailleurs cette position donnoit aussi les moyens d’accélérer le siège, par une
 “ plus grande facilité du transport des munitions: il y eut aussi trois vaisseaux
 “ nommés pour aller s’emboffer à l’entrée de la riviere de James. Le 30, 800
 “ hommes de la garnison des vaisseaux furent renforcer le Sieur de Choisy qui
 “ bloquoit Gloucester avec la legion du Duc de Lauzun de 2000 Americains.
 “ York fut investi le 29, la tranchée ouverte du 6 au 7 après midy. Le 17, le
 “ Lord Cornwallis demanda une suspension d’armes de vingt quatre heures; (le
 “ General Burgoyne avoit signé il y a quatre ans à la même époque la capitu-
 “ lation de Saratoga), deux heures lui furent seulement accordées, & pour lors
 “ il demanda à capituler; un jour fut employé à discuter sur les articles de la
 “ capitulation, qui fut signée & conclue le 19.

“ Il s'est trouvé dans les postes d'York & de Glocester 6000 hommes de
“ troupes réglées, Angloises ou Hessoises, & 22 drapeaux, 1500 matelots, 160
“ canons de tout calibre, aux environs de 40 batimens, dont un vaisseau de 50
“ canons qui a été brûlé; 20 bâtimens de transports ont été coulés bas-dans ce
“ nombre se trouve la fregate la *Guadeloupe*, de 24 canons.”

(3¹)

(No. II.)

S U P P L E M E N T

A LA

G A Z E T T E de F R A N C E.

Du MARDI, 20 NOV. 1781.

“ Journal des operations du corps François sous le commandement du
“ Comte de Rochambeau, Lieutenant Général de l’Armée du Roi;
“ depuis le 15 d’Août.

“ **N**OUS reçumes le 15 d’Août, par la fregate la *Concorde*, les reponfes
“ du Comte de Grasse, qui nous annonçoient sa prochaine arrivée dans la
“ baye de Chesapeak avec 3000 hommes, &c. &c.

“ Nous fumes le 6 Septembre à la tête de l’Elk sur la baye de Chesapeak
“ où nous trouvames les lettres du Comte de Grasse, qui nous faisoit part de
“ son arrivée dans la baye le 28 Août, du débarquement des troupes, &c. &c. (M)

“ Le peu de transport que l’on avoit pu rassembler dans la baye, où les
“ Anglois depuis cinq mois avoient tout détruit, ne nous permit que d’embar-
“ quer les, &c.

“ Le 8 le Général Washington & moi & le Chevalier de Chatelleux primes
“ les devants. Nous arrivames le 14 à Williamfbourg. Le Lord Cornwallis
“ étoit

“ étoit occupé à se retrancher à York & à Gloucester, barrant la riviere d'York par ses vaisseaux emboffés & quelquesuns coulés bas dans le chenal.

“ Après toutes les nouvelles les plus inquiétantes que nous avions reçues le long de la route sur l'apparition de la flotte Angloise, la sortie de celle du Comte de Grasse, un combat donné dans la journée du 5, l'apparition de deux fregates Angloises dans la baye, nous eumes enfin dans la nuit du 14 au 15, par une lettre du Comte de Grasse, un rapport circonstancié des faits suivans ; l'Amiral Hood avoit rejoint le 28 Août l'escadre de Graves devant New York ; elles avoient fait voile toutes deux le 31 vers la baye de Chesapeak, au moment où notre mouvement par terre sur Philadelphie avoit été demasqué.

(N) “ L'escadre Angloise, forte de vingt vaisseaux, arriva le 5 au Cap Charles, comptant y primer le Comte de Grasse ; celui-ci ayant encore 1500 hommes dans toutes ses chalopes, qui avoient été débarquer les troupes & qui n'étoient point encore de retour, ne balança pas à couper ses cables & à aller combattre l'ennemi avec vingt-quatre vaisseaux, laissant le reste à bloquer Cornwallis dans les rivieres d'York & de James ; Graves s'éleva au vent, l'avant-garde du Comte de Grasse, aux ordres du Sieur de Bougainville, atteignit l'arrière-garde Angloise, qui fut très maltraitée ; le Comte de Grasse ayant poursuivi quelque temps, rentra le 11 dans la baye où il trouva l'escadre du Comte de Barras, qui étant partie le 25 Août de Newport avec dix transports, portant notre artillerie de siege, étoit entré dans la baye le 10 à bon port. Les deux fregates Angloises se trouvèrent entre les deux escadres & furent prises ; on détacha tout de suite les dix transports du Comte de Barras, les fregates & les prises du Comte de Grasse, pour aller prendre nos troupes à Annapolis, sous les ordres du Sieur de la Ville Brune, commandant le *Romulus*, qui avec le Baron de Viomenil mit une telle activité qu'il arriva le 25 au creek de Williamsburg où l'on débarqua l'armée le 26 & le 27.

“ Le 28, l'armée alliée partit de Williamsburg à la pointe de jour, se porta sur York-town, et le corps François composé de 7000 hommes commença l'investissement, &c. Le 29, l'armée Americaine passa le marais, & l'investissement de York se trouva complet. La nuit du 29 au 30, l'ennemi prit le parti de nous abandonner tous ses ouvrages extérieurs. Nous passâmes la journée du 30 à nous loger dans ces ouvrages abandonnés. Ce même jour les transports portant l'artillerie de siege font descendus jusqu'à Trubello-Landini à 7 miles d'ici, &c.

“ Le 3 Octobre, le Sieur de Choisy marcha pour resserrer Gloucester.

“ La tranchée été ouverte dans les deux attaques audeffus & audeffous de la riviere d'York dans la nuit du 6 au 7.

“ La nuit du 10 au 11 on a mis le feu au *Charon* & à trois autres transports.

“ Dans la journée du 17 l'ennemi commença à parlementer. La capitulation a été signée le 19 au matin. La garnison a défilé à deux heures tambour battant, &c.”

SUPPLEMENT.

For the benefit of those who do not read French, the following translation of the extracts from the *Gazette de France*, of Tuesday, November 20, 1781, is respectfully submitted.

THE EDITOR.

SUPPLEMENT.

FOR the benefit of those who do not read French, the following translation of the extracts from the *Gazette de France*, of Tuesday, November 20, 1781, is respectfully submitted.

THE EDITOR.

(33)

(No. I.)

S U P P L E M E N T

TO THE

G A Z E T T E de F R A N C E.

T U E S D A Y, 20 N O V. 1781.

Sketch of the Campaign of the Fleet under the orders of the Count de Graffe.

THE Count de Graffe left Brest, March 22, with a convoy of one hundred and fifty sail, and after an unexampled quick passage across, on the 29th of April by a cannonade, routed the eighteen English men-of-war, which had blockaded Martinique for fifty days; their superior sailing powers and the plan they adopted of retiring wind astern, on the third day forced the Count de Graffe to give over the chase and return to Port Royal, Martinique. (A) After spending forty-eight hours there, an expedition against Saint Lucia was pretended, when they only wished to carry Tobago. This colony was taken before Rodney's very eyes, the latter with twenty-two vessels against twenty-four, chose to be a mere witness, careful to keep at a respectful distance, and constantly refusing the battle graciously offered by the French. Tobago being provisioned with all that it needed, the fleet proceeded to St. Domingo, with a convoy of two hundred sails, collected at Granada, Martinique and

L

and

*F
no 117...*

and Guadaloupe. On the 16th of July it anchored at the Cape, Island of St. Domingo, on the 23d the Intrepide, 74 guns, blew up from the fire taking in a-barrell of tafia. The same accident befel the Inconstante at Isle à Vache.

On the 5th of August, the fleet hoisted sail from St. Domingo and directed its course, so as to pass before Havana, and take in money; it then debouched by the Bahama channel. On the 30th of August it anchored in Chesapeake Bay. The Marquis de la Fayette was in command of a corps of Americans at Jamstown, watching the movements of Lord Cornwallis, whose forces outnumbered him. The latter occupied the post of York on the right bank of the river of that name, and that of Gloucester on the left opposite York. The Caton 50 guns, the Guadeloupe 24, several corvettes and a great number of transports assured his supplies and communications and made him master of the sea. Count de Grasse was informed of all these details the very evening of his arrival, by an officer whom the Marquis de la Fayette had posted on Cape Henry to await him.

The frigate Concorde dispatched to St. Domingo by Count de Barras with despatches from Generals Washington and Rochambeau to Count de Grasse, had informed him of the position of their army, and of the enemy's success in Virginia and Maryland under the command of Lord Cornwallis, who might be surpris'd, if the naval force should become superior to the enemy's.

The Count de Grasse, convinced of the importance of relieving those two provinces, undertaking the capture of Lord Cornwallis in the posts he occupied, and becoming master of Chesapeake Bay, at once dispatched the Concorde to announce his arrival at Cape Henry, took on board 3300 men under the command of M. de St. Simon, who were distributed among the twenty-eight men of war composing his fleet. The return of the Concorde to Newport, made known to Generals Washington and Rochambeau the preparations of Count de Grasse. Those generals then marched their army on the Elk, which empties into the head of Chesapeake bay on the northeast.

Count de Barras was also notified of the same preparations; that commander fully convinced of the advantage that would result from his junction with Count de Grasse's fleet in Chesapeake Bay, prepared to proceed to that point, notwithstanding the liberty left him to act as chief in the northern waters.

- (C) The Glorieux, Aigrette and Diligente were chasing in the van of the fleet when it stood into the bay: they discovered the frigate Guadeloupe and corvette Loyalist anchored off Cape Henry and pursued them to the mouth of York river. The corvette was taken; the Glorieux with two frigates, anchored at the mouth of the river to blockade it, and was reinforced the next day by two vessels, the Vaillant and Triton: possession was taken also of James River, which empties into the Chesapeake, four leagues south of the York. The Experiment, Andromaque and several corvettes were stationed in that river to cut off Lord Cornwallis' retreat into Carolina, and at the same time to protect our boats and sloops in which M. de St. Simon's 3300 men had

embarked to be transported up the James, to a distance of eighteen miles from the anchorage of Lynn Haven, occupied by the fleet. The Marquis de St. Simon arrived there on the 2d of September, the Marquis de la Fayette on the 3d with the corps under his command, and the next day they moved on Williamsburg, which is only five leagues from York.

The theatre of this important operation was then a kind of peninsula of about fifteen leagues from east to west, and from four to five from north to south, formed by the rivers York and James and Chesapeake Bay. The post of Jamestown, Williamsburg, former residence of the Governours of Virginia, York and Hampton lay in this peninsula.

The fleet was awaiting at the roadstead of Lynn Haven tidings of General Washington's march, and the return of its boats and sloops, when on the 5th of September at 8 A. M. the frigate on the lookout signalled twenty-seven sail in the east, steering towards Chesapeake Bay, the wind was from the north-east. It was soon evident that the fleet signalled was the enemy and not the Count de Barras, whom they were expecting: sail was crowded and they were soon near enough to perceive easily that the enemy were forming on a close (D) starboard line, pushing the heavy vessels to the front. The Count de Grasse at the very moment when they were signalled ordered all hands to prepare for action, to recal the rowing boats which were out for water and to be ready to weigh. At noon the tide permitted him to set sail, the signal was given to do so and also to form in order of speed. The captains manœvered with such (E) celerity, that notwithstanding the absence of nearly 1800 men and 90 officers engaged in landing the troops, the fleet was under way in less than three quarters of an hour, the line formed in the following order: the Pluton, Bourgogne, Marfeillois, Diademe, Reflechi, Auguste, St. Esprit, Caton, César, Deftin, Ville de Paris, Victoire, Sceptre, Northumberland, Palmier, Solitaire, Citoyen, Scipion, Magnanime, Hercule, Languedoc, Zelé, Hector and Souverain. The Languedoc, under the Sieur de Monteil, commodore of the white and blue squadron, was directly in front of the Ville de Paris; the Count de Grasse seeing that there were no general officers in his rear guard, gave him a verbal order to go and assume command of it.

The enemy came from windward; they had kept it by forming in a close-hauled starboard line. At two o'clock they tacked, and wore together on the (F) same tack as the French fleet; in this position they were on the same tack yet without being ranged in parallel lines, Admiral Graves' rear guard being infinitely to the windward of his van. At three o'clock the headmost vessels of the French fleet were by the shifting of the winds and currents too far to (G) windward for a well formed line. Count de Grasse made them bear away two points, so as to give all his vessels the advantage of fighting together; they kept the wind when they had borne away sufficiently: the heads of the two fleets then came within musket shot. At four o'clock the action commenced at the van commanded by the Sieur de Bougainville, with a very brisk fire,
and

(H) and successively all the ships of the main body took part. At five the winds having continued to vary four points, again threw the French van too far to windward. Count de Grasse ardently desired a general engagement, and to bring his antagonist to it, again ordered his van to bear down: that of Admiral Graves was very ill treated, and that Admiral improved the advantage of the wind, which made him master of the distance to avoid being attacked by the French rear guard, which was making every effort to reach his rear and main body. The setting of the sun terminated this combat. The English fleet kept the wind, and having preserved it also the next day, spent the day in repairing.

On the 7th at noon the winds shifted favorably for the French fleet. Count de Grasse drew near to the enemy and manœuvred during the evening in order to keep the wind in the night. The 8th at dawn, Admiral Graves improved a favorable gale to get to windward of the French fleet, which was then in a bow and quarter line, on a close larboard line running on the starboard tack. Count de Grasse perceived it, made his whole fleet veer at once, and by this movement it was in order of battle well drawn up, bearing down on the enemy, who was on the contrary tack in an illformed line, and notwithstanding his disadvantageous position seemed disposed to dispute the weather gage. The Count de Grasse signalled his foremost vessels to pass close ahead of the English van. They then undertook to form by a general tacking of the line, head to wind, to offer a line of battle on the same tack as the French. Admiral Graves saw how dangerous this manœuvre was, as by continuing it, the French fleet would have the advantage of attacking his half formed line. Only three vessels had begun this manœuvre, when he made his fleet bear away aft to form on his rear; this manœuvre yielded the weather gage completely to the French fleet from which the English had retired under full sail.

In the night of the 8th-9th, a shifting of the wind gave them the (I) weather gage.

In the evening of the 9th the Count de Grasse gained it from them by his manœuvring and by the advantage of being able to crowd more sail than the English fleet, his vessels having suffered less. During the night of the 9-10th the enemy disappeared. Count de Grasse then seeing the difficulty of forcing Admiral Graves to an action, and fearing lest some change of wind might enable the enemy to get into Chesapeake Bay before him, resolved to return there to continue his operations at that point, and take his crews aboard again. The Glorieux and Diligente rejoined the fleet on the evening of the 10th. On the 11th the two frigates Richmond and Iris, which sailed the day before from Chesapeake bay, where they had gone to cut the buoys of the Count de Grasse's fleet, fell into his hands. The same day his fleet anchored off Cape Henry, where Count de Barras had arrived the preceding day.

The French fleet, in the affair of the 5th, consisted of 24 ships of war and

and two frigates; Admiral Graves, reinforced by Hood, had 20 ships of war, two of them three deckers, and nine frigates or advice boats. According to their own account, five of theirs were considerably damaged, especially the *Terrible*, 74, the sixth ship of their line, to which they set fire on the night of the 9th-10th, unable to keep her afloat. The fifteen headmost vessels of the French line were the only ones which took part in the action, and had only an equal number of vessels to engage; the five ships in the English rear declining to come within reach.

The French fleet lost in this affair the *Sieurs de Boades*, captain of a man of war, commanding the *Reflechi*, *Dupé d'Orvault*, lieutenant of a man of war and major of the blue squadron; *Rhaab*, ensign of a man of war, a Swede, on the *Caton*; *de la Villeon*, an auxiliary officer on the *Diademe*; 18 officers were wounded and about 200 men killed and wounded.

During this interval, the American and French armies had reached the mouth of the Elk. The van under Count de Custine, embarking on vessels of the country, reached Williamsburg on the 19th, the rest of the army under the Baron de Viomenil, having marched to Baltimore, embarked there on frigates and transports sent by the Count de Grasse. On the 24th all united at Williamsburg. Generals Washington and Rochambeau had been there from the 13th, having come by land, attended only by two aides de camp. On the 18th they went on board the *Ville de Paris* to concert a plan of action with the Count de Grasse. The Count de Grasse then left the anchorage of Lynn Haven, where ships are not safe, and occupied that beyond Middle Ground and Horseshoe Bank; his fleet anchored in line, within and at the issue of these two banks, ready to spring his cables, if Admiral Graves, now reinforced by the arrival of Digby, should attempt to relieve Lord Cornwallis; moreover this position enabled them to quicken the siege, by facilitating immensely the transport of munitions; three vessels were also appointed to go and anchor with springs on their cables at the mouth of the James. On the 30th, 800 marines were sent to reinforce the *Sieur de Choisy*, who was blockading Gloucester with the Duke de Lauzun's legion of 2,000 Americans. York was invested on the 29th, the trench opened on the 6th or 7th after noon. On the 17th Lord Cornwallis desired a suspension of hostilities for twenty four hours; (four years before at the same time General Burgoyne had signed the capitulation of Saratoga.) Two hours only were granted him, and he then asked to capitulate; a day was spent in discussing the articles of capitulation, which were signed and concluded on the 19th.

There were found in the posts of York and Gloucester 6000 regular troops, English or Hessians, with 22 colors, 1500 sailors, 160 cannon of all calibres: about 40 vessels, one, a ship of 50 guns, which was burnt; 20 transports had been sunk, among them the frigate *Guadeloupe* of 24 guns.

(38)

(No. II.)

S U P P L E M E N T

TO THE

G A Z E T T E de F R A N C E.

Of T U E S D A Y , N O V . 20 , 1781.

“Journal of the Operations of the French corps under the command of the Count de Rochambeau, Lieutenant-General of the Royal Army, from August 15th

“ **O**N the 15th of August, we received by the frigate Concorde, the replies of the Count de Grasse, announcing his speedy arrival in Chefapeake Bay with 3000 men, &c. &c.

On the 6th of September we proceeded to the Head of Elk on Chefapeake Bay, where we found the Count de Grasse's letters, informing us of his arrival in the bay on the 28th of August, the landing of the troops, &c. &c.

(M) The scanty transportation which it had been possible to collect in the bay, where the English had been destroying everything for the last five months, did not permit us to embark the, &c.

On the 8th General Washington and I and the Chevalier de Chatelleux, started on ahead. We reached Williamsburg on the 14th. Lord Cornwallis was

was busy entrenching at York and Gloucester, obstructing York river with vessels anchored, and some sunk in the channel.

After all the most disquieting news that we had received on our way, as to the appearance of the English fleet, the departure of that of the Count de Grasse, an action fought on the 5th, the appearance of two English frigates in the Bay, we at last in the night of the 14th-15th obtained by letter from the Count de Grasse, a circumstantial account of the following facts:—Admiral Hood had, on the 28th of August, rejoined Graves' Squadron off New York; they sailed in company on the 31st for Chesapeake Bay, the moment our movement by land on Philadelphia was unmasked. The English squadron, twenty men of war strong, reached Cape Charles on the 5th, calculating to anticipate the Count de Grasse there; the latter having 1500 men still in his floops, which had been landing the troops and had not returned, without hesitation cut his cables and sailed out to meet the enemy with 24 ships, leaving the rest to blockade Cornwallis in York and James rivers; Graves got the weather gage, Count de Grasse's van under the Sieur de Bougainville, reached the English rear, which was very roughly handled; the Count de Grasse having pursued for some time, returned to the bay on the 11th, where he found the Squadron of the Count de Barras, which had sailed from Newport on the 25th of August with ten transports, bringing our siege guns, and had entered the bay safely on the 10th. The two English frigates found themselves between the two squadrons, and were taken; they immediately detached the ten transports of the Count de Barras, and the Count de Grasse's frigates and prizes, all under the Sieur de la Ville Brune, commanding the *Romulus*, to go to Annapolis and bring down our troops. De la Ville Brune with the Baron de Viomenil used such celerity that he reached Williamsburg Creek on the 25th, and landed the army on the 26th and 27th.

On the 28th, the allied army left Williamsburg at daybreak, and advanced on York-town. The French corps, consisting of 7000 men, began to invest, &c. On the 29th, the American army passed the marsh, and the investment of York was completed. On the night of the 29th-30th, the enemy determined to abandon all his exterior works. We spent the 30th in occupying these abandoned works. The same day the transports with the siege guns came as far as Trubello-Landini, seven miles from here, &c.

On the 3d of October, the Sieur de Choisy marched to invest Gloucester.

The trench was opened in the two attacks above and below York river on the night of 6th-7th.

On the night of the 10th-11th they set fire to the *Charon* and three other transports.

On the 17th the enemy began to parley. The capitulation was signed on the morning of the 19th. The garrison marched out at 2 o'clock, drums beating, &c."

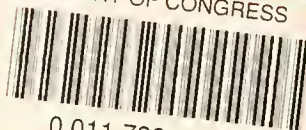
FINIS.







LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 011 782 291 6