

France seems unstoppable, the Republican government, by force of numbers of people, drive all before them and will do so as long as they find means to keep going. One would think so great an Army would destroy itself by ruining the country, wheresoever they come, but we have long thought so and still they go on. God knows how it will end, but I think if we had peace with them they would do the work themselves, by a civil war in France.

Collingwood to Dr Alexander Carlyle (July 1794)

We arrived at St Fiorenzo in Corsica on the 23rd of this month. A more miserable island is scarcely known, the most savage country, barren brown mountains, rearing their rugged, wrinkled, heads to the skies: the valleys produce a little corn, bad wine and olives, but the barbarians who inhabit there have not industry to cultivate any of them. Their manners are savage, their ignorance is terrible, but worst of all they hate the English. Every man of them travels in the country with a rifle, a gun and a dagger, with which he kills with skill such game or Englishmen as he may chance to meet in his way - the ships of war have lost several men stabbed by those fellows - and do it with the same peace of mind that an old butcher kills a pig.

Collingwood to Sir Edward Blackett (Aug 1795)



A guillotine blade. The guillotine was used to execute the enemies of France

The French, filled with pride over their victories of their armies, and having been made rich by the plunder of those countries they overrun, show no willingness to come to peace. In Italy they have collected immense sums of gold and silver, but every monument of art and magnificence which has made a country respectable and is moveable, they carry off. Their army is a band of robbers.

Collingwood to Sir Edward Blackett (August 1796)