

Letters of Edward Sacheverell Chandos Pole while on active Service with army including campaigns in Spain and Portugal 1807-1813¹

D5557/21/1

Dear Father

I write an hasty line by Coll Cheney to tell you that I am well & going on well. I've din'd with Price Clarke who I like very much. I was the night before last at Lady Vernon's ball, where I saw Marquis of Hartington & a number of other great persons. I was not long ago at music party at Mrs Lockhart's to whom I have been introduced as well as Miss Du Vinen(?). Last night I was at the Opera & went afterwards to Mrs Ford's music party; I hate Catalani she's so proud at least if you may judge from her looks; I'm tired of the Opera from seeing it so often. I this morning was with Coll. Cheney at the exhibition, but could only see one piece with wild beasts worth having; & that I did not like. I have just received an invitation to Lord Ormonde's on Friday but being pre-engaged to Dr Jos'h Banks's can't go. Dear Father ever believe me your most truly affect Son

E S Chandos-Pole

London

Wed'y May 4th 1807

Remember me kindly to all at home & tell my Mother that I would like some new shirts. I wish you had seen the Chimney Sweepers the other day.

D5557/21/2

Dear Father

As my Grandmother leaves Town tomorrow morning I will lose no time in writing a line to you, by favor of her. I wrote the other day to my Sister & hope that she has received my letter. Lady Ormonde has been so kind as to send me a ticket for the play to night, and to request me to dine with her to day, which I shall have no objection to. Charles & his wife leave Town to-morrow morning which I am very sorry for, as they have been very good-natured to me during their stay in London. I saw Gil't Gardiner last night at Drury Lane, (I never see him any where else) he told me he should write to you to-day but I suppose has delay'd 'till to-morrow. Pray tell my Mother I wish she would be kind as to send me a few shirts & one or two pair of black silk stockings (there being a court mourning) things of which I am in great want, also give my best love to her. I have received the most kind, obliging, civil letter you ever beheld, which I take the liberty of sending to you, it's so like Ware(?). I have no news, more than what I have told Mary. Pray give my best love to my Mother Brothers & Sisters, all of whom I hope are well. Dear Father I ever remain your most truly affection'te Son

E S Chandos-Pole

London

May 27th 1808

D5557/21/3

Dear Mother

I am sorry to acquaint you that I cannot go to Radborne this week as the Adjutant who's duty I have hitherto been doing is in the Isle of Wight, unwell, and will be unable to come to town 'till the 15th or 16th of this month. Another reason is, that we are so short of officers at present that there are hardly enough to do the London duty, and it comes to ones turn every guard mounting. The first Brigade is now off with the second (not going together) for Spain, and I unfortunately can't go along with them. I can't find Lady Gosfords direction. I can't tell when I can come, duty runs so hard with one at present, and as the duty of the Regim't must be attended to it won't do for me to take no notice of it, & be idling my time away at home like A's Curzon[?]. I hate the Inhabitants of London as bad as frenchmen they are such insufferable rascals & hate and abuse the Guards who are in Reality the only honest men within ten miles or in London as bad as they need do. I can't say any more now. Give all my very best Love to all at Radborne, tell Reg & German I will see them as soon as I can be where they will.

Dear Mother Ever believe me

to remain your most truly affect Son

E S Chandos-Pole

1808 *[from postmark]*

That Rascal Mr Swarby the devils agent has not sent my Fathers Parsons rattle trap yet he says he must consider of it. I am out of patience with it as you will se(e) by my letter the cockneys plague me to death and if

¹ Derbyshire Record Office Ref. No: D5557/21/1-63

I cared for them I should have been dead. I as Adjutant, this morning marched 80 of the finest brave boys to the first brigade, all ready to go to Spain and as many as possible, at the thought of mincing the French. Goodbye I must go to my barracks. Write to me soon as you have this if you can.

D5557/21/4

Dear Mother

As there was no room for me in the inside of yesterdays mail, I was obliged to take an outside place, which I did not much relish; the night was much in my favour, being a kind of warm rain which did not penetrate through my thick cloathing, having two great coats of my own besides one which I borrowed of the coachman, I contrived to keep myself tolerably dry & warm until I arrived this morning in London. I had upon the whole a better journey than I expected. The waters at Cavendish bridge were perfectly safe, although very high; the coachman informed me that two days ago the water was so high as to wash over the horses backs, and no coach dare venture until he bolder than the rest made the attempt, which with some difficulty he completed. There has been another fire in Pall Mall, but its ravages were not important, timely assistance being ready at hand, as it was near the Palace (which I believe has nearly been on fire a second time, from a bed being in flames) from whence they had not as yet removed the Engines. I saw the flames from the top of Highgate Hill a few miles from London but I lost all the beauty of the scene from its being moonlight; no lives were lost I believe. I have called on as many of my acquaintance as the shortness of my time could allow, I am engaged to several dinners next week, and am now but just returned from the Bromleys. One of the officers of the Regiment who is in Scotland had during my absence, had sent me three brace of the finest more game. On my arrival this morning I discovered his letter laying on the table, but on inquiring for the present it announced, was informed that Sir Charles Pole had it, I this morning called on them when they informed me that they had not taken possession & had invited General Norton, Lady Dalrymple & various others to partake of it, which upon the whole I am not sorry for, otherwise they would have stunk, as the woman of my Lodgings would never have had the sense to have forwarded them to Radborne. Give my best love to my Father & Sisters, and tell Charlotte I am sorry I forgot her letter, and that if I had, I had not the opportunity of putting it into the Northampton post.

Dear Mother

Ever believe me to remain

Your most truly affect Son

E S C Pole

Albemarle St. Feb'y 3d 1809

PS I wrote this letter last night

D5557/21/5

Dear Mother

I am now settled at Chatham which place I like much. I must request that you will send me two pair of small sheets, with six towels, and two small table cloths. I am in great haste therefore can't write more. Give my best love to my Father & Sisters.

I ever remain

your affect Son

E S C Pole

Direction -

E S C Pole

E... 1st Battalion Gds

Chatham Barracks

Kent

1809 *[from postmark]*

D5557/21/6

Dear Father

I yesterday received your kind letter & this morning my Mother's. I do not volunteer my services as you have imagined, but go in my own turn, which if I did not, I could not go, as volunteering would not be allowed. Tell my Mother I am very much obliged to her for thinking of the flannel drawers &c, for me, but as I have got as many of them already (I will not trouble her as I shall want) which I took care to provide myself with, immediately upon hearing that the Brigade was ordered off upon service. Tell her therefore that I do not want any more, and if I had they would only be useless lumber upon my hands & I should finally be obliged to leave them. We are all going in line of battle Ships. You shall hear from me again in & few days. Give my very kindest love to my Mother, Brothers & Sister.

I ever remain dear Father
 your most affect Son
 E S C Pole
 Chatham June 30th 1809
 I would write more but am in haste as the post leaves here immediately

D5557/21/7

Dear Father
 Although I wrote yesterday I write again to day, as I only entrusted my letter to a Sailor belonging to a strange ship, but I am now come on shore for an hour & therefore take the opportunity to seeing the letter put into the post office myself. I am now on board the Leyden (a sixty four) which I expect will sail either to day or tomorrow, I rather expect for the Downs. Our Regiment is liquise[?] on board six other men of war. Give my best love to my Mother Brothers & Sisters. In the greatest haste, as I am immediately going on board.
 I ever remain
 your most truly affect Son
 E S Chandos-Pole
 Sheerness
 July 17th 1809
 Our destination is unknown

D5557/21/8

Dear Father
 I have nothing more to say, except that I am now on board the Leyden, which is laying off Sheerness, & which I expect will hourly sail for the Downs, in company with the Ships Courageux, Tisis[?], Princess of Orange, Adamant & some transports. We expect to lay in the Downs until joined by the other Ships going on the expedition. I have money enough, if you will give orders for the money, for which I wrote to be paid into Roberts's hands on whom I have given a draft. Give my best love to my Mother, Brothers & Sisters.
 In good health
 I am your most affect Son
 E S Chandos-Pole
 Leyden July 12th 1809

D5557/21/9

Dear Father
 From what I can learn I hear that Lord Chatham yesterday determined in a council of war, that it is not his intention to proceed, therefore I suppose we shall soon return to England. The opposite coast is very strong, the Ennemy are daily throwing up batteries, and the shore is in a manner lined with guns. I suppose it is that, which he is afraid of, therefore we shall return without the fleet and his lordship will return like all other English Generals without doing anything; although our men are as anxious to cross as possible. I have not seen Sitwell since I landed and believe he is still on board. Give my very best love to my Mother, Brothers & Sisters and ever believe me to remain
 your most truly affect Son
 E S Chandos-Pole
 Batz August 28th 1809
 PS We could take Antwerp easily
 If you could write only once a week as a packet sails no oftener I shall receive as much if you write daily. This expedition has done literally nothing

D5557/21/10

Dear Father
 We are going to do nothing more in this quarter, therefore I believe we shall return to England almost immediately. I think Lord Chatham has acted very prudently in not crossing the water, as by that step had he taken it, he would in all probability have lost half his army, although he would finally have taken Antwerp. We shall sink three ships in the channel between Icowen and Beverland which will block up that passage, and Flushing guards the other, therefore the Ennemy fleet at Antwerp is rendered totally useless. I have been to Flushing which is in a most ruinous condition. I have nothing more to add, therefore give my best love to my Mother, Brothers & Sisters and ever believe me to remain
 your most affect Son
 E S Chandos-Pole
 Batz August 31st 1809

D5557/21/11

Dear Mother

I yesterday landed at Chatham from on board the Rota, a Frigate, commanded by Captain Sommerville, after a very good passage. All our Regiment is not arrived but I suppose will all be here in a day or two. I have it not in my power to leave this; but I hope in a short time to be able to go to Radburne. My best love to my Father and Sisters

I am your very affect Son

E S C-Pole

Chatham Sept'r 13th 1809**D5557/21/12**

Dear Father

I this morning arrived in London where I have been obliged to come, that I might know at the Orderly Room whether I could have a short leave of absence. I have obtained it therefore shall leave town on Monday evening, and shall be at Radburne on Tuesday. I disembarked at the Nove[?] the other day, with the Remainder of the Light Infantry Battalion, most of which is in a very sickly state. Give my best love to my Mother and Sisters

I am your very affect Son

E S C-Pole

London Sept'r 15th [1809 from postmark]**D5557/21/13**

Dear Father

I have this morning seen an house which if you will give me leave I will take for you, as I think it is more likely to suit than the one I first mentioned. It is in a good place, Baker St. on the North of Portman Square. It has one good dining room, with a small room opening with folding doors into it, two large drawing rooms, 3 bed chambers, with four excellent garrets, and in them 6 capital beds, Housekeeper's room, pantry, kitchen washhouse, Laundry, mangle & other conveniences, Coach house & 3 stalled stable. There are also some beds below stairs. For 3 months the house is 250 guineas, and very clean. It belongs to Coll. Wheatly who is ordered on service or it would not have been left. I should recomend you to give me immediately a decisive answer. There is a pump above stairs which as it does not render the house at least damp, is a luxury. Give my best love to my Mother & Sisters

In great haste I am your affect Son

E S C-Pole

March 16th 1810

If you take it Robinson & Myself will go into it immediately as it will save the expense of Lodgings so pray send the ear[!]iest answer

D5557/21/14

Dear Father

It is ridiculous enough, my offering to send so short a line so far, yet I am induced to do so, as I know you will be glad to hear what I am about, and how my health is. Letters are so uncertain and miscarry so frequently that I am led to write twice a week for fear of any accident. I am still at Viseu and am recovering as fast as I can. I do not recover fast enough to become quite well, but from the nature of my illnes I had better go on as I do, which is slowly tho' sure. I have but ten minutes to send this to the post therefore cannot say anything; indeed I have nothing to say. We, tomorrow send off a great many officers on their promotion to England, some of whom I think must bring me near the top. I am afraid the bag may be made up, therefore conclude with my very kindest love to my Mother, Brothers & Sisters.

My dear Father believe me

to remain your most affect Son

E S Pole

Viseu

Jan 12th / 12

Twelve

Has my Mother got the patterns?

D5557/21/15

Dear Mother

I have had an extremely pleasant journey up to London, and on my arrival here, found every body in the most perfect degree of joy, on account of Lord Wellington's (who is created a Marquis) victory. London was

illuminated on Monday, Tuesday and is to be again to night. It certainly is paying His Lordship a very high compliment, and I think doing too much. The fickle mob who last year and all this spring hissed a soldier, now almost worship them. And their patron Sir Francis Burdett has had his windows broken amongst many more in Picadilly, because in the opinion of the People he had not lights enough in his house. On Monday they Hurra'd Bury & Trelawney (who were on guard) as they walked up St James's Street. Every one is now most loyal. It is I think too sudden a change, from the extreme gloom which pervaded every where (before this news) to the excess of joy which the lowest orders show, by three nights illumination, and certainly by rather riotous behaviour, the same mob on ill news, would I think be equally unmanageable, in a different way. However I am very glad they are so loyal. The whole town put me in mind of Vauxhall and the Horse Guards &c &c were beautiful to a degree.

Four troops of each Regiment of cheese mongers & four of Blues, making six squadrons, are under orders. We expect to march soon, perhaps a fortnight. However pray tell Goodwin to send me six of those new coarse shirts & six new fine ones & pray let them be marked & let George send me those strong shoes I left Behind. Pray let them be sent as soon as possible. I wouldn't take 10 thousand pounds to stay in England, it would be a disgrace. I don't think I shall want any money tell my Father. I will write again in a day or two. Till then I remain Dear Mother

your most affect Son

E S Pole

Wednesday *[postmarked 1812]*

Give my best love to all at home

Send one pair of good coarse sheets & six Towells. Mine are not good enough.

D5557/21/16

Dear Father

I have not had any good opportunity of writing during our march, but I am just arrived at Portsmouth & take this first opportunity of writing. I am so surrounded with people that I cannot write, but will do so tomorrow. I am happy to say every thing is most favorable. Give my best love to my Mother & Sisters.

Believe me to remain Dear Father

your most affect Son

E S Pole

Sunday *[postmarked 1812]*

D5557/21/17

Dear Father

I have dispatched Charles this morning with my mare to Radborne. I shall be obliged to you to send him back again as soon as possible, as I understand the Battalion will march either on Tuesday or Wednesday. I have not written by him as I sent him off in rather a hurry. I am under no apprehensions of his not suiting me. I hope you will do as is most convenient with the mare, but with regard to Gimcrack I wish no one except yourself, or the girls, or my Mother to ride him, & let nobody except George break him. I think I shall like Spain of all things. All the officers are in the highest spirits and would rather go than remain in England. Everard Bouverie is taken in, he entered the Blues in thought that the regiment would never be ordered on Service. Pray give my kindest love to my Mother and Sisters and I shall write again before I leave London.

Dear Father I remain your most affect Son

E S Pole

London Sept 3 *[postmarked 1812]*

D5557/21/18

Dear Mother

I shall in the future, direct all my letters to my Father, to whomsoever I may write. As I find it is generally done, & saves many unpleasant remarks which are made by the Sailors &c. I yesterday came on board the Bellona transport No 342 a very fine ship, and much better than what I had expected to find her[e]. We shall sail the first opportunity, the wind is now fair, but not enough of it, to take us out of harbour. I shall write whenever I can, but you may expect the greatest irregularity in receiving my letters. Sometimes even a month may elapse without my being able to gain an opportunity of sending one. For, as we do not know where we are to land, there may be no regular post established, until we join the Army. Much time must necessarily elapse before I can gain Lisbon &c & any answer return to you. Therefore don't be alarmed at not hearing from me. Pray give my best love to my Father & Sisters, and believe me to remain your most truly affect Son

E S Pole

Bellona Tuesday *[postmarked 15/16 Sep 1812]*

D5557/21/19

Dear Father

Here we are at Spithead, the Commodore has just fired his signal gun for us to get under weigh. Our topsails are loose and if the breeze continues I make no doubt but that we may drop down to St Helens to night. You had better always send my letter by the regular mail & post paid, or I shall never get them. The orderly room I find is a bad plan. Wherever we go you had better direct them thro' Lisbon, and this direction will be sufficient – (Ens. Pole 1 Guards with the army in Portugal), that will be the best and most simple direction. I don't know when I may have an opportunity of sending any more letters ashore so don't be alarmed if you do not hear from me again before we reach the Peninsula. Pray give my most kind love to my Mother, Sisters &c and believe me to remain

your most affect Son

E S Pole

Bellona 342

Wednesday

Sept 16 *[postmarked Sep 1812]*

I've received the parcel of letters

We sail this evening to St Helens if possible

D5557/21/20

Dear Father

We are now arrived safely at Corunna after beating out of the English Channel, with a foul wind, when it drop'd, and carried us in sight of Cape Prior last night; we then backed our mizen top sails, and lay to all night; this morning we entered this beautiful harbour and expect to disembark in an hour or two. As I have not yet been on shore I cannot tell you what sort of a place we are got into, but the monks on the walls give me a different idea from our parsons in England. The harbour is not very large but extremely good. I write in greatest haste as the Packet is going to England immediately, but will give you a very circumstantial account of every thing in my next, I am very much please with the appearance of every thing about me and do not doubt but that I shall like the place extremely. I have no time to spare, and must conclude with saying that I am in excellent health and only now want to be ashore. If we march before another packet sails, you may (on account of there being no regular communication established) not hear from me again 'till I reach the army. Therefore don't be alarmed for I mean to take very good care of myself. As I said before I have seen nothing yet, and therefore can give you no account of anything. Pray give my very best love to my Mother, Sisters & the Boys and believe me to remain

your most truly affect Son

E S Pole

Corunna

Sept 25 1812

Letter 1

D5557/21/21

Letter second

- a short march just to get -

My dear Mary

When we came into harbour I wrote in great haste, as there was a packet to sail immediately, but which however was delayed 'till Saturday morning, in case any of us should wish to write to England. I shall give you as circumstantial an account of every thing which passes within my knowledge as I am able, my letters will be long, and I shall usually envelop them, that they may be legible, after the numberless dirty hands which they will have to go thro' between Corunna and Radborne.

The first thing after having dined, which we did immediately before we entered the harbour, was to get ashore, which I did in company with three other officers. Ashore, the first thing that struck me was a most filthy dirty Spanish sentry, and a guard composed of the same materials; then I gazed at a crowd of animals 'till I was tired of their dirt, who returned the compliment handsomely, with much ado I then pushed my way thro' the bull carts 'till I arrived at a place to breathe – a bull cart is a small sledge upon two clumsy wheels drawn by two little dirty (once white) bulls. You hire them (something like a hackney coach in London) to carry baggage &c. I then walked about, 'till time for the opera, a bad play with dancing; fully equal to a second or third rate company of English comedians. After this we all got again on board, to land with the troops next morning at day light. A melancholy circumstance occurred before we landed, Lt Coll Henry Wheatley commanded on board our ship, and had nearly recovered from a little lowness of spirits which parting with his (wife &c that possibly might not be the reason) & children had occasioned, when Nixon came on board to tell him that his

brother the General was dead. He died in the south of Spain at the Escorial.

After we landed and I had gotten my billet I hired a bull cart to take my baggage home, when I came to reckon with my man he charged me two dollars for his trouble, so I gave him a Pisterene value one shilling and on his grumbling was obliged to turn the rascal out of the house. Remember I had not defrauded him, but payed him well. On Sunday I visited the fortifications which are moderate enough but of no use, because commanded; Much fine brass Ordnance lies all over the town, but is useless, because these inert cowards dare not use it. Sir T Moore's monument is a poor slab of granite (which is common materials for building here) on a pedestal, without inscription, which is to put on. Here it is!! *[sketch of monument]*

I have visited most of the churches, some are certainly what might be called fine, the altar piece is extremely handsome, as the ends of the transept. These creatures are at prayers almost all day, a few in a church at a time. The music of one I went to yesterday pleased me extremely, a fine organ and certainly a good band belonging to a sort of Spanish regiment. It is not quite our sort of cathedral music, but more opera style something like (Vive Henrico). And as I like it much, is I suppose adapted to the meanest capacities, or I'm sure the monks could not understand it. There is but one thing I like in this religious country, there are no pews, and every body, grandees and all, kneel down upon the same pavement. All the rest is mummery and monkish superstition; of what I've seen, it is more tinsel show, and insignificant pageantry than awful solemnity, and devout attention. Five or six hundred of us, our company inclusive, are quartered in a large Convent of Dominicans; the Convent is a large quadrangle with cloisters where we parade – above is a passage (where the men live) with little rooms or cells all round where the monks live, the same again above. There may be more quadrangles I've not seen.

These brothers dress in the long petticoat and hood or cowl, or whatever they call it, and are lazy drones and do nothing but pray. The Spaniards are the leanest, thin scamps in nature, and these monks the fattest. Very few of them indeed are lean. I'd a long conversation with one the other day about this convent we're in, he says the French have spoiled it. I've not yet seen any nuns but I suppose they are as bad as the monks. I am now well convinced that it is only those turn nuns, who are too ugly to live in the world, and are glad to get some quiet subsistence out of it. I must make myself more master of the forms, &c of this Catholic religion (before I leave Spain) which I shall have more opportunities of, higher in the country, where the French have not ruined (it did not want much ruining) every thing. This morning we rose, by what Scot would call the pale moonlight, in the grey cloisters of these aged walls, the bloody soldier grasped his fiery bayonet, lights were contrasted with the pallid hue of the moon, whilst we numbered the host (alias called the roll) which extended round the cloisters old; and far in the street thro' the portal gate, stretched far the weary guard &c. John Cranford might write a poem upon it but I'm not fool enough yet.

E S Pole

D5557/21/22

My dear Father

I don't know whether you have received my letters as regularly as I could wish, but if not, I hope that this will reach you, so that you may at least form some idea how I have been going on since my departure from England. My last I dated from Coruña, & wrote it to my Sister. Since my departure from thence I have seen nothing worth of making up a letter. We left Coruña Thursday first and marched to Satanzos [*Betanzos?*] four leagues (sixteen miles) where there was a fair, but as it rained when we got in, I was glad to get to my billet. The next day we reached several small villages consisting of two or three bad houses of stone, or properly speaking, little barns, however we had an excellent dinner and slept well; the only inconvenience was the smoke, which as there was no chimney, forced a way out anywhere. Saturday we had another four league march to Valmonte, much such another place but a little better than the former. Four leagues on Sunday brought us to Lugo, where I am now staying, 'till tomorrow when we commence a four days march to Villafranca. Lugo is for this country a good town, narrow streets, bad houses, and walled round (without a fosse) much like an old English castle. I last night went to a sort of party, the best but one in the place, the people sat round the room whilst two card tables, with dowagers were hard at work; they cheated every English officer who offered to stake a dollar! Then we went to the dancing party, which consisted of two sets who danced a sort of country dance but waltzed down and up again. I thought the dancing good, excepting when our officers attempted it. These animals dance the waltz much differently from what they do in England, here it is an elegant and withal a very modest dance, and not performed in that romping manner as in England. We do as we like, no invitations to us are necessary, tho' no doubt the natives have some sort of etiquette. I've made one observation since I left Portsmouth. The women are very ugly.

I gave 80 dollars for a horse yesterday, and must give anything for a mule today, or I shall not get my luggage up the country, mules sell at two hundred dollars. Direct a letter to me via Coruña, it may reach me. As I leave this before daylight tomorrow (we always march at that hour) I am so pushed for time I cannot say any more. Pray give my kindest love to my Mother, Brothers & Sisters.

I am in very good health and remain
 your most truly affect Son
 E S Pole
 Lugo Oct 6
 Letter 3 1812

Don't let anyone out of the family see my letters as I don't want the observation of friends.

D5557/21/23

Dear Anne

As the towns or rather pigsties in Spain, have not yet established any regular mail coaches, I do not know whether my letters reach Radborne regularly or not, but however I think it is worth hazarding a letter at all events, for if it does miscarry, we shall be only as before, had I not written. Yesterday we reached Villa franca, where we halt today, and I believe tomorrow likewise; we left Lugo on Wednesday and have performed a four days march, thro' a mountainous country, the beauties of which have in a great measure been lost upon me, from the weather having been so very unfavorable. About the middle of the second day's march we began the ascent of that (I believe) nameless chain of hills, which divides Galicia and Leon; with little variation we ascended the remainder of that day's march, and most of the next, including one hill about two leagues from bottom to top, when we were pretty well into the clouds, where it rained hard and prevented me seeing (I suppose) all Spain. Here ended Galicia. We then descended to Herrerias, where we halted, & yesterday pursued our rout(e) all the way down to Villa franca, the most picturesque and consequently dirtiest march I have ever had. I could not divest myself of the idea that I was in the road between Hopton and Matlock, tho' the hills on each side were about the same size or twenty times as large (I don't know which, my eye deceives me so, in this immensely mountainous country) but I rather think the latter. The French have burnt every village in the way, nothing is to be seen in some places, but miserable huts many of which are without roofs and others smoak dried. Villages that were never better than bad English hovels, made worse by war. Villa franca appears to have three large convents and some small nunneries with a Moorish castle. The castle, if the French will just burn the rest of the town, may two centuries hence be a pretty ruin, together with the three convents. The castle is already burnt, the convents have been pillaged, and the nunneries I suppose weren't worth it, or General Bonnet, who came here ten months ago to levy four hundred thousand reals (threepences) would no doubt have payed them a visit. In short you never saw such a ruinous place as it is. There is nothing to be had. However we manage so as to have two or three good dishes for dinner every day, somehow or other. Marsach and Lontour the officers of my company are quartered upon a Spanish nobleman and I believe I am quartered upon another. We have two large scrambling houses, like very large English barns, with nothing in them, to be sure the French they say, did not so much as leave them a razor to shave with, and moreover, took one of them away as hostage for the levy money being paid. Dear Anne I have nothing more to say, therefore must conclude with my kindest love to my Father, Mother, Brothers & Sisters and Believe me to remain

your most truly affect Brother

E S Pole
 Villa Franca
 October 11th 1812
 Letter 4

PS. Tell my Father to let Greenwood and Cox know where they may have the money in case I may have an opportunity of purchasing my lieutenantcy, as I may get over a head or so. Having both Battalions abroad we may have a run of promotion.

I am very well and like Spain (divested of dirt) very much.

D5557/21/24

I write this on Tuesday 29th Sept 1812

the men a little upon their legs and to see who were able to march, and who were at all ill or sick. We marched out of Corunna by moon light and certainly the bay was beautiful, the sun afterwards rising behind the high hills had a very superior effect. We marched two or three miles to the top of a very high hill (which was the french position at the battle) from whence we saw clearly where the English were drawn up below. To say the truth I don't see why our troops might not have had the commanding position as well as the French; but all our officers who were there seemed to think that they had done miracles, so they had! But the fault lay in Moore. To every one the disadvantage must appear, in an army crossing a good position into a place, and then returning several miles to lay themselves completely under the command of those who occupy the highs above. The French had they been good for anything, ought to have annihilated the English. It would have done you good to have heard our people gasconade. I do not know where Lord Wellington intends us to join

him, but as news has arrived here, of his driving the wreck of Marmont's army before him in the north, it is generally believed that we shall meet him on his return to beat Soult in the south; he does not appear to want us with him immediately, for if he did, by sending us to Sant Andaro we might be with him on Monday, the wind now proving favorable. Our right wing will march tomorrow morning to Batanzos on its road to Lugo, we follow Thursday; farther than that I am ignorant. Lord Dalhousie goes with us. We mean to buy mules &c at Lugo. Here every thing is so extremely dear on account of our coming (for these rascally, cowardly scoundrels have raised every thing five fold) that it is impossible to get any thing in reason; I have been obliged to give (after b[e]ating down ten dollars) thirty five for a wretch of a pony, which I am informed I might have got a week ago for ten dollars. This morning a Spanish regiment landed here, I do assure you that tho' English clothed, armed and accoutered, they were the most miserable wretched, dirty brutes you ever saw. In the whole corps I don't believe, even in the front rank (eight or ten men excepted) they had many men so tall as myself, and some men and officers not bigger than Reginald. At first I thought they were half monkeys. They look just like apes, which ride on camels backs in England. I think if it was not for the dirt you would like to be here, for we kick them about just as we please. For the appearance of the lower orders you will form some idea from the Minorca pictures in the Plad batchelors, or the dress of the Turkish & Egyptian peasants in the book which lies in the Saloon. But then on the other hand, some are very civil, where I live, the family (of which the head man is a sort of Spanish officer) are very much in my good graces, and for Spaniards are attentive and tolerably polite. I don't know you will make out my letter for Lord Dal[housie] sees our Battalion this evening and I write in the greatest confusion, noise, hurry, bustle and every thing else which is against writing an intelligible letter. I must conclude with saying that I would not lose being here for the world, and like what I've seen very much, being in excellent health. I particularly desire you will not show or read my letters to any but my Father, Mother, Sisters & Brothers. I don't know when I may have an opportunity of writing again but with my best love to my Father, Mother, Sisters & Brothers.

I remain your most affect Brother

E S Pole

[postmarked Oct 1812

D5557/21/25

My dear Father

I have not much to say, and am moreover pressed for time, but as I know you will be glad to hear where I am, I just write a line to let you know what I am about. I date this Benavente, we marched yesterday from la Bañeza, & halt here today. Tomorrow we march to Villalpando and get up to the army the 29. The hills we march across are the largest I ever saw. To Astorga we had two, which were at least 8 or 9 miles to the top of each, from thence the flat country has been equally extraordinary, not even a hill to be seen. I hope this uninteresting country may continue, as it is easier marching and these extensive plains are as beautiful as the highest rocks. I have much to say, but have not time now. I will the next halt give as good account of myself as I possibly can. For the present you must be satisfied with this line to say that I am very well, and desire my kindest love to you all. I have not had a day's illness since I came into the country. I now march with the greatest ease and have got over a slight fatigue which I used to feel on coming in. I always march otherwise I should not get any exercise, and two or three leagues per day is nothing to me now. Since we left Coruña we have had constant rain, but now we have crossed the mountains, I think the weather will become settled. Today has been delightful, a kind of summer day which you do not know in England.

I hope you are all well at Radborne. Give my best love to my Mother, Brothers & Sisters and believe me to remain my dear Father your most affect Son

E S Pole

Benavente

Oct 20 1812

Five

I have not heard from you yet as all letters go to the Army where I shall get them.

Tell Charles Mundy I will write to him when I have more

D5557/21/26

Dear Father

We are very still here encamped. The aid de camp is waiting therefore I can't write. I am very well & will write next post. My love to all Mother, Sis & Broth
your most affect Son

E S Pole

Tordesillas

Oct 31 *[postmarked Nov 1812*

D5557/21/27

My dear Sister

As I received a letter dated Sep 29 from you on Sunday last, which is the latest I have had from England I take this opportunity of a mail going from hence to England. As I have nothing to relate but a narrative of my proceedings which I fear you will read heavily, you must receive them as the substance of my letter I wrote last, and numbered my letter five from Benavente. I now write from our camp opposite Tordisillas (called Tordisillas) and can only say what I have been doing since I left Benavente, from whence the whole of the march has been uninteresting in the greatest degree 'till we were arrived within a mile of Palencia; when lo behold we had suddenly two days provision issued to us, and orders to change our route to join the main army which much astonished us, as we were in expectation of halting next day, Sunday, at Palencia on our way to Burgos. The order reached us just in time as the French were within six miles of us. However we reached our army encamped Dueñas that night. The next morning being Sunday we instead of halting at Palencia saw part of our army on the left engaged defending a bridge over the Pisuerga. The mine which they sprung to blow up the bridge failed, and the consequence was the french captured 60 miners and turned our left. The first division in which are the Guards, was then marched to the heights which command the plains thro' which flows the Pisuerga, that we might be ready for any movement the Enemy might make, and then we all thought we were going into action, (*in margin* - We had no action you see) which I thought more probable when I saw an officer whose face I thought I had seen before, led wounded upon a pony, he looked at me, and I at him, then just as I was going to speak, he asked me if my name wasn't Pole, when I asked if his was not Curzon. We shook hands and after I had very particularly inquired after his wounds, which are a musquet shot thro' the fleshy part of his thighs, which grazed both, but has not touched the bone, we parted as I was obliged to march with the men, and moreover had it fully impressed upon my mind that I was going upon the same errand, and I could be of no use to him. I had two impressions on my mind which were the only predominant ones, which regarding my worldly views troubled me, the one my family, and the other how if I was shot, which however I did not intend to be. We marched to the top of the hill. The French kept their side of the river, we marched back again, and bivouacked. Next day we reached the bridge of Cabazon, which the French made a show of attacking, one german was killed and Coll. Robe was wounded, which wound Nixon had the greatest satisfaction in dressing. We stayed there two days, when the army retreated to Ponte de Douro, where we expected to halt sometime, but hearing the misinformation that the Enemy had crossed the River lower down and were coming in our rear, we went to attack them, to drive them over the river again, which is now much swol[le]n by the rain and I believe impassable, I know unfordable. I then thought the same as before, but the report being unfounded the whole has ended in our being now opposite Tordisillas. We on this side the River the Enemy on the other. I had an out Picquet last night, under command of Capt Bowater last night, we were down by the River watching the Enemy. It was a bad Picquet as it was a bad night and we could not have a fire so near the French, but however I didn't mind as we both did very well. We were very alert on both sides. The French are very much afraid of us now, and don't like med[d]ling with us in any way whatever if they can help it. I don't think we shall stay here long and shall get into good cantonments for winter, tho' bivouacking agrees with me very well. It is laying in the open air, but as I have a good tent it can hardly be called a bivouac. Enough of Spain. Pray tell me all of the scandal in England. What do you mean by the Longford family being much altered &c &c.

I am warmed for the party so must go with them to get water, as if they went alone, they would be plundering. Pray write to me every week, no oftener. I wrote a little note in a hurry. Tell my Father to let Greenwood know where the money may be had for my lieutenancy. My very kindest love to my Father Mother, Brothers and Sisters, and I am your

most truly affect Brother

E S Pole

Letter six

Tordesillas

Oct 31

D5557/21/28

My dear Father

As I have not written of a week and I wish to let some of you hear from ever[y] opportunity that occurs, I just write to let you know that I am very well, and am as comfortable as possible. I cannot now tell you what I have been doing since I wrote last, as I meerely write this to send by tonights post from Salamanca that it may have the earliest chance of going to England, tho' I don't doubt but the same vessel that takes this, will also carry several more letters from me, to some of the Family.

In England I conclude this retreat has been enough condemned. You have the papers regularly, and know more of what is going on than we do, and I assure you that if you will form your own opinion of the war, you

need not care for what people tell you. Only keep this in you[r] view, that the Enemy cannot beat us. They are extremely afraid of our Infantry and are so strong compared with us in Cavalry, that they don't care making little deprivations, and skirmishing with them. Their cavalry is composed very generally of their best men, the Infantry are conscripts, who are boys, almost children. And he no more dare meddle with us in our position, than sacrifice his army which as cavalry can't act he must inevitably must do. Hill is near us close by, and we are throwing up redoubts from villiage to villiage I believe (don't quote me as authority) therefore we may lay very quietly here in Cantonments as long as we please. I am at Villares del Reyna, in map Villares; Salamanca two miles off and am very comfortable. I'm short of time but will tell you more in my next. As we now have a prospect of promotion let Greenwood an[d] Cox know where they may have what money they want for my lieutenancy. Could you send me out the latest army list? Grimsted I have not seen. He is gone home sick. Pray give my best love to my Mother Brothers & Sisters and believe me Dear Father to remain your most affect Son

E S Pole

Remember me to Goodwin and tell some of the Family to write rather oftener

Villares

Nov 11 1812

D5557/21/29

My dear Father

As I have heard of several steps which I consider (some of them) as very likely to fall to my share, I hope you will excuse my writing so short a letter, & so soon again, to request that you will lose no time, in paying into Greenwoods hands a sufficient sum to purchase my lieutenancy. For by so doing, and having the money ready, I may very possibly get over the heads of some who would purchase, but have neglected to have the money ready. And again some one might go over my head, in case I have not taken the same precaution. Give him to understand that you do not share expence, otherwise if I stuck at only giving the regulation, I might lose much time.

Pray give my very kindest love to my Mother Brothers & Sisters. I am in very good health & believe me to remain

your most affect Son

E S Pole

Villares

Nov 12

D5557/21/30

My dear Father

As I get out of bed to write this, I fear my hand is not perfectly steady, but if I did not write now, the letter would not go to England. We have had a very severe march from Salamanca. I was unfortunately very unwell the whole march, and have been obliged to ride a commisariat mule, 'till we reached Viseu, where I believe we remain for the winter. I have an excellent quarter, and as I am very comfortable, and Nixon attends me, I expect to be perfectly well again in about a week or ten days; indeed I am very considerably better than when I left Salamanca, where I was first taken ill. My dear Father, you need be under no alarm, as I am now recovering as fast as possible. Therefore do not alarm yourself or I shall be uneasy, as I must necessarily be well as soon as this letter can reach Lisbon; I want for nothing, and am very comfortable, and have every thing I can wish for; nothing ails me now but a slight weakness which as I said before, Nixon says I shall get over in about a week. As the letters must go immediately I must conclude with my best love to my Mother Brothers & Sisters

My dear Father I remain

your most truly affect Son

E S Pole

Viseu

Dec 7th (1812) [*postmarked 16 Jan 1813*]

D5557/21/31

Viseu Dec'r 8th Tuesday

My dear Sir

Hearing that Mrs Pole and yourself may be alarmed at seeing Sacheverel's handwriting, exhibiting such symptoms of debility, I write to say that you need now be under no alarm about him. He is now recovering certainly, his fever having quite left him, though as you may easily suppose very weak and much reduced – he was taken ill with low fever about three weeks since, & although the symptoms have never been very high, yet

as he had a long journey to perform in the worst of Roads sometimes in Spring Waggons but for the last ten days on mules, the Waggons having broken down. I could not help feeling a good deal of uneasiness about him, I have however persever'd in keeping him with the Regiment under my own eye[?] & with his friends instead of sending him to the General Hospital among strangers & I have the greatest pleasure in being able to assure you, that he arrived here yesterday much better than I could have expected. We are now fix'd in our Winter Quarters at this place, which are very comfortable in comparison to what we have been accustomed to since we joined the army – [?] sort of Provisions & Cloathing are to be had in abundance & I have no doubt in the course of a fortnight of his having nearly recover'd his strength & spirits again – his long march of three weeks under circumstances of great difficulty at times even to Persons in perfect health, has necessarily been a w.... to him of great fatigue & Labour; but as I have often seen before in similar Cases of such fever, if the Patient has strength enough left to be able to endure it, he is generally the better & quite free from fever at the end of the March – I need not I am sure say that he shall experience from me all the kindness & attention in my Power to give him, & with my best wishes, & Regards to Mrs Pole, the young Ladies & the rest of the Family

I remain

My dear Sir

very sincerely yours

(?) Nixon

[no date possibly 1813]

D5557/21/32

My dear Father

As you will see by my last letter, that I had the day before arrived at Viseu, here I still remain, as I hope that we shall do all Winter. We have been exceedingly fortunate in getting here when we did, as it has rained incessantly ever since our arrival. My health is now recovering very fast. I have regained my appetite and walk out whenever the showers cease. I was taken ill at Salamanca, but recovered even on the march, which was a very bad one to Viseu. But now I expect time to be quiet, and shall I don't doubt be perfectly well in a week or ten days. Every thing is to be had here that I can possibly want, and I spare myself in nothing. Will you in the letter next sent from home, send me enclosed the first Reg't, which you will tear out of the latest army list? An army list would never reach me. My letters now arrive thro' Lisbon. I am much obliged to you for your goodness in writing to Greenwood, I here know nothing of what is going on in the Regiment, and whatever is done, must be done in England. I am very sorry to hear that my Mother has had a return of her headaches, & shall rejoice to hear of Dr Darwin having cured her of them. I think that you have done right to change my mare, as she was good for not much, and very vicious. I am happy to hear that the hounds are going on so well. It is a melancholy death of [Geo.?] Talbot to drop down dead at the cover side. I think those hounds must drop through. I am sorry old Cox should have acted doubly. I thought something had been brewing for some time, by his manner. Pray who is Mr Chambers? I wish in your next you would let me know all about him? If you mistrusted old Cox, I think you have done well in employing someone else. I am glad that money did not immediately carry the day at Nottingham. John Broadhurst has no business in Parliament, and Gell has a right to please himself.

To revert to the old subject, I must inform you that the Portuguese are as good as the Spaniards are bad. The former are the greatest thieves &c on the face of the earth charging double for every little trifle. At the house I am, the master has been liberal enough when my servants have been wet, to give them things to mix with their food &c &c, and has given me many things for which he will not take money, and at other times has shewn me where I could buy things that I wanted. Indeed on the road some cottagers gave me two eggs and bread for which they would take nothing. I am a very small wheel in a vast machine, and cannot tell you any thing about the army. You know all from the papers. Pray dear Father give my very best love to my Mother Brother & Sisters

and believe me to remain

your most affect Son

E S Pole

Viseu

Dec 17

D5557/21/33

[outer cover of letter only with address and seal]

D5557/21/34

My dear Anne

I received your letter the other day and am very much obliged to you for it. I beg you will some of you write to me at least once a week, as my greatest pleasure is to hear from some of my Family; I only beg you will not crowd the writing, so as to make it unintelligible, rather send letters in an envelope. You of course have heard that I have been unwell, I am now much better, and as my appetite is increasing I do not doubt but that I shall very soon recover entirely. We live very well here, but certainly very expensively, as the officers of my mess are determined to live well. I of course must conform to their rules, or I should appear singular. I have lived during my illness chiefly away from the mess; as no one likes to sit down with a sick person, I thought I should be better away. By paying for them, we buy wild duck, Teal, hares, rabbits & Woodcocks; the Hares & Woodcocks are in a great measure spoiled, from our not being able to procure such good materials for dressing them, as what you can, or rather what we have been used to do, but however we find very good substitutes. We do not get fresh butter, but however in a great measure by washing, the saltiness is very much diminished. My dear Sister, I am writing a great deal of nonsense, but what can I say to fill up a letter. Lord Wellington does not make me his confidant, and I receive an order and obey it. L'd W knows nothing of the matter, nor cares. We junior officers (indeed the Collonels know no more) are no more than the useless wheels of some large machine, which if we failed, would still continue its motion. – You tell me to get acquainted with some of the Donnas &c my dear Anne, if you knew the state of the country and the nature of the Inhabitants, what they are, you would wonder that you should ever have thought of such a piece of advice. This country is not by any means what you take it to be, Don Whiskerandos and fair Rosaline are all imaginary. There are no such people in the country, and if ever there were, they have deserted this country for their American settlements. I have not seen a girl or weoman, whom you could stretch your mouth, to more than, Señora, since I landed on the Peninsula.

Tell my Sister Mary that I have not forgotten her, and tell my Mother the same. Tell my Mother that I am ashamed of myself, for not having written to her lately, but that I forget to whom I do write. Tell Mary also that I followed her advice in obtaining what little Spanish a long march would admit of, but having continued that march into Portugal, Spanish is here not unfortunately spoken, and what Spanish I have learnt is of very little use to me. As I hope never more to see Spain, and know very little of the language, and I am sure I never shall travel thro' this country for curiosity, I shall not labour up hill at a language, which in all probability will never be any use to me. I have written to my Bookseller for a Portuguese dictionary and grammar, but I don't know whether they will (being so large a parcel) ever reach me. I have my doubts whether they will ever get any nearer to me than Lisbon. Pray tell whoever writes next, tear the first Regiment out of the latest army list, and carefully fold it in a letter. Remember that without all my letters are post paid, it is impossible that they should ever reach me, therefore pray be very particular on that head, as it no use to lose any letter if avoidable. Tho' I am very comfortable here, yet you may rely upon it, Radborne looks much more green, and in a much more cheering condition than these barren rocks, and in a great measure uncultivated country. Pray give my very kindest and affect love to my Father, Mother, Brothers & Sisters.

I remain your most affect Brother

E S Pole

Viseu

Dec 18

Pray tell my Mother that nothing gives me greater pleasure than to hear that she has recovered her headaches

D5557/21/35

My dear Sister

I am now disengaged, and therefore, as I cannot employ my time to better advantage, or more to my own satisfaction, I sit down to answer in a letter to you, three letters which I have lately received, one from my Father without date, one from yourself, and one from Anne, yours dated Nov 25, Anne's 27. Tell my Father that since the money is lodged in Greenwood's hands, I hope he will give himself no further trouble. As for my letters, if you will just pay them (they do not leave England otherwise) and direct them Ens. Pole 1 Battalion 1 Guards with the Army in Portugal, they are safe. I extremely regret the death of my most excellent Aunt; I this day have tied on my arm a piece of black. William Curzon is here and has heard repeatedly from home. Tell my Father that I am very glad to hear so good an account of the hounds, and more particularly that he goes out with them so regularly. Now that I have answered my Father's letter, I will answer your own, and begin, as it is Christmas day with wishing you all a merry Christmas, and happy new year. You may think that I am terribly addicted to good living, but I could not help on this day, asking two of our officers to dine with me to eat some of the roast beef & plum pudding, which I, upon mature deliberation, considering would not be enough for more than one, persuaded the master of my house to get me a Turkey, which he did, much cheaper than I

could, at about three dollars nearly, which added to some soup and a cold mince pie, I think is a dinner fit for a king; but you must consider my things are not quite so well dressed as they would have been at Radborne. You must not communicate this beyond the Family, or People would take me for a gourmand. I am very glad the Cokes are so much improved, and that the younger part of the family are made so sensible of their former misconduct. My dear Sister, you will find my (I believe) grandfathers hand mark to a passage in L'd Chesterfields letters which says, that the Court and Camp are the only places to learn the world in; I never lived in the former, but by what little I have seen of the latter, I have learnt more caution & experience than in all my life besides. I think that if you had considered the matter, you would have scarcely have decided upon the Cokes having undergone a complete reformation. Mr Coke says they shall not go to London; they know the reason, and you know that they have thro' life been bred the children of hypocracy, therefore a repentance and wish to act better is their desire, I shall not be convinced 'till another winter has seen them in Town, for they are made of the same materials they always were, and you know, the Deer do not change their horns when they please, nor is it effected in a day.

Enough of them.

The d_I was sick

the d_I a monk would be

but he got well

the d_I a monk was he

I am very glad to hear so good an account of my Godson's prowess. I think that his father had better let me have him to educate. I think I could make of him a perfect gentleman, in every thing, which is more than I can say for my Goddaughter, out of whom I fear we shall never produce a perfect lady. Young John Gisborne I think, is the greatest proof of his father not being a benevolent humane man (which the world always took him for) that you can have. Is it a mark of humanity to send your own child as he has done to the remotest region in the world, and trusted him, without perhaps a clean shirt as he told him, to Providence? Tho' certainly one's surest trust. And yet he can put the whole family to the fuss about a wounded cockchafer. How long does Kitty Craufurd remain with you. I suspected John's marriage latterly, and yet I thought again, that he was only playing the male coquette; a despicable character which many men make a profession of. Tell Kitty if Donald has no prospect of returning, except with the conclusion of the war, he had much better stay where he is, and like a true soldier, do no more than he is ordered, which is quite enough, and almost aye! quite as much, if not often more than you can do well. A true soldier does as he is ordered, and I've had orders thick enough upon another, to obey them properly, what more is, or can be, required of you. He might like it very well to come out for a short time, but for year & year, he would often wish if fear, that he had never left Lewis. I've often heard Dick Welby say he wished he could find someone with money, as he was poor. If in twenty four hours Mary French has struck up so violent an acquaintance with Mrs Sedley, I fear she will someday, before her visit has elapsed, be served as Miss Broadhurst served her. You seem to have a very brilliant Venus in the North, a new star doubtless, which if she traverses the Hemisphere to the South every Christmas, must not only astonish astronomers, but every one else. I hope my Mother will have a very good Christmas Ball. Wishing her health thro' it, and my very kindest love to herself, my Father, Brothers & Sisters.

Believe me to remain my dearest Sister

your most truly affect Brother

E S Pole

This will leave Viseu Dec 27th

D5557/21/36

My host has been here with an interpreter in the greatest tribulation for fear of the Regiments (which are German and are to occupy old quarters) robbing a Quinta or country house of his, but in which was quartered none of our men. He said he has there his pictures, a quantity of wine, much wood, good rooms, and everything to make a gentleman comfortable. But alas, Germans plunder, so when the Battalion has marched, I go and look at the quinta, which is but two short miles from Viseu and mean to have my townhouse in Viseu, and my country house near, I think we shall live pretty handsomely among all this wine and other things. And Wiskerandos may parley his language for ever, e're he gets me from the quinta. My old host is delighted, and I have just given him some plum pudding, for which he has given me some roasted chestnuts. My bat man or second soldier servant has just brought me my order book, wherein I am ordered to hold myself ready to go to Lisboa, there to do duty as orderly officer, so I don't know that I shall write again from Viseu. It is from ten to fifteen days march to Lisboa, particularly as I shall stop one day to go out of my way to see the famous Busaco, and must see the museum at Coimbra, and every thing else that is to be seen. They say it is an excellent road to Lisbon from Coimbra. I don't know whether you had better direct to me at Lisbon, I think you had better direct as below. Do you want anything from Lisbon? or my Father any wine &c &c. I believe there are few things that are worth bringing home.

Remember me to Goodwin

The Regiment does not march 'till this rain clears up and I do not expect to go to Lisbon 'till another post arrives from England &c &c &c

Direct

Ens. Pole

1 Batt of Guards

if not at Lisbon to be forwarded immediately

D5557/21/37

My dear Father

As a post is due, I am now in daily hopes of hearing from you, as a letter from home does me more good than the best run the hounds have had this season; which by the way, I am glad to hear so excellent an account of. One of the officers has lent me some poems, amongst them Somerville's chace, which I read with so much pleasure that it has given me a taste for poetry; I only fear I shall be reading all the Bards I can lay my hands on. You no doubt have read it, his account of hare hunting amused and interested me most, but whether it was from my understanding that sort of hunting, perhaps better than any other, and my sporting in the hunting field, consisting of hare hunting, or rather my taking more interest in it, and wishing to improve myself as much as possible in it, but his discription is so minute, and so perfectly accurate, that in my opinion, which on poetical subjects is not the best, I think it preferable to any part of the work, the whole of which however I admire extremely. I think he has not taken so much care to describe his foxhunting; he does not seem to me to draw his picture on that subject with so much feeling; again the eastern sports must have been gleaned from others, and his account of stag hunting appears principally, from the King's calf at Windsor, and I think savours very little of true sporting; I do not mean on the part of the Author, but the sport described. You understand the subject thoroughly. I do not, but from what little I do know, I should judge his advice upon the kennel to be very good; and I think he seems to venture his knowledge upon that subject, together with that of hare hunting more boldly than upon any other. He possibly might find more sport in the windings of the hare, than the endways run of the fox. Sport is one thing, a steeple race another.

You say L Tamworth has sent some hounds which it is necessary that they must be kept 'till I see them; but if too large, as probably they are, or any foxhound blood &c. In short if you don't think they are exactly of our sort, you may I think use your own judgement upon getting rid of them, in any manner you think proper; we shall have plenty of whelps, and as we only wish, or require ten or twelve couple, to hunt seven or eight, why encumber the Farmers and kennel, with trash? Which probably is no more than fox blood, drafted from Smith to Chaworth, from him to L Tamworth, and then made a present of to you. You remember we have many whelps of different breeds, which we have crossed and particularly wish to try, the King's, Southern &c. If we take rubbish I fear we may have too large a pack, and spoil what you have already got so compact, and into such excellent order.

I have been writing so much on Mr Somerville that I fear I have scarcely room for any thing else. We have no news here whatsoever except what little we hear from England. Here we go on as usual, and I am daily recovering my strength, indeed recovering as fast as I ought to do. If I got flesh too fast, in this climate, it might bring on a relapse. We have lost the Captain of our company, Lautour, who I suppose prefers the society of his wife and family to the more fatiguing duties of a soldier's life; he sent in his resignation the other day, which however gives me a very good and unexpected step. We should have had one, if not two more, if that stingy cur James Macdonald would give a fair price for his company. Pray how do you like Mr Chambers? I hope he goes on satisfactorily. Where does he live, and who recommended him? I hope he's honest and may do justice to the property. It is now getting late and my hand tires, therefore I must, my dear Father, conclude with my very kindest love to my Mother, Brothers and Sisters and believe me to remain your most truly affect Son

E S Pole

Viseu

Jan 1st

D5557/21/38

My dear Anne

Living as I do and gleaning every particle of news I hear, from those who have seen some English paper, or perhaps from some old one I may chance to lay hold on, you can't expect to hear much from me; and with regard to what is going on here, you cannot hear or learn the slightest intelligence from any person in Portugal, unless you open a correspondence with Lord Wellington himself; for as it is his peculiar policy to keep all his intended movements concealed from even those who are most in his confidence, you may without any force of imagination, easily conceive that he does not make them known to me. We know literally nothing,

and sometimes when everyone supposes he is going to make some stay in a place he will order the whole army to move. But here we are comfortable in our cantonments. I am recovering as fast as possible, and, we have no chance of moving, at least at present.

Being in very comfortable quarters, I do not feel any of those inconveniences which those do who are lying about in the villages. I am very near a good market, where, at a good price, I may by looking sharp provide myself with almost anything I want, but the wild fowl &c is bought up almost as soon as it comes in to town, and that I want but occasionally, now and then as a change. Butcher's meat I can always have in plenty, indeed I am allowed a pound daily by government. There are sutlers come to the army whenever they rest any where for any time, who have goods come from Oporto, Lisbon &c. One lives near me, who, tho' as he sells many English goods, they are consequently very dear, yet it is necessary for an Englishman to purchase many things which in one's own country come under the denomination of the necessaries of life, such as Tea, Sugar, Wine &c, then again we indulge in what is called Luxuries, as Pickles, sort of very good fish &c. Indeed I am very comfortable at Viseu, and as we do not expect to break up our winter quarters and take the field again these six weeks, and there is much talk of promotion. I may almost hope that when I do leave it, it will be for England. I'm convinced I do not hear from you, arises from the Servants who don't, and won't. post pay the letters, or you very seldom write, for I may safely affirm these several last posts, I am the only officer in the Brigade who has not heard from his friends. Pray do be punctual in writing in future, for I don't think I have heard from you, any of you, three times since I've been from England, and I generally write twice, always once a week. Pray give my very best love to my Father, Mother, Brothers & Sisters, and dear Anne believe me to remain

your most truly affect Brother

E S Pole

Viseu

Jan 13 1813

Give my love to Goodwin

[on cover] Nixon's foolish message is about Mr Wescomb

D5557/21/39

My dear Mary

I have this morning received your letter of the 19th, many thanks for it, my Mother's also lays on the table, but tell her that as you have so many things I wish to return an answer to, and as I write to the Family. When I write to any one individual, I hope she will excuse my writing now to you; particularly as Mrs Newdigate's funeral is too melancholy to write about, and I have no news from Viseu. In your letter you are alarmed about me, to be sure you had not heard of me of some time, but you now have received letters from Viseu, and have heard e're this that, tho' not well I am now recovering, and have now gained every thing but flesh and strength, but which however I acquire as fast as possible. I regret that scandal is reduced to so low an ebb, but it happens that you & I always fall foul upon J Gisborne, but he seems to have very little feeling, if one may judge from circumstances. I do not wonder at Kitty being in just as much distress as a young lady ought to be, when her brother is going abroad but you may assure her Donald is the person ought to be in the greatest alarm on this particular occasion. If he is ordered by Government on service, it is only his duty to go, but if it is a volunteering business, as I strongly suspect it is, it savours very much of the young soldier, and it would be with equal credit to himself, and I would recommend him to remain where he is. People may bragg and boast as much as they please, but the sameness of the camp and quarters is extreme in highest; added to which you are nobody, and have nothing to do; for instance I came here wishing to learn Spanish, bring only Spanish books, and am immediately marched into the heart of Portugal. He'll tire in about three or four months. I'll give him that time. Pray send to me, by him, a Prayer book, Portuguese dictionary & grammar, and a good meat and pastry book of cookery? Ask Charlotte to send one which she knows to be genuine. Send me a good Goldsmith's (I think it is) almanack also. Always send me the 1st Reg't Guards of every month, or any particular Gazette &c, tearing off that one side of the Paper, and folding it up close in a letter. Charles is very well, and suits me extremely well, and desires his compliments to George, if proper give mine also. Michael Wilson was the other day, when I last saw him, in excellent health. With regard to the money being lodged, everyone here says I am by this Captain, considering all steps. I hope my Mother may have had a good ball. Godfrey Mundy ought to have exerted himself, particularly as my Mother has done so much. I fear Reginald is not yet a man. Tell him that I hope now that he is near sixteen, he will leave off childish things, and become a big boy, or an old one, at least. I hope my Father has recovered from the cold weather? My dearest Sister, I must now conclude with my very best love to you all, whom I hope to have the pleasure of soon seeing again.

Dear Mary I remain your most

sincerely affect Brother

E S Pole

Viseu

Jan 7

[on cover] Donald will if he comes with his troop, be kept a long time at Lisbon, so if you don't send by him, but post, pay me the parcel, which send immediately. Give my love to Goodwin and Kitty. Tell Charlotte to use her utmost judgement upon the cookery book, as I can now only roast a bit of pork & make a custard to my apple pie.

D5557/21/40

My dear Mother

As there is again a post I take the opportunity of writing this in answer to yours which I received the other day. I send enclosed a small pattern of something or other, which a shopkeeper shewed me the other day, and which struck me was the same as some that you found, and which we worked so hard to bring the border, which was something faded, to its pristine beauty. You remember what I mean? I do not know whether this is proper stuff for women's gowns, but if so, pray write and say how many yards you will have, as there are many patterns here, and I dare say many more at Lisbon. I can bring a gown for yourself, Mary and Anne, or if it won't do for gowns, it may for something else. Perhaps my father would like a dress of it to go to court in? It is used here for the smartest waistcoats, and I do assure you is reckoned among these stingy folk, most costly. It is to be sure tolerably dear, I think four dollars for the vara; a vara is a measure of about three quarters of a yard. I suppose it is to be had at Lisbon as good, and I should think in greater variety than here; if so I would buy it at Lisbon. It is the only thing (if worth anything) which appears to me worth taking home to England. You will think I am writing in a strange strain, as if I was going to return to England immediately. But the reason is this, with the number of steps we have lately had, and the time I have been in the Regiment, I may with some degree of reason expect my promotion, should any more leave the Corps; added to which consider the time a letter may be going to England, and an answer returned. On the other hand, it may happen that we may not have a step of a twelvemonth; since I've been in the Reg't, I've known it to be fourteen, without any one change taking place; therefore do pray send me a Prayer book, Almanack, Portuguese dictionary and grammar, with a very respectable book on cookery in all its branches; if Donald is to come straightways to the army, send by him; if he comes with the troop, he will be detained a month or two at Lisbon, and if you send by the post, pay the carriage or I shall never see the parcel. Pray always send the most interesting part of any paper which is worth reading, and never fail to send the leaf of every month's army list.

Pray write particularly how is my Father. By Mary's account I fear he has suffered considerably from the cold weather. I am recovering very gradually, and just as I should do, provided I am to keep my health when I get it. My dear Mother, pray give my very best and kindest love to my Father, Brothers and Sisters, and believe me

to remain your most affect Son

E S Pole

Viseu

Jan 10th

D5557/21/41

My dear Anne

I intended writing to you yesterday, that the letter might leave Viseu today, but having neglected so to do, I write this by Tuesday's post. I have not heard of you very lately, however I understand a post is expected daily, which I hope will bring me a letter from some of you, and I hope a good account of you all. Pray has my Mother received the letter I sent with the patterns, I do not know whether they are the proper sort or not, but however if not, it is of no consequence. I the other day bought a box of some sweetmeat to eat instead of a very bad kind of salt butter we get here. I have sent my servant to know the name, which when I heard it, struck me that it was a scarce commodity in Great Britain. If it is worth while I will bring some when I come, or (rather) go. For a box a foot across and three inches deep, I gave a dollar and half, the name I will put at the bottom of the letter, then, if worth carrying home, write word, and I will take some with me. I think by the time you get this, I ought to have either my lieutenancy or else to be very near it. Immediately that I am gazetted, pray send that leaf of the gazette, or enough of it to give the Adjutant authority to call me Lieutenant, as it may be of use to me.

Have you any scandal; if there is a little of that jewel (for as such we always hold it) pray collect what little may be scattered over the country, and bundle it in a letter to me. I have none! Alas the worse! I wish we had some of the Derbyshire families here, and you the rest; we then might carry on a correspondence of some import, which might a little interest us but Helas! Alas! Viseu has no Cokes, no Longford, nothing but English goods, which are sold very dear, and a few Portuguese productions of the country with the inhabitants, whom I

now find are one or two degrees better than a Spaniard; to make a Portuguese, add a few sparks of generosity to a Spaniard. I think the difference to be about this much. If you were to be dying at the door of a Spanish house, the owner would have you moved, lest you became a nuisance; a Portuguese would give you something to eat, and here his generosity would stop.

I don't know what to say to fill up a letter, you were hard pushed for it last time. I'll tell you a secret, so keep it in the family. One particular reason why I should like to get my Lieutenancy soon is, if so, I can get leave to go to England – on plea of ill health, before another ensign comes out to relieve me; by this means I get home much sooner than I otherwise should do.

My dear Anne, do write me a full letter of whatever is doing in the country, & when you go to London, & when the ball is to be given &c. If I get any letters by next post, I hope in answering them to have more to say than I have at present. Give my kindest love to all at home, my Father, Mother, Brothers & Sisters, and my dearest Sister

I remain your most affect Brother

E S Pole

Viseu

Jan 13

P S Give my love to Goodwin. The sweetmeat is called Sidraõ, or in English, Citron

Charles is very ill, but making a good recovery, he was for some hours in danger, but much better now. And Hill has been rather unwell. Charles thought, and still does hold the same opinion, that he shall not live, but I am happy to say he differs very much from Nixon and another Surgeon, both of whom say he'll soon be well. He has every thing he wants.

D5557/21/42

My dear Mother

There is no post yet arrived, therefore I have no letters to answer, but write to let you know how my health is and where I am. Still at Viseu, no alteration whatever has taken place since I wrote to Radborne last, and I suppose that we shall remain yet longer in our cantonments. My health is considerably better than when I wrote last; I was then rather unwell again, or rather the weather was rainy and bad. It rains in this part for one or two days and then we have fine weather again, the rain always creates an heaviness about me, but the fine weather is like a fine day in April or beginning of May in England, during which I am perfectly well, my debility excepted. The weather is at this time of year the most delightful you can imagine, perfect spring time, and now that you are enjoying the fire side at home. I ride out every day, when I can scarcely help thinking it is spring, 'till I am reminded of the time of year by the leafless trees, although when I mount an hill, the pine woods in the vallies which extend to an immense distance give this barren country a very cultivated appearance. I imagine the country from Radborne to Breedon one deep valley covered with pines, and bounded by rocks which reach the clouds and are covered with snow, such is a valley near Viseu. Indeed what I have seen of Portugal, the whole country is beautifully dismal. I think a view beautiful the first time I see it, and then afterwards am tired of it. We have no news here, and when a paper does arrive, the commanding officer is the person to whom it goes, and we younger officers hardly ever get a sight of it. William Curzon has got his company in the 99, I think it is, I am very glad of it, for he has had as much duty in his time, and been abroad as long as anybody. I hope next post will bring out my army list. How does promotion go on in England in the first Regiment. I shall look out for some post or other before long to bring me an account of my Lieutenancy. If it does not arrive soon before I am we.. [page torn] I'll have the pleasure of two months extra duty here 'till somebody comes to relieve me. I am happy to say Charles is getting well, but he has had a smart attack of fever, and like myself still retains a degree of debility. With my best love to my Father, Brothers & Sisters I remain my dear Mother

your most truly affect Son

E S Pole

Viseu

Jan 22

D5557/21/43

At last I arrived here having lost my horse on the road, and my Pony and mule died afterwards from the fatigue which they had undergone. Nixon has had a letter from my Mother, tell her that I have not undergone more fatigue than any other Guardsman, and if you'll tell me who told her so, on my return, he shall recant. How is it possible that you will make yourselves uneasy with what every babbling fool chuses to tell you. On the twenty third of Jan'y, I am alive, believe that, and be easy, 'till you hear from me again, and if I'm ill, I will let you know. It is impossible to write on a march. At present I am not able to take a day's hunting or shooting, but I can ride upon my mule six or eight miles and back to dinner, which I eat with a prodigious

appetite.

Enough of this, I have not much time to finish this letter. Tell Charlotte she may write twenty letters and I shall be very happy to hear from her. Pray write soon and often, the post from the Army to England is as regular as from Derby to London, and I only lose your letters from them not being paid, or some other such negligence of the Servants. Pray how is Goodwin, Charles desires to be remembered to her, and I also. Charles is getting well tho' slowly, he has had a smart attack of fever, which however has left him, and he now retains only a debility. He has had much another such complaint as myself. How is my Father? I am very sorry to hear he has been so unwell this winter, write me a particular account of the state of his health. Give my kindest love to him, my Mother Brothers and Sisters, dear Mary

I remain your most affect Brother

E S Pole

Viseu

Jan 24

D5557/21/44

Sunday Jan'y 24th 1813

Dear Mrs Pole

Your letter of the 26th of December only arrived yesterday; but I trust very long before this your mind has been set quite at ease respecting Sacheverel, by the arrival of my letter of the 8th December & by several subsequent ones from himself. I have now the satisfaction of being able to assure you that within the fortnight he has made most rapid progress in the recovery both of his looks & flesh. He dined with me the day before yesterday, & had you seen what good use he made of his knife & fork, all your apprehensions about him would have vanished. He has had a most severe illness, & for a considerable time I was under a good deal of uneasiness about him, during our long, and to him, most laborious and distressing march, but I was resolved at all hazards to keep him with us; for had I sent earlier into the Rear to the general Hospital, his March would have been very little shorten'd, & he finding himself among perfect strangers in the midst of nothing but sick & dying soldiers, would I am quite confident have been the death of him in the wretched state of debility & depression of spirits he was at that time labouring under. I think it is probable you will e're long see him in England, as he is, I believe, the next for a Lieutenancy & probably has got it before this. By that time I think I can almost promise you that you shall see no Remains of his late Illness. The Officers & their Servants have been in general remarkably healthy, but the poor men have suffer'd & are still suffering most dreadfully – the Mortality too is very terrible, the Guards alone having lost upwards of two hundred men in the last month, & in the last week sixty seven, more than half of which are in our first Battalion – this I believe is almost equal to any thing of the kind which has occur'd in the West Indies & much greater than any thing I have ever yet seen in the service, Walcheren not excepted – the rest of the Army is not very sickly, but I find this always the case for fresh troops to suffer excessively soon after their arrival in this country, and as we join'd the army under such unfortunate circumstances, we have no doubt been more affected than we otherwise should have done. I am fortunately perfectly well myself, but in consequence of the four principal Surgeons of the four Battalions of the Guards being very ill with fever, I am incessantly & laboriously occupied that I have scarcely a Moment to myself from one Week's end to another. My charge naturally consists in the superintendence only of the Hospitals of the 1st Division, which are situated in Cantonments, in a Circuit of about fifty miles; but this disastrous sickness of the medical officers has thrown the additional duty of visiting all the sick of the 1st Battalion [page torn].....ing to two hundred & seventy, upon my shoulders, & which broad as they are, is almost more than they are able to stand under. I have no news whatever to tell you, & if I had I am afraid I have hardly time to write it. I must therefore conclude this scrambling epistle, with my best & kindest Regards to Mr Pole & the Signorita & believe me

My dear Mrs Pole

Most sincerely yours

Tho's Nixon

D5557/21/45

I am glad that Tom Brown has got the Prince's stud. I hope it may prove something good to him, as no doubt it will. I am glad the Derby hounds are given up, as now ours may hunt supreme. Tell Anne never to form opinions for me. Tell her that my opinion of a clergyman is, that it is the most respectable, and most responsible undertaking of any I know, and if I was not otherwise provided for, I would rather enter the Church than any profession. Who can be more happy than a good man in that situation of life, exercising his duties amongst his parishioners, and looked up to, and respected by them all, particularly if he has a comfortable house and enough to live on.

How comes my Father and Mr Sitwell to have struck up such an intimacy? Is it not a very extraordinary

circumstance? I dare to say you are just as happy, and I am sure more comfortable over our tea table at Radborne, than Miss Bonell is in furnishing her house in Harley Street, I should like to see it, if she does it herself, that I might judge whether she has an elegant taste, or a vulgar one.

I am sorry Mr Green is taken prisoner. Did you hear how S'r E Paget was taken from amidst, I may say, his own division? Our Division; but I believe it was partly owing to riding a little pony and being short sighted, I've a message for Anne from Nixon when I write. Its foolish enough and I'm almost afraid she'll be offended if I send it. Pray how is Goodwin? I particularly wish you to give my love to her. Adieu. Remember me to Kitty Craufurd if she is still at Radborne.

[stamped Viseu – no postmark]

D5557/21/46

My dear Father

The other day I received your letter with one from Anne, and another from Kitty Craufurd. You wrote yours just having received my first from Viseu. I am extremely glad that I have had an answer to them (as I could not be easy 'till I had heard from you) to inform you that I was just beginning to recover. My fever has been pretty smart, which, together with the debility, which it naturally occasioned, caused in me a tolerable fit of illness. The most unpleasant time to me was our march from Gallegos when I had so great a giddiness in my eyes that I could not discern objects around me, my taste and appetite were also gone. I remember one day wishing to drink some water from a stream the most clear and beautiful I ever saw, which when I came to drink tasted more nauseous than you can conceive, every thing had either lost its taste or had not any taste at all. I am now not so strong as when I had not been ill, but in other respects I think I am better than I ever was in my life. I feel as if I had been born again. Charles is making a very good recovery from much such a complaint as I have had. Nixon and Armstrong have been so good as to see him and I let him have just whatever he wants and is proper for him. He now has only a weakness upon him of which he is recovering. The Batt. is very sickly; we have but barely twelve hundred remain out of fourteen or nearly fifteen which we brought out, officers inclusive and five hundred of these are sick. The complaint is I believe only infectious to those who are always employed about the patients. One of our Surgeons is very dangerously ill of the fever, which he must have caught from being constantly visiting the hospitals. They fear he may not live, which I should be very sorry for. I think Bercot[?] is a very good sort of man, and has more in him than the generality[?] of Army Surgeons who seldom know more than cutting & hacking; he has been very attentive to me whilst I have been at Viseu which I shall ever remember. Nixon attended me whilst I was seriously ill. If Elliot does not exchange I shall be senior Ensign, which will take me to Lisbon to do duty at the Depot, this is an order lately come out, and a very wise one, because time is saved to the officer going home, the time the other officer would take to join the army, and also the returning officer's journey to Lisbon. I am glad to hear that you have employed Chambers, and have no doubt but that he will do better than Old Cox. Anne's letter shall be answered in a day or two; it is excellent; how could the Waterparks be so shabby? I cannot help feeling angry at the girls and Lady Frances wishing to make a joke of my sisters, who are handsomer and better behaved twenty to one than they are, nor Lady Frances nor any of them can any more compare with our three than dandelions with snowdrops. You have had your full revenge. I like Ann's Sr Godfry Webster painting the hanged Lady, and the likeness to our Anne, chronology, dates, knowledge &c all together!! But the duck crowns all. Erase tutus from their motto and put in duck. Write the name without the (n) leave the dish, it will be useful next time. They are parsimonious certainly out of measure. Pray give my loved to my Mother, Brothers and Sisters

and my dear Father believe me to remain
your most truly affect Son

E S Pole

Viseu

Jan 31

D5557/21/47

My dear Sister

Although you have no doubt read all the letters which I have written home, yet as I write to all the rest of the Family, and receive their answers, I do not see any reason why yourself and I should not keep the same correspondence, which I hope may commence from this short letter. I am obliged to write less than I could wish (tho' more than I have to say) from it now being past my usual hour of retiring to rest, and you know it is not customary with me to sit up longer than I like for any one, especially to write letters, but now I take a pleasure in what would otherwise to me be a trouble. Tell Anne I thank her for her letter, it is the best I ever read. I received one likewise from Miss Craufurd. I wish she would not write four sides of foolscap to me; it was stuffed with what had caps been worn, might have justly been said to have come forth from a fool's cap. I

shall direct my orderly corporal to write a proper answer.

Pray is Mr McKinnon in our part of the world; he is in his own account a very great hero, and a very clever young gentleman; you have doubtless deigned to lend an ear, to his wonderful feats of activity, and prodigious proof of wit, sense and judgement. Possibly you may have heard how valiantly he entered a convent of nuns, how the nuns were lost in rapture, joy, wonder and surprise, but you may, if he plays any more tricks in our region, be fully even with him, for your wit can improve, or rather bring to perfection, what my rustic and unpolished pen may inform you of, concerning this miracle of perfection! This convent is in Viseu, and I have examined it well, the place that he got in at, is, as he has shewn, possible to be entered by man I think, if I could bend my legs as much as I could, it is possible I could get in too, but how did he fare when he was in? Why the door keeper, an old woman, turned him out again. Thus you see how this Knight Errant has magnified his valor. Many other things which my paper grows too short to admit of writing down, could I inform you of, to shew how young ladies and young gentlemen may be fooled by such a dandy rant about. Did Goodwin order all Turkeys to be plucked as soon as no more goose quills are left, and send down a cart to Darley to Mr Evans for a realm of paper, that you may write all the news, scandal, sense, and every thing in Derbyshire except the latter, which must come from Radborne. Pray have you dispatched to me a sensible book upon the subject of pies and tarts? How are the Family? I hope my Father is quite recovered. Pray give my very kindest love to himself, my Mother, Brothers and Sisters, and believe me to remain
your most truly affect Brother

E S Pole

Viseu

Feb'y 2nd

My love to Goodwin

D5557/21/48

My dear Anne

I am very much obliged to you for the letter and account of Lady Waterpark's duck. I think you must have had more amusement from the badness of the dinner, than had it been the most sumptuous entertainment in the kingdom. How did the Major carry off his new appointment? Was he entirely the man of the world, or did he chiefly confine his conversation to military affairs; does he approve of our late movements? Or would he have any other alterations take place; perhaps he may think we have been long enough at Viseu, if so he may set his mind at ease, for we are going to move, I believe this is not to be one of our most spirited, but a retrograde movement, which confines itself to the Brigades of Guards only, some say on account of our sickness & c & c; but whether we are going towards Coimbra or Oporto, I know nor care not, but I shall be very glad of a move, for now that I walk and ride about I begin to find I have seen what is to be seen in Viseu, and although the country round is most beautiful yet nevertheless I am tired of riding the same roads to eternity. Whether we go towards Coimbra, there we have a good town, if towards Oporto we get better wine. I only hope wherever we go it may be of service to our men. The Battalion left London between fourteen and fifteen hundred strong; this day if we were to march, we could (officers, servants, orderlies, and all together with those employed about the sick) only muster six hundred and twenty men, many of whom would be ill. Those sick who are present with the Battalion amount to (266). The sick absent in General hospitals amounts to (213) we have fourteen missing and two hundred and seventy dead. Which thins our Battalion to an extreme degree. The whole army tho' not so sickly as we are, yet many Regiments are not far from it. I forget the number. Michael Wilson I am sorry to say is sick, but not very bad. I have ordered the Serg't of the convalescent hospital to let him have what he wants, & shall go myself as soon as I have finished this and see what he wants; good living would set him to rights again I have no doubt, in a very short time; it is want of clothes and enough to eat that has killed all our men.

I wish Miss Craufurd had not written to me, I hate writing letters as much as I hate poison, I don't know when I shall be able to write an answer, I think never, her foolish stuff only spoiled your letter. I have no more to say but will write again as soon as I get into quarters, perhaps before, if we don't move at present. Give my best love to my Father, Mother, Brothers and Sisters
and believe me to remain
your most affect Brother

E S Pole

Viseu

Feb'y 7

Remember me to Goodwin

D5557/21/49

My dear Mother

I have today received your letter dated the sixteenth of January. The last post brought me several, which I was very thankful for, one from Miss Craufurd, which I can't answer, on account of my duty which runs very hard, for on account of my health, I am recommended one breakfast and one dinner per diem, which is as much as a person in my convalescent state can possibly get through. To write a letter into the Bargain might possibly fatigue me too much, and tho' I am tolerably well now, I might be thrown into a relapse, and that might prove fatal! Tyrconnel they say died in Russia, and Ward has a Regiment, so I suppose I tumble upon my Lieutenancy for nothing. I'm glad (I think) Wigsbies have been spiteful and ill natured, it serves for such pretty scandal, without which I could not live even in the Spanish land. I never credited their sincerity, nor now do I think much of anybody's. As for Lady F Webster I always thought her a b---h ever since I saw her one evening at her Father's in London, she has now become one by alliance, being coupled to a poodle! I met Mrs Scoville in a village near to Tordisillas, riding with Coll. Clews, or whatever his name is, she looked at me and I at her, so I made impudence to ask her very familiarly how she was, for as Anne says, she was much delighted at seeing Mr Western in an uninhabited part of England, so was I at seeing a Lady in an almost uninhabited part of Spain. The husband and Coll. stood in their stirrups, wondering what Guards Officer she had gotten acquainted with. I took her for Mrs or Mr Hilton's Sister so not knowing but the Coll. Clews had visited Radborne. I bowed him, and he again saluted me, then I inquired how are the Hiltons &c. He then introduced me to her husband, and we soon after parted. I never saw more of the good people 'till encamped near Pitiagua where they had quarters in the village. I went into the place to get wine and wood, as I was encouraging the men to pull down part of an old house, out pops his worship of Scovill, from amongst a cloud of dust and heaps of rubbish, and importuned me to assist him in saving the remains of his quarters, for such had that house the honor of being I assisted him, and have not fall'n in either his, or his wife's way since. He is post master general, or holds some such employment, but he will no more introduce me to L'd Wellington than the man in the moon.

When do you go to London? I shall go to England if I get my Lieutenancy, and the Beau (such call they Lord Wellington) will suffer me, on account of being unwell, for by that means I may save a good deal of time. I should stay a week I think at Lisboa for the sake of seeing the place &c. I am very glad to hear that you are all so well. I perhaps may not write again 'till we have changed quarters which I expect we shall do in a day or two, which I am very glad of, for I am tired of Viseu. Give my very kindest love to my Father, Brothers and Sisters.

and believe me to remain

your most affect Son

E S Pole

Viseu

Feb'y 8

Remember me to Goodwin and Mr Mundy &c.

Wilson is better

D5557/21/50

My dear Mary

I received your letter of the twenty third and I am sorry to hear of Reginald's obstinacy, tho' at his age I think it signifies nothing unless there is any chance of its continuing. He is going on in exactly the same way as I well remember was the case with Henry Boudier, who whenever his father asked him what profession he would be of, looked down upon the ground and wouldn't make any answer, 'till at last they discovered that he was eighteen or nineteen, and I believe someone decided for him, but he preferred the Church, and tho' Boudier has no interest in that line, his two boobies would chuse it for their profession, is the consequence of this folly? Both these young men are upon the world totally unprovided for any further than what they can earn upon a small curacy; this Boudier knows as well as that my Father has one or two livings, one of which he thinks he might ask for one of his sons should neither of my Brothers chuse the Church, and there was no one to give them to; and I am very much inclined to think it is at Wellingborough that Reg has taken offence at a Parsonage. And I do not think, but he would rather be a gentleman than enter any profession, he sees many gentlemen in the county who have none, and I think he would be one of those. Indeed what I found this upon, is some observations which I made about him and, which I never troubled my head about, any more than when they came across my mind. I can't put them down on paper, I have not room, moreover it is not a subject I can write upon. If he does not like the Church, I would not urge it, for should he enter it, and not fulfil the duties of his situation, he would say I was the cause of his entering a profession which he did not like, and my back would have to carry no small proportion of his neglects, and I should in some measure be answerable for him. Any other trade or profession, if neglected would go no further than here below, but a

Parson's is too serious to be muddled with, it's like touchpowder. My opinion is this, that circumstances so concur in this instance, that Reginald not chusing for himself, does not signify; I hope to reach England before next Holidays, if he does not then fix, I think he never will; and I would not give sixpence for the Boy's attention to anything thro' life; except he takes any accidental liking anywhere, then it may alter the case, I would for the present let him remain where he is. I am pretty clear of this, that no other profession will suit him, and he must either go into business or be a dead weight upon the Family if he does not chuse.

I have tried to answer Kitty's letter, but I cannot, she is I fear too much of a critic for me to undertake such an office. Hers was enough open to criticism, but what I turm as trivial. She would lay open to the amusement of her family. Has she married the house, or is she become a fixture? She was returned upon the strength of the Family in your first letter, and she has been ever since. Is Clan Alpine married? What do you think of the young gentleman's conduct? I think he is unworthy of my acquaintance, which will not extend very far that way on my return. You always knew my opinion that I entertained respecting the whole of that love affair. I've amalicious pleasure tho', in the girl being jilted. She deserves it for giving way to the addresses of such a cookoo, and being so befooled by him. I felt a little hurt the evening before we marched, I went, being on guard, to the Craufurd's house in my Regimental great coat and cap, to drink tea and wish them goodbye according to appointment. But when I entered the room I was welcomed by a general stare (the Churchills were there). John's love made some blue, and very witty remark upon me, Mrs Chew[?] said I looked like a pilgrim, and they amused themselves all round at my expense. I felt a little relieved by Kitty's & Sam's presence to whom I spoke a little &c; but at the end of ten minutes my brass was exhausted and I was relieved by Tom Cocks saying he would walk down with me to St James', which he accordingly did, and very kindly bid me use his name should I meet Major Cocks of the 79 in Portugal. Thus well out of this scrape I shall be upon my guard another time. You may think that I have taken offence at them, but that is not the case. They always made themselves merry at my cost, which when alone, I bore in joke, but latterly before the Churchills I began to be tired of their wit, and when I saw that it was done highly, and not in good part, and particularly the last night, I became disgusted. Nixon has had a letter from my Father but has not heard of some time from young Jem..y, what is the reason he never writes? I don't think he has heard from him scarcely since he has been at Viseu. Nixon says S'r W Bumbold is in a bad way, that is one of Solomon's breed. I don't think it honest in a man to marry a woman with large fortune, and spend it in the childish manner that he has done. Our Battalions march tomorrow for Sabugosa and its neighbourhood about two or three leagues from hence. I don't know whether I will go there or not; if the accommodations are good I shall move, if not I remain where I am for a short time longer. I am now very well again, but don't do any duty. I am not so strong as before, but in point of health better, I feel as if I had been thoroughly cleansed. Charles is tolerably well, and Michael Wilson mending fast. The mortality of the Regiment has been equal to what it was in Walcharen, and we still continue to fall away very fast, although the disorder is at length abating. One company has lost five and forty men underground, besides what are now sick. You say the ground is covered with snow; here it has been very mild, pleasant spring weather, yesterday and today have rained incessantly, but I suppose in about a week or so, the fine weather will return again. How comes it that George Mundy is so fast with Miss Bonell. I always thought her mamma kept her for someone of good fortune. I wish she may marry out of the county. Whoever gets her will have a lumping pennyworth. Give my very kindest love to my Father, Mother, Brothers and Sisters and believe me my dearest Mary to remain

your most affect Brother

E S Pole

Viseu

February 16

D5557/21/51

My dear Father

I am sorry to say Lord Wellington has refused all the officers down to myself, leave to join the second Battalion, which in consequence will prevent my going to do the Lisbon duty as soon as I expected. It is of no further consequence than I had rather be amusing myself for the next month at Lisbon than remaining here in Viseu. I am still here, although the battalion has marched into the neighbouring villages, but really the quarters there are so bad, that I prefer remaining where I am. I may nevertheless look out for a good quarter. If such an one is to be found, in some other village than where my company is quartered, for I must confes(s) I begin to find it being rather wearisome being totally without society. As our officers' leave has been refused, my letters had better be directed as usual; direct them to the Batt'n and I shall always be able to get them. I expect another post in a day or two, which I shall be very glad to receive, for I very much want to hear what you have seen and done at Chatsworth. Did you meet the Waterparks there? I'll venture to affirm there was some jealousies passed between the Families. They by all accounts seem to be a very invidious race. But what surprises me most is master Henry Cavendish getting a majority in the Staffordshire Militia; Is Lord

Uxbri(d)ge, or who is, Lord Lieutenant? There must be someone he would rather oblige than Mr Wigsby, at least so I should have thought, and yet it may stop Mr Paddy asking for a better thing, which he is a likely person enough to do, should any opportunity occur of his getting anything worth having. When do you think of going to London. I should suppose you will be there when I leave this country, and indeed if my Mother intends giving a ball this year, the sooner I should think the better. Things will be cheaper and there won't be many People in London. Is John Craufurd married, or does he intend to marry this girl? I think it is a pretty good lesson to all misses, not to give way too much to the addresses of young masters, whereby they only cover themselves and put themselves under some man's power, who then has it in his power to brag and laugh at them. I must say I consider Donald a very great idiot for coming out here, he will repent it before he has been here long. I suppose he thinks he will learn something from experience, but how mortally disappointed he will be when he finds himself nobody, and perhaps well hauled over the coals by some fool whom he despises for perhaps doing something or other by way of gaining information. The stupidity and idleness of this life is not to be told, and without a man has a most supinely inactive mind, he must find a very great want of employment. A man will very soon find himself of less consequence than he imagines, when he comes to a little hard living &c. If I come out again I will bring more books with me, and if he, Donald, has not sailed, do write to him and say how very necessary an article he will find a few pounds of such baggage. The weather has been delightful. I have never known a day but you might very well sit with your window open, and the Sun sets as it does in England in Summer, but I had rather be sitting over a fire and hear the wind beat against the window, than see these beasts sitting at their doors singing their national song all evening through. Pray give my very best love to my Mother Brothers and Sisters and believe me my dear Father to remain your most affect Son

E S Pole

Viseu

Feb'y 24

D5557/21/52

My dear Charlotte

As tomorrow is post day, I write this that it may go early before the post leaves Viseu. I expect a letter tomorrow myself, for the letters generally arrive here on Tuesday and it is now five or six weeks since I have heard from England, for the wind has been contrary almost all of that time; but now that it has changed to north, I expect packets without end. I was this morning much surprised at hearing that the light division had reported themselves ready to begin another campaign; but alas! on looking into the state of affairs with regard to our regiments, our two Battalions have nine hundred and four sick, and five hundred and sixty three dead, and the other Reg'ts are very unhealthy. One of our companies has only four men well; so you may conceive what pretty havoc this fever has made among us. I am now totally well recovered, and can also give a very good account of Charles, who is like myself very well. Michael Wilson I am sorry to say has left the convalescent hospital to go to the general hospital on account of very bad swelled legs, but his fever has left him and I hope he will do well. This is the carnival or intrude as these people call it. I believe they are licensed to do anything now. The men throw water at the ladies, who in return dab a handful of flour in their necks, and between the two, before night the town is pretty well whitened and washed; they however shew us great respect and don't pretend to play tricks upon us, which is on the whole full as pleasant, for I don't see the wit in having my stock full of meal. They have no fun about them, and tho' this is their greatest holyday, they do nothing but make a noise in the streets, and dirty one another all over. A poor woman this morning at a Franciscan convent, by way of penance, walked on her knees about four hundred yards, and up and down a flight of stairs. She was pretty well tired when she was done. The convent is partly occupied by monks, and partly by convalescent guardsmen, and the situation the most beautiful I ever saw in the whole course of my life. There was a little Saint in a bag[?] wig and plush breeches, but the men called it the old gentleman, and I believe would have eaten it if the good father had not removed it in time. I rather like the monks, they seem a harmless, well fed, idle race, do some good and no harm. I can imagine them something like fellows of a College in their way of living. I have nothing more to say but hope tomorrow to have a letter to answer, which I am anxious for, that I may hear what has been going on at Chatsworth. Pray give my very best love to my Father, Mother, Brothers and Sisters, and believe me to remain your most truly affect Brother

E S Pole

Viseu

March 1

Remember me to Goodwin

D5557/21/53

My dear Mother

It is so very lately since, that I wrote home, that nothing has taken place worth mentioning since I did write. I am very happy to hear that Dr Darwin has been of so essential service, not only to yourself, but the whole Family, for I am sure that they must all be equally glad of your recovery, with myself, who am sure felt very great pleasure in hearing that you had gotten rid of so troublesome a complaint, and one that has remained so long with you. I am very considerably better, indeed with respect to a loss of a little (I may say fat) and a certain debility, which is not to be recovered all at once, very little ails me. I recover my strength daily, and have now a very good appetite. I have not quite gotten my taste, but feel a very great difference every meal. One of which I will now lay aside my pen to take account of, otherwise it will be cold. I am extremely comfortable at Viseu, and hope the weather (indeed the winter will prevent it) will not at present allow us again to take the field; as nothing I dread more than a march again into Spain. And I should not be particularly sorry if L'd Wellington was to make another fruitless attempt upon Burgos. We are now getting provisions &c in very good supply, by paying for them, and up the country nothing is to be had, added to the whole of it being a desert, from the ravages two armies must of necessity make. Indeed at our camp, or rather opposite Tordisillas; I was very much astonished at the army being short of wood, not a tree or stick to be seen, excepting on that side of the River, which the French held possession of; at their pulling down a tolerably handsome Church, the German legion, which is famous for any expedition of that kind, began with the beams of a sort of barn adjoining the Church, our people were not long in following their example, by which means you may conclude that the house did not stand long; but they then fell foul upon the Church, and one day I observed some things glittering in Sun, approaching towards the Camp, I suspected what it might be, as it afterwards turned out, the Germans first, and then our men had fallen foul of the altar piece, the roof having become dangerous and they not having proper tools for taking it down properly. The Spanish altarpieces are very gaudily gilt, made of wood, are adorned with all manner of carved figures, and reach nearly to the ceiling, and in a fine large gray stone church, I think have a very heavy and awkward appearance, and are very much misplaced.

I was very much shocked at hearing some of the men crack their jokes upon the carved images, intended to represent angels &c which they would call Jasuses. And one Sunday as some men of different Reg'ts went to get wood, thirteen were killed by the beams &c. One of our Reg't lost his life, it might be a judgement upon them! But what can men do, not a stick to be had, and in a barren vineyard, encamped and nothing to cook with? This Church was full four miles off, a good distance to bring wood into Camp every day!! L'd Wellington's camp is this; you halt in open column of companies as you may have seen men standing on parade in this manner, company 1, company 2, company 3, and there they pile arms. All weathers are on a march, or in camp blessed my stars, and been thankful that I had a good tent well lined, which has often kept the wet quite away from me. However I am now at Viseu, where I am very comfortable and hope to remain. I have been able to get some good clothes here, which I wanted. Pray give my very best love to my Father, Brothers & Sisters and believe me to remain my dearest Mother
your most truly affect Son

E S Pole

It is now a very long time since I have hear from you. I wish some of the Family would write. My letters come thro' Lisbon.

[no date or postmark]

D5557/21/54

[only cover with address, postmarked Feb 1813]

How is Goodwin. Remember me to her

D5557/21/55

My dear Mary

I have received a letter from Anne this morning and one from you which I did not get 'till as I was sitting down to dinner, but as yours is the longest and has most news I answer it only, having written home so lately. Your letter is dated January third, and gives me account of your ball. I congratulated my Mother her having so good an one, but more particularly on Lady Tamworth being there, which certainly must have been intended as a compliment. I'm very glad to find that you think as I have always done that the Cavendishes are not sincere; it has always been my opinion that people, with whom we have only little more than common acquaintance, will serve us only in what was no more than a civil speach or so, what would be glad if any accident might happen to you, could it serve their turn; what mother that does not love her own cubs the best! whence arises these little jealousies, which arise in high life as well as low, from one daughter being better off for a partner at a ball than another; I don't understand what you mean by the Cokes being right in regard to the Wigsbis I myself

don't believe that either the Cokes, Cavendishes, Kitty Craufurd or any one of them would care sixpence for any of you, would it serve their end by acting otherwise. For my part, I think people only serve you, to serve themselves. I was quite angry at Anne, when in a former letter she said, she was quite enraptured with the Cavendish girls, with Mr Westcomb and somebody else; I have found by living constantly with men and in straight situations their selfishness, which all certainly goes off when they come to good quarters and comfortable living. I was the same once, and I mean, liked everyone that I saw, when I first went into the Guards, but have altered my opinion since I have been encamped &c. Perhaps H Cavendish may learn a little of the world, when he come to have been in quarters with the Staffordshire Militia. Why does he not come out to Portugal with the Guards, or some good Regiment, and live with his superiors & equals, not command a parcel of farmer's sons, at whose mess, and in whose company he must live, and be only respected for being a young lord. Send him to us, and we'll try and make a man of him. I would rather make my way again up the Ensigns in the Guards. When on the march from Rodrigo, sometimes, as some of our officers would sit in my tent, drinking their wine, which was sour saving a little sugar boiled in it, and as I lay on the ground in my bearskin, they would laughing say, Did I not wish I was Lt. Coll. of Derbyshire Militia & then Derby Militia order arms &c. If it had not been for our jokes on those who stayed at home in clean red coats, we should never have got over our march I do believe. We always kept up the ball somehow or other all the march through. Had I not been ill, I should have done extremely well the whole of my hitherto short campaign. I am better now with my officers than I ever remember to have been before, and moreover do not at all dislike Portugal. My health is now very nearly restored, as you may see from what I am now enabled to do, which I shall say anon. I first felt myself ill as I was making myself a fort at Salamanca. The next day, Bagot, one of the Surgeons, gave me some salts and thought me well, so thought I; but we were ordered to march next day, and I, tho' I only had to march to Salamanca, found myself completely tired when I got there and no quarters were to be had, and we should have had none if Lambert had not given us a room in his, which happened to be remarkably good ones. We had a mutton chop, which I ate little of, when suddenly an order came for us to march; we bivouacked that night, which I believe increased my being unwell and having my skin pores open from medicine, added to a drizzling rain which fell part of the night, certainly did me no good, tho' used to bivouack before without any inconvenience. If you lay out without covering except a cloak or so, that is called bivouacking. I was afterwards reduced to riding on a gun, and then to a spring waggon between Salamanca and Rodrigo. I had some chance of being taken, the other waggons also; we halted that night, and tho' the others slept in the waggon, I got out and went into a cottage close by, which was full of all sorts of soldiers English and Portuguese, who all lay upon the floor; I did not like being cramped in the waggon, so lay down too as near the fire as I could. I laid my head upon the soft hinder part of a gun driver, who wrapt in Somnus' arms, snored, unconscious of the honor I did him, or he me (if you please) and my feet upon the side of some soldier or other, in so great request was this floor. We slept well tho' the enemy were close by, and we were by ourselves and defenceless; however we got to Rodrigo, and then to Gallegos, where we halted two or three days. I there received a letter from my Mother and one from yourself. I was there so ill, and had such a blindness in my eyes that tho' I hardly managed to read them, I could not answer either, for when I tired, I could not see how the lines ran, and how to write, and to guide my pen I knew not, for my wrist was weak and I was almost blind. From hence I rode commissary mules which I was glad of, not being amused with poor men groaning, some dying, and not having to leave a dead man by the road every now and then, to get off my mule to lay down, and then be lifted on again.

D5557/21/56

[cover only, with address, stamped Viseu]

D5557/21/57

My dear Mother

I now begin to be heartily tired of waiting for a post, five mails are now due, and I do not know when we shall ever have another. Tuesday must bring us letters, and as it is five weeks since we have heard, there must be some very great news, at least plenty of it, and letters too I should hope. I have now moved my quarters from Viseu, to a small village called Perada, the company is quartered here, and I am much more comfortable living with them, than by myself at a dirty cold town as Viseu. The weather is extremely fine, there is always a warmth in the sun tempered by a gentle March gale, the pleasantest thing imaginable, perfectly warm yet neither too hot or too cold. Vegetation is also getting forward, the trees are coming out, and the heath which grows to six or eight foot is in full bloom. We are quartered in the most beautiful country you can possibly conceive, nine miles from Viseu, the hills generally speaking are rocks covered with pines and this broom, with rivers running in the vallies, at the bottom of which, there is generally some little narrow meadows, which from being flooded, have all year round a most beautiful vivid green appearance. The whole country is beautiful, bold and romantic.

I was the other day caught in an orange tree, as I was agreeably regaling myself with the fruit. The unhappy landlord of the place where the orange trees grew, finding words would not avail, threw turf which proving no more effectual, tried the virtue of stones, which succeeded admirably, but not 'till my cap was filled with the golden fruit. But as orange trees are very plentiful, the fruit was no object, and it was more in joke than otherwise.

I have been on a fool's errand to the Estrella to find a lake on top of the chain of hills, I travelled one day from Viseu, and after toiling all day, at last as evening fell in, I met a foraging party who told me it was but a quarter of a league to the next town, on the left hand side of the road. I travelled on until it became perfectly dark and rained most plentifully, thro' the darkness of night we missed the town which was a little to the left, out of the road. I then thought I was on a fool's errand, so said to Hill who was with me, that I thought we had better lay ourselves down under a rock and make the best of the night, but he being an older soldier than I said he preferred walking on the road (which however is difficult to be done here, the roads being so extremely bad) and at last we must come to an house. This I resolved upon and followed the path 'till we came to a place where there was a river which made a roaring as it rolled along, at last a bridge obstructed the way, and I thought I saw a light not far down it, tho' up the stream, I thought also it was Jack a lantern, but on seeing it again and moving &c, I made to it leaving Hill with the horses on the bridge, it was a miller's cottage, whose door was so well barred, that no admittance could be gained, 'till after a long persuasion he opened the door, which he would as soon have shut, had I not prevented him (I called to Hill) he was frightened, the wife screamed, the children cried, and the cat ran out of the house. At last by persuasion and compulsion, I cooked my supper and slept in a shed next the house with horses and servant &c, the house which was mill and all only being big enough for the owner's couch & fireplace. I got the horses something to eat and slept well, which was all I wished at that time. Next day we proceeded up the mountain, but when there, we were told the lakes were four or five leagues off, no trifling two days' journey in this country, so as I expected letters, and for other reasons, I set off again towards Viseu, getting a tolerable quarter in a miserable village that night, and getting home the next day. Resolved to go no more lake hunting. I have nothing more to say, but shall be much disappointed if letters do not arrive next Tuesday. Pray give my very best love to my Father, Brothers and Sisters

Believe me to remain dear Mother

your most truly affect Son

E S Pole

Perada

March 8

D5557/21/58

My dear Anne

I have received letters up to the twelfth, but no later, I therefore expect, as mails have arrived as late as the fifteenth, to receive more on Tuesday. I am very glad to hear that I am gazetted Captain, but I fear it is not in my power to go to England before I am relieved, which will not be the case at present. Officers, I understand, are sent out to relieve us, but they must arrive up to the army before the Marquis will allow us to go home. I have not seen Donald Craufurd yet, and very probably if I were to remain here twelve months, I should not see him. At present it would be impossible, for he cannot have got farther than Lisbon, where no doubt but he will be kept some time, to recover the horses from any fatigue they may have sustained during their passage. It is possible I may meet him, or I may not, I should certainly see him if I could, as I should be very happy to meet with another acquaintance here, but my only chance is his being cantoned near me, or when the army meets together, tho' should I hear of his arrival at any town near, I would go over to see him.

I will doubtless attend to my mother's wishes with regard to the dresses. I may meet with such as she describes or not, for people do not understand the nature of a convent exactly in England. The nuns will not let me in, and were I to ask for gowns thro' the grating, I most likely should not only be laughed at, but be refused, as they would only think an English officer was making a joke of them, in asking for things he could have no use for. Moreover, as I understand nothing about dress for Ladies, I might only do as some officers did at Walcheren, where they bought some very excellent English goods, for which they paid five times their worth. However I'll try; but you will only be disappointed, for in a country where women wear nothing but a black hood and gown, I do not expect to see worked dresses, and were there such things, I do not know where to find them. If my Father wishes, I will bring either a mule or an ass, but he will get either of them much better in England; what animals there are, are all employed for the army, and they, like the inhabitants themselves, are much inferior to the English. The Portuguese horses are infamously bad, and the asses little better, and the mules which are the best animals these creatures possess, are not the superior mule one expects them to be; they are slow and only fitted for these roads; the draught work is all done by oxen, and yet I have never seen a cow in the country. I am glad to hear that you have had so pleasant a journey to

Chatsworth, but do not understand why the Waterparks were not there; but what I like most is the duke receiving you all like gentlepeople, and not as those who wish to make up to him because he is a duke. He is too high in life for me to consider him as a companion or an equal, therefore I could never know him intimately. Has Kitty left you, the Lununers will make a wisit of longer than a veek if the vonce begin. John is I conclude is united e're this to his love, or as she would say, united so that no dissolution can take place, or has CLANALPINE jilted the dear. Blessings on her, is she jilted? I never yet heard or read of a jilted Philosopher. How disappoointed her mamma will be (Peg & Kitty, but particularly Mag) were cracking off the Churchills to me, and after extolling them up to the blue sky, told me they were an even older branch of the great Duke of Marlborough than the present Duke, I stared, no says Mag, older did I say? Yes said I, you did. Mag cried hum, why said Mag, between ourselves, it is – hum – that – a – that they are an ----- branch. So, said I, what branch? Why there, said Mag, to tell you the truth they are an illegitimate branch, but the present family are very clever. Aye, thought I. I know Jacky better than to think he'll marry Miss Churchill. He's only coqueting a little, and so it will prove.

I have at last received a letter from Grimstead, he has arrived in England, and says that they shall never catch him out of it again, it's quite good enough for him. The Viscount Bury is making a great fool of himself here, and the officers in general look upon him as such. I have nothing to say but hope on the day that I put this into the post, to receive a good mess of scandal. Dear Anne, pray give my very best and kindest love to my Father, Mother Brothers and Sisters and believe me to remain
your most truly affect Brother

E S Pole

Perada

March 16

My love to Goodwin

D5557/21/59

My dear Mother

Excuse a short line to say I am well, for really I am in the greatest haste to go to Viseu, where I hope to see some more letters from England. I had written two or three letters which should have gone by last post, but were unluckily forgotten. There is a pretty well founded report that our Battalions are for Oporto, there to recover their health, if so we march in a day or two, but I shall hear more today. I have had a letter from Donald, but despair of ever seeing him. The lad seems pleased enough at coming out, he's young and he will know better anon.

I hope today to hear a good dish of news one way or other. Pray give my very kindest love to my Father, Brothers and sisters, believe me my dearest Mother
your most truly affect Son

E S Pole

Perada

March 24

D5557/21/60

My dear Sacheverell

I fear you have not received so many letters nor then letters so regular as you ought to have done, we have been in eager hope of seeing you again in England, as you have been now Captain for the last two months. I wish you could make it convenient to return home, for I fear my health is very seriously in the decline, and I should wish to see you at home before any very material change takes place. I have been very unwell all the winter, and certainly get daily worse, and were it not for the early expectation of fine weather and warmer days, I should be under immediate apprehensions, but as spring comes in fast, I may get about again. I fear I am too weak to get to London. Dr Darwin who was with me yesterday, recommends me staying at home this spring. Your mother and sisters are now very well, they fret themselves concerning me. I wish it was otherwise, but it is not to be prevented. Were you with me I should feel more at ease and it would be a great consolation to them. .. Merchant has got The Lieutenancy of Mr Elliott by last night's gazette, and Nixon who has just left us, expects very soon to be sent to Portugal; there are but two men before him. Grimstead has written to your mother. He is now laid up at Epsom dangerously ill. May God Almighty bless you and send you a prosperous voyage home again & I I myself with your Mother and Sister with regards your most affectionate S C Pole

Radborne April 2nd 1813

my Father's last letter to me *[written on cover]*

D5557/21/61

My dear Anne

I have just time to send you a line to say that I am well. You of course know that I am at Oporto which town I think extremely pleasant, although these good people do very little in the way of taking any sort of pleasure at this time, being Lent, but when this is over, the opera will open, which with a Play house is I believe the only public amusement these people have. I believe the inhabitants are very well inclined to shew the Guards any civility in their power, but hardly know how to set about doing it. Donna Anna [??]jeea has done all in her power, she is an old Dowager, and gave us all a general invitation the first night we came here. I also went to a card party, stupid enough, which with Sir Nicholas Trantshall is all I have as yet seen of the customs of the place. At Gen. Trant's, on entering the room, which was well crowded and hot in excellent proportion, one of his officers, who is I suppose factotum, asked me if I would dance. I answered in the affirmative, whereupon he introduced me to a damsel of the usual colour, which the natives generally assume under this degree of latitude, but pretty enough, and well bred; I led the lady to the top of the dance, but was superseded by Coll. Lambert and his partner, and was soon after sent into another room to make another set. I was the top but one of this also, then I took the opportunity of asking my little cherub in that language which I speak most fluently, whether she could speak it also. She understood me and said no. I then asked her in French if she could talk that language, no was the answer I received. I then enquired in Spanish if she could speak it. She could not, but enquired again of me if I could talk Portugese. I said I spoke scarcely anything of the tongue having but shortly arrived in this country from Spain &c. I said a few things which I spel'd out as well as I could, and succeeded to my utmost satisfaction through two dances, when I was glad to give o'er, on account of the heat of the room and extreme crowd into which I was pushed in the dancing room. The Portuguese dames are much better behaved than our lasses in Britain. There was at Coll. Trant's no pushing for precedence, no missish pride, and nothing disagreeable in the company, but every one knew how to behave, as if they were conscious of being in good company. I have a great objection to the custom of the men engaging themselves five or six dances immediately upon their coming into the room, which leaves no girls disengaged for those who come in afterwards. There was a great friend of mine there, a nun, who has leave of absence from her convent. She is a middle aged (or about thirty) Lady, extremely the gentlewoman, and appears as if she understood something of the world. We had a good deal of conversation, and should have had more, had either of two fat old ladies, who were posted on either side of her, be inclined to have given me up a place. I am extremely partial to the nuns, and spend much of my time in talking to them in the different convents. I think them very pleasant women, with none of the silliness of London misses. Were I a woman, I'd turn nun! Lord Wellington has not yet given us leave to go home. I expected it in a fortnight or three weeks, when I shall go to Lisbon, where I shall stay until I have seen every thing worthy of seeing, and then repair to England. I have to return you my kindest thanks for none of you having sent me any letters these last four weeks, but you now need send no more, as I shall not be able to receive them before I am on my way home as they will go round by Oporto &c &c. Perhaps I may not write any more as you know I am in Oporto and doing very well. I beg when I do go home, I may not be made a goose of, for I am neither Lord Wellington nor Marshall Beresford. As I am now out here, I shall take my time and see every thing that I can, both here & at Lisboa. Pray give my best love to my Father, Mother, Brothers & Sister.

and Believe me dear Child

to remain your most affect Brother

E S Pole

Oporto

April 14 [postmarked 5 May 1813]

D5557/21/62

Adj't General's Office

Frenada 17th April 1813

Sir

In answer to your letter of the 15th instant covering an application for leave of Absence to the Officer named in the margin (Capt'n Pole) of the 1st Regiment of Foot Guards I have the honor to inform you that His Excellency the Commander of the Forces has been pleased to grant leave to that Officer to proceed to England to join the 2nd Battalion.

I have the honor to be

Sir

Your very obed't Serv't

(Signed) Aylmer Col.

D A Gen'l

To

Lieut. Col. Bouverie
AA General
1st Division of Infantry
A true Extract
[signed] W Miller
[signed]

D5557/21/63

My dear Father

It is with the utmost regret that I the other day received a letter from you in which you are complaining of your ill health. I have again experienced the trouble of having my leave refused from a fool's blunder L. Aylmer but hope to receive it tomorrow, if so be the case I hope to go to Lisbon in a week or ten days when I will immediately set out for England. There are many of us who are in the most anxious expectation of receiving leave tomorrow. Pray give my very best love to my Mother Brothers and Sisters and believe me to remain your most truly affect Son.

E S Pole

Oporto

April 27

Adj't Generals Office
17th April 1813

Letters re death of German Francis Chandos Pole 1821²

D5557/22/1

Dear Brother

I Begin a letter to you that I may be in time for a vessel that will sail in 5 or 6 days as a vessel to England is very scarce. If you find any faults in the letter you must attribute them to their true cause my being positively too weak to write we have had such a passage as never hardly was known but yet we have had about the shortest of any vessel that has arrived it blew nearly a gale the whole but one night it was a perfect hurricane such as you meet with once in 6 or 7 years I think we were 22 days from Cork 12 of which were beating up within 150 miles of the island. The voyage brought me down very much & has made me excessively weak but here we are at last & I hope to be in our own house soon as we are in the most noisy street in the town. The town is large but the streets so narrow & all paved with slippery lava. Every thing carried on by poneys mules & more especially oxen with a sort of sledge. People resemble exactly the features I have seen of the Portuguese & are like no other nations I ever saw they appear to be very civil & yet there is not a plain in the Island. It is nothing but one or several enormous mountains rising immediately from the sea hardly leaving you a place to land we have now several of your fruits and those of the west I noties it is volcanic but no fine specimens at how often & said he found mat... lead nonsense. The English Merchants are very kind indeed as the Consul it is perfectly impossible to express what he has gone through is really astonishing. These Portuguese are worse than any nation I ever saw it is nearly impossible to settle with them & do quibble so dreadfully. It is so hot we sitt with our windows open. There are a great variety of flowers but not a timber tree. Give my love to Anna Maria & I remain your ever affect brother

German F C Pole

Funchal Madeira January 20 1821

[letter addressed to S C Pole, Radborne, Derby]

D5557/22/2

Sunday

My dear Pole

It falls to my lot to communicate to you the melancholy tidings which I've no doubt you may have had reason to fear would take place.

We have this day past received a letter from Mr Gamble giving an account of poor German's death, he departed this life poor Boy without any apparent suffering on the 1st of Feb'y. This will be a melancholy subject My Dear Pole for you to communicate to your Mother, tho' I suppose she has been prepared for the worst accounts from Madeira, the post is waiting. You shall have Mr Gambles letter of the contents by post. D....y is not very tho' very composed.

Ever in haste My Dear Pole

y'r aff..... *[signature illegible]*

² Derbyshire Record Office Ref. No: D5557/22/1-2