

would be far more usefully employed in paying the troops as yet back. I am sure that if
General Crook could begin over again, and have a fresh Legion set out, he would act in
his parts differently from what he has done. He would have two, or at most three Baysides, in-
stead of four; instead of four Colonels (now ineffective) he would have but Lt. Colo., instead of
two Majors, he would have only one, or perhaps none at all, for there is nothing in a Major's that
that could not be done by the Adjutant and Senior Captain; instead of three officers to a Com-
pany, he would only keep two, a Captain and Lieutenant; and then, with different other things that
might mention, would cause a wonderful saving to the Government, and be of good to the force at
large. I have a plan in my head, which, if clear, I should be a Lt. General, or have a body of troops
under my own control, I mean to put a decoration - and that is to dress, now, and accoutre soldiers
chapel, on a fashion i.e. for service in the field, a round foraging cap with a peak or shade (I have
known many of our men with a tin case for most of this to their foraging caps); a long blue great-
coat closed to the knees, common cloth trousers of an uniform colour, with blue up boots and puttees,
a corded box or bandolier slung round the waist with two small straps or thongs, passing under
the shoulders to keep it up; and above all in place of that cross, a knapsack, nothing but a coarse
canvas bag which the Spaniards call morral, and will hold almost as much as a little
you like, and having a fastening at each of the four corners (two pairs over the shoulders and two
around the middle) sits easy and light, conforming with the man's back whether he stoop, walk
or climb. Also I would have the belts of the accoutrements (the fewer the better) of black leather
so that the same blacking and brush which serves for the boots would do to keep the belts clean, and
save the soldier's carrying of great lumps of pipe-clay. I am not quite decided about the position
of the bayonet; the Chapelier's were ~~then~~ it is placed like a Highlander's click, or at the side, but
perhaps it is as much out of the way behind as we wear it. This is a point which only the trial
of the two methods would settle. If a large great coat were necessary, in addition to the other
clothing, I would have it folded up horse-collar fashion, and ~~worn~~ carried over one shoulder
as a halberdier does. I think you will agree with me that with these alterations, a great im-
provement would be effected, and that a soldier instead of being a half crippled animal as he now
is, sweating and groaning and cursing under the weight of his knapsack and what not, would like
Mrs. Barbauld's "man" be able "to leap, to walk, to run". The expense too, would be but
down to one third. Nobody above a footman should wear an inch of lace on firing; soldiers
marchers; it would "take the glory out of them" like Dumple.

As I did not see the French practice Bellefleur at St. Omer, I can pass no opinion upon
it; but I should think it the most effective of any way of firing. It is what Macdonald
calls "file firing" when every rank and file independently and takes as long a time as he likes to
aim. Firing by companies, I think very useless, unless the enemy be so close as to be
seen. And then a battalion keeping up a well directed fire by companies would do some exe-
cution. But generally it is more fit for parade and show than for anything else, as the
men are more taught to fire together than to take good aim. It is very odd that only a
little while before your letter came, when at Plasencia, we were taught by Col. Rich's
successor, Col. Beaton, to charge with fixed bayonets and loaded pieces, and give a volley
when at twenty paces from the enemy without bringing the musket to the shoulder. It suc-
ceeded very well, and I have no doubt would be very effective against the Confu-
dian Cantalists, if we could only get them to stand till within twenty paces. We have never
made the battalions give a file fire down, but it is a very common thing with us to
form four deep in order to let the skirmishes pass through the intervals to the rear and
so form up, or to make the skirmishes lie down and charge over them. All these
things appear so like what you mention in your last letter from the Manual
d'infanterie and Ney's Maxims, that I almost think Col. Beaton cannot have read
them himself, which conjecture is strengthened by my once seeing les maxims de
Napoleon in French on his table. - I have always forgotten till now to tell you that we
have a Company of rifles attached to our Regiment. I have seen no other in the Legion have

them except the 10th. But I hear that a great number have been sent for from Eng-
-land, so that I suspect we shall have a full company attached to every regiment, which
will be a great improvement. It is curious that all the Spaniards I have met, both
officers and men, appear to be quite "innocent" of rifles or their use. Some old fellows
of the guerra de la independencia recollect that they saw such things used by the High
-landers in Spain, and that they used small, to force the ball down; but they all have the
notion that the grooves inside the barrel are only intended to jag the ball and render the
wound more dangerous. Es bala de muerte, they say, when speaking of them, and they
fear we use them from a new - Zantardic desire to torture and execute our enemies.
By the bye, what do the French call rifles? The Spaniards have no name for them beyond
armas blancas or cavalinas; those who have fallen in with us, and figure themselves on looking
something phant [?] and the English call them rifles.

The two latest pieces of news of importance concerning the dejeu is that General Coans has been
appointed to the command of the left wing of the army, and has supreme command everywhere
in the absence of the Comandante en - Chief, who, I am soon to say, is still Cordova. And the
news of a very useful body, Col. Boyd, and his gone to Madrid to arrange about
stores and equipments for the dejeu, and also to frighten the Government into paying as some
pay. It is now three months since we got any, and words of us, both officers and men,
are now down to our last penny. However I have your little in reserve, and do
not dread the deferment of pay, so much as some others. It is a general opinion
back. I agree with you that Gen. Evans would put an end to the war in three weeks
fair play. I have no fault to find with the dejeu - he is a gentleman only 25 years of age, and
has been stuck into the chief command on account of his birth and interest, and is well
known to have been at one time a rank Carlist. If he were to desert us over to
the Philistines, head and foot, I should not be at all surprised.

As for myself, the best news is contained in the following "Intelligence" for the Officer commanding
-ing 1st. Regt. of Infantry. - Lieut. C. W. Thompson is promoted to a Company in the 9th. Regt.
Dated March 6, 1856. - W. Comandante. Chief. - Gen. Coans, Intelligence, March 6, 1856.
I have had word of a Company sent for some time past, but hardly expected it so soon. Col. Post-
-on, while he was with us, recommended me for my Company in room of a Capt. lately ordered
but declined for another. "that the Lt. General had resolved upon making no further promotion, for
the present." He showed me the letter, but said he hoped the accommodation would stand good
for some future occasion. One could hardly expect less than such an answer at a time when
the 1st. and 2d. Regts. were on the point of being made into one, and when Col. Poston left us,
(Col. Poston of the 3d. being senior to the "consolidated" Regt.) I fully expected of our being
to be sent some time before, but whether Col. Poston spoke for me or his return to the Intelligence
or the Intelligence was sufficient for the Lt. General, I do not know. I was much surprised to hear from
Lieut. Poston who had arrived at Cordova from Intelligence that my name was General Order
for a Company. I was sent after, and arrived the above "Intelligence". At the time I was then sent
-ing very busy, as I was only fourth lieutenant in the Regt., and have been lifted one to the
of "the acting Captain" into the 9th. I have received tomorrow - for Intelligence on my way to join
the 9th. which is, I think, at Cordova for some such place. I shall stay a day or
two at Intelligence to buy a stock of boots and trousers, as well as to "get a matter" done. I have
of my poor mare that Intelligence will, after which I will set out Intelligence to join the
9th. I do not regret leaving the 1st. so much as I do. I have done very well for a time, for most of the
old hands who were sent with us have been either killed or are now in a very bad way. I have
with officers from the 20. The 9th. is an Intelligence has been one of the best Regts. in the dejeu, and the 1st.

of J. City would have a very good reputation as a good officer and pleasant sort of a man.
 I already knew two or three officers of the 1st Regt. Dragoon, who was black, never was
 Bury, and on the whole, I do not doubt but that I shall get on very well among them. I was
 at Col. Keble's telling me that I had been recommended by Col. Dobson, but that I had refused to
 take a Company, preferring to act as lieutenant in charge some time longer. It must be a mistake
 of his - I cannot find any of the "1st Imp. Dragoon", for I never was so. I always had a respectable
 idea of myself - Battalion, Lieut. and a very dear one too in light of the matter; and although I had not been
 of the Company in the 1st Regt. of Dragoons, there was nothing that I can think which I could not have done
 myself in the absence of the 1st Regt. It is true that Col. Dobson, as I told my mother at the time, pro-
 posed to accompany me for my company at Montevideo on Board H.M.S. "Penguin", but as he
 afterwards took into his head to better than the Commanding of the 1st Regt. at Antwerp, or my going
 that off, I doubt very much whether he ever forwarded his recommendation to head quarters, though

13, Hanover Square
 Regent's Park
 London.
 W. Col. P. P. Thompson M. P.

1833
 1834
 1835
 1836
 1837
 1838
 1839
 1840
 1841
 1842
 1843
 1844
 1845
 1846
 1847
 1848
 1849
 1850
 1851
 1852
 1853
 1854
 1855
 1856
 1857
 1858
 1859
 1860
 1861
 1862
 1863
 1864
 1865
 1866
 1867
 1868
 1869
 1870
 1871
 1872
 1873
 1874
 1875
 1876
 1877
 1878
 1879
 1880
 1881
 1882
 1883
 1884
 1885
 1886
 1887
 1888
 1889
 1890
 1891
 1892
 1893
 1894
 1895
 1896
 1897
 1898
 1899
 1900

25 Nov. 1896. Received
 25 Nov. 1896. Received

Col. Keble, knowing about it looks as if he did, for I do not think I ever mentioned it to him (Col.
 Keble). At all events my sky was greatly enlarged; I have always intended to pick up something
 - per it was to be found. I think now that good may proceed in the Mexican affair without further delay;
 have a sort of longing after it, as I think he will be getting the chief command some of these days, besides
 which I have no objection to establish myself as a Captain or Penitentiary-Coroner in Spain, and after the war
 fight to quarters, under conditions. I judge of the desirability of a situation on Mexico's staff from the point
 of view which all young men of my standing desire to grasp at the other person I have mentioned it to him. I
 - in of men, who has spent almost his life in the Columbian Museum, and speaks Spanish at least like a South American,
 seems to think it is the best and most profitable that I can do, and for preference to the English service. I judge
 and for - enough to - with a view to his own advancement, and advice for without delay
 to enter the Spanish service. I myself think it would be the most unattractive with regard to the pay, and which
 creature might turn out to go, who knows but I might be one of the O'Donnells.
 I hope that you will do all you can to gain new water. I have never been without a good deal of water, and I expect
 that I was not aware of Captain Keble's half-brother, and I thought him with it. I think
 you might do something through Col. Keble when he returns, as he knows what Captain Keble likes, and all

648
 N.H.