

conquer every island in the West Indies, and reduce all the British navy in those places. For, were France and Spain to send their whole naval force in Europe to those islands, it would not be in the power of Britain to follow them with an equal force. She would be still 20 or 30 ships inferior, were she to send every vessel she had, and in the mean time all the foreign trade of England would lie exposed to the Dutch.

It is a maxim which I am persuaded will ever hold good, and more especially in naval operations, that a great power ought never to move in detachments, if it can possibly be avoided; but to go with its whole force to some important object, the reduction of which shall have a decisive effect upon the war. Had the whole of the French and Spanish fleets in Europe come last spring to the West Indies, every island had been their own, Rodney their prisoner, and his fleet their prize. From the United States the combined fleets can be supplied with provisions, without the necessity of drawing them from Europe; which is not the case with England.

Accident has thrown some advantages in the way of England, which, from the inferiority of her navy, she had not a right to expect. For though she has been obliged to fly before the combined fleets, yet Rodney has twice had the fortune to fall in with detached squadrons, to which he was superior in numbers: The first off Cape St. Vincent, where he had nearly