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LETTERS OF CHARLES O'HARA TO THE DUKE OF GRAFTON

Edited by GEORGE C. ROGERS, JR.

The six letters printed below were written from America by Charles O'Hara to the Duke of Grafton. They cover the period from November 1, 1780, to October 20, 1781.¹ Charles O'Hara (1740?-1802) is best known as the officer who surrendered Cornwallis's sword after the defeat at Yorktown to General Benjamin Lincoln, who received it in behalf of Washington. More importantly, he was a brigadier general in command of a brigade of guards during Cornwallis's campaign in the South, being wounded twice at Guilford Court House.

He was the illegitimate son of James O'Hara, second Lord Tyrawley, was educated at Winchester School, and was later commissioned an officer in the Coldstream Guards. He had seen service in Germany, Portugal, and Senegal before arriving in America. After the American Revolution he was, in the 1790's, governor of Gibraltar where he was familiarly known as "Old Cock of the Rock." At his death he left £70,000 in trust for two ladies at Gibraltar by whom he had had families and his plate valued at £7,000 to his black servant.²

Douglas Southall Freeman described General O'Hara, on the famous occasion of the surrender, as sociable and "entirely at ease." "Had he been in his own quarters, entertaining welcome friends, he could not have been more pleasant. Later, some of the French, who themselves knew all the arts of making a good appearance, expressed amazement at the sangfroid of British officers."³ The following letters indicate that O'Hara had long thought the Americans unconquerable; therefore, the conclusion at Yorktown must not have been totally unexpected. It was proof of what he had long been telling the Duke of Grafton.⁴ It is this attitude of O'Hara which marks these letters as interesting.

¹ The present Duke of Grafton has given permission for the publication of these documents (Grafton Papers, 423/189-192, 195-196) which are on deposit at the Bury St. Edmunds and West Suffolk Record Office, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, England.

² Henry Manners Chichester, "Charles O'Hara," *Dictionary of National Biography*.

³ Douglas Southall Freeman, *George Washington, A Biography*, New York, 1952, V, 391-392.

⁴ The third Duke of Grafton (1735-1811) was head of the English ministry from September 1767 to January 1770, when he was succeeded by Lord North. During the American Revolution he was in opposition, and his views "probably always leant to the side of the colonies." William Prideaux Courtney, "August Henry Fitzroy, third Duke of Grafton," *Dictionary of National Biography*.

of the state as a microcosm led inexorably toward localism. His very inability to appreciate the purpose of promotion worked toward a similar end. The goals of history became lost in the emphasis upon particular events, and in the concentration upon reforms and the maintenance of local prestige and social institutions. The South Carolina historians gradually found a new identity in the state as a distinct and peculiar object of concern.

New York the 1st of November 1780

Though my Arrival in this Country has been so short, as not to admit of my making so particular an enquiry into the state of this Continent as I cou'd wish to lay before your Grace; still, I think I may, from what I have already seen and heard, venture to say, that I find America in every respect as Hostile to the Interests of Great Britain, as when I left this place two years since; If I am not much mistaken, every day confirms me the more, in my old Opinions, that England has not only lost this Country for ever, but must for ever consider the People of this Continent, as the most inveterate of Her Enemies. I am sensible that this Doctrine will appear very extraordinary, at a time, when England is exulting over Her Triumphs, in the reduction of Charlestown, and the Defeat of General Gates's Army on the 17th. of August by Lord Cornwallis;⁵—the old and fatal delusion must now act with redoubled force, that our successes will enable our numerous Friends to exert themselves in the cause of Great Britain—that the Carolinas are permanently ours, and the Rebellion receiv'd such severe, decisive checks, that this Continent will very shortly be ours again—in this Country we do not see these Events through such flattering Mediums, on the contrary, we hold our situation more precarious, and much more critical, as we are more materially vulnerable at this moment, than we have been at any Period during the War; In a Military point of view, I think your Grace will agree with me, when you consider the number of Posts that are now so weakly occupied by our Army, reduc'd to little more than half the Number of their Establishment, whilst the Americans are growing stronger every day by the Accession of French Troops and Fleets—and it is a fact beyond a doubt, that their own Numbers are not materially reduced, for in all our Victories, where we are said to have cut them to pieces, they very wisely never staid long enough to expose themselves to those desperate extremities, whenever the Rebel Army is said to have been cut to pieces, it wou'd be more consonant with truth to say that they have been dispersed, determin'd to join again upon the first favourable opportunity, and in the mean time they take the Oaths of Allegiance, and live comfortably at Home and among us, to drain us of our monies, get acquainted with our Numbers, and learn our intentions, the better to deceive and avail themselves of every occasion that may present itself—those men are call'd in England the numerous friends of Government, and I am confident that our friends here are of that description only; this Country is certainly the Empire and Seat of

⁵ Gates was defeated at Camden on the 16th.

Duplicity—how impossible must it prove to conquer a Country, where repeated Successes cannot ensure permanent advantages, and the most trifling Check to our Arms acts like Electrical Fire, by rousing at the same moment every Man upon this vast Continent to persevere upon the least and most distant dawn of Hope, in pursuit of their favorite Independence, which like a powerful talisman has charmed every American, in every Quarter of the Globe, and from which they will never depart, as long as they have the means of supporting the Contest, at the same time they have the satisfaction of knowing this certain truth, that England will always consider herself fortunate in receiving America upon any terms she may be pleas'd to perscribe herself short of Independence—Our experience shou'd now produce an immediate resolution, either to give over so ruinous and fruitless a pursuit, or Adopt that mode of War that might probably lead to permanent Advantages, the first there can be no doubt about, and I am certain that the latter is equally within our reach, I mean a War of desolation, as every part of the Continent is exposed to Invasion, where the object is only to Ruin and Devastate and not make Establishments—this Idea is shocking to Humanity, but however dreadful, it must be undertaken upon the Principle that I am persuaded either this Country or England must be sacrificed, that they never can, or will exist at the same time, this Country is determin'd not to be our Friends, it is then our duty to place them in that situation, that they may be as little Hostile to us as possible; as all experiments shou'd be tried to prevent the Union of this great Continent, which wou'd certainly prove so destructive to our West India Possessions, why shou'd not England tempt Russia by giving her part of this Continent, and assisting her in making Conquests upon the French and Spanish Territories in the West Indies, to create a Marine friend to assist us?

I must ask your Grace's Pardon for troubling you so long with my political American Creed, when I shou'd have confin'd myself to setting before you the Occurrences in this Country, which I shall without further Preface begin from the last Accounts transmitted from hence to England, which contain'd Lord Cornwallis's defeat of the Rebel Army under General Gates on the 17th of August last.

No Military Operations of any moment since that time have taken place, farther than Lord Cornwallis's posting his Troops in South Carolina in that manner, as to give protection and Countenance to the Kings Friends, several of whom he has Arm'd, (I wish he may not have reason to repent it) and to curb and keep in order the disaffected.—those Arrangements being settled, about the middle of last month Lord Cornwallis then mov'd, and is now Marching towards North Carolina where

it is said a large Body of People are waiting his Arrival with the utmost Impatience to take up Arms against the Congress (Je n'en crois rien) and that reinforced with these Numbers he is to endeavour to dislodge General Gates from Hillsborough. that Town is in North Carolina, situated upon the great Communication from Virginia, Maryland, the middle Colonies, and Pennsylvania into the Carolina's—it is from those Central Advantages that General Gates has taken Post there, to assemble all the American Force in that Quarter to stop Lord Cornwallis's progress through North Carolina into Virginia—in order to facilitate all these Operations, General Leslie⁶ with a Corps of Two thousand five hundred chiefly British and Provincial Infantry sail'd from New York the 15th. of this month for Petersburg at the Head of the James's River in Virginia, that Town is distant from Hillsborough about Eighty Miles.

When I consider that Lord Cornwallis has no Retreat nearer than Charles Town, from which he was distant when at *Camden* 150 Miles, which distance he is increasing every day in his progress through the Carolinas, that every one of those Men that he has, or that have Armed themselves and taken a Thousand Oaths of Allegiance and Fidelity, are waiting with the utmost impatience to break them all—the very Vulnerable situation of Lord Cornwallis's Army, not consisting of Fifteen hundred Men, those Numbers diminishing every day, that the smallest Check to any of his Detachments wou'd in all probability end like the unfortunate Affair of Saratoga in the total demolition of Lord Cornwallis's Corps. I must confess that I cannot help having my fears about him.

There has been no accounts receiv'd here for a considerable time from Lord Cornwallis, or have we heard of General Leslie since he left us.

Your Grace will hear of our Coup Manqué that had been concerted between Sir Henry Clinton and the famous *One Arnold* a Rebel General, who is now with us at New York, had that plan succeeded, which was to have put into our hands Stoney Point, with other passes across the North River and four Thousand of the American Continental Army that were under Arnolds Command with General Washingtons person, which was likewise part of the Scheme, those Events might have produced good consequences; I wish this account was to end here, by my telling you that some contre tems had disconcerted these measures, and that we had only to lament that disappointment, but this unfortunate

⁶ This is Major General Alexander Leslie. Leslie had much the same view of the war in America as did O'Hara. See an interesting series of letters written from Charleston by Alexander Leslie to his brother the Earl of Leven, 1781-1782, in the Leven and Melville Muniments, Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh, Scotland.

affair was attended with the most shocking Catastrophy, as it caused the Death, by the most Ignominous manner, of one of the most accomplish'd Young Man in this Army—Major André, Sir Henry Clinton's most confidential Aid de Camp, who was employed in this business between Sir Henry and Arnold—as this affair may by ill-inform'd Persons be stated in that manner, as materially to hurt Sir Henry Clinton, I will in as few words as possible tell you how that business took the unfortunate turn it did, which was from this cause—Poor André had been sent with a Flag of Truce upon some pretence to Arnold.—when it was necessary for Andre to return to New York, Arnold proposed that he shou'd be disguis'd in colour'd Cloaths, and procured a Brown Coat for him for that purpose—disguised in this manner André, tho provided with Arnolds pafs which carried him safely through all Arnolds Posts, was stop'd by some Militia Men not far from York, who struck with Andre's appearance as superior to the Character he had by his disguise endeavour'd to assume, in searching him they found some Papers secreted between his foot and his Stocking—by this means the affair was discovered, General Washington was immediately made acquainted with it, and Arnold having heard of Andre's being stop'd, was so alarmed at the consequences that might probably attend it, that he immediately made his escape on board of the Vulture Sloop of War, that fortunately for him happen'd to be up the North River,—the Rebels went through the form of trying André by a General Court Martial, by which he was condemn'd to be Hanged and he suffer'd that dreadful Death—Sir Henry Clinton sent General Robertson ⁷ to Washington and used every means in his power to prevent the Unhappy Young Man's cruel fate, but to no purpose, in vain Andre's situation as a Flag of Truce was urged in the strongest manner and threats of Retaliation were hung out—they were inexorable—they considered his disguise and the Papers found upon him, to have absolutely set aside every protection due to a Flag of Truce, I am sorry they were in this instance so much in the right.

Upon my arrival at this place I was so much surprized as I conclude every body in England will be when they hear of Sir Geo: Rodney's ⁸ being here with the Sandwich and Ten Ships of the Line—this formidable reinforcement to Arbuthnot ⁹ and Graves's ¹⁰ Squadrons, makes our force here Twenty One Ships of the Line, with Frigates without number

⁷ Major General James Robertson (1720?-1788).

⁸ Admiral Sir George Rodney, later first Baron Rodney (1719-1792).

⁹ Admiral Marriot Arbuthnot (1711?-1794).

¹⁰ Admiral Thomas Graves, later first Baron Graves (1725?-1802).

—Sir George came in quest of Monsieur de Guichen,¹¹ upon information he had receiv'd that Guichen had left the West Indies with a considerable part of his fleet, meaning to join Monsieur Ternay¹² at Rhode Island who has been blocked up there, with Seven Ships of the Line and five thousand Men ever since the 10th of October by part of our Fleet, these joint French Squadrons were with the Americans to have attempted the reduction of New York—Monsieur de Guichen has not yet appeared in these Seas, we hope he has return'd to Europe, if he shou'd not have left the West Indies everything may be apprehended in that Quarter—Sir George Rodney is still here with his Squadron and all his Captains are employed in trying Captain Bateman of the Yarmouth, when that Court Martial is over, which it is supposed will last about a fortnight longer, it is then imagin'd Sir George will return with his Eleven Ships to the West Indies—His Conduct is most spirited and disinterested—I wish other Admirals would follow his example. I am afraid our Fleet has too many Officers in it, who have no other pursuit but Prize Money, and sacrifice their duty to the Public to that mean consideration—we have had a very scandalous and fatal example of that sort in the Conduct of Admiral Graves, who was order'd to follow Ternay to this Country, and in order that he might make all the dispatch possible, his whole Squadron consisted of Copper Bottoms, and though there were many Transports and Merchant Vessels ready to sail for these Seas when Graves left England, they were not suffer'd to Sail with him that he might not be detain'd, and have no other Object but the finding Ternay—Unfortunately for England, Admiral Graves off the Western Islands took a Homeward-bound East India Ship, she prov'd so very bad a Sailor, that he was oblig'd to have her Tow'd by the Ships of his Fleet all the way from the Western Islands to New York, that Operation is said to have lengthn'd his voyage at least a Fortnight, by which means Ternay got into Rhode-Island three days before Graves arriv'd at New York—if that fact can be prov'd I think Graves ought to be hanged.

The Cork Fleet¹³ is not yet arriv'd and we are in the most critical situation for want of Provisions, not having more than One Months in Store for the Army—Our Navy is not much better supplied—if such is the manner that this favorite Service is supplied with Troops, Provisions and Stores, what a formidable situation must our Fleets and Armies be in other places.

¹¹ The Comte de Guichen had returned to Europe.

¹² Admiral the Chevalier de Ternay.

¹³ A fleet bringing provisions from Ireland.

Major General Phillips¹⁴ was exchange'd last week for General Lincoln,¹⁵ the Rebel Commandant of Charles Town, who fell into our hands upon the Reduction of that place—the Congress wou'd not listen to any of the terms propos'd for exchanging the Troops of the Convention¹⁶ for their Prisoners taken by us in the Carolina's, they as usual made use of a thousand specious Arguments against that Exchange, in which they are never deficient, as they are perfect Masters of every Artful Colouring over their Actions; in all their Negotiations with us, they do only what they please, and commonly as they please, but the true causes of their not consenting to that exchange are, that they consider those unfortunate Men as pledges in their hands to prevent our exercising any severities on their Prisoners, and they are likewise determin'd that they will never part with that Army, till England shall first have satisfied them for every demand they make for different supplies of Provisions, Fuel, Forage, Medicines etc. etc. etc. with which they pretend to have furnish'd the Troops of the Convention to the Amount of a Million Sterling, in short, they mean, that we shou'd purchase that Army from them—All the other Prisoners of War, those of Saratoga excepted are now exchanging, we expect to receive from them about twelve hundred of our Prisoners, including the Hessians, with the British.

Lord Chewton with the 87th Regiment of Foot under his Command arriv'd here with Sir Geo: Rodney—they have been serving as Marines on Board that Fleet ever since January last—nothing can be more melancholly than the Accounts from the West Indies of the dreadful Mortality that has taken place amongst the Troops there, particularly the New Corps—they have already lost above two thirds of their Numbers, and what remains of them totally unfit for service—The Troops that went from this Country with General Grant,¹⁷ early in November 78 have experienced nearly the same fate, very few of them are now fit for Duty.

¹⁴ Major General William Phillips (1731?-1781).

¹⁵ General Benjamin Lincoln (1733-1810).

¹⁶ The "Troops of the Convention" refer to the British soldiers who surrendered at Saratoga. By the "Convention" they were to have been permitted to return to England, but instead they were marched to Virginia and kept there until the end of the war. Christopher Ward, *The War of the Revolution*, New York, 1952, II, 540-542.

¹⁷ Major General James Grant (1720-1806) had come to America in 1757, served against the Cherokee Indians in Carolina, been governor of East Florida, and commanded the left wing of the British Forces at the battle of Long Island. Wilbur Henry Siebert, *Loyalists in East Florida, 1774 to 1785*, Deland, 1929, II, 309-310.

All Accounts agree in the very scandalous Neglect of the Troops in the West Indies beyond what it is possible to suppose the greatest Ignorance could have—and that a great part of those evils shou'd have originated with Major General Grant, is the more extraordinary, who from his Experience of the Unhealthiness of those Climates in his long residence in them must be perfectly Master of all the necessary steps to be taken for the preservation of Troops.

Previous to the Arrival of General Grant's Corps in the West Indies, though the expedition to St. Lucia had been intended above a Twelve month before General Grant left America, No provision had been made for their Arrival, particularly the very obvious one of Barracks ready to be erected in such situations as might be thought necessary immediately upon the reduction of St. Lucia—No provision of that sort having been made, the Troops were obliged to Hutt themselves. A work of very great labour, wanting constant great Repairs; and that is the only covering that they have had ever since they have been in St. Lucia—The Capital Post that is occupied by the Troops in that Island is upon the Summit of an exceeding high Steep Mountain called le Morne Fortuné distant from the Water-side about two miles, to the top of that Mountain our poor Soldiers have been obliged ever since they have been there to Rowl up Casks or carry on their Backs all the Provisions, as well as all the Military Stores from the Sea Side, in addition to those Evils, the Soldiers have been constantly employed in making Roads in St. Lucia, of which alone many hundreds have perished the folly of that work can only be equall'd by its inhumanity as it has made the Morne Fortuné more volulnerable by making all the Avenues to it more practicable.

The officer that now commands at St. Lucia is I understand employed in destroying those Roads, which Operation I suppose will cause the loss of the few Men we have remaining—My Astonishment is, that One single Soldier shou'd have escaped such multitude of Batteries level'd at them—I wish our Officers would take example from the French in the treatment of their Troops—A French Soldier is never suffer'd to work—not even to Cook his victuals—with all the care and precaution that can be taken, the fatality of those Climates must always destroy a great many Men, but I consider our unfortunate Soldiers as Murdered—Employ'd on Works—Lodged and fed in that manner, as wou'd have destroy'd the most Robust Negroes.

Of the Ten old Regiments that went from this Country with General Grant early in November 78 and the Eleven New Corps that have been sent at different times within these two years to the West Indies, making

in the whole about Eleven Thousand Men, how dreadful the reflection that above Five Thousand of them have already perished—how these Numbers are to be replaced, and how these Islands are to be protected I conceive to be a very unnecessary consideration, England being absolutely unequal to either—it is to be apprehended that our Commanding Officers in the West Indies, have been more zealous in making Money, than in taking care of the Troops.

Barracks for Three thousand Men are now making in this place by Order of Sir George Rodney, who means to carry them with him to St. Lucia for the use of the Troops there.

Sir George, who never neglects every Opportunity of forwarding the King's Service deserves, for his spirited, disinterested and indefatigable Conduct, the Highest Praise of His Country.

A report prevails this day from A Rebel Account, that Major Ferguson of the 70th Regiment who had been sent by Lord Cornwallis into Tryon County, in North Carolina to Head a Body of Militia who had taken up Arms against the Congress, had been attack'd by a considerable Body of the Rebel Militia, Major Ferguson with One Hundred and fifty Men have been killed, Eight hundred made Prisoners, and the rest of the Body dispersed, with the loss of all their Ammunition, Arms and Stores.—if this unfortunate stroke shou'd prove true in the extent related by the Rebels, I am afraid it may be productive of the most fatal consequences to Lord Cornwallis.¹⁸

Your Grace will I hope forgive my troubling you with so long and Uninteresting a Letter—I wish our situation in this Country afforded more pleasing matter to lay before our Friends, who I am afraid, must always be disappointed at finding Letters contain so little, 'tho wrote from Scenes that are supposed to be so Animated and active.

I enclose Your Grace the account of all the proceedings, with the other papers respecting the unfortunate Major Andre, as they have been published by order of Congress—likewise Copies of Letters taken out of a Rebel Mail which fell into our hands a few days since[.]

New York November 6th, 1780

Though I have not one word of fresh matter, to add to the very long letter I had the Honour to write your Grace five days since, of which I have sent a Duplicate by this Opportunity; as my intended Voyage into the Cheseapeak where I am going immediately may put it out

¹⁸ Major Patrick Ferguson was defeated at King's Mountain, October 7, 1781.

of my power of sending your Grace any account for some time from this Country, I was desirous that your Grace shou'd be acquainted with the reason probably of my long silence.

We have not yet heard from Lord Cornwallis, or General Leslie, and as the Rebel Army under Washington, still remains at MorrisTown, his old position in the Jerseys, they not having made any movements lately, it may be concluded that nothing very remarkable has happen'd lately to the Southward.

Monsieur de Ternay with his Ships, and Troops, are still at Rhode Island, and Admirals Arbuthnot and Graves, at Gardners Bay, the East end of Long Island, watching their motions, I wish I cou'd add, that whenever the French Sail from thence, our Fleet from Gardner's Bay can follow them, that may not be the case, as the Wind at N.E. will carry Ternay from Rhode Island, and keep our Ships in Gardner's Bay.

It wou'd be endless to enumerate the many fatal Blunders that have been committed by our Commanding Officers here in the Land and Sea Departments; particularly Admiral Arbuthnot, whose conduct has been such, upon several occasions as almost to make his fidelity suspected; I will not trouble your Grace with a detail of them, reports of that sort always find their way to England—one instance only I will mention to your Grace, the giving up Rhode Island, which I understand was done in consequence of Arbuthnots advice—in whatever point of view that unfortunate step can be considered, it is full of evils of the greatest Magnitude, as we have put into the hands of the Enemy, not only the best, and safest Harbour in America, but from its vicinity to New York, the best situated for Hostile purposes on that place—The French are so persuaded of the Numberless advantages they possess in Rhode Island, that they are taking every precaution for its preservation, they have erected most formidable works, mounted with a powerful Artillery, and supplied with Military, and victualing Stores in the greatest abundance, and a most respectable Garrison: Amongst many other advantages peculiar to Rhode Island, it is the only Harbour in the Northern parts of America that is never froze, and what shou'd have been to us, in the reduced state of our Army, the first consideration—that with Six thousand Men, fortified as it ought to have been (its present Situation) wou'd be almost impregnable—when our Force here was not considered as equal to the Defence both of New York and Rhode Island how unfortunate it was, that we shou'd keep the former. A Gulph, which may be said to have swallowed England.

How very different is New York, when contrasted with Rhode Island—The Port of New York is render'd totally impracticable for Ship-

ing, considerably above one third of the Year, requiring at least fifteen thousand Men to cover it, against Invasions from without our Lines, and as I look upon the great Majority of the Inhabitants of this Town, waiting only for a favourable Opportunity to assist their Friends without, it will be necessary to leave at least Five thousand Men in Town, to keep this place from Rising, whilst the Troops are employed in defending the more distant parts—from what fatality has the unfortunate Idea arose, or the wonderful importance of New York to both parties? I suppose it must be from our having persisted so long in keeping this place, under the innumerable disadvantages attending that ruinous measure, which employs almost all our Troops for its Defence—prevents our being Hostile any where, and makes us vulnerable every where, it is difficult to account for such palpable, obvious errors.

Our situation at present, is in every respect most alarmingly critical—the New Mode adopted of pursuing the War in this Country by Arming American against American, I am afraid will prove a most dangerous experiment; this attempt Lord Cornwallis is now making, by marching through the Carolina's; his chief support to arise from the supposed attachment of the Majority of the people whom he is now Arming to oppose the Disaffected—I must confess that is a Tryal I never shou'd have ventured to make, I hope it may succeed, which I hold to be impossible, as I am persuaded England never had a Friend in this Country—shou'd experiments ever be made of so serious a nature, as to produce certain Ruin when they do not succeed, there can be no doubt if Lord Cornwallis receives the smallest check, our cause is irretrievable. Ministers are however so confident in the Wisdom of this plan, that I suppose they do not conceive any Evils can result from it, they ought to be the best informed. I wish with all my Soul I may be mistaken—In a Military view, one certain disadvantage must attend our new Operations, the necessity of Augmenting very considerably the Number of our Posts, already too numerous, as we must establish several small Detachments in those Districts, that are known to be very much disaffected, that Arrangement will unavoidably disperse the Troops all over the Country and make them materially vulnerable in every part—tho we have already embark'd very deeply in this new System, I have not a guess from whence all the Corps will be taken, that will immediately become necessary—without England can make an Effort and send immediately to this Country Ten thousand Men, it is in vain to think of carrying on the War here upon the plan proposed—we think ourselves very fully employed in keeping the very little we do possess of *English America* without fresh Quixotism.

If France shou'd, which she certainly ought, make America the Theatre of the War, and reinforce the Troops at Rhode Island with Ten thousand Men, which she can very well spare from her numerous Armies not employed in Europe, As she has manag'd to preserve Europe perfectly quiet with respect to herself—upon such an Event, what will England do?

By a Vessel just arrived from St. Kitts that left that place the 11th. of last month, we are inform'd that everything was quiet in those Seas when she left them—the French have not a single Line of Battle-Ship at Martinico, or the Windward Islands, they possibly are assembling all their force at St. Domingo to join the Spaniards from the Havannah for some Expedition to Jamaica.

I expect to Sail to Morrow for Virginia[.]

Sandy Hook the 15th of November 1780

I have been here these four days, waiting for a Wind to carry me to the Cheseapeake.

An express is just arrived from South Carolina, who brings an Account, that Lord Cornwallis has order'd General Leslie, to quit the Cheseapeake immediately, and endeavour to join him with his Corps, by pushing up Cape Fear in No. Carolina—Upon this change of operations, I immediately went to New York, to receive from our Commander in Chief, any fresh Instructions he might have for me—I found Sir Henry, the most perplex'd, as well as the most disappointed of all Human beings—all his Dreams of Conquests quite vanish'd, from the desperate situation of our Affairs in the Carolina's—Your Grace may recollect, that I mention'd to you in some of my letters, A Report of Major Ferguson being defeated at the Head of a Body of Militia; that Account is but too true, and has produced very bad consequence, it was most obvious it wou'd do, to all those who have ever been persuaded, that England never had, or ever will have, A Single Friend in this Country—it is in vain to pursue a War, that is attended with such fatal consequences upon the smallest Reverse of Fortune—our very *Numerous Friends*, that have taken a Thousand Oaths, are now indulging the real wishes of their Hearts, by breaking them all—several of them have taken up Arms against us, and a general Revolt will without a doubt take place immediately, all over the Carolinas, and will probably extend to Georgia.

Lord Cornwallis is at Charlottesville¹⁰ near the Catabaw River in No. Carolina, surrounded by Thousands of the most perfidious and the most inveterate Friends—I tremble for his situation, and the more so, that from the very Ill state of his Health (as he has been most seriously Ill) he is hardly able to go through the fatigue of a Commanding Officer, so critically circumstanced—Lord Cornwallis's Troops are likewise very sickly—the Carolina's have ever been consider'd the most unhealthy parts of America, but how is it possible for Englishmen to exist in a Country, where to the worst and most fatal of all Climates, they are likewise exposed to the not less fatal invenom'd Shafts of its Inhabitants.

Monsieur Ternay with his Ships and Troops are quiet at Rhode Island—Sir Geo: Rodney with Ten Sail of the Line is waiting here for a fair wind to go to the West Indies.

I shou'd have mention'd to your Grace before, that General Leslie is supposed to have sail'd from Cheseapeak for Cape Fear River the 10th. of this Month, during his stay at Portsmouth in Elizabeth River, he took a few small armed Vessels, that the Rebels had been obliged to quit upon his appearance—his landing at Portsmouth and at Hampton in James's River, where he sent a small Detachment, were not opposed—the only Shots that were fired during General Leslie's Corps being on shore, were by a few Militia that attack'd a Post of the Guards commanded by Lt. Col. Stewart²⁰ who dispersed them and took Six peices of Cannon—is it not very extraordinary, that a few Drunken Militia (which it seems was their Case) shou'd be trusted with Six peices of Cannon—they certainly are well supplied with Artillery; to make so wanton use of them.

All the Cork Victuallers arrived safe in this place the 10th. Instant—and thank God has dispers'd our fears of Starving.

South Carolina upon the Banks of
the Wateree River at the Camp
near Camden January the 6th. 1781

Since my arrival in South Carolina, not an Opportunity has offered, of writing to Europe, or is their one at this time, when your Grace will receive this Letter, I have not a guess, but I could not let an officer of the Guards, who means to return to England, by the first safe Conveyance

¹⁰ The present Charlotte, N. C.

²⁰ Most probably Lt. Col. Stuart who later commanded the British forces at the battle of Eutaw Springs, September 8, 1781.

quit this Country, without a Letter from me—Our Communication with Charles Town, is so very precarious. I mean for Letters, when carried by Persons without Escorts, that I can not venture to write my Sentiments of this Country with that freedom, I did, when at New York, but so far I will observe, that change of Situation, has made no change in my way of thinking, respecting America.

What our intended Plan of Operations are, I can not even hint, in a Letter, which is to be carried one hundred and fifty Miles, in the Pocket of a solitary Traveller, and should with as little propriety, comment, and draw Conclusions upon the Scenes before me, which are beyond description wretched, every Misery which the bloodiest cruel War ever produced, we have constantly before Us—to what physical or local Cause it may be attributed, I can not pretend to determine, but it is certain, that the People of this Part of America, are infinitely more violent in their Resentments, and prejudices against England, and their determin'd Resolution more fixed to be separated from Us for ever, and continue for ever our Enemies, than any other part of this Continent I have yet seen.—the violence of the Passions of these People, are beyond every curb of Religion, and Humanity, they are unbounded, and every Hour exhibits, dreadfull, wanton Mischiefs, Murders, and Violences of every kind, unheard of before.—we find the Country in great Measure abandoned, and the few, who venture to remain at Home in hourly expectation of being murdered, or striped of all their Property—the Major Part of the well affected to the English Cause, have been obliged to quit their Plantation, and retire for Safety into the neighbourhood of Charles Town, or quit this Province totally, and go into Georgia, where they have found hitherto, greater Security for their Persons and Properties.—that Protection I am affraid depends upon a rotten thread, and is only the consequence of being removed from the Scenes of Hostile operations, if the King's troops should receive any check in this Province,—Georgia would very soon experience every Calamity, felt at present in this Colony.—did not Sir H. Clinton tell us, in the Gazette, which gave the Account of the Reduction of Charles Town, that all the People of this Province, were either in Arms for Us, or our Prisoners. the times are much altered, for at this time, all those Men or the greater Part of them, are in Arms against Us,—even those very Prisoners which Sir H. Clinton released, for Reasons only known to himself, are likewise opposed to us—The Inhabitants of this Country are incapable of any one liberal Sentiment, and they always construe every act of Humanity, to proceed from our Fears, and not from more generous motives—I can not give you a more striking instance, of the want of honor in this cursed Race, then the Conduct of a great Body

of them, the most respectable in the whole Province, as far as Property, and having held the first Employments in their mock State, can give Men preemmenence in Society.—A few Days before the Defeat of General Gates's Army by Lord Cornwallis on the 16th August last, the Rebels were so confident of Success, from their superiority of numbers, that a general Revolt was intended and to be attempted at the moment of our Defeat, Rutledge who had been President of the Congress,²¹ with others to the number of seventy, Men of equal weight with himself, then residing in Charles Town, where they had been permitted to remain, after the Capture of the Place, upon pledging their Words, of preserving a peaceable Conduct, during their Continuance in the Town, had determined with their followers, every American in the Place, to seize the Garrison, which was very weak in numbers, and those in a very low reduced Condition from Sickness, and put Charles Town into the Possession of Gates, who was to have appeared before the Town, immediately after our Defeat. had that Event happened, I am certain, that a general massacre of the English wou'd have ensued,—Providence had other wise ordained, and Mr. Rutledge with his Seventy worthy associates were seized, and sent to St. Augustine in Florida, where they still continue our Prisoners—when Rutledge and his Partners in Mischief were seized, many others of that Conspiracy, of whose Intentions we had not received information, voluntarily Declared themselves accessaries, requesting they might share the same Fate with their Brethren, and were accordingly sent with them to St. Augustine ²²—I did not conceive that Providence, could have suffered such People to have existed—

We are to march to morrow, but what our Destination is, I am not at liberty at present to explain to your Grace in a Letter, which may fall into the Ennemy's Hands.

Lord Cornwallis is at Winsbury,²³ which is not laid down upon the Map, but you will find Terrible Creek, which it stands upon, that Creek runs in the Broad River in Camden Precinct South Carolina.

The Ennemy have many different Posts, what they call their Grand Army under General Green ²⁴ (for Gates since his defeat the 16th August

²¹ This was Edward Rutledge who was sent to St. Augustine. He had been a member of the Continental Congress, but never president of that body.

²² For the two groups sent to St. Augustine see "Josiah Smith's Diary, 1781-1782," this *Magazine*, XXXIII (1932), 3, 4, 6, 100.

²³ Winnsboro.

²⁴ For a most excellent account of Greene's southern campaign see M. F. Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown: The Southern Campaign of Nathanael Greene, 1780-1781*, Chapel Hill, 1963.

has been superseded in his Command by order of Congress) consists of about three thousand Men, they are posted on the East Side of Thompson's Creek, which runs into the River Yadkin in the Cheraw Precinct South Carolina, they have several smaller roving Detachments from two to five hundred Men strong, and thousands of Murderers, the most formidable of their troops, infesting the whole country— Quelle chienne de guerre—

Camp near Wilmington Cape Fear River
April 20th 1781

Tho' I despair of giving your Grace so particular an account as I could wish, of the late expedition into North Carolina, under the Command of Lord Cornwallis, I will endeavour to give you some sketch of our transactions, since Major General Lesslie's Corps (the Brigade of Guards composing a part) join'd Lord Cornwallis the 18th of January upon Bullock Creek, near Broad River, in Camden Precinct.

The defeat of Major Ferguson's Corps of Militia at King Mountain, by a large Body of Rebel Militia, of which I gave your Grace an account in my last Letter, produced all the fatal consequences, that ever attend the smallest check to our Arms. A great Majority of the People of South Carolina, who had taken any active part for Government, were so exceedingly alarm'd at all the dangers, that their fears made them believe they were threatned with, that in order to make their peace with the Rebels, many immediately joined them, and every appearance of a general revolt, was strongly marked in every part of the Province—In this critical situation, Lt Col. Tarltons misfortune at the Cow-Pens on ye 17th January at once determin'd our *numerous Friends* what part they should take, and all that could, deserted from Us, and our hopeless cause, and join'd the Rebels—Greene who commands the Rebel Army to the Southward, immediately upon Lt Col. Tarltons defeat, to give countenance and facilitate the rising of the Rebel Militia; and our Scoundrel Friends in the Neighbourhood of our Posts, advanced from the Cheraws, where he had been Posted for some time, upon Thompsons Creek—With all these Storms gathering round Us some Vigerous measures however desperate was to be adopted, any delay or inactivity that betrayed our imbaras'd situation, would increase the numbers and confidence of the Enemy—but where and how to direct our operations were the great points to be consider'd, as it was evident every material, possibly fatal consequences might attend any steps that could be taken—circumstanc'd as we were all was to be risked, and as the only event that could possibly tho' in a small degree for the moment, retrieve our affairs in this Quarter, was the

beating or driving Greene's Army out of the Carolina's, that resolution was taken, and carried into execution in a Stile that must ever do the greatest Honor to Lord Cornwallis's Military Reputation, and to the Gallant persevering Spirit of his little Army— As the Opperations of the Army, would in all probability be chiefly confined to North Carolina, a very mountainous Country, almost a continued thick Forrest, cut with numberless Broad, Deep, and rapid Waters it was evident the movements of the Army, would be attended with many difficulties; the necessity therefore of diminishing the Carriages and Bagage of the Army was indispensable, and the proper Orders were given for that purpose, tho' these two impediments were lessen'd in a great degree, after a few days March, the Country proved so very impracticable from a thousand causes, not only those already mention'd, but the exceeding scarcity of Subsistence for Men and Horses, made the necessity of making long and rapid marches so unavoidable that it was again determin'd, to lessen still more the Bagage, and number of Servants; Lord Cornwallis sett the example, by burning all his Waggons, and distroying the greatest part of his Bagage, which was followed by every Officer of the Army without a single murmur, such very little Bagage only as could be carried upon a few Batt Horses was kept, the only carriages that remained, exclusive of the Canon and Ammunition, were a few Waggons for Salt—even the Hospital Waggons were distroyed—In this situation without Baggage, necessaries, or Provisions of any sort for Officer or Soldier, in the most barren inhospitable unhealthy part of North America, opposed to the most savage, inveterate perfidious cruel Enemy, with zeal and with Bayonets only, it was resolv'd to follow Green's Army, to the end of the World— Our first movements were calculated, to make Green suppose that he was not our immediate object, to keep from him as long as possible, our intentions of passing the Catawbaw River, which was considerd from its magnitude, many other causes, and the Banks Inhabited by a very disaffected well trained Militia, as a most dangerous arduous undertaking, our fears in those particulars, as we afterwards experienced, were but too well founded—Green very soon discovering, yt. we meant to pass the Catawba, ordered their famous Partizan General Morgan with a picked Corps, (the same that had beat Lt. Col. Tarlton on ye. 17th January) and all the Militia of the Country to defend the Fords upon the Catawba near our Army—In order to keep from the Enemy our real intentions, at what place we meant to endeavour to force a passage, demonstrations by Parade of Troops and Artillery was made at Beaty's Ford,²⁵ where

²⁵ Beattie's Ford. One can compare O'Hara's account of this campaign with that set forth in *ibid.*, pp. 135f or in Ward, *op. cit.*, pp. 767f.

Morgan was Posted to oppose Our passing, whilst a part of the Army made good the Passage of the River at McGowans Ford,²⁶ a few Miles below Beaty's Ford; these were the first Shots that were exchanged with the Enemy this Expedition—It is impossible to conceive a more awfull appearance than the many very formidable obstacles that opposed themselves to us in the Passage of the Catawba; a Broad, Deep and Rapid Water, full of very large Rocks, the opposite shore exceedingly high and steep, cover'd with the largest Timber, and from the number of Camp Fires, it might be presumed, a large Corps was Posted there. The Spirit of the Officers and Men upon that occasion, deserve the highest praise, under every possible disadvantage, contending against a powerful current that carried many of the strongest Men down the stream, under a very heavy Fire. They were never thrown into the smallest confusion or fired a single Shot, 'till they landed on the opposite shore (which with difficulty they were so exhausted they could ascend) where they attacked and immediately dispersed the Enemy, formed upon the Heights; So soon as Morgan was informed that one of our Corps had passed the Catawba, He fell back, with all the Militia Corps likewise, upon Green who was moving forward to support his Posts upon the Catawba, The Whole Rebel Army then retreated to the Yadkin, another very considerable River, which Green reached by forced Marches, and crossed before we could overtake him, notwithstanding every possible exertion that we made He crossed upon Flatts and Ferrys about Twenty Miles before Salisbury; but we trod so close upon Morgans heels who commanded Greens rear-guard, composed of about a Thousand of their best Troops, that he was obliged to push for the Ford near Salisbury, where we arrived a few hours after him before he had compleated his passing, and beat up his Rear Guard, who after giving a few Shots in the language of this Country, Split and Squander'd—that is run away—The Yadkin which had increased for some days past from heavy rains, swelled so much in the Night as to be impassible; and the next morning with the Day, we saw Morgans Corps posted upon the opposite Shore, grown bold by this invincible Barrier, they remained on the other side 'till the waters began to Ebb, and the passing of the River would have become practicable in a few Hours, they then moved off after Green, who was retiring towards the Roanoke, the greatest part of their Heavy Baggage had already crossed, and it was concluded that Greene meant to pass with His Army over that River; our being stopt by the Yadkin's not being fordable, gave Green sufficient time to assembly a great Body of Militia at Guildford Court House in Orange County, where it was said He meant to wait for

²⁶ McCowan's Ford.

us; Our Army passed the Yadkin without opposition at the Shallow Ford, about Thirty five Miles above Salisbury as it was very improbable that Green with the Force he had at Guildford, would risk a general Action, as he expected to be considerably reinforced from the Northward in a very little time; Lord Cornwallis was perswaded. He never meant to wait for Him, And in order to get between Greens Army, and the Fords upon the Dan, (the Roanoke takes the name of the Dan above the Hyco River and is not fordable in any part in the Winter) immediately after passing the Yadkin, we march'd to Bithania, and Salem the Moravian settlements; Green still remaining at Guildford, perceiving that we were pushing between him and the Dan, and likewise his supply from Virginia, march'd to Boyd's Ferry, where they had collected all the Ferrys and with wonderfull dispatch crossed the Dan, just above where the River called the North-Hyco runs into the Dan—every effort that we made proved ineffectual, for their rear guard had passed about twelve hours before we arrived upon the Bank of the River. I dont recollect wether I mentioned to your Grace in any of my former Letters, that Government were persuaded from repeated assurances they had received, that a great Majority of the People of the Carolina's, particularly North Carolina, were waiting with the utmost impatience, for the arrival of our Troops among them, to countenance and protect their rising in favor of England, and that Thousands from every part of North Carolina, would Flock to the King's Standard, upon the first appearance of our Troops; The giving the People of North Carolina, an opportunity of manifesting their zeal to our cause, was another very powerfull inducement, which determined Lord Cornwallis to penetrate into North Carolina; Green's march or rather flight from the Catawba over the Dan, closely pursued by our Army, had given some eclat and credit to our Arms, that hour of triumph and exultation was consider'd favorable for calling upon the many Friends Government had perswaded themselves we had in every part of North Carolina, And Lord Cornwallis with the usual formalitie, erected the Kings Standard at Hillsborough, and invited all. His Majesty's loving Subjects, to take up Arms and join his Forces, in defence of their Civil Libertys, the reestablishing Peace and good order, upon Constitutional principles and for many other good purposes that I have forgot: The novelty of a Camp in the back Woods of America, more than any other cause, brought several People to stare at us, their curiosity once satisfied, they returned to their Homes; I am certain that in our March of near a Thousand Miles, almost in as many directions, thro' every part of North Carolina, tho every means possible was taken to persuade our Friends as they are called, and indeed as they call themselves, to join us,

we never had with us at any one time One Hundred Men in Arms, without the experiment had been made, it would have been impossible to conceive, that Government could in so important a matter, have been so grossly deceived. Total infatuation—when will Government see these People thro' the proper medium? I am persuaded never.

After we had been about Six Days at Hillsborough where I am (I am certain that not more than that number of our many Friends joined us) Green having received some reinforcements from Virginia recrossed the Dan, and moved towards Hillsborough. His object in approaching, and keeping near our Army, was to prevent the People of the Country from joining us (no such precaution on their side was necessary) from that time to the 15th March, the two Armys were never above twenty Miles assunder, they constantly avoiding a General Action, and we as industriously seeking it; These operations obliged the two Armys to make numberless moves, which it is impossible to detail; The Gazette will acquaint your Grace with our success on the 15th March near Guildford Court House, I wish it had produced one substantial benefit to Great Britain, on the contrary, we feel at this moment, the sad and fatal effects of our loss on that Day, nearly one half of our best Officers and Soldiers, were either Killed or Wounded, and what remains are so completely worn out, by the excessive Fatigues of the Campaign in a march of above a Thousand Miles, most of them barefoot, naked and for days together living upon Carrion, which they had often not time to dress, and three or four ounces of unground Indian Corn has totally distroy'd this Army—entre nous, the Spirit of our little Army has evaporated a good deal.²⁷ No zeal or courage is equal to the constant exertions we are making; Tho you will not find it in the Gazette, every part of our Army was beat repeatedly, on the 15th March, and were obliged to fall back twice, The Rebels were so exceedingly numerous, as to be able constantly to oppose fresh Troops to us, and be in force in our Front, Flanks and Rear: It is impossible to say too much in praise of our Officers and Men in a conflict that lasted near two hours, tho' so powerfully outnumber'd, their Spirit and constancy never forsook them, and at length Crown'd their manly exertions with Victory. I never did, and hope I never shall, experience two such days and Nights, as these immediately after the Battle, we remained on the very ground on which it had been fought cover'd with Dead, with Dying and with Hundreds of Wounded, Rebels, as well as our own—A Violent and constant Rain that lasted above Forty Hours made it equally impracticable to remove or administer the smallest com-

²⁷ For casualties suffered on both sides at Guilford Court House *see* Treacy, *op. cit.*, p. 187 and Ward, *op. cit.*, p. 793.

fort to many of the Wounded, In this situation we expected every moment to be attacked, there could be no doubt, that the Enemy must be very well informed of our loss, and whatever their loss might be, their numbers were still so great, as to make them very formidable; and they had only retired eighteen Miles from us, fortunately for us they did not, or even follow'd us, when we march'd but at a very respectable distance, or have ever fired a Single Shot since the affair of the 15th.

Two Days after the 15th of March we fell back by easy marches upon Cross Creek,²⁸ a very large settlement at the Head of Cape Fear River, chiefly inhabited by Scotch, who were said to a Man would join us, but that has proved like the other Government Dreams.

It was Lord Cornwallis's intention to have remained for sometime at Cross Creek, and by the means of Cape Fear River, to have received the supplies for the Army from Wilmington, which we were told before our arrival at Cross Creek would be very practicable, and would not be attended with the least obstructions from the People of the Country, on the contrary that we should from them receive every assistance, these favorable reports we found were false in every particular, for our advanced Guard were fired upon when we enter'd Cross Creek, and both Shores of the Cape Fear River proved so very hostile, as to render the Navigation for us totally impracticable, and Lord Cornwallis was obliged to fall back upon Wilmington where we arrived the 12th of this Month, and have remained every since, endeavouring to recruit and repair, our very Shatter'd, exhausted, ragged Troops.²⁹

You will have heard of the Engagement between the English and French Fleets off the Chesepeak.³⁰ If Admiral Arbuthnot tells the Truth, in the account he means to give the Public, He must confess to the Eter[n]al disgrace of our Navy, that with a much Superior Fleet both in number and size of Ships, He behaved as shamefully Ill as the French behaved Gallantly well—The Romolus Frigate of 44 Guns that the French took from us a few days before that scandelous event; was engaged with, disabled and beat our London of 90 Guns out of the Line—This Account I have from a Captain of One of our Frigates, who told me that he was a witness of that very dishonourable humiliating days disgrace. Admiral Greaves commanded the London. I dont find that any

²⁸ The present Fayetteville, N. C.

²⁹ For the arrival in Wilmington and a different date *see* Ward, *op. cit.*, pp. 796-797.

³⁰ On March 16, 1781, the Chevalier Charles Destouches engaged Arbuthnot in an indecisive sea battle about forty miles to the east of the Virginia Capes. *See* Freeman, *op. cit.*, pp. 271-272.

notice has been taken, of his shameful conduct relative to detaining his Fleet so long by Tugging the French East India Ship from the Western Islands to New York, of which I gave your Grace an account in some of my Letters[.]

[P. S.] A Report prevails this morning that Green with his Army has march'd into South Carolina, if that should prove true a general Revolt will take place and we shall certainly loose the Carolina's for ever—it will be impossible for Lord Cornwallis to return by Land to South Carolina and equally impracticable for us to remain here. I believe we shall endeavour to join Major General Phillips who is said to be at Petersburg at the Head of the Jame's River in Virginia[.]⁸¹

York Town Virginia October 20th 1781

The immediate departure of a Ship for England, will not admit of my giving your Grace so full a detail of our transactions as I could have wished.

The Public account will inform you of the surrender of the Posts of York and Gloucester;⁸² with their Garrisons, to the combined Forces of France and America.

Our Ministers will I hope be now perswaded that America is irretrivably lost, an event I have repeatedly told your Grace would certainly happen.

The French talk of attacking Charles Town, altho' they must be too well acquainted with this Country to conceive any further Conquests necessary—America is theirs—I think it very likely that Messr. Rochambeau,⁸³ with the French Garrison of Rhode Island that were employ'd in the reduction of this Place, will sail with Messr. D' Grass ⁴³ to the West Indies, and take our few remaining Windward and Leeward West India Island Possessions; Or possibly to assist Spain in the Reduction of Jamaica.

Messr. D'Grass brought with Him from the West Indies 3000 Troops who were employ'd against Us, making the whole of the French Force 8,500 Infantry and 300 Cavalry, and a very heavy Train of Battering Artillery with large Quantity's of Military Stores.

⁸¹ Cornwallis joined the army of Phillips on the banks of the James River on May 20. Phillips himself, however, had died on May 13.

⁸² Gloucester Point was on the opposite side of the York River from Yorktown.

⁸³ Comte de Rochambeau was the French military commander at Yorktown.

⁸⁴ Comte de Grasse was the French naval commander at Yorktown.

By the Capitulation our Troops are dispersed with very few Officers all over the Continent, few of them consequently will ever be employ'd again in the Kings Service.³⁵

I have very good Authority for saying that the last Sea Engagement between our Fleet and Messr. D'Grass's in which the French had but two Ships more than Us, proved like all the other Sea Engagements we have had this War, disgraceful to our Flag.³⁶ If my Lord Howe,³⁷ or some other Man like Him of Honor and Virtue is not soon employ'd, the reputation of our Fleets will sink into the most contemptible State.

³⁵ The British officers were permitted to return on parole to Europe or to an American port in British hands. Feeman, *op. cit.*, p. 383.

³⁶ This was probably the engagement between Graves and de Grasse on September 5, 1781, off the Virginia Capes, after which Graves returned to New York and left control of the Chesapeake in the hands of the French.

³⁷ The reference is to Richard, Earl Howe (1726-1799), admiral of the fleet and brother of General Sir William Howe.