

No. 2.

Porosda, April 7, 1836.

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My dear Father

we continue to occupy the same position on the Bilbao road as described in my last. It is the general opinion here that we shall now make a move in some direction or other within four or five days - but where to, nobody seems to know with any certainty, though everybody has the name of some town or place in his mouth and "is sure" that we are going there. The first detail of our future operations I heard was the other night at Col. Fitzgerald's - I think I mentioned it to you in my last - that we were to proceed to Durango via Oñate and Mondragón which we were to take and fortify, and then push on to Bilbao, opening the communication between it and Victoria. Gen. Evans is reported, also, to have declared that "in three weeks he would have his head-quarters at Durango"; but at least a week has elapsed since his reported declaration, and ^{too plain} the news which reports have been very thick that we were going to San Sebastián and even to Barcelona. Yesterday is true the latter place appeared to be "the favourite", and it was very generally said that we were going to march into Catalonia in order to restrain an expected insurrection of the Carlists in that quarter, who appear to be getting too strong even for Mexico. Altogether, I am puzzled to say where it is likely that we shall move to, and if the truth were known,

Gen. Cosens the dearest is as innocent as any body else. I'm old hand.
The castle of Pulmaria, was taken on day before yesterday. But I think it
is an unlikely locality and that we shall not go near it again. What con-
-firms me in this, is that all the recruits are ordered to make prepara-
-tions as if for a long march, and officers have been told by the G. M.
General (Gen. Macdonald) to disperse if their private baggage is retained
on the supposition that we shall never return to it again. In this, some-
what so far as to say, that we were going to Santander on the first sea-
-port to be shipped off for England - which, I think is about as probable a
supposition as any of the others, I have mentioned to you. If we should go
anywhere in the direction of Durango or Oaxaca, we can hardly fail
to have an engagement of some sort with the Carlists, for I should think it
impossible to march a strong force into the heart of the enemy's country and
not fall foul of him ~~some~~ somewhere or other.

I am sorry to see that the English papers have got into the habit of abusing
Mina. I am convinced that he is the only man that either can or will put an
end to the war, for as long as Cordova is at the head of affairs, there will
be nothing but shuffling and temporising. I have great faith in Mina, for two
reasons - first, because I think that he has no jealousy of the British and will
push them forward on every occasion, which is just the reverse of Cordova;
and secondly, because I have him so well spoken of on all hands, not only
by Spanish officers but by the foreigners also. I have met with Spanish sol-
-diers who spoke of Mina with a feeling of respect and confidence such as you
must imagine in an old quartermaster of Napoleon's battle garden; and as for
his descent, which it is the penny-a-line-man's cant to call "cold-blooded
cruelty," I am certain that it is the only thing that has on men will have any
effect on Spaniards. If you decimate a village and burn the houses down

their heads, the understanding that you are a capitalist and fear accordingly, whereas if you act with liberty and boldness, and attempt to resist, as our Philanthropic Radicals would have you, they would no more comprehend the motion than the motion of a balance beam. Let me hear set ashore at New Orleans who would believe the men not going to have their heads cut off. Between you and me, the best advice to be followed is that of the Puritan on board the Packet Steamer that took us home from Charleston to Portland, who said to me with all the gravity in the world - "Houm as in avec ces gens-là, il n'y a qu'un moyen - il faut fusiller tous les hommes, brûler toutes les maisons, et brûler toutes les femmes." These men's adoption of the above advice, could as it may appear at first sight, would put an end to the war, and the saving of blood and misery that would result from a speedy conclusion of the struggle, bought at whatever price, would be immense.

I have only one more thing to remark upon - and that is Gen. Evans' leniency to deserters from the Legion. He has no objection to give a man 300 lashes but to shoot him is too much for his humanity. Now several men of the good name of the Regiment of the Legion, notably of the 10th and 12th, have been executed in the very act of deserting to the enemy, and yet when condemned to death by a Court Martial, are let off by the Lt. Gen. with seven years in the garrison or something of the sort. This is not the way to stop the evil, which is on the increase - if they were to take the next deserter they catch and hang him on the first tree or shoot him in sight of the whole Legion, it would have more effect than all the condemnations to gallies in the world. Gen. Evans' reason it is said is that when men are so hardly treated and ill paid as ours, he cannot find it in his heart to shoot them when they attempt to desert. At this rate, he had better discharge them at once, - abolish all rank and discipline in the Legion because their notions of bread and beef are not served out regularly. If he gives a man 300 lashes for stealing a great coat or pair of boots from his command, he ought not to stick at shooting ~~any~~ ^{one} who attempts to commit a far worse crime, if it were only for the sake of deterring others by the example.

Yours truly

F. W. Thompson

