

[1799] "I was shipped in the King's packet, the *Lady Harriet*, commanded by Captain Dillon, and of which my eldest sister's husband, Mr. Steele, was the sailing master... Our own force was only 6 short 6 pounders, and a crew of about 30 men. The enemy mounted 30 guns, long 18-pounders, with a crew of more than 300 men ... we made the land, passed by the entrance to the great naval arsenal of Spain, **Ferrol, and entered Corunna**. Several months passed away in this [prison]. The authorities of Corunna, finding our maintenance, scanty as it was, too burthensome to be continued, proposed to give us our liberty, on condition of our leaving their city and **going by land to Oporto or Lisbon**. The stipulated allowance for our maintenance on the road was to be a '*crusada nova*' per head - about two shillings English, for every hundred miles - which, considering that distance to occupy eight ordinary days' march, made about threepence halfpenny per day for each person.. We were about 50 sailors and six passengers. (For a lady and her children) the seamen voluntarily made a capacious sedan-chair out of the branches of trees by the way-side, assisted by the carpenter and his mates. To this was attached two long poles, one on each side, by which the chair containing the party could be lifted from the ground; and **eight men**, two at each pole before and two behind, **carried this litter on their shoulders the whole of the way**, to the intense delight of the children and to the great relief of their mother, who could never have performed the journey without such aid....

The frontier town and fortress on the Spanish side is named **Tuy**. It appeared about as large as Falmouth, but more regularly built. We passed through **Barcelos**, on the Cavado river. Two days march from hence - about thirty miles - brought us at length to **Oporto** where it was arranged that we should halt for a week. We had free liberty to roam about during the day. "Next to Lisbon it was the most beautiful city I had ever seen."

There were many English vessels at Oporto about to sail soon for England; we had hoped to have obtained a passage in some of them. For reasons which I never knew, we were obliged to continue our march towards Lisbon. We had to resume our weary and foot-sore journey... At Coimbra, we enjoyed the rest it afforded us exceedingly. We hastened on by daily marches of ten or twelve miles towards **Abrantes**, on the Tagus, where we found boats descending that stream to Lisbon, giving us the luxury of water conveyance, for which we now longed. In this journey we had to cross a lofty range of mountains, running through **Estramadura**, and the toilsome ascent, rocky passes, and sudden declivities of this great barrier made its traverse infinitely tedious and painful. We felt, therefore, as if we had reached a paradise, when we came to **Abrantes**. The town of Abrantes is much smaller than Corunna, St.Iago, [Santiago] or Coimbra; but it was strongly fortified, and, being the highest point of navigation on the Tagus for boats of large size, is the seat of the most active commerce for conveying by water the produce of the interior of the capital. We floated down the stream in a dreamy and languid repose, which was like a new existence to us. The whole distance was about a hundred miles from Abrantes to **Lisbon**. It was really delicious to sit or lie along on the cargo, to gaze around upon the many beautiful scenes which the **Tagus** presents on either side.

Our joy was soon damped by the intelligence - the first we had on landing - that there were **pressgangs** prowling along the river and the shore, seizing all Englishmen that could be found, to fill the places of the dead and wounded, and to help navigate the fleet and prizes to England... As no protection or excuse for exemption was admitted, [allowed] some of our party were seized, handcuffed, and dragged into the boats by the pressgangs, or forced at the point of the cutlass, as if they had been enemies and not fellow-countrymen. A few only escaped by concealment, among whom **I, fortunately, happened to be one**.

