

The Napoleon Series

The Peninsular Journal of Major General John Randoll Mackenzie 1808-1809: November 1809

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Source: Mackenzie Papers Vol, XV Diary of Maj. Gen. J. R. Mackenzie 1808-09

On the 3rd of November I left Corunna for St. Iago, having previously sent the 51st & 59th on different days as far as Carral, the first stage to St. Iago. The second stage is Ordenes [Ordes]. Both miserable villages, particularly the last. It was intended that the division of the army which was ordered for St. Iago should proceed by the Orense road to Astorga, but a reconnoissance of this road produced so unfavourable a report, that it was determined the junction should be made by a cross road at Lugo, and the 76th Regiment was stopt [sic] altogether from proceeding to St. Iago, and was directed to follow the other column on the great road for Lugo. The road from Corunna to St. Iago is excellent.

The difficulties attending the movements of an army in this country can scarcely be conceived by any officer accustomed to the operations of war in most other countries, and these difficulties were considerably increased by our being in a friendly country, where we were obliged to be extremely cautious of giving the least offence, or laying hands on anything however essentially wanted, without the previous consent of the different departments of their police, which is complicated & slow in its operation, to a degree most distressing, lending to cramp every attempt at a quick movement, such as we had always been accustomed to. The three days march to St. Iago were consequently attended with more absolute distress to the men both as to want of provisions & accommodation than would be credited in any other country, and what rendered this the more provoking was, that arrangement only was wanting, the district being capable of easily supplying a much larger force. If we had been permitted to supply ourselves by means of our commissariat, our difficulties would have very soon vanished. In that case, all we wanted from the Junta, was their recommendation or command to the different magistrates. The detail would have been easily managed. But this would not satisfy the Junta. With a great appearance of eagerness, they insisted on supplying us with every thing [sic], proposing to settle the prices & payments afterwards with the British government. This appeared so fair, and their promises were made with such confidence, it was impossible to resist the offer. But when we came to the trial, their contractors failed in every instance, and threw up their engagements. Against such a failure, we had no redress, and a scene now was discovered not at all to the honor of the Spanish character. When we first arrived at

Corunna, there were many mercantile people in the town & its vicinity, who had a view to the supply of the army, with the different articles it might want, and were making their arrangements. The Junta of Finance, a body inferior to & under the orders of the Junta of Government, wishing to establish a monopoly in their own favor, proposed to the Junta of Government the plan of supplying our army, in the manner I have above stated, with a view of throwing all the competition out of the market. The consequences in the first instance answered their expectations. Private adventurers withdrew. The Junta of Finance by their own agents affected to proceed to execute the promises for our supply, but (under the expectation of raising the prices, and of course making an infamous job) when it came to the moment of execution, these agents flew off, asserting the prices were too low, and must be advanced. A private communication made to me, by a respectable merchant, of the whole proceeding in this nefarious transaction, had however the effect of bursting the bubble, and in the end the Finance Junta did not reap the advantage they expected. Sir D. Baird being now aware of the whole cheat, took the best steps in his power. Remonstrated with the Junta of Government, and proceeded at last, (as we ought to have done at first, had we been permitted) to supply ourselves thro' our commissariat. I do not believe the Junta of Government had any share in this job but that they were the dupes as well as ourselves of the Finance Committee. But the effect of this proceeding, as well as our detention in our transports, was the loss of three weeks of the most precious time, when the rainy season was about to set in, and would most likely, retard our operations, and render our movements not only difficult, but injurious to the health of our men. To drop this unpleasant subject. We found the people of Corunna & every where [sic] else, very kind & civil, and tho' it does not appear to be the characteristic of the Spaniards to be lavish in their expression of joy, yet they were evidently glad to see us, and expressed on all occasions much anger at the cold reception we received from the Junta. It would not be fair to form an estimate of the Spanish character from the inhabitants of Corunna, but even then it would not be unfavourable. They seem an honest, honorable race, much behind in the arts of civilized life, and to our ideas, filthy in their houses & mode of living. Their customs & manners so different from ours, will require some time to study and examine.

Before I left Corunna, the Marquis Romana¹ arrived in the *Semiramis* Frigate, with Mr. Frere² & suite, as British ambassador to the Supreme Junta of Madrid, with a million

¹Pedro Caro y Sureda, Marqués de la Romana (1761-1811). Spanish Lieutenant General. In 1807, Spain and France being allies, he was appointed commander of a Spanish division sent to Hamburg and later Denmark. After the Spanish uprising against the French (May 1807) he was able, with the help of the British, to embark part of his division and returned to Spain. After his arrival he replaced the defeated Blake at the head of the 'Army of the Left' and tried to organize the remnants in Galicia. See: Martinez, Alberto. *Diccionario Biográfico del Generalato Español. Reinado de Carlos IV y Fernando VIII (1788-1833)*. Madrid: FEHME, 2012. pp. 178-180.

²John Hookam Frere (1796-1846). British diplomat, a close friend of George Canning. British envoy and plenipotentiary to Spain, from 1802 to 1804, was recalled on account of personal disagreements with Godoy, the Spanish ministry. In 1808, after the Spanish uprising against the French, was appointed envoy and plenipotentiary to Spain's Central Junta; after the British army's embarkation at A Coruña, leaving Spain, he was recalled and replaced by the Marquess of Wellesley. See: Black Jr,

of Dollars for their use. They were received with every mark of attention, and from the people with every demonstration of affection & joy.

The town of Corunna is situated on a peninsula, which joins a pretty large headland to the continent. It is built from sea to sea. The bay formed on the west side is open to the ocean, and has generally a tremendous surf. But the bay to the east is completely landlocked, and will contain in perfect safety, between two & three hundred vessels. In the middle of the entrance is a rock which has been fortified & is much neglected. If properly repaired, the entrance is completely commanded by it. There are several other batteries on the shore all round, but completely neglected. On the headland above mentioned is the Tour-de-Fer, a light house, most completely planned, but not quite finished. There are high grounds near it, which command the town. Unless they are occupied, Corunna cannot be defended.

The trade of this place may & must recover by a connexion with England, but by its long estrangement from us, it has at present but little or no commerce. It is said to contain (including the contiguous village of St. Lucia) about 25,000 inhabitants. Certainly about double the number that would be contained in an English town covering the same extent of ground.

During my residence at Corunna I was accommodated in lodgings at the house of Mr. Barrié, a Frenchman by birth, who is married to a woman I at first understood to be a Spaniard, but I have since learnt to be an Italian. Be this as it may, he has so long resided in Corunna, as to be in effect a Spaniard, and my being placed in his house was pleasant, I could not only make myself understood in French, but I found he understood English also. At the commencement of the glorious endeavor in Spain, to throw off the French yoke, Mr. Barrié being a Frenchman by birth, occasioned his being thrown into prison, tho' there was no other reason whatever to suspect his attachment to the Spanish cause; and I understood he owed his liberty to the humane intercession of General Brodrick³, Colonel Kennedy⁴ and some other English gentlemen, who came to Corunna on diplomatic & military missions.

Nov 4th On my arrival at St. Iago, I found Major General Warde settled in very comfortable quarters. The 1st Battalion of the Guards in the barracks near the town,

Frederick. "Diplomatic Struggles: British Support in Spain and Portugal, 1800-1810". Dissertation submitted to the Florida State University. 2005. pp. 94-131.

³Major General John Broderick. British agent in Spain; later appointed commandant of the Corunna garrison. A brief service biography: McGuigan, Ron. The Napoleon Series. 2006-2014. Retrieved 26 March 2017. http://www.napoleon-series.org/research/biographies/BritishGenerals/c_Britishgenerals51.html

⁴'Captain Kennedy, a British military agent stationed at Coruña by Colonel Doyle, who obtained for him in Madrid the local rank of lieutenant-colonel.' *The Spanish Journal of Elizabeth Lady Holland*. The Earl of Ilchester (Ed.). London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1910. p. 209, note 1.

the 2nd Battalion in the convent of St. Martin⁵. The 51st in the convent of St. Domingo⁶, and the 2nd Battalion 59th divided between two convents of Franciscans. Of all these the 1st Battalion of the Guards were the worst lodged, the barracks being indifferent, & the situation disagreeable. Nothing could be better than the accommodation in the convents.

I found myself fixed as a lodger with the old Count de Taboada, a most respectable nobleman of about 80 years of age, but healthy & stout. He has the appearance of great strength, and I understand has been an active vigorous young man. Of several sons only one was at home, who speaks French fluently. Of his other sons, one is with the army a Colonel under Blake⁷, and another is married & settled at Lima in South America, when his uncle, the old Count's brother, was formerly Viceroy. The Count's only unmarried daughter, is now of a certain age, but has had resolution to avoid a nunnery, the general receptacle of most women of her rank, who are not married in due time. She was the only female resident in the family, beside a niece, who lives in it, during the absence of her father with the army, but there are generally three or four present at dinner, and in the evening there was always a party of relations & friends, generally consisting of the same persons with now & then occasional visitors. This being the accustomed mode of living in this part of Spain, where the habit of visiting between families, at least among the higher classes, is scarcely ever known. This custom has undoubtedly the pride of family for its origin, and it agrees well with the indolence & state of the Spanish character. To a stranger it is more inconvenient in appearance than in fact, for as when you are introduced to the different families, they are always glad to see you, it is easy to visit as many of them, and as often as you please; your company instead of being considered an intrusion, is always received as a favour.

The kindness of this family, who insisted that I, my Aid [sic] de Camp, & Brigade Major should accept the hospitality of their table, while we remained at St. Iago, made me soon forget the disappointment I felt at first, at not having been placed in a house where I could have been my own master, and lived in my own way. For I was much disinclined to the idea of living in the Spanish fashion altogether, a circumstance however in which I found myself much mistaken. The Count's table was not only plentiful, but great part of it much to my taste, and there was a degree of kindness & good humour throughout, in the conduct of it, that soon set us all at our ease. Their usual dinner hour was one o'clock which was changed to four o'clock to suit my convenience, without even a hint on the subject. A great number of our officers of all ranks, were accommodated in this manner, in the houses of the inhabitants of the first rank, who seemed to vie with each

⁵Mosteiro de San Martiño Pinario.

⁶Convento de San Domingos de Bonaval.

⁷Joaquín Blake y Joyes (1759-1827). Spanish Lieutenant General. Commander of the Army of Galicia since July 1808. Later that year was appointed commander of the 'Army of the Left'. After an advance on Bilbao and a serie of small actions, he was severely defeated by the French at Espinosa de los Monteros (10-11 November 1808). He was then replaced by the Marqués de la Romana. See: Martinez, op. cit. pp.127-129.

other in their attention to them. Amongst the female relations of the family, a widow, Madame Rita seemed pleased with the attentions of Major McGregor of the 59th Regiment⁸ who was recommended to the Count by a friend at Corunna. The Major could talk a little Spanish, and Madame Rita's conversation gave him opportunities of improving. There was also a very pretty niece of the Count's, mother of five children, who did not appear to be above nineteen. She was married to a little man, not much different in face or figure from a monkey, and one not of the most agreeable physiognomy. The custom of calling each other by the Christian name, was to us at first a little strange, and is certainly a ridiculous custom; but we got into it by degrees, in spite of the smothered laugh it originally occasioned.

We had great difficulty here, in procuring forage for our horses &ct. [etc], altho' the (...) we brought were very limited indeed. On the 5th of November orders arrived for moving the Guards in four divisions for Lugo, on succeeding days, commencing the 7th. General Warde & myself found no small difficulty in enabling them to move at so short a notice, on so bad a road, and so destitute of the means of supply & conveyance. It was however at last arranged in the best manner we could. Fortunately the roads, bad as they were, were just passable for the country carts. These carts are drawn by oxen, and are of the most clumsy figure & workmanship that can be well conceived and scarcely travel above two miles an hour.

Nov 7th The Guards (1st Division) accordingly marched on the 7th, and General Warde proceeded with them. The route to Lugo being (in four days) by San Gregorio, Sobrado, Friol, to Lugo. The distance about 15 leagues, or above 60 English miles.

8th The 2nd Division of the Guards moved on, and the route arrived⁹ for the march of the 51st & 59th Regiments of my brigade, on the same road, on the 12th & 13th. Every preparation is accordingly making [sic]. After every exertion the purchase of mules for our equipment goes on but slowly.

9th The 3rd Division of the Guards marched on rather a better day than the two former, who were deluged with the rain. On this day I paid my respects to the Archbishop¹⁰, and was requested by him to be present at the ceremony of swearing the Junta of St. Iago (of which he is the head) to its allegiance to the Supreme Junta of Madrid, acting for Fernando 7th.

This ceremony I accordingly witnessed, which was sufficiently solemn, without any useless forms. I rode this day in different directions about this city, which is very compact, and seems closely inhabited. It contains several fine churches, convents &

⁸James McGregor.

⁹Presumably orders for the movement and route of march of these two regiments

¹⁰D. Rafael de Múzquiz y Aldunate, Archbishop of Santiago de Compostela. A brief biography: Gil Novales, Alberto. Diccionario Biográfico de España (1808-1833). De los orígenes del liberalismo a la reacción absolutista. Retrieved 28 March 2017.

<http://diccionario.historia.fundacionmapfre.org/bio.php?id=98317>

hospitals, of grand architecture. The church of St. Martin's is magnificent, and tho' not quite so large as that of St. Iago, appears to me of a more elegant structure. Both are however, superb buildings, and have a chasteness, surpassed by nothing I have ever seen in the gothic taste. There is an hospital in this town for a certain disorder, so famous throughout Spain, that patients flock to it from all quarters.¹¹ The consequence is that there are more horrible objects from the cruel effects of that dreadful disease, than probably in any other part of the world. At night there was a musical serenade sent to me at the Count Taboadas [sic], by the Archbishop, consisting of the best musicians of the Cathedral of the town. There were a number of fireworks let off on the tops of the houses opposite. All this was a consequence of my presence at the ceremony of swearing the Junta in the morning. Upwards of five or six thousand people collected in the streets shouting the most loyal expressions of attachment to Fernando¹², of respect for the King of Britain, and praying for an eternal continuation of the connexion between the countries.

10th Went today to visit the University, and more particularly the Library, a most beautiful room, admirably calculated for its purpose, but filled with books, not the most useful, in all languages. Consisting principally of the works of the Fathers, of the different proceedings of the Councils of the Church, and other theological works. The building is a very simple elegant structure. Young Count Taboada informs me that the population of St. Iago is from 30 to 40 thousand; and this is not remarkable if we consider it in proportion to that of Corunna, otherwise I would think it much exaggerated.

11th Dined this day with the Archbishop. We had a most magnificent & sumptuous repast, in the Spanish manner, but much better dressed, and more elegantly disposed than any thing [sic] I have yet seen in Spain. The entertainments given by the Junta at Corunna were far left behind. The dishes were extremely good, & agreeable to our English palate, without being overloaded with oil or garlick [sic]. Above an hundred persons sat down to dinner, among whom there were about thirty British officers, in whose honor the dinner was given. There were four complete courses, with a great many more entremets than I could count, and we continued at table above four hours, every thing [sic] being produced that could please or provoke the appetite. We had above twenty different kinds of Spanish wines, but the Sherry pleased me best, tho' there were several others very pleasant both white & red. Punch was made in a delicious stile [sic], superior to any thing [sic] I had ever seen, fined with eggs and iced. There was much of patriotic conversation, and many toasts favorable to the growing connexion between Spain & England. A sister of the Archbishop's who lives with him, was loud in the praises of the English, and in expressing her horror of the atrocities of the French of which she was an eye witness at Madrid, on the memorable 2nd of May¹³. This lady has taken a great antipathy against General Blake. She inveighed

¹¹Hospital Real, famous for the treatment of syphilis.

¹²Fernando VII, King of Spain.

¹³*El Dos de Mayo*. On 2nd May 1808, a popular mutiny against the French arise in Madrid triggered by the news of the abdication of the King Fernando VII to Napoleon in Bayonne. The revolt was violently

bitterly against him, but I could not understand the grounds of her abuse, or indeed that she had any grounds at all. After all, the Archbishop's principles are suspected. It is certain he owes his preferment to the Prince of Peace¹⁴, and was father confessor to the Queen of Charles the 4th¹⁵. Be this as it may, he professes cordial attachment to Fernando and his cause. He is a man of pleasant appearance, and his address very much that of a man of the world.

This town may truly be said to belong to the priesthood scarcely any thing strikes the eye but ecclesiastics, and convents & churches.

12th Nothing extraordinary occurred today. The 51st Regiment marched for Lugo. My baggage went on with it, my intention being to follow it tomorrow. Rode this day on the Orense road, which is in most shocking order. It has formerly been made with large stones of different sizes, and seems to have been for years quite neglected, and is of course worse than if it had never been paved at all. Equally bad & unsafe for horses or carriages. This ride cost me a set of shoes for my horse. From a hill on the left of the road, I had a very good view of the town, which is surrounded by hills on all sides of different dimensions. The place itself is totally incapable of defence, but an army might take post on the hills & prevent the approach of an enemy from any direction. But the defending army must be very strong, and would have the disadvantage of being much subdivided, so that a single failure might expose the whole to destruction from a superior enemy. My observation relative to the Orense road only applies to the distance of a few leagues, but I heard that the continuation is almost as bad.

The kindness & hospitality that we met with in the family of the Count Taboada has been unaffected & constant. It is generally supposed that the heart of a soldier is steeled (from the frequent changes of situation his wandering life exposes him to, and the other vicissitudes of his profession) to those sensations of regret which are the natural consequences among others, of parting from friends, however suddenly required. I do not believe the observation is without foundation, but like most others of the same kind, is apt to be considered in the extreme. I can only say that I part from this family with very sincere regret, and shall not easily forget the attentions which made my time pass so pleasantly in this place.

The Spanish character begins daily to open upon us, and appears more & more to advantages. It assimilates very much to the English, if we make allowance for the small degree of commerce they have with the world, the consequent confinement in their stock of knowledge, their great backwardness in the arts & comforts of life, and the

repressed by the French troops. It was the outbreak of the Spanish insurrection against the French rule. See: Oman, Sir Charles. *A History of the Peninsular War, volume I 1807-1809*. London: Greenhill Books, 2004. pp. 57-62.

¹⁴Manuel de Godoy, Spanish prime ministry to the king Charles VII from 1792 to 1797 and again from 1801 to 1808. A brief biography: Gil Novales, Alberto. *Diccionario Biográfico de España (1808-1833)*. De los orígenes del liberalismo a la reacción absolutista. Retrieved 28 March 2017.

¹⁵María Luisa de Borbón-Parma, wife of Charles IV and mother of Fernando VII.

bars thrown in the way of their emancipation from ignorance by the clergy. These circumstances abundantly account for the filth & want of neatness in their domestic habits. The dress in this part of Spain is in no respect what I had been taught to expect from the costume used on our Stage, to represent that of the Spaniards. The men in general dress in a loose coat, nearly as large as our great coats, in other respects the[y] seem to follow the English; & commonly wear boots. Indeed very little attention seems to be paid either by ladies or gentlemen to their dress. That of the ladies seems not very far distant from the English, but they do not change their fashions so often.

13th Took leave of my worthy & estimable friends the Taboada family, and proceeded thro' a hilly country but little cultivated, tho' capable of much improvement, to San Gregorio, a miserable village, the first stage to Lugo. Proceeding to the second stage, the convent of Sobrado¹⁶, where I found the 51st Regiment in comfortable quarters, and was hospitably entertained by the Monks. This is a very large convent, consisting of three squares, one of which is not quite finished. The oldest part of this convent was begun early in the ninth century, so that it is now near a thousand years old. The church is a beautiful piece of architecture, surpassing any thing [sic] I had seen even at St. Iago. Some idea may be formed of the immense size of the convent, when it is stated that four thousand infantry might be lodged in it without inconvenience to its present inhabitants. The 59th Regiment. which follows the 51th are to take their quarters here tomorrow night.

14th This day I went to the next stage only. Friol & Santal, contained the whole of the 51st. I went on to the latter place about half a league beyond Friol, where my quarters were allotted at the house of an *Escrivando*, or Notary Public. But strange to tell, when I asked for pen, ink & paper to write a note on some public business, the house could not produce one of those three ingredients for a letter. It must not be supposed from hence that the Galicians having nothing litigious in their disposition, and furnish no employment for the retainers of the law. On the contrary they are as much inclined to quibble & quirk as in most other countries, but as they have no money to expend in law papers, their disputes & processes are carried on almost entirely *Viva Voce*¹⁷, and in tones sufficiently loud to crack the nerves of a common ear. With the appearance of stupidity, few people have more mother wit, and if one may judge from appearances, there is little chance of carrying a point with a low Galiego, but by the *Argumentum Baccalinum*¹⁸. They are crafty, tho' apparently heavy, and I am informed that it is very difficult to procure honest servants in Galicia, altho' they are noted to a proverb, when out of their own country for honesty & attachment, and it is computed that there are at least forty thousand Galiegos in other different parts of Spain, & in Portugal, in the character generally, of confidential servants. This is a curious circumstance, and might give much room for speculation, on the effects of habit & situation on Human Nature.

¹⁶Monasterio de Santa Maria de Sobrado.

¹⁷In spoken form as opposed to written.

¹⁸A resort to force, or the threat of force, to bring about the acceptance of a conclusion.

15th Arrived at Lugo, a pretty large town not much different in appearance & character from the other two of Corunna and St. Iago. The conveniences of life seem rather better understood, but not much more of cleanliness. The approach to the town from Friol, over the river Minho is beautiful. The country is fertile & well cultivated. Sir D. Baird arrived this night at Lugo, on his way to Astorga.

16th This morning arrived a letter for me from Sir Harry Burrard¹⁹, commanding in Portugal, containing the disagreeable & unwelcome intelligence to me, that there was no mistake, but that I am undoubtedly the person appointed to the staff of that kingdom, and peremptorily ordering me immediately to Lisbon to assume the command of the troops in Portugal, as he was ordered immediately home. It may be more easily conceived than expressed how much this order has mortified & disappointed me. I have however no alternative but to obey, and that in the most expeditious manner. After consulting with Sir D. Baird & Colonel Bathurst²⁰, I have therefore determined to set off immediately for Corunna, to endeavor to procure a sea passage from Admiral De Courcy in some armed ship, or if that should fail, to proceed by land. I set out accordingly at 4 o'clock p. m. after waiting more than two hours for the Post horses. Leaving Mr. Stuart my Aid de Camp, to follow with my baggage. Captain Roberts my Brigade Major remains attached to the brigade, to which Colonel Cheney²¹ of the Guards is appointed. Slept this night at Guitaritz [Guitiriz], the second stage towards Corunna. This is the first Spanish inn, I have been under the necessity of putting up at for the night. I am told it is one of the best, but tho' a well built house, nothing can to an Englishman but experience, convey and idea of its inconvenience, filth or the boorish habits of the host & his servants. With difficulty I procured a few eggs in the village; and from some officers of our 7th Light Dragoons, who were on their march, quartered here for the night, I got a little cold meat. Bread & bad wine, was all the house afforded, but my bed room & bed were not quite so bad as I expected.

17th Proceeded for and arrive at Corunna about 7 o'clock in the evening, after posting on miserable horses the whole day; having made about ten Spanish leagues or about forty English miles in eleven Hours. Immediately after taking a little refreshment with my worthy old host Mr. Barrié, I went on board Admiral De Courcy's flagship the *Tonnant*, when I had the mortification to find there was not a single Ship of War in the harbour, except one appointed absolutely a convoy [escort] for England with the returning transports. He however informed me, he expected three cruzers [sic] in immediately, and promised to call on me next day on show. Came then on shore and slept at Mr.

¹⁹Lieutenant General Sir Harry Burrard. A brief service biography: McGuigan, Ron. "British Generals of the Napoleonic Wars". 2006-2014. *The Napoleon Series*. Retrieved 26 March 2017.

http://www.napoleon-series.org/research/biographies/BritishGenerals/c_Britishgenerals52.html

²⁰Lieutenant Colonel James Bathurst, Deputy Quartermaster General to Sir David Baird force. See: *The Peninsular Journal of Major General Benjamin D'Urban 1808-1817*. London: Greenhill Books, 1988. p. 5.

²¹Robert Cheney, 1st Foot Guards.

Barrié's, who insisted on my living with him during my stay. Lord Paget²² who had taken up my old quarters, had just quitted them this morning to join the army, and I had unluckily missed him on the way. I had met a family occupying two coaches on the road, who I found afterwards to be Lord & Lady Holland²³, on their way for Madrid.

18th I saw Admiral De Courcy today, and had a conversation with him on the subject of my journey to Lisbon, which must be very tedious and uncertain by land, at this season. He expects every hour three different Ships of War, (one of which my old friend Captain Crawford of the *Champion*) and advises my waiting till Monday, or Tuesday the 21st or 22nd when he thinks it almost certain, some one [sic] of the cruzers expected must appear. The great saving in time, if this should happen, added to the improbability of my getting away, till late tomorrow or Sunday morning at any rate, has induced me to follow his advice, and in the mean time [sic] I am preparing to start by land, if the sea conveyance fails.

19th Waited on the Junta of Corunna to take my leave. News arrived today to General Brodrick, left in charge of the depot at Corunna, of the defeat of Blake's army²⁴, the particulars not given, nor are they known to the Junta or any person here. The account, however comes with too much authenticity from the Grand Army, & communicated by one of Sir D. Baird's confidential staff. If the French advance rapidly, according to their usual plan, it is difficult to say whether Sir D. Baird will be able to join Sir John Moore at Salamanca, for the French may interpose between that place & Astorga, where Sir David's force is assembling.

20th No farther [sic] accounts from the armies today, and no ship has yet appeared to carry me to Lisbon. Wrote to Sir Harry Burrard the day before yesterday, by the Lisbon Post thro' Madrid, and sent a duplicate by the Post for Lisbon by Oporto [Porto], which went out this day. Wrote yesterday also, publicly & privately to Colonel Gordon²⁵, requesting His Royal Highness to send a senior officer to supersede me in the command in Portugal (to which I do not consider myself equal) & permit me to join my brigade in Sir John Moore's army.

21st Having determined to go on with my own horses as fast and as far as they can carry me (no ship of war having yet appeared) and as they did not arrive last night according to my expectation. I am necessarily detained till tomorrow morning.

²²Lieutenant General Henry William, Lord Paget. A brief service biography: McGuigan, Ron. "British Generals of the Napoleonic Wars". 2006-2014. *The Napoleon Series*. Retrieved 26 March 2017.

²³Lord and Lady Holland. For the Holland's travels in the Peninsula see : *The Spanish Journal of Elizabeth Lady Holland*. The Earl of Ilchester (Ed.). London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1910.

²⁴Battle of Espinosa de Los Monteros (10-11 November 1809). See: Oman, op. cit. vol. I, pp. 412-416.

²⁵James Willoughby Gordon. At this time the Military Secretary to the Commander-in-Chief. A brief service biography: McGuigan, Ron. "British Generals of the Napoleonic Wars". 2006-2014. *The Napoleon Series*. Retrieved 26 March 2017.

http://www.napoleon-series.org/research/biographies/BritishGenerals/c_Britishgenerals56.html

The particulars of Blake's disaster are received today from the same source by General Brodrick. They are as bad as possible, and place both Sir D. Baird & Sir John Moore in a critical situation.

22nd Left Corunna this morning at 8 o'clock, and arrived at St. Iago at 8 at night. Saw my worthy friends of the Taboada family, but could not make them miserable by telling them the fatal news of Blake's defeat, which they know scarcely anything of.

23rd Arrived this night at Pontevedra, at the head of that bay of the sea, in which Vigo harbour is formed. The valley from St. Iago to this place is rich & cultivated, in some places very broad, in one or two others narrowing and forming very strong passes. Many beautifully romantic situations with several small streams. Cross the small river Ulla at El Padron. Just after passing Caldas de Reis, 3 leagues short of Pontevedra, are some romantic hills, covered with large stones, as if they had been rained from the heavens. Pontevedra is a pretty large place seems to have been formerly fortified and a place of some note.

24th Proceeding from Pontevedra. The vineyards are very thickly planted and these appear a much greater number for some distance than in any previous part of the road from Corunna. The only gentleman's seat I have yet seen from the road in Spain, was close to Pontevedra, I regret I had not time to pay it a visit to see something of the internal economy, for I believe I should have been welcome as an Englishman. From the outward appearance I judge that the same filthy custom prevails in the country as in the town houses, of devoting the ground floor to stables, and other offices connected with them. The Spaniards affect to despise the ground floor, and have all their suites of best apartments on the first and second floors. But the consequence of this arrangement is that all kinds of insects are bred in the filth below which (particularly in the warmer season) became a nuisance scarcely to be borne, filling the whole of the upper apartments in a manner that even the active cleanliness of an English family could not prevent much less is it likely to be overcome by the supine apathy of the Spaniard.

Passed St. Paio [Sampaio] a miserable village about a league & half from Pontevedra, where the Vigo river falls into another branch of the same bay. Stopt [sic] to breakfast at Redondela, about a league & half from St. Paio, a pretty large place and well situated, but the most miserable inn I have yet stopped at. The road all the way from Corunna to this place is excellent, with very little exception. From Redondela it is very bad for near two leagues, and passes over a very high hill, both the ascent & descent very steep & rugged. The road to Vigo, turns off at Redondela. As one proceeds for Tuy, the large stones scattered over some of the hills, are still more extraordinary than those I saw yesterday. Surely this must have been the scene of some of the combats of Typhon, Briarius & the other Giants, with Jove. For the force of Man could not disjoin such extraordinary, mishapen [sic] pieces of rock. Arrived at Tuy the last town in Spain, fortified, and situated on a hill, which (...) descend to the river Minho, which here forms the boundary with Portugal. Crossed the opposite side into Portugal, and arrived at

Valenca do Minho [Valença do Minho], also fortified, & situated on a hill, not above a mile from Tuy. Both seeming to frown with majestic indignation at each other.

Thus have I left Spain for the present, with many mixed sentiments. Mostly of regret at quitting a situation I so much desired, for one which I enter upon with much diffidence; to which I do not consider myself at all adapted. In a time of such difficulty & danger, to be placed as the responsible commander of a force so great, in a foreign country, would be of itself more than equal to the abilities I possess. But when to that is added, the delicate conduct necessary to be observed to the Portuguese, who are dissatisfied with us, for reasons of which I at present know but little. My total ignorance of the manners, language & customs of these people, and also of the intrigues of the different parties in the country, of which I understand no country has a greater share. All these circumstances I confess, make me enter into this territory with much of unpleasant feelings, and a persuasion that I now take my leave of the comforts of my pillow, as long as the command lasts.

25th Left Valenca for Barcellos [Barcelos], stopt [sic] at Ponte de Lima, half way, a very hilly & bad stage. Ponte de Lima is a very pretty town on the Lima river. Arrived late at Barcellos, which seemed to be a town of some consequence. But my guides carried me to a wretched inn, without the walls, and on the opposite side of the river which runs past it.

26th Proceeded for Oporto. The country now improves very much, and from the enclosures & quantity of wood, takes much of an English summer appearance. Arrived at Oporto about 4 o'clock p. m. This is without doubts the handsome & most commodiously built city I have seen out of England. It has a singularly clean appearance, and probably owes much of this, to its long connexion with England. It is situated on a hill rising suddenly from the Douro. The town is completely commanded by another hill on the opposite side of the river, near where the Villa Nuova [Vila Nova de Gaia] is built, a poor dirty place. I found Sir Robert Wilson²⁶ here, as also Lieutenant Colonel Guard²⁷ of the 45th Regiment having his own regiment [and] the 82nd & 97th Regiments, under his command.

²⁶Lieutenant Colonel Sir Robert Thomas Wilson (1777-1849). In August 1808 was sent to Oporto to help organize a Portuguese volunteer corps, the Loyal Lusitanian Legion. Made a Brigadier in the Portuguese army by Oporto's Supreme Junta. See: Glover, Michael. *A very slippery fellow. The life of Sir Robert Wilson 1777-1849*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978. pp. 45-79.

²⁷Lieutenant Colonel William Guard, 45th Regiment of Foot.

27th Remained this day at Oporto, in order to pay my respects to the Bishop²⁸, the truest friend of the interests of his Prince²⁹ & his country, in Portugal. I was highly satisfied with our interview. In consequence of the present crisis, I have ordered the 82nd and 97th Regiments to march as soon as they can be moved with convenience on Lamego for Almeida. The Bishop engages that all the Portuguese troops in the Northern Provinces shall move to the frontier. Looked at the 82nd & 97th Regiments, as well as the 45th and afterwards at about 1,000 men of Sir Robert Wilson's Legion. A great quantity of stores are now pushing on for Lamego by water, to be forwarded to Almeida, for Sir John Moore's army. On inquiry I find the harbour of Oporto, is a very unsafe one, very liable to be rendered useless at this season, by the torrents which swell the river so, that no vessel can lie in it. This is very unfortunate for us at present, who must depend so much upon it.

28th Set off today on my route for Lisbon on mules, having completely knocked up my horses, and being obliged to leave them behind under care of my servant to follow me when they are able. My other servant & baggage I had left at Corunna, with Mr. Stuart my A.D.C. to come Lisbon, by the first water conveyance. Probably they may be there before me. I am now accompanied by a young gentleman of Sir Robert Wilson's Corps. Captain Pinto³⁰, a native of Oporto, who has never been in England, but speak the English language with great fluency & correctness. He will be to me an excellent cicerone. Baron Eben³¹ has been so kind as to allow one of his servants to accompany me. Breakfasted today at San Antonio de (...) passing a pretty cultivated country; dined at Pinheiro da Bemposta [Pinheiro da Bemposta] & slept at Albergaria Velha.

29th Breakfasted at Sardao [Sardão]. Dined at Mealhada & slept at Coimbra, the country still pretty. In the last stage the olive trees begin to appear, and in great numbers, as we approached Coimbra. There is a great deal of wood all the way I have come, from Corunna, principally oak, chestnut & a few pines, almost the same as the scotch fir, in Spain. The same kinds continue still through Portugal, but the quantity of chestnuts decrease, while the woods of natural pines increased. There are also a great many cork trees after (...) enter Portugal. Very few before.

²⁸ D. António de São José de Castro, Bishop of Oporto. He was the president of the Junta Suprema formed in Oporto in the wake of the uprisings against the French in northern Portugal. After the Regency's reinstatement in Lisbon he was appointed his President, but only left Oporto after the fall of city to Soult's army in March 1809. See: Tavares, Pedro Vilas Boas. D. António de S. José de Castro: dever e fidelidade para além das circunstâncias, in *O Porto e as Invasões Francesas 1809-2009*, IV. Porto: 2009 pp. 29-74.

²⁹ "D. João, Prince Regent of Portugal. A recent biography" : Pedreira, J., Dores Costa, F. D. João VI. Lisboa: Círculo dos Leitores, 2006.

³⁰ José Pinto da Cunha Sávedra (?- 1855), captain in the Loyal Lusitanian Legion, later in 1810 becomes ADC to Lieutenant General James Hamilton (in Portuguese service). Present in almost all the campaigns of the Peninsular War. His mother was from British ascendancy; his ancestor, General William Neville lived in Porto since 1714.

³¹ Major Christian Adolph Frederick, Baron Eben (1778?-1829). In August 1808 he was sent to Portugal under Sir Robert Wilson to organize the Loyal Lusitanian Legion. He was appointed colonel in the Portuguese army by Oporto's Supreme Junta. See: Centeno, João. *O Exército Aliado Anglo-Português na Guerra Peninsular 1808-1814*. Lisboa: Tribuna da História. 2011. pp. 262-263.

From Oporto to Coimbra the Bishop had given notice of my coming, so that we found something ready for our different meals wherever we halted. Coimbra is a large place, which I regretted I had not time to look at more minutely. It is famous for its university.

30th Breakfasted at Condeixa. The two first leagues have been paved & neglected, but still it is better than the horrible road we passed from Oporto to Coimbra. We now enter on very good road, which a little attention would render almost equal to an English Turnpike. It continued so with little exception until we come to Pombal, where we dined, and afterwards to Leyria [Leiria], where we slept. This is a pretty large city and has a bishop.

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