

## **THE ROMANCE OF WAR, OR, THE HIGHLANDERS IN SPAIN: THE PENINSULAR WAR AND THE BRITISH NOVEL**

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Wellington's Peninsular campaigns aroused considerable interest among British historians and reading public throughout the nineteenth century and even into the present decade of the twentieth century. The most recent historian of the war, David Gates, in *The Spanish Ulcer* (1986), counts some three hundred published personal memoirs and diaries, mainly British, in his bibliography. The war in the Iberian Peninsula was savagely fought by British, Spanish, Portuguese, and French troops, as well as by Spanish and Portuguese irregular forces (the *guerrilleros*). When not fighting, British and French troops at times fraternized and observed a chivalrous respect for each other. The sufferings caused by the war were immense, including the looting and devastation of French-occupied Spain, the starvation of many Spaniards and Portuguese, and a very high casualty rate among the troops involved. Indeed, British soldiers frequently collapsed and died under the excessive loads they were compelled to carry<sup>1</sup>. For the British, the campaign represented the success of a small and previously despised army, under the remarkable leadership of Wellington, over Napoleon's veterans. Spanish historians, on the other hand, stress the Spanish contribution to the successful outcome of the war<sup>2</sup>.

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1. For a vivid first-hand account of the savage discipline enforced in Wellington's army and the atrocious sufferings of British soldiers, especially during the retreat to Vigo, see Christopher Hibbert, ed., *Recollections of Rifleman Harris*, Hamden, Connecticut, Archon Books, 1970.

2. The American literary scholar Roger L. Utt has recently commented a clear case of historical deformation. The novelist Benito Pérez Galdós, in his *episodio nacional La batalla de los Arapiles* (1875), following the example of Spanish historians, suppresses all mention of the contribution of the Portuguese to the allied victory in the Battle of Salamanca ("Batalla de los Arapiles"). To demonstrate the non-participation of Spanish troops in this battle, Utt quotes the calculations of British historians: the

One historical work, Colonel (later Major-General) Sir Willian Francis Patrick Napier's *History of the War in the Peninsula and the South of France*, published in six volumes between 1828 and 1840, enjoyed a remarkable success, 39 editions being published between 1828 and 1921. Napier (1785-1860) had served in the Peninsula and had received a serious spinal wound at Casal Nova, was present at the storming of Badajoz, commanded a regiment at the Battle of Salamanca, won a victory for the allies at the Battle of the Nivelle, and took part in the later actions in the South of France<sup>3</sup>. Meticulously researched Napier enjoyed the active assistance of Marshal Soult and had access to Joseph Bonaparte's secret correspondence, of which his wife broke the cypher—his narrative, as fast-paced as many a novel, gives details not only of every campaign but of the varying political situations in Great Britain, Spain and Portugal. His work was in large part written to counter Spanish claims that the deliverance of Spain was due to Spanish efforts. Rather, Napier forcefully asserts, Napoleon was beaten by Wellington and his disciplined army. The Spaniards, as portrayed by Napier, were weakened by imbecilic and corrupt rulers, by "the despotism springing from the union of a superstitious court and a sanguinary priesthood, a despotism which suppressed knowledge, contracted the public mind, sapped the foundation of a military and civil virtue, and prepared the way for invasion". Despite Spanish courage in resisting Napoleon, the Spaniards lacked discipline, were prey to sudden enthusiasms and despair, and behaved barbarously toward French prisoners and the wounded.

To the student of Spanish literature, the term "novel of the Peninsular War" (*novela de la Guerra de la Independencia*) would immediately suggest the name of Benito Pérez Galdós, who wrote ten *episodios nacionales* on this theme between 1873 and 1875. On the other had, modern scholars whether British or Spanish, have remained totally unaware of the existence of novels written in English on the campaign in the Iberian Peninsula during the war against Napoleon. These novels are often of considerable literary merit and were sufficiently numerous to form a sub-genre of nineteenth-century British fiction. Some of the novels were written by British army officers who had served during the Peninsular campaigns. The novelists offer a realistic, at times caustic, view of their experiences, very different from the "Romantic" approach of many foreigners to nineteenth-century Spain. Their comments on Spanish customs and religion are of considerable interest, conveying not

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British suffered 3.000 casualties, the Portuguese 1.500, the Spanish 7! See Roger L. Utt, "Sic vos non vobis: herencia historiográfica y coherencia estructural de *La batalla de los Arapiles*" in Peter Bly, ed., *Galdós y la historia*, Ottawa Hispanic Studies, 1, Ottawa, Dovehouse Editions, 1988, pp. 81-98.

3. The Napiers were a remarkable military family. Sir William Napier's brother, Sir Charles James Napier (1782-1853), was the conqueror of Sind and won one of the most amazing victories in the history of the British Army in 1843, when he attacked and defeated a Baluchi army of 30.000 men with a force of 2.800. Another Napier, Baron Napier of Magdala, after a distinguished Indian career, commanded the expedition to Ethiopia in 1868, and was commander-in-chief in India (1870-76).

only information about Spain but also the prejudices of the British authors. In their factual style and concern for military detail, the British novels offer a marked contrast to Galdós, impressionistic and at times overexcited treatment of the war<sup>4</sup>.

The first of our novels,<sup>5</sup> published in three volumes in London in 1825, is *Don Esteban; or, Memoirs of a Spaniard, Written by Himself*<sup>6</sup>. "Himself" is Valentín de Llanos Gutiérrez (1795-1885), who had left Spain in 1814, befriended Keats in Rome, and married Fanny Keats, the poet's sister, in 1826. In the introduction to *Don Esteban* Llanos states that he wrote to efface the pain of exile, that he "endeavors to present a faithful picture of the manners, habits and customs of his countrymen" (I, iii), and that his aim to show Spaniards "*as they really are*" (author's italics).

The novel is written in the first person in impeccable English. The plot of the novel is trivial but, fortunately, for most of the novel disappears under the weight of Llanos' far more interesting account of Spanish customs and national vicissitudes. The hero Esteban, a foundling raised by an enlightened couple, saves the beautiful and shyly blushing Isabella Torrealva and her family from bandits. After overcoming numerous obstacles placed in their way by Isabella's evil uncle Facundo, the couple finally marry many years later. (Don Facundo commits suicide; Esteban, it is discovered, is of noble birth). Not only is the plot inane; the dialogues of the sentimental lovers are highly stilted. All too often, characters load their conversations with pieties, thus: "Patriotism and virtue are the dreaded enemies of tyrants" (II, 235). Despite the exemplary sentimentality of the hero and heroine, however, Llanos shows an especial relish in relating numerous scenes of rape and torture when treating the war against the French.

The account of "customs" reveals Llanos' delight in the ways of his countrymen. The novel contains descriptions of grapeharvesting, a picnic (in which all social classes freely and harmoniously mix), a *romería* (pilgrimage) and bullfight. The constancy and beauty of Spanish women are proclaimed. Cádiz is presented as an earthly paradise. The typical daily routine of a genteel family (II, 100) and the customs of the aristocracy and of the Royal Guards after the Fernandine Restoration of 1814 are described in passages of considerable historical interest. Llanos gives examples of Spanish proverbs and of picturesque speech, including the comic exaggeration of an Andalusian. The text is loaded with Spanish words and expressions,

4. For a recent discussion of Galdós's first series of *episodios nacionales*, see Brian J. Dendle, *Galdós. The Early Historical Novels*, University of Missouri Press, 1986.

5. I have been unable to locate a copy of Miss [Alicia] Le Fanu, *Don Juan de las Sierras, or, El Empecinado. A Romance*, London, 1823, 3 vols.

6. Valentín de Llanos Gutiérrez, *Don Esteban, or Memoirs of a Spaniard*, 3 vols., London, Henry Colburn, 1825. A second edition was published in 1826. A German translation appeared in the following year. For more detailed information on Llanos, see Vicente Lloréns, *Liberales y románticos*, Madrid, Castalia, 1968, pp. 260-67.

all—save for the obscenities— translated into English.

Llanos also recognizes the negative side of Spanish life: the venality of Spanish justice, the vices of the wealthy, the pride of grandees, the fanaticism and superstition of the people, the corruption and abuse of power by the clergy, and the inadequate education of women.

The ideology of *Don Esteban* is that of the Enlightenment. The hero's adoptive father is an incorruptible lawyer, who encourages agricultural development, founds schools and, as a result of his benevolence and virtue, has a perfect marriage. In a manner typical of the eighteenth century, Llanos draws moral lessons from what he observes. Thus, the fertility of the Basque region is explained by the industry of the Basques and by their love of freedom. Good morale is essential: lack of resolution condemns the Parliamentary movement of Cádiz to failure; loss of morale explains the French defeat.

The novel is strongly anticlerical. Llanos offers numerous examples of clerical corruption and brutality —Esteban is imprisoned for a while in the cells of the Inquisition—, and denounces popular superstitions, which, he claims, are frequently deliberately encouraged by the clergy<sup>7</sup>. Despite the anticlericalism of the novel, Llanos regards sincere prayer as the mark of the superior man; he also praises simplicity in worship.

The novel traces in detail—in paragraphs and even whole chapters barely linked to the novelistic intrigue— Spanish history from the corrupt regime of Charles IV prior to 1808, through the horrors of the war against the French and the despotism of the Fernandine Restoration, to the joyous moment when the Constitution is proclaimed in 1820. Llanos makes no attempt to whitewash the defenders of the Spanish cause. The Spanish mob is superstitious and undisciplined, murdering its leaders on baseless accusations of treachery<sup>8</sup>. The Spanish army, consisting of ill-led and untrained peasants, often behaves with cowardice, as at the Battle of Cabezón. Heinous atrocities are committed by both sides. The horrible privations of refugees and of country dwellers are traced in detail. The guerrilleros are savage monsters; the guerrillero leader the priest Merino is “a cruel blood-thirsty coward” (I, 299). The British, however, are referred to as “our brave and generous allies” (II, 166). The French behave on occasion with chivalry (I, 271; II, 163) and assist Spanish refugees after the Battle of Vitoria.

In *Don Esteban*, Llanos establishes the fundamental characteristic of

7. For a discussion of Llanos anticlericalism, see Brian J. Dendle, “Valentin de Llanos Gutiérrez’ *Don Esteban* (1825): An Anticlerical Novel”, in Juan Fernández Jiménez, José J. Labrador Herraiz, and L. Teresa Valdivieso, eds. *Estudios en Homenaje a Enrique Ruiz-Fornells*, Erie, Pennsylvania, ALDEEV, 1990, pp. 142-48.

8. Cf. the vivid description of the murder of Mañana in Chapter XV of Benito Pérez Galdós’ *Napoleón en Chamartín*. Llanos treats the murder of Cevallos in Valladolid. Accounts of the murders of leaders by the Spanish mob abound also in Vol. I of Napier’s *History of the War in the Peninsula*.

the “novel of the Peninsular War”, namely, that the accurate rendering of history is of far greater importance than novelistic intrigue. Llanos not only attempts to rival the historian; he also wishes to understand the role of his fellow countrymen in a wider European context. In a poignant note, Llanos regrets Spain’s hard-won victory for it led to the enslavement of the Ferdinandine Restoration: “Would to God we had failed in our attempt! Spain would not now be the prey of civil dissensions, and of the darkest ignorance and misrule” (I, 255).

In the same year as Llanos’ *Don Esteban*, Francis Glasse published anonymously *Ned Clinton; or, The Commissary* (London, William Marsh, 1825). The first of the three volumes of this ribald, often scatological, picaresque tale relates the adventures in Spain and Portugal of a commissary’s clerk in the British Army. The novel evokes the hardships suffered by the British in the retreat following the Battle of Talavera; it also contains numerous, often amusing, anecdotes of army life. The French are treated with hostility, as vandals who treat their prisoners with brutality. The Portuguese are unfavorably compared with the Spanish. Spaniards show great kindness to British soldiers. Spanish women are clean and elegant; Portuguese women are “dirty, slovenly, awkward, unpolished, and generally illmade” (I, 177). Glasse’s description of Lisbon typifies his dislike of the Portuguese:

But my admiration was embittered by disgust; for though the houses are beautiful, the streets are filthy; and with a climate that is heavenly, the people are addicted to the grossest vices. The whole country swarms with priests, beggars and assassins. A magnificent river flows in vain by the dirtiest of cities, the streets of which are in a state of putrefaction for want of being purified by water. Horribly maimed and shockingly disgusting objects of deformity are exposed in every thoroughfare, who loudly solicit charity from every passenger; some of these wretches twisting their broken limbs about, and others exposing naked sores, while even dead bodies are laid out in the public streets, until a sufficiency of money is collected on the corpse, from charitable people, to pay for the interment. In short, this place, which might be a sort of Paradise upon earth, is the scene of everything disgusting and abominable to nature. —It is the very sink of depravity. (I, 49-50)

*Ned Clinton* is remarkable also for the extent of its hostility to Catholicism, whether Portuguese, Spanish, or Irish. Priests, such as the Irish toper Father Murphy O’Carroll, are pimps and swindlers. Nuns are unchaste. The Inquisition —“that cursed institution which far exceeds all former inventions of mankind for the practice of cruelty and injustice” (I, 260)— is responsible for the degradation of Spain.

In 1825, George Robert Gleig published in *Blackwood’s Magazine* a serial novel of the Peninsular War entitled *The Subaltern* (The novel appeared in book form in the same year, published by William Blackwood of

Edinburgh and T. Cadell of London). Gleig (1796-1888), a Scotsman, had served as a lieutenant in the Peninsular War in 1813 and 1814; he had been present at the siege of San Sebastián, the passage of the Bidasoa, the Battles of the Nivelles and of the Nive, and the investment of Bayonne. In his later career he became a clergyman and was chaplain-general of the armed forces (1844-75). He wrote numerous historical works, his specialty being military history. He also wrote a biography of Wellington (1862), with whom he was personally acquainted.

*The Subaltern*, written in the first person, relates the adventures of a British officer who went to Spain in 1813, witnessed the siege of San Sebastián, and took part in the campaigns in the south of France. *The Subaltern* is, in fact, Gleig's memoirs, thinly disguised as a novel. Writing in a sparse, factual style, Gleig offers numerous details of military life: the pay and equipment of the soldier, the excessively heavy loads carried by infantrymen, the suffering of the wives left in England, the auctions of the personal effects of dead officers, his personal homesickness, the shooting of deserters. He is greatly affected by the agonies of the wounded; he notes the stench of decomposing corpses and the ignorance and prejudices of Spanish surgeons (p. 64).

Gleig comments frequently on the defects of Spanish and Portuguese troops. On French soil, they disobey orders and, motivated by vengeance, commit numerous atrocities (pp. 143-44). He later notes examples of Spanish cowardice in action (p. 222), of Spanish incompetence (and Portuguese bravery) (pp. 294-95), and of the sullen hostility shown by the inhabitants of Irún toward the British. A troop of *guerrilleros*, however, impresses Gleig with their martial manner (p. 220). The British have their share of censure, when Gleig indignantly describes the drunken looting of San Sebastián by British troops in August 1813. The French are portrayed with respect. They fight bravely; British and French troops readily fraternize.

Gleig, recognizing the bravery of many Spanish soldiers, seeks to understand the reasons for their failure in action, which he attributes to the low calibre of their officers: "Not that the Spanish peasantry are deficient in personal courage, (and their soldiers were, generally speaking, no other than peasants with muskets in their hands), but their corps were so miserably officered, and their commissariat so miserably supplied, that the chief matter of surprise is, how they came to fight at all" (p. 100). Again, referring to Spanish troops: "But they were, one and all, miserably officered. Their inferior officers, in particular, were mean and ungentlemanly in their appearance, and they seemed to possess little or no authority over their men. Yet they were full of boasting, and gave themselves, on all occasions, as many absurd airs as if their valour had delivered Spain, and dethroned Napoleon; such is the foolish vanity of human nature" (p. 370).

Gleig's novel, or rather *mémoires*, can, with its eyewitness accounts of military campaigns written in simple, fast-moving prose, be read with plea-

sure even today. Gleig shows considerable sympathy for those he describes and is entranced by the beauties of the Pyrenean countryside. He also wisely recognizes the impossibility that one in his position should gain an intimate knowledge of a foreign people: "No man who journeys through a country, in the train of an invading army, ought to pretend to an intimate acquaintance with the manners and customs of its inhabitants. Wherever foreign troops swarm, the aborigines necessarily appear in false colours. The greater part of them, indeed, abandon their homes, whilst such of them as remain are servile and submissive through terror; nor do they ever display their real characters, at least in the presence of a stranger" (pp. 256-57).

In 1834, Telesforo de Trueba y Cosío published a three volume work entitled *Salvador, The Guerilla* [sic] (London, Richard Bentley). Born in Santander, Trueba (1799-1835) had been educated in England (1812-1818) and again resided in England between 1824 and 1834<sup>9</sup>. Besides writing numerous plays, in both English and Spanish, Trueba devoted himself to writing historical novels in the manner of Sir Walter Scott. Among these are *Gómez Arias* (1828) and *The Castilian* (1829).

*Salvador, The Guerilla* lacks literary merit. The dialogue is stilted to the extreme; the plot is trivial and relies on such hackneyed devices as the heroine's disguising herself as a man to rescue the man she loves, the chivalric and romantic chief of the *guerrilleros*, Salvador de Montalván. French soldiers are conventionally portrayed as womanizers and looters. The only interest in the book lies in the brief historical accounts of the role of the *guerrilleros* (Introduction, I, i-xxvi) and the "Notes" on individual historical figures which follow the novel (III, 263-69). This historical section was written in indignant reply to Napier's criticisms of Spanish conduct during the war.

In 1837, the Irishman William Hamilton Maxwell published the three-volume *The Bivouac; or, Stories of the Peninsular War*. Maxwell (1792-1850) had served in the 88th regiment in the Peninsular War and at Waterloo. He was the author of numerous historical novels, of books on sports, and of a *Life of the Duke of Wellington* (1839-1841).

*The Bivouac* is, like *The Subaltern*, a work of history, with various interpolated tales; unlike Gleig, Maxwell has no interest in Spanish customs. He describes the campaigns of Corunna, Vitoria, the Pyrenees, the fall of San Sebastián, and the Battles of the Bidasoa and the Nivelle and gives a retrospective account of the fall of Badajoz. The behavior of Spanish army officers is strongly criticized: General Cuesta is portrayed as an imbecile; Spanish cowardice at the Battle of Talavera is noted. Although *The Bivouac* exalts above all the courage of the British, Maxwell notes the savage beha-

9. For information on Trueba, see Lloréns, pp. 267-84, and Salvador García Castañeda, *Don Telesforo de Trueba y Cosío* (1799-1835), Santander, Diputación Provincial, 1978. I wish to thank Professor García Castañeda for providing me with a text of *Salvador, the Guerilla*.

avior of the Irish (and of the Portuguese) toward Spanish civilians. Apart from Trueba, Maxwell is the first of our novelists to give more than passing attention to the *guerrilleros*. He stresses not only their ruthlessness, cruelty, and banditry, but also their daring, their patriotism, and, in the case of the two Minas, their superb leadership.

The next and by far the most important nineteenth-century novel of the Peninsular War is James Grant's *The Romance of War, or, The Highlanders in Spain*, published in 1845 (London, George Routledge). James Grant (1822-1877), "the novelist of war", was the son of a captain in the 92nd Gordon Highlanders who had served with distinction in the Peninsular campaigns and whose recollections formed the basis of *The Romance of War*. James Grant entered the Army as an ensign but resigned his commission at the age of twenty one to devote himself to writing historical novels. His novels, all meticulously researched, dealt mainly with military episodes and characters, frequently taken from Scottish history. Grant, a partisan of the Stuarts, considered Scottish history "romantic". The Scotland he recreates is one of brutal chieftains, superstition, blood feuds, and treachery<sup>10</sup>.

From the outset, *The Romance of War*<sup>11</sup> is a novel of Scotland and of Scotsmen. The title page bears the verse:

In the garb of old Gaul with the fire of old Rome,  
from the heath-covered mountains of Scotia we come;  
our loud-sounding pipe breathes the true martial strain,  
and our hearts still the old Scottish valour retain.

The closing lines of the Preface proudly proclaim that the Gordon Highlanders, with "their striking garb, national feelings, romantic sentiments, and *esprit de corps*, are essentially different from the generality of our troops of the line".

The novel opens with an account of the murderous eighteenth-century feuds of the Stuart and the Lisle families, feuds which rule the conduct of their descendants. The author lovingly evokes the wild Scottish scenery of the Highlands of Perthshire. Ronald Stuart, the hero of our text, is described in terms of his romantic, Scottish nature: "Still more were they charmed with the peculiarity of his disposition, which was deeply tinged with the gloomy and romantic, —a sentiment which exists in the bosom of every Highlander, imparted by the scenery amidst which he dwells, the lonely

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10. For a comprehensive discussion of Grant's Scottish novels see: Sophie S. S. Veitch, "The Scottish Historical Novels of James Grant", *Scottish Review* 11 (1888), 117-35. I wish to thank Professor Nicholas G. Round of Glasgow University and Dr. Catherine Davies of St. Andrews University for providing a text of this article.

11. Page references in this article are to *The Romance of War*, London, George Routledge, 1888. There were at least thirteen editions, British and American, of *The Romance of War* in the nineteenth century.

hills and silent shores of his lochs, pathless and solitary heaths, where cairns and moss-covered stones mark the tombs of departed warriors, pine-covered hills, frowning rocks, and solitary defiles, —all fraught with traditions of the past, or tales of mysterious beings who abide in them. These cause the Gaelic mountaineer to be a sadder and more thoughtful man than the dwellers in the low country, who inhabit scenes less grand and majestic". Indeed, despite Grant's recognition of the splendors of Edinburgh (p. 19), he considers the lowlander —such as the lawyers Diddle and Fleece— an inferior being.

The text is littered with Gaelic phrases and words (e.g., in the introductory chapters, "*clachan*", "*piob mhor*", "*duinhe wassal*", "*skene-dhu*", "*usquebaugh*", "*cailloch*"), all untranslated. Even the English speech of the Scottish peasants is barely comprehensible to the reader; thus, the ancient piper Donald Iverach: "your honour's clory disna get twa sic muckle letters ilka day. The auld doited cailloch tat keeps the posthouse down at the clachan of Strathfillan, sent a gilly trotting up the waterside wi'them, as fast as his houghs could pring him" (p. 13). In Spain the English soldiers mistake a Scots sentry for a German (p. 115); Ronald Stuart has to translate a Scottish soldier's "English" at a court-martial; Scottish officers, when drunk, revert to Gaelic.

In Spain, Grant emphasizes that he is relating the exploits of Scottish, rather than English, troops. Spanish and Portuguese landscapes, customs, housing, and behavior are compared —for the most part unfavorably— with those of Scotland. Scottish choruses are sung in officers' messes. The Scots go to gallant death in battle, wearing kilts and to the strains of bagpipes, much to the amazement of Spaniards. At a ball in Aranjuez, the Scottish officers display their skill at the sword dance to the assembled aristocrats. Scottish soldiers treat their officers with a feudal devotion that goes far beyond the dictates of military discipline. Homesickness for Scotland is constantly iterated. Scotsmen's deaths in battle evoke the author's lament of their distance from their wild but beautiful native land. Letters from home reveal the continuing feuds of warring lairds and the consequent devastation of the Scottish countryside. Ronald Stuart's father, accompanied by his clan, is forced to emigrate to North America; the whole clan, with the exception of the piper Donald Iverach, die of shipwreck on the Newfoundland coast. Another side of Scottish life is presented toward the close of the novel when Ronald Stuart, returning home after Waterloo, meets in Edinburgh Sir Walter Scott and other literary luminaries.

Apart from the frequent references to the Scottish risings of 1745 and their heavy-handed repression, the history covered in *The Romance of War* parallels that of the military service of Grant's father during the Napoleonic War. Ronald Stuart, with a regiment of the Gordon Highlanders, arrives in Portugal in the spring of 1812; he is stationed in Albuquerque and serves with Sir Rowland Hill's division at the capture of Mérida and in the subsequent campaigns in central and western Spain. Between 1813 and 1815, he

takes part in the Battle of Vitoria, the campaigns of the Pyrenees, and the Battles of the Nive, Orthez, Toulouse, and Waterloo.

Military actions, from minor skirmishes to major battles, are described with the detailed precision of the military historian. Strategies are explained. Grant shows considerable compassion for the sufferings of civilians and the footsoldiers of the three allied armies. Ronald Stuart observes on his arrival the starving inhabitants of Portugal, the destruction of their villages, the atmosphere of gloom (p. 27). British soldiers have no tents and are forced to march and sleep without protection from the drenching sleet; many soldiers are accompanied by wives and children; a family will have no more than a single blanket beneath which to huddle. Soldiers carry back-breaking loads. Food is scarce: British army rations are a few ounces of flour and meat (from slaughtered bullocks too exhausted to drag the army wagons) per day; Portuguese soldiers receive only a few ounces of wheat. British soldiers fight each other for a few drops of muddy water. In the day preceding the Battle of Alba de Tormes, each soldier is fed only a handful of horse-beans; in the retreat from Alba officers and men share a few handfuls of unground wheat. "On reaching their winter quarters, thousands of soldiers died of sheer exhaustion, or were invalided and sent home, to become burdens to their friends, parishes, or themselves, for the remainder of their lives" (p. 291). "Toilsome forced marches —shelterless bivouacs, starvation, receiving no provisions sometimes for three consecutive days, —no clothing, and almost ever in arrears of pay— on one occasion for six months— nothing but the hope of a change, and the redoubtable spirit which animated them, could have supported the British soldiers under the accumulation of miseries suffered by them in the Peninsula, miseries which were lessened to the French troops, by their living at free quarters wherever they went" (pp. 52-53).

Losses in battle are enormous; thus, the British suffer 4,000 killed and wounded in the storming of Badajoz. Ronald Stuart describes the agony of the wounded after the storming of the forts of Almaraz: "Here lay the war-worn and grey-haired grenadier of the Guard, seamed with the scars of Austerlitz and Jena, blowing the bells of froth and blood from his quivering lip, and scowling defiance with his glazing eye at the passer. Beside or across him lay the muscular Highlander, his bare legs drenched in gore, casting looks of imploring helplessness, craving 'Maister Stuart, for love o'the heevin aboon them, to bring the wee'st drop of water, or send some ane to stanch their bluid'. Here lay one Frenchman with his skull shot away and brains scattered about, —another cut in two by a round shot, and scores, otherwise torn to pieces by Campbell's terrible volley from the platform, lying in long lines, which marked the lane made by the course and radius of each discharge of grape, and the whole place swam with blood and brains— a horrible puddle, like the floor of a slaughter house. All this was as nothing to witnessing the frightful agonies of the wretched wounded and dying, goaded with the most excruciating pain, choking in their blood— their

limbs quivering in extremity of torture, while they shrieked the eternal cry of 'water!' and shrieked in vain" (pp.170-71). Medical attention is rudimentary, thus: "Stuart's wound was of too little importance to procure immediate attendance, all the surgeons being hard at work, with their shirt-sleeves turned up, hewing off legs and arms mercilessly, as was their will and pleasure in those days. On with the tourniquet, and off with the limb, was the mode then; any attempt to reduce a fracture being considered a waste of time, and style of cure troublesome alike to patient and physician" (p.323). In such circumstances it is hardly surprising that of the thousand men who landed in Portugal in 1812, only 80 are left by the time the Highlanders reach the Pyrenees.

The death of soldiers in battle leads Grant to remonstrate with the indifference of those who have stayed at home: "Little think the good folk at home, —those who for days would be haunted by the memory of some sudden death, which possibly they had witnessed in the streets, —little do these good people imagine, or perhaps care, for the mighty amount of misery accumulated on a single battle-field, and the woe it may carry into many a happy home and domestic circle. But the agony of dying men, and the tears of women, are alike forgotten and unheeded when forts fire, cities illuminate, balls are given, and mails sweep along, decorated with flags and laurels, in honour of a victory" (p. 314).

Unlike other British novelists of the Peninsular War, Grant does not accuse the Spanish Army of cowardice. Spanish courage in defending Alba de Tormes and the warm welcome given by Spanish towns to liberating allied soldiers are noted. One cause of Scottish disgust —the despoiling of corpses— is levelled equally against Spanish, Portuguese, and French troops. Furthermore, apart from casting a bandit-*guerrillero*, one Narváez Cifuentes, as the villain of the novel, Grant highly praises the patriotism of General Espoz y Mina and the Basque *guerrilleros*. Espoz y Mina appears in the novel, exotically dressed —to Scottish eyes— with a picture of the Virgin Mary pasted upon his shoulder belt and a golden image of the Virgin around his neck. The twenty-five-year-old Espoz y Mina's military skills, astounding courage, and enforcement of a savage discipline duly impress Ronald Stuart (pp. 346-48). Although the French plunder mercilessly in the Pyrenees (p. 339), their courage and gallantry are praised throughout the novel. Indeed, when not in battle British and French troops fraternize readily. Portuguese bravery in battle is frequently acknowledged. Wellington's great skills as a strategist and leader are admiringly portrayed. In a manner akin to that used by Galdós in his *episodios nacionales* to portray national figures, Wellington's personal appearance is briefly described, with stress on his simplicity of attire (p. 329).

Grant is fascinated by the customs of "romantic Spain, the land of bright eyes, of the mantilla, of the dagger, and the guitar" (p. 397). He notes the gravity, pride, daring, and idleness of Spanish men, the beauty and dignity of Spanish women. Assassination, by means of the stiletto, is rife.

Spanish and Portuguese inns are as filthy as those of Cervantes' time; those who sleep in the beds of Portuguese inns contract *sarna* (the itch). The Scottish soldiers constantly accuse the Spaniards of ingratitude, of failure to appreciate the sacrifice Scotsmen are making to free Spain. On the other hand, frequent examples of Spanish generosity, such as the willing sharing of food without demanding payment (p. 147), are given. When Spaniards and Scots have the chance to get to know each other, as when the troops take up winter quarters in Baños, marriages result. Spanish nobles behave with chivalry. But Spaniards also mistreat prisoners; Spanish justice is venal; and banditry is rife. Spanish indifference to good government is sorrowfully described: "But it has been truly remarked by someone that, give the Spaniard his cigar, his sunshine, his *querida*, and amusements, and it is all one to him whether Spain is ruled by a Solon or a Caligula" (p. 319).

Spanish culture interests Grant greatly. He describes a Spanish Sunday, a bullfight (which is favorably compared with the disgraceful English custom of bullbaiting), Spanish furniture, a theatrical performance, Spanish fear of the Scots as "heretics", Spanish costume, Spanish food (too garlic-ridden for the Scottish palate), and the diet of gypsies. The text abounds in Spanish words, phrases, and songs (often, unfortunately, erroneously transcribed by the printers). Cultural references —to Pizarro, Alonso Cano, Spanish ballads, Amadís de Gaula and similar chivalric works, the Cid, the Counts of Carrión, Lazarillo de Tormes, Cervantes, Fray Gerundio, etc.—are common. Grant describes the antiquities and present attractions of such towns as Mérida, Truxillo, Toledo, and Aranjuez with the detail of a Baedeker. He notes the desolate countryside of Extremadura, ravaged by war, but is generally delighted by the beauty of the Spanish countryside, which reminds the Scots of their native land. Grant's general admiration for Spaniards is manifest. One character, Don Alvaro, becomes Ronald Stuart's blood-brother; Ronald Stuart loves and wishes to marry Don Alvaro's sister; Louis Lisle finds a fitting bride in a lovely Spanish noblewoman. By way of contrast, Ronald Stuart, while admiring the vivacity and deploring the infidelity of French women, states that no Scotsman would marry one (pp. 477, 481).

References to religious beliefs and customs abound in *The Romance of War*. The Scottish peasantry and soldiers are highly superstitious. At the outset of the novel, an old crone sees spirits in the mist and hears the death-song in the wind when her sons are killed at Corunna. Major Campbell, as a lad, saw uncanny things in the dark. A *fey* Scotsman foresees his own death (p. 333). A soldier who is a *taischatr* (one who possesses second sight) and fought with the *lham-dearg* (a bloody-handed woodland spirit) explains to a sceptical officer: "I daursay, he doesna believe noo that deidlichts burn on the piper's grave in the auld kirk-yard at hame; or that spunkies and fairies hide in the glen o' Auchnacarry, kelpies in Loch-Archaig or that the *daoine shie* haunt the dark holes, cairns, round rings, and unco places o' the Corrie-nan-gaul in Knoydart, where I mysel hae seen them dancing tulloch-gorm in the bonnie moonlicht" (p. 304).

The Scottish reaction to Spanish Catholicism is mixed. Much in Spanish religion disgusts the Presyterian Scots who, the author remarks, would sooner hearken to the devil than to a Catholic priest (p. 174) and who consider the Pope as a "pagan fu' o'pride" (p. 175). To the amazement of the Scots, Spanish girls dance on the sabbath; priests preach political sermons (against the French); Spanish peasants bargain with the local Virgin for favors to be rendered; peasants curse their enemies, using the names of saints and of the Virgin; bandits and murderers wear religious images; a Spanish nobleman assumes that priests impregnate female devotees of a miraculous shrine (p. 278). Ex-votos arouse Ronald Stuart's astonishment: "Many mouldy portraits of saints adorned the walls; around the lighted shrine were hung certain strange memorials, placed there by the piety of those whom the saint was supposed to have cured. Crutches, even wooden legs, and many stuccoed casts of deformed limbs, were there displayed, all doubtless the work of cunning priests, to impose upon the credulity of Spaniards. But what chiefly raised his wonder was some hundred little images of children, with which the place was absolutely crowded" (p. 277).

But Ronald Stuart's reaction to Spanish religion is not only negative. Assisting at mass in the cathedral of Mérida, Ronald Stuart experiences "an indescribable emotion of deep religious veneration, inspiration almost of holy awe" (p. 71); his "enthusiastic soul" is raised "from the grossness and bitterness of earth almost, as it were, to heaven, so grand and impressive, in form and ceremony, is the religious service of the Church of Rome, as it exists on the Continent in all its ancient glory" (p. 72). The abbess and priest of the Convento de Santa Cruz de Jarciejo urge Ronald Stuart to forgive the vile murderer of Catalina, the Spanish noblewoman he loves. During her requiem mass he is moved to ecstasy, being forced almost involuntarily to his knees "from excess of veneration and a holy feeling, with which the sublime service of the Roman Catholic Church had inspired him" (p. 189). On other occasions, Ronald Stuart recognizes the charitable work of the nuns and praises the friars, who "pray with true Catholic fervour" (p. 299) at the execution of a Protestant deserter. It is worth noting that twenty years after writing *The Romance of War*, in 1875, James Grant converted to Catholicism; his son Roderick became a Catholic priest.

The literary qualities of *The Romance of War* are many. The rapid, nervous style, the adventurous and somewhat romantic plot, the realistic description of the sufferings of the allied soldiers, the evocation of the savagery of Highland life, Grant's emotional identification with the Scottish cause, and his obvious delight in Spanish customs and admiration for the chivalry of many Spaniards all combine to hold the reader's interest.

The writer of juvenile tales, George Alfred Henty, wrote three novels dealing with the Peninsular War: *The Young Buglers. A Tale of the Peninsular War* (1879), *With Moore at Corunna* (1897), and *Under Wellington's Command* (190?). Henty (1832-1902) had visited most parts of the globe as a war correspondent (including Spain, when he covered the Third Carlist

War) before taking to writing three or four juvenile novels per year. His works were highly successful. There were, for example, twenty editions of *The Young Buglers*, which was by no means his best-selling work.

His three novels of the Peninsular War rely heavily on Napier. *The Young Buglers*, for example, reproduces Napier's maps and page after page of Napier's narrative, often without attribution. (Henty claimed that after reading *The Young Buglers* one could pass an examination on the Peninsular War). All three novels have similar plots, in which English or Protestant Irish teenagers of good social class, by dint of courage, intelligence, discipline and hard work (Henty is especially keen that his heroes learn languages), rise from the ranks to occupy senior military positions within the space of a few years. Foreigners, except for aristocrats and those willing to submit to British discipline, are regarded as inferior beings. References to Spanish and Portuguese cowardice, treachery, incompetence, fanaticism, and barbarity are frequent<sup>12</sup>. To even the score, however, Henty reproduces examples given by Napier of the savagery of British troops in Spain (the sacking of Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajoz and San Sebastián). Copying Napier, he recalls the bitter hatred which existed between the Spanish and British "allies". The French, on the other hand, are portrayed as chivalrous and trustworthy. Indeed, in one remarkable episode of *The Young Buglers*, British prisoners and their French captors join to fight Spanish *guerrilleros*. Henty admits, however, that when Spaniards have adequate leaders, as at the sieges of Zaragoza and Gerona, they fight bravely; he also readily acknowledges examples of Spanish generosity. Despite the marked prejudices of class and nation revealed in Henty's works, certain of his values—the need for courage and responsibility, his contempt for those who abuse the helpless or who break their bond—are far from reprehensible.

The next writer to treat the Peninsular War was the poet and lady of letters Margaret L. Woods (1856-1945) in *Sons of the Sword (A Romance of the Peninsular War)* (London, William Heinemann, 1901). The plot of the novel is romantic: the heroine Angela Dillon, an Englishwoman in Spain in the winter of 1808 to 1809, undergoes numerous adventures, at times in the company of a French officer (Henri Vidal); when Vidal dies in Austria, Angela, at sunset prayer in a Spanish convent, is granted a vision of her platonic lover. Despite its romantic nature, *Sons of the Sword* contains a wealth of historical detail, not only of the campaigns but also of the faults of the British government in wasting so much money on subsidizing the juntas while neglecting to supply Moore's army. The novel also has scenes of a quite startling emotional and visual impact: the crossing by Napoleon's army of the frozen Guadarrama Pass; a vengeful and fanatical female mob in Zamora; and the Goyesque horrors suffered during the retreat by the British and Spanish armies after the Battle of Talavera.

12. A further novel by Henty, *With the British Legion*, New York, Scribner's, 1902, a tale of the First Carlist War, is equally hostile to Spaniards.

Margaret Woods idealizes neither the British, the French, or the Spanish in her portrayal of the terrors of war. The French murder the wounded, hang peasants, loot, and vandalize; gallows with their victims are found everywhere in Valladolid; French officers contemplate the butchery with curiosity. Demoralized drunken British soldiers sack Astorga. The typhus-ridden Spanish Army under the Count of Romana degenerates into a rabble. French soldiers commit suicide rather than face torture at the hands of Spanish peasants. The mob of Zamora is fiendishly cruel in its pursuit of a supposed heretic.

But Margaret Woods also finds nobler characteristics in the warring nations. Henri Vidal behaves with chivalry. British officers assist their fevered Spanish colleagues (p. 257). British camp followers ("Boadiceas") refuse to bow to Napoleon, who hails these savage slatterns for producing children, rather than "witticisms" as do Frenchwomen (p. 270). Some Spanish priests are vengeful fanatics; others behave with charity and love. Woods explains that the Spanish character—generous, cruel and vindictive—is beyond the comprehension of North Europeans (p. 182). She notes the courtesy, grace, and piety of simple Spaniards. She shows understanding for the situation of Spanish peasants who are "savagely brave, boundlessly ignorant, and hating all foreigners alike" (p. 239).

*Sons of the Sword* not only protests the horrors of war; it also conveys an almost mystic sense of "English" values. When Napoleon makes "infamous advances", Angela Dillon prefers death to dishonor (p. 43). The reaction of the "ungentlemanly" Napoleon is excessive: "his countenance swollen and convulsed, his eyes bloodshot and foam upon his lips" (p. 45). Angela Dillon, with "the stubborn pride of the Briton" (p. 156), will not lie to save her life. The deeply religious British general Sir John Moore has "a face full of calm intelligence, of inalterable benevolence ... a magnetic quality" (pp. 209-210). Angela Dillon respects, but cannot accept for herself, the values of the Catholic Church. In the final scene of the novel, Angela's brother (who was serving with the *guerrilleros*) arrives to meet his sister: "It was home, it was England he beheld there" (p. 393).

A later novel by Margaret Woods, *The Spanish Lady* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1927), is little more than a trivial tale of intrigue. The Duke of Wellington, in Cádiz during the Cortes of 1812, narrowly escapes assassination at the hands of the corrupt aristocratic family of his proud Spanish mistress. Historical details are few and are mainly limited to brief character sketches of British generals.

Our last novelist is C. S. Forester (1899-1966), who in 1933 published two novels of the Peninsular War: *Death to the French* (also published in the United States under the title *Rifleman Dodd*) and *The Gun*. In the first novel, Forester follows the adventures of a rifleman who, isolated from his regiment, joins the Portuguese *guerrilleros* in actions against the French troops halted by the Lines of Torres Vedras. Forester portrays the enormous sufferings of

French soldiers and Portuguese peasants and the atrocities committed by both sides. Forester, who always carefully researched the background to his historical novels, offers numerous details of uniforms, arms, and even diet. As in the Hornblower series, *Death to the French* has the ring of historical truth.

In *The Gun* Forester relates the finding of an 18 -pound gun and its use by Spanish peasants in their struggle against the French. The novel convincingly evokes the ill- disciplined *guerrilleros*, with their rivalries, their cruelty, and their skill at irregular warfare. Their ruthlessness is exemplified in the final episode when a Franciscan priest, proclaiming that it is God's will that the French be killed, poisons the bread of a besieged garrison.

Perhaps the outstanding feature of the British "novels of the Peninsular War" is their "realism". The novels are based either on direct observation or on careful historical research. The novelists seek to understand Spain and the Spaniards and in many cases possess a genuine love of Spain; they also show a remarkable frankness in acknowledging the hostility which at times existed among the "allied" forces. The nineteenth-century novelists are also obsessed with problems associated with Catholic rule in Spain. Glasse abhors the grip of the Catholic Church and the Inquisition; Llanos seeks a liberal, enlightened Spain; Grant is attracted to and bemused by Spanish religion; Henty portrays Catholics unfavorably. The novels also reflect stages in the formation of British nationalism in the nineteenth century. The early novelists stress British courage and the superior discipline of British troops. Grant's *The Romance of War* reflects a Scottish nationalism which, while maintaining a separate identity, is subordinating itself to the greater good of a United Kingdom. By the end of the century, Henty expounds an imperial vision; his novels proclaim Anglo-Protestant superiority, based on values of bravery, intelligence, discipline, responsibility, and decency. Margaret Woods, writing in 1901, reveals an almost mystic sense of "Englishness", while at the same time attacking the horrors of war. Finally, C. S. Forester, while exemplifying English resourcefulness in *Death to the French (Rifleman Dodd)*, stresses individual virtues which are equally possessed by Spaniard and Portuguese.