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Downing-Street, January 24, 1809.

THE Honourable Captain Hope arrived late last Night with a Dispatch from Lieutenant-General Sir David Baird to Lord Viscount Castlereagh, one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, of which the following is a Copy.

*His Majesty's Ship Ville de Paris,
at Sea, January 18, 1809.*

MY LORD,
BY the much lamented Death of Lieutenant-General Sir John Moore, who fell in Action with the Enemy on the 16th Instant, it has become my Duty to acquaint your Lordship, that the French Army attacked the British Troops in the Position they occupied in Front of Corunna, at about Two o'Clock in the Afternoon of that Day.

A severe Wound, which compelled me to quit the Field a short Time previous to the Fall of Sir John Moore, obliges me to refer your Lordship for the Particulars of the Action, which was long and obstinately contested, to the inclosed Report of Lieutenant-General Hope, who succeeded to the Command of the Army, and to whose Ability and Exertions in Direction of the ardent Zeal and unconquerable Valour of His Majesty's Troops, is to be attributed, under Providence, the Success of the Day, which terminated in the complete and entire Repulse and Defeat of the Enemy at every Point of Attack.

The Honourable Captain Gordon, my Aide-de-Camp, will have the Honour of delivering this Dispatch, and will be able to give your Lordship any further Information which may be required.

I have the Honour to be, &c.

D. BAIRD, Lieut. Gen.

Right Hon. Lord Viscount Castlereagh.

*His Majesty's Ship Audacious off Corunna,
January 18, 1809.*

SIR,
IN compliance with the Desire contained in your Communication of Yesterday, I avail myself of the

6th Moment I have been able to command, to detail to you the Occurrences of the Action which took place in Front of Corunna on the 16th Instant.

It will be in your Recollection, that about One in the Afternoon of that Day the Enemy, who had in the Morning received Reinforcements, and who had placed some Guns in Front of the Right and Left of his Line, was observed to be moving Troops towards his Left Flank, and forming various Columns of Attack at that Extremity of the strong and commanding Position which on the Morning of the 15th he had taken in our immediate Front.

This Indication of his Intention was immediately succeeded by the rapid and determined Attack which he made upon your Division which occupied the Right of our Position. The Events which occurred during that Period of the Action you are fully acquainted with. The first Effort of the Enemy was met by the Commander of the Forces, and by yourself, at the Head of the 42d Regiment, and the Brigade under Major-General Lord William Bentinck.

The Village on your Right became an Object of obstinate Contest.

I lament to say, that soon after the severe Wound which deprived the Army of your Services, Lieutenant-General Sir John Moore, who had just directed the most able Disposition, fell by a Cannon-Shot. The Troops, though not unacquainted with the irreparable Loss they had sustained, were not dismayed, but by the most determined Bravery not only repelled every Attempt of the Enemy to gain Ground, but actually forced him to retire, although he had brought up fresh Troops in support of those originally engaged.

The Enemy, finding himself foiled in every Attempt to force the Right of the Position, endeavoured by Numbers to turn it. A judicious and well timed Movement which was made by Major-General

Paget, with the Reserve, which Corps had moved out of its Cantonments to support the Right of the Army, by a vigorous Attack, defeated this Intention. The Major-General, having pushed forward the 95th (Rifle Corps) and 1st Battalion 52d Regiments, drove the Enemy before him, and in his rapid and judicious Advance, threatened the Left of the Enemy's Position. This Circumstance, with the Position of Lieutenant-General Fraler's Division, (calculated to give still further Security to the Right of the Line) induced the Enemy to relax his Efforts in that Quarter.

They were however more forcibly directed towards the Centre, where they were again successfully resisted by the Brigade under Major-General Manningham, forming the Left of your Division, and a Part of that under Major General Leith, forming the Right of the Division under my Orders. Upon the Left, the Enemy at first contented himself with an Attack upon our Piquets, which however in general maintained their Ground. Finding however his Efforts unavailing on the Right and Centre, he seemed determined to render the Attack upon the Left more serious, and had succeeded in obtaining Possession of the Village through which the great Road to Madrid passes, and which was situated in Front of that Part of the Line. From this Post, however, he was soon expelled, with considerable Loss, by a gallant Attack of some Companies of the 2d Battalion 14th Regiment, under Lieutenant-Colonel Nicholls; before Five in the Evening, we had not only successfully repelled every Attack made upon the Position, but had gained Ground in almost all Points, and occupied a more forward Line, than at the Commencement of the Action, whilst the Enemy confined his Operations to a Cannonade, and the Fire of his Light Troops, with a View to draw off his other Corps. At Six the Firing entirely ceased. The different Brigades were re-assembled on the Ground they occupied in the Morning, and the Piquets and Advanced Posts, resumed their original Stations.

Notwithstanding the decided and marked Superiority which at this Moment the Gallantry of the Troops had given them over an Enemy, who from his Numbers and the commanding Advantages of his Position, no doubt expected an easy Victory, I did not, on reviewing all Circumstances conceive that I should be warranted in departing from what I knew was the fixed and previous Determination of the late Commander of the Forces to withdraw the Army on the Evening of the 16th, for the Purpose of Embarkation, the previous Arrangements for which had already been made by his Order, and were in fact far advanced at the Commencement of the Action. The Troops quitted their Position about Ten at Night, with a Degree of Order that did them credit. The whole of the Artillery that remained unembarked, having been withdrawn, the Troops followed in the Order prescribed, and marched to their respective Points of Embarkation in the Town and Neighbourhood of Corunna. The Piquets remained at their Posts until Five on the Morning of the 17th, when they were also withdrawn with similar Orders, and without the Enemy having discovered the Movement.

By the unremitting Exertion of Captains the Honourable H. Curzon, Gosselin, Boys, Rainier, Serret, Hawkins, Digby, Carden, and Mackenzie,

of the Royal Navy, who, in pursuance of the Orders of Rear Admiral de Courcy, were entrusted with the Service of embarking the Army; and in consequence of the Arrangements made by Commissioner Bowen, Captains Bowen and Shepherd, and the other Agents for Transports, the Whole of the Army was embarked with an Expedition which has seldom been equalled. With the Exception of the Brigades under Major Generals Hill and Beresford, which were destined to remain on Shore, until the Movements of the Enemy should become manifest, the whole was afloat before Day-Light.

The Brigade of Major-General Beresford, which was alternately to form our Rear-Guard, occupied the Land Front of the Town of Corunna; that under Major-General Hill was stationed in Reserve on the Promontory in Rear of the Town.

The Enemy pushed his Light Troops towards the Town soon after Eight o'Clock in the Morning of the 17th, and shortly after occupied the Heights of St. Lucia, which command the Harbour. But notwithstanding this Circumstance, and the manifold Defects of the Place; there being no Apprehension that the Rear-Guard could be forced, and the Disposition of the Spaniards appearing to be good, the Embarkation of Major-General Hill's Brigade was commenced and completed by Three in the Afternoon; Major-General Beresford, with that Zeal and Ability which is so well known to yourself and the whole Army, having fully explained, to the Satisfaction of the Spanish Governor, the Nature of our Movement, and having made every previous Arrangement, withdrew his Corps from the Land Front of the Town soon after Dark, and was, with all the wounded that had not been previously moved, embarked before One this Morning.

Circumstances forbid us to indulge the Hope, that the Victory with which it has pleased Providence to crown the Efforts of the Army, can be attended with any very brilliant Consequences to Great Britain. It is clouded by the Loss of one of her best Soldiers. It has been achieved at the Termination of a long and harassing Service. The superior Numbers, and advantageous Position of the Enemy, not less than the actual Situation of this Army, did not admit of any Advantage being reaped from Success. It must be however to you, to the Army, and to our Country, the sweetest Reflection that the Lustre of the British Arms has been maintained, amidst many disadvantageous Circumstances. The Army which had entered Spain, amidst the fairest Prospects, had no sooner completed its Junction, than owing to the multiplied Disasters that dispersed the Native Armies around us, it was left to its own Resources. The Advance of the British Corps from the Duero, afforded the best Hope that the South of Spain might be relieved, but this generous Effort to save the unfortunate People, also afforded the Enemy the Opportunity of directing every Effort of his numerous Troops, and concentrating all his principal Resources for the Destruction of the only regular Force in the North of Spain.

You are well aware with what Diligence this System has been pursued.

These Circumstances produced the Necessity of rapid and harassing Marches, which had diminished the Numbers, exhausted the Strength, and impaired the Equipment of the Army. Notwithstanding all



these Disadvantages, and those more immediately attached to a defensive Position, which the imperious Necessity of covering the Harbour of Corunna for a Time had rendered indispensable to assume, the native and undaunted Valour of British Troops was never more conspicuous, and must have exceeded what even your own Experience of that invaluable Quality, so inherent in them, may have taught you to expect. When every one that had an Opportunity seemed to vie in improving it, it is difficult for me, in making this Report, to select particular Instances for your Approbation. The Corps chiefly engaged were the Brigades under Major-Generals Lord William Bentinck, and Manningham and Leith; and the Brigade of Guards under Major-General Warde.

To these Officers, and the Troops under their immediate Orders, the greatest Praise is due. Major-General Hill and Colonel Catlin Crawford, with their Brigades on the Left of the Position, ably supported their Advanced Posts. The Brant of the Action fell upon the 4th, 42d, 50th, and 81st Regiments, with Parts of the Brigade of Guards, and the 26th Regiment. From Lieutenant-Colonel Murray, Quarter-Master-General, and the Officers of the General Staff, I received the most marked Assistance. I had Reason to regret, that the Illness of Brigadier-General Clinton, Adjutant-General, deprived me of his Aid. I was indebted to Brigadier-General Slade during the Action, for a zealous Offer of his personal Services, although the Cavalry were embarked.

The greater Part of the Fleet having gone to Sea Yesterday Evening, the whole being under Weigh, and the Corps in the Embarkation necessarily much mixed on board, it is impossible at present to lay before you a Return of our Casualties. I hope the Loss in Numbers is not so considerable as might have been expected. If I was obliged to form an Estimate I should say, that I believe it did not exceed in Killed and Wounded from Seven to Eight Hundred; that of the Enemy must remain unknown, but many Circumstances induce me to rate

it at nearly double the above Number. We have some Prisoners, but I have not been able to obtain an Account of the Number; it is not, however, considerable. Several Officers of Rank have fallen or been wounded, among whom I am only at present enabled to state the Names of Lieutenant-Colonel Napier, 92d Regiment, Majors Napier and Stanhope, 50th Regiment, killed; Lieutenant-Colonel Winch, 4th Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Maxwell, 26th Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Fane, 59th Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Griffith, Guards, Majors Miller and Williams, 81st Regiment, wounded.

To you, who are well acquainted with the excellent Qualities of Lieutenant General Sir John Moore, I need not expatiate on the Loss the Army and his Country have sustained by his Death. His Fall has deprived me of a valuable Friend, to whom long Experience of his Worth had sincerely attached me. But it is chiefly on public Grounds that I must lament the Blow. It will be the Conversation of every one who loved or respected his manly Character, that, after conducting the Army through an arduous Retreat with consummate Firmness, he has terminated a Career of distinguished Honour by a Death that has given the Enemy additional Reason to respect the Name of a British Soldier. Like the immortal Wolfe, he is snatch'd from his Country at an early Period of a Life spent in her Service; like Wolfe, his last Moments were gilded by the Prospect of Success, and cheered by the Acclamation of Victory; like Wolfe also, his Memory will for ever remain sacred in that Country which he sincerely loved and which he had so faithfully served.

It remains for me only to express my Hope, that you will speedily be restored to the Service of your Country, and to lament the unfortunate Circumstance that removed you from your Station in the Field, and threw the momentary Command into far less able Hands.

I have the Honour to be, &c.

JOHN HOPE, Lieut. Gen.

To Lieutenant-General Sir David Baird,
&c. &c. &c.

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