Porto the 25th March 1809

Sir!

The last report I had the honour to send to your Excy, was from Lobios, since which I order'd Lt Linstow of the 60th Regt. to relieve Captn Dursbach who was posted at Germida and had his advanced posts at Barqueira and Soureiro. I marched with 250 men of the Legion to Prado sending my Patrols towards Ginzo, and spreading the report that a combined English and Portuguese force was to advance and cut off the communication between that place and Chaves. I distributed proclamations to the Gallicians, and orderd quarters for 5000 men, giving out that it was the force of my Vanguard.

At 4 o clock in the afternoon my advanced posts under the command of Lt Linstow, were attacked by the french, who found them on the alert. I immediately sent Captn Dursbach forward with 20 Riflemen 20 Fusileers and 8 Dragoons, and posted my remaining force on different hills, commanding the road to St Joas do Campo; the enemy then reconnoitred my position, but only attacked my advanced posts, retiring on the approach of night. The consisted of about 500, including Cavalry. The next day I sent Lt Linstow with 8 Dragoons to Ginzo, he arrived there in the Evening and learned that the same day in the morning the french had left it, and were marched towards Monterey. They were commanded by the Duke of Dalmatia, Generals Laborde and Loison; their chief force is Cavalry, the take care to hide their Artillery, but the Corregidor of Ginzo said they had 15 Cannons and amongst it one of heavy caliber. On the 14th at 9 o clock in the evening I received a letter from Genl Bernm Freire (of which the inclosure No 1 is a copy) and in compliance with retreated on the

morning

morning of the 15th, Captn Duersbach bringing up the rear. That night we remained at Turnero and at 11 o'clock next morning arrived at St Joaõ do Campo; at 12 o'clock I received the inclosure N.º 2 from Genl Bernrdo Freire, and after giving the necessary instructions to Brigade Major Domgo Bernardino, I intended to go to Braga, to know the wishes of the Genl, but at 3 o'clock I received a letter from the Commander of Salamonda, informing me that the enemy had attacked him, and I afterwards found, that this had taken place 7 hours before he communicated it to me; when I reproved him afterwards for his tardy intelligence, he excused himself by observing that he had no time to let me know it earlier.

Knowing the importance of the post I thought it necessary to support it immediately, and sent up the Legion and two Companies of the Vianna Regt; unfortunately they arrived too late and Major Domgo Bernardino retreated to Pico de Regalados, Captn Duersbach again commanding the rear.

At midnight at the convent of Bouro, I spoke with the Commander of Salamonda, who informed me that his loss consisted in three men killed and that he had not fired about 12 rounds with his canons. He said that the Enemy had brought against him a great deal of Cavalry. Genl Bernrdo Freire had inspected his post only the day before, and had approved his arrangements. I thought it of the utmost moment to send immediately to the Lt Colonel Jno Manuel de Queiroz 1st Regt Artill. No 4. commanding at St Jago, advising him to retreat to Braga with his two Brass guns and to spike his four Iron ones, blowing up the Powder, if not sure of bringing it safely to Braga.

In consequence of the obstacles thrown in my way by ordonnances, I could not reach Braga that night but

arrived

arrived there at 9 o' clock in the morning of the 17th. I found every thing in the greatest disorder; the houses shut, people flying in all directions, and part of the populace armed with guns and Pikes. Passing thro' the Streets with Dn Linstow and Ensign Mendez, I was greated with loud 'Vivas'; tho the people knew me, I could not guess the meaning of this. At the market place I was detained by the rapidly increasing Populace, who took the reins of my horse, crying out loudly that they were ready to do any thing to defend the city, requesting me to assist them, and speaking in the lowest terms of the General. I promised them to do all in my power to aid their Patriotic zeal, but said that I must first speak with him; upon this they suffer'd me to proceed, accompanied by about 100 of them, but I had not got far on my way to his quarters, when I saw him on foot, conducted by a great armed multitude, who suffer'd no one to pass and on my attempting it, threatened to fire. I was therefore obliged to turn my horse, and this the people applauded, two men had hold of the General's arms, his sword was taken from him, and the people abused him most vehemently. On my way back to the market place one Soldier wanted to shoot me, taking me for Genl Bernr. Freire, but I was saved by a Soldier of the Legion, who explained the mistake. When I reached the market place, I found about 1000 men drawn up and communicated to them my determination to assist them in their laudable endeavours to defend themselves, provided they would first permit me to speak to the General, for whose actions I promised to be answerable as long as I should be with him. I had order'd a house to be got ready for my residence, when the General arrived, accompanied as before. I saluted him with respect, at which the people plainly discover'd their disapprobation; I repeated my proposal, but they would not

not listen to it. I perceived the danger of the General, and proposed to take him to my quarters, my adjutant offering him his arms; when I spoke to him, he only replied, "Save me", at the entrance of my house I was surrounded by thousands, and heard the loud cry "kill, kill"! I now took hold of him and attempted to force my way into the house with him, and a Gentlemen slightly wounded him with the point of his Sword under my arm. He collected all his strenght, rushed thro' them, and hid himself behind the door of the house. Lt Linstow never quitted me at this critical moment, the people surrounded us and forced us from the house. To draw the attention of the people from the General, I order'd the drummers to beat the allarm and formed the ordonnances in ranks, but they kept up a constant fire on my house, where the General still was. As a last attempt to save him I now proposed that he should be conducted to Prison in order to take his legal trial, this was agreed to, and he was led then in safety. I now hoped I had succeeded, as the people demanded to be led against the Enemy, now rapidly advancing in number of about 2000. I again formed them and advanced with them; soon after I hear'd the firing again, and was informed that the people had put the General to death with pikes and Shot. I was now proclaimed General and two men presented me with Bernr Freires Epaulets, Portfolio and twenty Gold pieces. I of course refused them and having sealed up the papers, order'd the men to proceed immediately to Porto, and there make a verbal relation of all that had taken place to H. & the Bishop. It was now 11 o' clock in the morning.

By the inclosure No 3 Your Excellency will see that the late Genl, had allready order'd the retreat of all the Outposts to Braga. I instantly communicated to

Brigadier

Brigadier Pizarro, commanding Carvalhos and to the Commanders of Ponte Porto and Talpera, my resolution to defend their respective ports and to afford them all possible support. As the allarm bell rang, the number of Ordonnances was every moment increasing; as the Corregedor had fled, I appointed two Gentlemen of capacity, to do his duty and particularly charged them to provide subsistence for the multitude. When I commanded at S.to João do Carmo, Genl Bernardo Freire had sent to my support 800 of the Ordonnances, but they arrived without provisions and none were to be procured at that place. This I mentioned to the General and told him that the good of the Service required that in future each man should be provided for 3 days at least, but as no attention had been paid to this complaint, I found the greatest difficulty in obtaining supplies. I order'd a return to be made to me of the contents of the Arsenal, there was in it plenty of loose Powder, but no cartridges for the ordonnances the use stand to Porto as the bore of their pieces is not so large as that of a musquet. It was now reported to me that the enemy was advancing by Ponte Porto; I sent a reinforcement, and they retired. By inducing the people to hope for the assistance of regular troops from Porto I encouraged them to resist. At three o'clock in the afternoon, Custodio Gonçalves Villarboas (of the late General's Staff) who had as yet remained concealed in my house, was discover'd, the people paid no respect to his situation, but fired upon him, and thrust a Spear thro his body and finally killed him with Swords and Pikes; there were more than 6000 people assembled, and the noise and confusion baffle description; tho I was in the house, they still fired, and more than 50 balls passed into the

room

room, where I was, endangering my life every moment; when they had done they called out to me to come to the Balcony and show them that I was not wounded; they made me come down amongst them and paid me the greatest attention. The french now marched against Carvalhos, which post I reinforced with men and two Cannons. This day the enemy were several thousand strong, more Cavalry than Infantry, but no guns. As my position was defended by Cannons, the Enemy lost more than we. As it grew dark the french retreated and during the night all was quiet. In the middle of the night I sent a 12 Pr. to Carvalhos and made a report to H. E. to Bishop, stating all that had happened and urging him, to send Regulars, Ammunition and Supplies. During the night all the houses were by my order illuminated and fires made in the Market Place. The movements of the Enemy indicated that they expected very little resistance, but the people were in high spirits, and inclined to do all in their power for the defence of the place. The whole force under my command at this time did not exceed from 12 to 14000 men. In Braga the central point of my operations, I kept allways a strong reserve to second the different positions when attacked by a superior force. I had sent couriers to the Legion on its retreat from Salamonda, to hasten it's march to Braga; at 11 o clock at night part of it arrived and two Companies of the Vianna Regt with two Guns. The men were extremely fatigued, and in want of provisions but thro' the zeal of the new Corregidor, the troops were supplied with bread and wine. By daybreak I placed the two Cannons of the Legion on

the

the road towards Ponte Porto and erected a Battery of 3 Cannons but put only one in it. I divided the Legion in such a manner in the different posts, as to show the enemy that I had regulars. On the 18th the enemy attacked Carvalhos, but met with a very warm reception, and lost many of them and horses in a few hours, they at last retired. In the course of the morning, the rest of the Legion, 150 men and two 3 Prs. arrived under the command of the late Governor of Salamonda, of which place they formed part of the Garrison, and two men Ordonnances also came in. A soldier of the Legion presented me with an order of the french Legion of honour, together with the Patent and some papers of consequence; they belonged to Genl Courvoisier of the Hussars. I perceived that the enemy intended to turn my right flank which I reinforced and in the Evening all my posts were engaged; the inclosure N 4 contains a list of them. There was now the greatest difficulty in procuring balls for the ordonnances; a mould having been found in the Arsenal, lead was taken from the Churches and the night employed in casting balls; a 6 Pr. having some defect, was also repaired. The french sent me a Trumpeter to offer Capitulation, but the Officer who was to accompany him, having left him, I kept him prisoner, ordering my outposts, never to admit a flag of truce. This man and other prisoners informed me that they were 8000 strong, including 4 Regiments of Cavalry; had with them 4 pieces of mounted Artillery and were hourly expecting reinforcements. The ordonnances were constantly bringing in Spys and suspected people, among the latter were the Corregidor and two others of the first rank, their lives ~~were~~ saved with great difficulty.

On

On the morning of the 19th my Outposts were again attacked but not for any length of time. At 11 o'clock in the afternoon the Enemy was perceived in greater force than usual particularly near Carvalhos and had 11 pieces of cannon mounted; the post of Petralha was forced and I lost 2 Iron 3 Prs. It was well that the dusk began, as it enabled me to deceive the enemy by sending 50 of the Legion and 30 of the Vianna Regiment, extended in one line to move over the hills, making a large fire before them, this kept the french in check for the night.

A Commissary to take charge of the Provisions and the Paymaster with 50000 Dollars arrived from Porto, but no reinforcements. I had made application for this money, to pay the Ordonnances regularly. N 5 inclosure, is the report of the Artillery Officer, and N 6 contains my Evening's order for the 19th. Under the existing circumstances I order'd the Paymaster to suspend the payment of the ordonnances. This day I was informed by a Portuguese Officer of Rank, that Captn von Arentschild had arrived at Guimaraens, collected the allready dispersed Peasantry, brought them to a stand and by his persuasions induced them to accompany him back to Ginzo, opposite a french corps of 5000 men, which was at Povo de Lanhoso. I was further informed that he had assembled a body 10000 men near Amarante and of 7000 at Penafiel and that it was his intention to attack the enemy, but I received no Oficial information from him, till I arrived at Porto. On the 20th in the morning all the posts were allarmed, and the Enemy was perceived rapidly advancing in three columns, one towards Gimaranes, one (by far the strongest) towards

Carvalhos

///

Carvalhos and the third to ~~Tralparo~~ Ponte Porto. The column for ~~Jerorrenha~~ Gimaranjè, having the longest distance to march, did not come up immediately. A most unfortunate accident now happened; the 12 Pr burst, thro unskillfull management, several people were killed and the greatest confusion took place. By 10 o clock it was a compleat rout, great part of the ordonnances were engaged with only three rounds and the Artillery had scarce more. As the fugitives came crying in the city, closely pursued by the Cavalry, I took a standard, and Lt Linstow and Ensign Mendez did the same and we attempted to rally and defend the city, but all was in vain, the people having the Cavalry so close to them, lost their courage and to all my entreaties to stand, they made no other answer, than "no ammunition" "no ammunition". My Staff and myself were closely pursued by 60 Hussars and were only able to save the 3 Pair of Colours, with the Military Chest of the corps under my Command. I order'd the 15 barrels powder which I could not save, to be blown up but am sorry to say that 8 of the brave Legion, perished in executing this service. When the french ender'd the city, the people murdered all the prisoners, whom I wished to send to Porto, the Corregidor and another man of consequence being of the number. It was first my intention to barricade the streets and to defend house by house, but then being no retreat for the people and the enemy being close on our heels, too much would have been sacrified to my honour in defending the city for perhaps one day longer. The enemy found in the city Provisions for one day. In the different positions were placed 14 Cannons, 1 of 12 tt, 2 of 6 tt the remainder of 3 & 2½ tt

only

only half of them Brass; only three were saved, the rest fell into the hands of the french, but entirely disabled.

The whole forces under my Command were

Regulars

120 Grenadiers of Vianna Regt
150 of the Garrison of Salamonda
100 of the Braga Militia
700 of the Legion
25 Dragoons
5000 Ordonnances with Firearms
18000 with Pikes

We lost about 1000 men, the Legion 3 Officers and between 2 to 300 men, but as they are dropping in every hour, I cannot make a correct statement at present. I can not sufficiently commend the stadiness and bravery of the Legion. The ordonnances behaved in general well, and the two Chaplains given me by the Bishop, were of great Service, encouraging the people. I have great reason to be content with the behaviour of the Officers of the Legion and have spoken with much length on the subject, but I must particularly recommend to Your Excellency's notice, Captn Duersbach, L L L, Lt Linstow, 5th Batn 60th Regt who has Sir John Craddocks permission to remain with me. Lt Rixlaven, Portuguese Artillery and Alferes Mendez my Adjutant. They were allways with me, executed my orders with the utmost punctuality and braved at the peril of their lives every danger, to which they were exposed with me. I have lost great part of my baggage, a horse, my field Bibliothequee, Captn Duersbach and Lt Linstow, likewise lost most of

their

their baggage. In my retreat of the 20th I was fired upon from the Mountains and Houses by the Peasantry, who took me for an advanced port of the french, and having been detained in several places by the ordonnances, I could not reach Porto till the 21st.

The people here have taken the sword of justice into their own hands, and on the 22d executed 15 persons whom they suspected to be in the french Interest, three of them men of rank.

I am resolved to do every thing in my power to be usefull here, and to assist the people in defending their strong line.

His Excellency the Arch bishop of Braga and other persons informed me — that the french have lost from the 17th to the 20th March between 2000 & 3000 Men.

I have the honor to be with the highest respect.

Your excellency

Most obedient & humble Servant.

Frdc Baron Eben

Major Dillon's Regtm.