

Literature,

REVIEW.

FROM THE SCOTTISH LITERARY GAZETTE.

MAJOR LEITH HAY'S NARRATIVE.

MAJOR LEITH HAY'S Narrative of the Peninsular War, will be published, we understand, in a few days. We have been favoured with a look of the work, which is handsomely printed by Ballantyne, and embellished with a number of illustrative engravings of many interesting scenes; and have extracted the following account of the Spanish *Guerillas*, which, in the present state of that kingdom, cannot fail to attract notice:

I have not in the course of this narrative, hitherto noticed, with sufficient attention, a very influential, and extraordinarily constituted force, namely, the *Guerillas*—partisans equally dreaded by the enemy, and hated by their own countrymen: a force combining many valuable qualities, with great laxity of principle, frequently exhibiting undaunted courage and adventurous temerity, on other occasions shrinking from conflict, and only formidable to the unfortunate inhabitants subjected to their frequently unreasonable exactions.

The foundation of the Spanish *Guerilla* force is to be ascribed to the nearly universal spirit of hostility to the French aggression. That feeling, strongly implanted as it was in the minds of a turbulent, naturally warlike, noble, though misgoverned, people, induced a very general desire to participate in the struggle carrying on throughout the whole extent of the monarchy. This unsettled and hostile inclination became strengthened by the circumstances under which the civilians suffered during the devastating system of subjection to the constant visits of different armies or bodies of troops, all burdensome, and, unfortunately, at times presenting not a very distinct difference of conduct in the acknowledged enemy, the soldier of the country, or his more disciplined, but not more easily reconciled, friend and ally. It requires no additional testimony to establish the fact, that not only the armies, but the population of Spain were in active hostility to the French. The city, the agricultural village, the ruined convent, alike sent forth persons to swell the *Guerilla* force. At the commencement of the war in 1808 no such bands existed; nor was it until the provincial jurisdictions had shaken the basis of regular government, and subsequent to the dispersion of the Spanish armies, that these partisans made their appearance. The dispersed and lawless Spanish soldiery found their safety dependent on forming parties sufficiently numerous to resist the authority of the *corregidores* and *alcaldes*, and to enforce demands made in parts of the country where no power, either civil or military, existed sufficiently formidable to curb their exactions, or restrain the self-created importance they did not hesitate to assume.

This system, successfully adopted in a country whose government had become a chaos, was speedily enlarged upon. The marauders chose a chief and these men, no longer contemplating a return to their regiments, became the nucleus of every *Guerilla* party; their military knowledge and habits, their uniform and equipment, serving as a defective model to others hitherto uninitiated. These parties soon became numerous, but a spirit of enterprise, and successful command, only distinguished a few of the leaders; consequently the generality of the bands gained little in numerical strength, or were destined to arrive at great notoriety; but the most insignificant were objects of terror to the French troops, in as much as their vicinity rendered the slightest removal from quarters a matter of captivity or death.

Of the most distinguished *Guerilla* leaders may be cited, the *Minao*, the *Empicinado*, Don Julian Sanchez, the *Medico*, *Porlier*, the *Cura*, and *Chaleco*, these all commanded numerous and formidable bands, and were of essential service to the allied cause.

Nothing could be more motley than the usual array of the *Guerilla* bands. Provided a certain degree of individual military appearance prevailed, no effort at uniformity of dress or appointment was considered essentially necessary. The *Guerilla* generally became equipped with spoils from the soldiery of other countries, or a mixture of the most gaudy and tawdry dresses of his own. The flaring scarlet and light-blue jacket of an *Estremadura* hussar, the schakos of a French *chasseur*, a cheval, pistols and saddle of English manufacture, the long straight sword of the enemy's dragoon, the brown Spanish sash, and leathern cartouch belt, with an *Arrogonese* or *Catalan* *esopeta*, were the not unfrequent equipments of the same brigand, as the French invariably designated them.

The *Empicinado*, acting in the districts more immediately in the neighbourhood of Madrid, was more than any of the other partisan leaders in the public view. His band, conducted with great gallantry and enterprise, became the terror of the Court of Joseph Bonaparte. Reports were often circulated of Don Juan Martin, and his adventurous followers, being close to the walls of the capital, when in reality he was either scouring the Province of Guadalajara, or levying contributions at *Alcala de Henares*. On one occasion he penetrated to the precincts of the *Casa del Campo*; at another, interrupted the rural festivities of the *Pardo*; and when more important service became necessary, he was found at the head of a formidable body of cavalry and infantry, ready to measure swords with the regular troops of the enemy. Perfectly acquainted with the country, surrounded by friends from whom he obtained the most accurate information of the movements against him, personally brave, possessing the confidence of his party, zealous in the cause, and highly exasperated against the French, such a man could not fail to become powerful as an enemy, and by his successes, which were frequent and signal, encouraged others to embark in similar modes of life.

Of the *Asturian* *Guerilla* leaders, the *Marques de Porlier* was the most celebrated. At an early period of the partisan warfare, he exasperated the enemy by the frequency of his attacks upon the convoys and detachments on their rout from

Bayonne to Madrid; invariably retiring into the mountains when numerously attacked, he baffled the utmost efforts of the French generals to rid themselves of the serious inconvenience and loss sustained from the effects of his active and indefatigable exertions. Upon one occasion, two divisions of infantry, with some hussars and Polish lancers were detached for the purpose of annihilating his numerous and formidable band; but without success. Having obtained timely information of the movements against him, *Porlier* manoeuvred to draw his enemy into the fastnesses of the *Sierra de los Cameros*, constantly retiring, when out-numbered, occasioning considerable loss to his assailants, who believing their own safety would be compromised by further pursuit, left the *Marquesito* as he was called, to reassemble his followers, and return to the line of communication from whence he had been driven only to prove to his enemies the impossibility of destroying a force so constituted and commanded, when aided by the zealous assistance of the population of an almost inaccessible district.

In the Province of Leon, Don Julian Sanchez commanded an enterprising band, with which he frequently surprised the enemy's posts, moving rapidly, ever on the alert, not subjecting himself to conflict on equal terms, possessed of the most accurate information, at the head of a numerous and well-mounted party, he established a renown, conveying to the French soldiery an exaggerated impression of his power, that proved highly beneficial to the cause. Don Julian evinced great zeal. He seemed to bestow his undivided attention on the discomfiture of the enemy, and was probably with less justice accused of mercenary exaction than any other *Guerilla* chief.

From the first establishment of the Spanish *Guerilla* force to the termination of the war, it daily rose in importance, becoming, as the struggle advanced, an increased object of annoyance and terror to the enemy. It had also obtained a firmer hold of public opinion, and was extended over the whole surface of the monarchy.

The bands of various descriptions that started into notice as a consequence of the successes obtained by the earlier adventurers, were innumerable; many of them, insignificant in number, possessing no leader either of character, or talent, meriting in every respect, the French appellation so liberally bestowed by that people on the whole class. Still, they were useful in as much as the very name of *Guerilla*, sounded harshly in the enemy's camp, cramped the operations of his troops, occasioned a distrust and restraint seriously effecting the moral of the soldier, and preventing, in some degree, the undisturbed system of contribution by which alone the armies of Napoleon existed in Spain.

That little discipline or subordination existed in the minor *Guerilla* parties, may be deduced from the fate of *Martinez*—a man of stern uncompromising temper; with a decree of resolute activity that had obtained for him considerable notoriety. Having entered into some trifling altercation with one of his *partido*, the exasperated brigand drew a pistol from his belt, and discharged it through the head of his chief.

The perfectly uncontrolled authority of the *Guerilla* leaders gave them additional capabilities of annoyance. A partisan chieftain manoeuvred his band more with reference to his enemy's communications than with a view of engaging him on the plain. The country in which he carried on operations was usually selected, not by superior direction, but to suit his own convenience, and in accordance with what appeared best calculated to support his predatory system, and afford scope for those minor successes against isolated detachments of the French army, by whose destruction he derived a claim to levy contributions on his defenceless countrymen.

It was no security to a French general that these petty chiefs were understood to be at a distance from his quarters; on the contrary, it tended to give a misplaced confidence, and to encourage the wandering propensities of the soldiery, who were frequently cut off by *Guerillas* supposed to be in another province. Whenever a chief had traversed a district, and levied contributions on the several towns within its boundaries, he marched to a different field of action, leaving its inhabitants to the MERCIFUL PROTECTION of some other bandit as rapacious as himself.

In the dusk of the evening, I have frequently seen the horse-men of the *Guerilla* band entering a village to take up their quarters for the night. The stillness of all around, with the perfectly quiet and unostentatious arrival of the *partido*, being strongly contrasted with the scene immediately resulting from it. First, there probably occurred great difficulty and dissatisfaction as to quarters, proper respect not being paid to the defenders of their country, arising very naturally from the people not considering those visitors of superior importance to their own families, or being inclined to resign every comfort to satisfy their unreasonable expectations. Next came the assembly of the magistracy, to whom demands, requests, or threats were applied, as circumstances rendered necessary, with a view to extract supplies of money, clothing, provisions, or arms. Where were the unfortunate peasants to find means of resistance? or to whom were their well-founded complaints to be addressed?—nowhere with the least probable chance of commiseration. "It was unfortunate," they were told, "hard upon the inhabitants, to be deplored; but the nature of the war, and circumstances of the country, rendered these inflictions unavoidable; they must consequently be patiently and uncomplainingly borne."

With all this oppressive latitude, neither very temperately nor judiciously exercised by the description of people in whose hands rested the power, the *Guerillas*, as I have previously stated, were eminently useful in harassing and weakening the enemy, and had an undoubted influence on the favourable termination of the war.

The above picture, added to every circumstance of this noble and most interesting struggle, may convey some idea of the depth of feeling which animated the Spanish people—a feeling that years of misery, constant annoyance, loss of property, and endless exaction, left unshaken and unabated.

For a fine, clear, and transparent kind of glue, which will unite glass as to render the fracture almost imperceptible, nothing is equal to isinglass boiled in spirits of wine.

FROM THE WINTER'S WREATH.

MOONLIGHT THOUGHTS.

It is a mild and mellow night;
The waves are melting on the shore,
Blandly, as if they felt delight,
That sow their pilgrimage was o'er.
Fitful upon the listening ear,
The wailings of the wild bird come
From the far sea-rock, while more near,
Earth slumbers in its beauty dumb.

Hushed are the rich autumnal woods,
And silence, from the dewy hill,
Looks down on pastoral solitudes,
And breezeless lakes, where all is still;
Whilst thou, pure Moon, enthroned above,
Dost smile on my sequestered way,
Awakening thoughts of vanished love,
And Being's cloudless early day.

A few brief years have come and fled—
Alas! how startling is the change!
Hearts, that then throbbed, are chill and dead,
And tongues, that then were friendly, strange;
Hopes, that then gleamed, are quenched and past;
Joys, that then charmed, rejoice no more,
Earth with a blight seems overcast,
'Tis gloom behind, and grief before!

Yet, when I look on thee, white Moon,
And gaze around me on this scene,
So fresh comes back life's vanished moon—
The days when Earth's parched soil was green,
That almost I could think the while,
The present but a dull mist driven
O'er the blue sky, to dim its smile,
Then passing leave the unclouded heaven.

Alas! alas! if this be so,
Where are ye now that wandered here,
On eves, like this, of silver glow,
When boyhood made existence dear?
See they the beauty of this scene?
Hear they the murmur of yon waves?
—Wild flowers and weeds are growing green,
The owl hooting o'er their graves!

Ah could we think in life's young day,
That all, which then enchants the heart,
Is but illusion, and away
Shall like a morning dream depart—
How would it sober down our bliss,
To look upon the churchyard skull,
And know, that all may come to this,
Long ere the Psalmist's term is full!

The tree lives on—though seeming dead—
When drop its leaves in autumn's blight,
And when around its lonely head,
Howl the regardless storms of night:
So throbs the heart in after-years,
When youth's romance hath passed away,
And Fancy's frost-work disappears,
Before the light of common day!

DELTA.

BROKEN LOVE.

From "Scraps and Sketches" by J. H. Willis.

Concluded.

Time flew, and still no tidings came, until 'hope deferred' began to sicken in one faithful heart. Yet expectation was still sanguine in its conjectures. Could it be illness—or some unforeseen event not calculated upon or anticipated? Why did he not write? He was ever so far, and honourable, and confiding, and oh! more than all, so devotedly fond and true. But he did not write; and from an accidental but an undoubted source came the melancholy fact at last—the tidings of his marriage—his marriage to another, and, as if to veil his falsity in the oblivion of the grave—his death.

It seems that, whether he had been constrained by parental authority, or swayed by some strong mercenary impulse, unaccounted for from the habitual nobleness of his disposition—he cast his vows to another aside—and married the widow of a rich Creole planter, then in England; and fell a martyr to the climate of the island where the large estates of his wife were situated, within a few months after taking possession.