

February 20 expect immediate & considerable reinforcements shou'd Cornwallis
 Red Book pursue him into Virginia. Lord Cornwallis's first object we may
 No. 28 certainly say was with a view to cut off Morgans Retreat after the
 Letter 45 action at the Cowpens & to recover the baggage & probably the Prisoners—but the great Rains allowed Morgan to get off before Cornwallis cou'd cross a Stream between them—which permitted the Junction with Green as mentioned above & a safe conduct of those Prisoners which with all others are far advanced into Virginia destined for the other side of the blue Ridge. I have the great pleasure to assure you that the Intelligence of the arrival of General Provost in Cape Fear River is premature, we now certainly know that that Fleet was from Cha^s Town, with 450 Troops, their object suposed to be some Stores out far distant but that party have not done anything & from the number of Transports (71) some now suppose that they were intended to act in concert with Cornwallis to influence the Tories & in Case of Cornwallis's disappointment in his pursuit, to assist his retreat that way to Cha^s Town, but I confess the latter part of these supositions do not accord with my notions, indeed I think it impossible from a knowledge of the Geography of that Country—but be this as it may I cant doubt but it will prove lucky to the United States that Cornwallis has ventured so far, & the more he advances the worse, indeed if he penetrates Virginia, he will meet the fate of Burgoyne—as our Counties there are powerfull in arms & determined whigs—our Executive has allready taken the most effectual means to push these men into immediate Service, by exempting from the present Drafts for the Continental Army—all who will turn out on this occasion. If they do so, (which I cant doubt) I expect to hand you the good news of his Captivity in my next.

As to Arnold Certain it is that a French Fleet arrived this day For night in Hampton Road—the best Intelligence says this fleet consists of a 64 & 2 frigates—it is certain Arnold had forewarning of their intending here & he has drawn up all his Fleet in Elizabeth River above the Fort, we can't yet say what may be affected by this Naval assistance—but we may hope for something good as in consequence of a Conferrence between the French Admiral & Baron Stueben—all our forces on the north side of James River are ordered over to the Portsmouth side—we have in Arms at that place about five thousand men—among them many Rifle men—very proper for Arnold or Cornwallis & that Countrey with the present Naval assistance, will allow of our acting ag^t either (should their Junction be attempted) with great advantages & little risque I have but to add, that the recent arrival of General Weedon who left Richmond on Sunday, has induced me to reject many Reports well told here, & to hand you the foregoing as Fact.