

CHEAP TRACTS, No. 3.

**A PICTURE OF WAR;**

BEING AN ACCOUNT OF

THE

**Storming of Badajoz**

AND THE

**Russian Campaign.**

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BUT WISE MEN SAY, AND SURE 'TIS TRUE,  
THAT WAR IS THEFT, AND MURDER TOO.

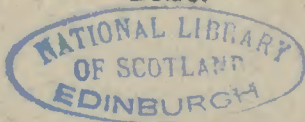
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A PICTURE OF WAR



Storming of Budafox

# A PICTURE OF WAR.

Russian Campaign.

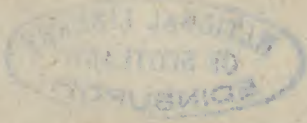
NOT WISE MEN ARE THEY WHO THINK

THEY CAN PLAY AT WAR

*“War’s a game, which, were their Subjects wise,  
King’s would not play at \_\_\_\_\_”*

THERE is no subject on which the common sense of mankind has gone farer wrong than that of WAR: This demon of discord, while it bewilders with its glare, subjects to the greatest privations, not only those engaged in it, but all who are not far removed from its influence. While mankind are by nature brethren, mutually dependant on one another (in whatever quarter of the world they may reside), for the supply of the necessaries and comforts of life, War destroys the connection—makes those enemies who should be friends, and entails misery and want where comfort and plenty would otherwise be found. Neither is there any thing in which principle is more

1831



grossly perverted. The nations of Europe are professedly *christian*; but in Europe war has raged until it has lost its energies, and it is still cultivated as a science, and followed as a profession, although its principles and its practices are as much opposed to christianity as light is to darkness; and there is much truth in the assertion, that, *were christian nations, nations of christians, all war would be impossible, and unknown among them.* Let those who may doubt this assertion, read attentively the Sermon of Jesus Christ upon the Mount, Matthew v. vi. and vii. and let them say if War is in any way countenanced there.

To correct, however, the ideas of those into whose hands this may fall, who think otherwise, a few mournful pictures are subjoined, which have been exhibited to the world during some of the recent campaigns; and that they may not be objected to as the ideal representations of an over-sanguine philanthropy, are delineated in the words of the writers, who were themselves eye-witnesses of, or actors in, the scenes they so affectingly describe; and these we shall introduce with the following Picture of War and its effects, drawn by a modern divine.

At the final issue of an obstinate contest, there must necessarily be many lives lost on both sides; destruction has then done her worst, and selected the objects of her fury; the grave that tells no tales, silently receives her myriads of murdered souls; and ungrateful Ambition, forgetting the blood by which victory was purchased, dwells only with rapture on the glory of her conquests! Oh! that the great ones of the earth were but a little more inclined to the reflection! what conquest was ever worth the useful lives lost to accomplish it? what battle was ever fought that did not hurry thousands of trembling and unprepared souls into the presence of their offended Redeemer?

O God! when thou makest inquisition for blood, upon whom wilt thou lay the guilt of those torrents of blood, that have been shed for no earthly purpose whatever, but to gratify the detestable and insolent ambition of a few poor puny creatures like ourselves.

At the conclusion of a spirited and long contested war, there is scarcely a cottage to be met with that does not bear visible marks of its fruits. In one miserable hut you may behold, seated at their scanty meal, a mother and her tribe of half-starved children; but father you will find none; death met him in the field of battle, and in a moment, made *his children fatherless, and his wife a widow.*

Here you view an aged couple, bent double with infirmities and years, and God knows! but little capable to sustain a protracted journey through the winter of life, yet hoping still to see better days, when the war is ended, and their children returned. Time, that at length brings all things to bear, finishes the war; but time does not bring back their children.

To the artificial advantages of war, I oppose with confidence, the real losses of mankind: To the pomp and splendour of martial heroism, I oppose the orphan's tears, and the widow's cry: And to the vain and idle boast of the victor, the sad and untimely fate of the vanquished. When the glories of a battle are the theme of conversation, how seldom are those remembered who fought and fell in it! Twenty thousand of what are called common soldiers, might perish, and no one concern himself to enquire how they died, or where they were buried; but let inhuman and insolent pride be told, that every one of those poor men, who thus fell neglected and forgotten, were as true to their king as faithful to their country, had dispositions as good, and hearts as brave and honest, and souls as dear, as the greatest and noblest warrior among them. How often are the common soldiers doomed to "*Beg bitter bread,*" while too

many who are conversant only in the knaveries of war, and who without virtue, labour, or hazard, are growing rich, as their country is impoverishing; and their infamies at length rewarded, by equipages that shine like meteors, and palaces that rise like exhalations.

In short, war is altogether a system of folly and devastation, of knavery and ingratitude, where the chief actors are the greatest losers, the most inoffensive the greatest sufferers.—Where the least entitled grow rich upon the spoil of those who serve them, and where the most deserving are repaid with poverty and disgrace.

Nay more, where men at the instigation of those who glory in their destruction, ACT A PART CONTRARY TO HUMAN NATURE, THE DICTATES OF SOUND REASON, AND TO THE VERY SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY.

## THE STORMING OF BADAJOZ.

*Camp before Badajoz, 5th April, 1812.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ We expect to storm Badajoz to-night in three separate places, so I shall soon see real service; and it is expected to be very sharp work unless they surrender, which is not likely, as General PHILIPPON is a very determined fellow. The French seem, however, to be short of powder and shot;

or perhaps they are reserving it for us to-night. They fire a shell or bomb about every two minutes, while we keep up a constant fire upon the breaches and upon the town.

*Alvaon, 15th April.*

“I now proceed to give you an account of the storming of Badajoz.

“At eight o'clock at night, on Monday the 5th of April, we were formed without knapsacks, and in half an hour marched in an indirect line towards the town, under strict orders, “*that not a whisper should be heard!*” Part of the 5th division were to attack the town on the south side, while the third division, to which I was attached, with their ladders were to scale the citadel, and the rest were to assault the grand breach.

“I procured a soldier's jacket, a firelock, sixty round of ball-cartridges, and was on the right of my company.

“But, before I proceed, I will give you some information which I have since obtained, to shew you where, and to what, we were going! The governor is allowed to be one of the best engineers in the French Service, and he has so proved himself; though our fire was continued at the breach, he had pieces of wood fastened into the ground, the sword blades and bayonets fixed to them, slanting outwards;

behind this a *chevaux de frise* was chained at both ends across the breach; the beam of it about a foot square, with points on all sides projecting about a yard from the centre, and behind that was a trench four feet wide and four deep. Covering all these, soldiers were planted eight deep, the two first ranks to fire as fast as they could, and those behind to load for them. Thus prepared, he told the men, "if they stuck to their posts, all the troops in the world could not enter." Trenches were also dug about fifty yards round the breach in case we did get in! In short the oldest officers say that no place has been defended with so much science and resolution in our times.

"On the march all was silent, except that our cannon kept up their fire at the breaches, till we got within a quarter of a mile of the town, when there were two or three fire-balls thrown from it in different directions, one of them falling close to us, we silently whispered to each other, "*Now it will begin!*" As the first division of our troops approached the place, the whole town appeared as if it were one mine, every yard throwing out bombs, cannon-balls, &c. &c. grape-shot and musket balls flying also in every direction. On the fire-balls striking near us, we moved out of the road to the greensward, but cannon-balls hissed by us

along the grass, and the musquet-balls flew like hail about our heads; we immediately began, therefore, to run forward, till we were within about a hundred yards of the bridge across the first ditch, and then the balls came so thick that, as near as I can judge, twenty must have passed in the space of a minute, within a yard of my head.

“ While we were running on the grass, one or two men dropped every minute, and were left behind; but now they fell faster. When we came to the bridge which was about two yards wide, and twelve yards long, the balls came so thick that I had no expectation of getting across alive. We then began to ascend the hill, and were as crowded as people in a fair. We had to creep upon our hands and knees, the ascent being so steep and rocky; and while creeping my brother-officer received a ball in the brain, and fell dead! Having got up this rock, we came to some palisadoes, within about twenty yards of a wall; these we broke down, but behind them was a ditch three feet deep, and just behind that a flat space about six yards broad, and then a hill thrown up eight feet high. These passed, we approached a second ditch, and then the wall, which was twenty-six feet high, against which we planted six or seven ladders.



“The hill is much like that at Greenwich, about as steep and as high. Just as I passed the palisadoed ditch, there came a discharge of grape-shot from a twenty-four pounder, directly into that flat space, and about twelve fine fellows sunk upon the ground, uttering a groan that shook the oldest soldier to the soul. Ten of them never rose again, and the nearest of them was within a foot of me, and the farthest not four yards distant. It swept away all within its range. The next three or four steps I took, was upon this heap of dead! You read of the horrors of war, yet little understand what they mean!

“When I got over this hill into the ditch, under the wall, the dead and wounded lay so thick that I was continually treading upon them. A momentary pause took place about the time we reached the ladders, occasioned I apprehend by the grape-shot, and by the numbers killed from off the ladders;—but all were soon up, and formed again in the road just over the wall. We now cheered four or five times! When we had entered the citadel, which was directly after we had scaled the wall, no shot came amongst us; the batteries there had been silenced before we were over, and we formed opposite the two gateways, with orders to “*let no force break through us.*” I was in the front rank!

“AS soon as PHILIPPON heard that we were in the citadel, he ordered two thousand men ‘*to retake it at all events* ;’ but, when he was told that the whole of the third division had got in, ‘Then,’ said he, ‘give up the town.’

“One battery fred about two hours after we were in, but those near the breach were quite in half an hour, part of the fifth division which got in on the south having silenced them. The attack on the breach failed ; it was renewed a second time ; and again a third time, with equal bad fortune, which made Lord WELLINGTON say, ‘the third division has saved my honour and gained the town.’

“We continued under arms all night. About fifty prisoners were made in the citadel. PHILIPPON withdrew into Fort St. Christoval, and most of the cavalry escaped by the Sally Port. By the laws of war we were allowed to kill all we found, and our soldiers declared they would do so ; but an Englishman cannot kill in cold blood !

“Our regiment did not fire a gun the whole time. I saw one instance of bravery on the part of the French, just before the grape shot came ; eight or ten Frenchmen were standing on the battery, No. 32, one of our regiment fired and killed one or two

of them, but the rest stood like statues; they kept on firing till there was but two left, when, one of them being shot, the other jumped down.

“The town is about the size of Northampton; all the houses near the breach were completely battered down, and most of the others damaged.

“In the morning I turned to the camp, and by day light retraced my steps of the night before. In every place I passed a great many wounded; I saw eight or ten shot through the face, and their heads a mass of clotted blood, many with limbs shattered, many shot through the body, and groaning most piteously! I found the body of my brother officer on the hill, his pantaloons, sword, epaulet, and hat, taken away; the dead lay stretched out in every form, some had been dashed to pieces by bombs, many had been stripped naked, and others had been rolled in the dust, with blood and dirt sticking all over them!

“When I came to the spot where the grape-shot first struck us, the bodies lay very thick! but even there they bore no comparison to the heaps in the breach, where they lay one upon another two or three deep, and many in the ditch were half out and half in the water.

“ I shall now give you my feelings through the whole affair, and I have no doubt when you read this you will feel similarly. I marched towards the town in good spirits; and, when the balls began to come thick about me, I expected every one would strike me: as they increased, I regarded them less; at the bottom of the hill I was quite inured to danger, and could have marched to the cannon's mouth. When the grape-shot came, I suffered more for those who fell than for myself; and, when I first trode upon the dead heaps, it was horrible! In the next twenty or thirty steps I trode upon many more dead, but each impression became less terrible!

“ You see that I have literally been within a few inches of death,—upon the very verge of eternity! With you, when two or three of your acquaintance die, you say, ‘These are awful times, death has been very busy!’ Here he was busy indeed!! Of three officers with whom I dined that day, one was killed and another severely wounded, yet not a hair of my head has been hurt! I am indeed in better health than ever I was in my life.

THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN.

A few extracts from a Circumstantial narrative of the Campaign in Russia, by EUGENE LABAUME, captain of the Royal Geographical Engineers, and attached to the fourth corps, of the French army, commanded by EUGENE BEAUHARNOIS, in that ill-fated and destructive enterprise.

*A Picture of Smolensko after being Stormed.*

“In every direction we marched over scattered ruins and dead bodies. Palaces, still burning, offered to our sight only walls half destroyed by the flames, and, thick among the fragments, were the blackened carcasses of the wretched inhabitants whom the fire had consumed. The few houses that remained were completely filled by the soldiery, while at the door stood the miserable proprietor without an asylum, deploring the death of his children, and the loss of his fortune. The churches alone afforded some consolation to the unhappy victims who had no other shelter. The cathedral, celebrated through Europe, and held in great veneration by the Russians, became the refuge of the unfortunate beings who had escaped the flames. In this church, and round its altar, were seen whole families extended on the ground. On one side was an old man just expiring, and casting a last look on the image of the

saint whom he had all his life invoked ; on the other was an infant, whose feeble cries the mother, worn down with grief, was endeavouring to hush, and while she presented it with the breast, her tears dropped fast upon it.

“ In the midst of this desolation, the passage of the army into the interior of the town, formed a striking contrast. On one side was seen the abject submission of the conquered—on the other the pride attendant upon victory : the former had lost their all—the latter, rich with spoil, and ignorant of defeat, marched proudly on to the sound of warlike music, inspiring the unhappy remains of a vanquished population with mingled fear and admiration.

### *The Night before the Battle.*

“ Although, worn out with fatigue, we felt not the want of sleep, there were many among us, so enamoured of glory, and so flushed with the hope of the morrow’s success, that they were absolutely incapable of repose. As they passed the wakeful hours, and the silence and darkness of midnight stole upon them, while the fires of the sleeping soldiers, now almost extinct, threw their last rays of light over the heaps of arms piled around, they gave themselves up to profound meditation. They reflected

on the wonderful events of our strange expedition: they mused on the result of a battle which was to decide the fate of two powerful empires: they compared the silence of the night with the tumult of the morrow: they fancied that Death was now hovering over their crowded ranks, but the darkness of the night prevented them from distinguishing who would be the unhappy victims: They then thought of their parents—their country—and the uncertainty whether they should ever see these beloved objects again, plunged them into the deepest melancholy. But suddenly, before daybreak, the beat of the drum was heard, the officers cried to arms, the men eagerly rushed to their different stations, and all, in order for battle, awaited the signal for action. The colonels placing themselves in the centre of their regiments, ordered the trumpet to sound, and every captain, surrounded by his company, read aloud the following proclamation:—

“SOLDIERS—This is the battle so much desired by you! The victory depends on yourselves. It is now necessary to us. It will give us abundance, good winter quarters, and a prompt return to our country! Behave as at Austerlitz, at Friedland, at Witespsk, at Smolensko, — and let the latest posterity recount with

pride, your conduct on this day ; let them say of you—‘ He was at the great battle under the walls of Moscow !’

*The Taking of a Redoubt.*

‘ The Viceroy and his Staff, in spite of the enemy’s tremendous fire remained at the head of BROUSSIER’S division, followed by the 13th and 30th regiments, They advanced on the redoubt, and, entering it by the breast-work, massacred on their pieces, the cannoneers that served them. Prince KUTUSOFF, who had witnessed this attack, immediately ordered the cuirassiers of the guard to advance and endeavour to retake position. These were the best of their cavalry The shock between their cuirassiers and ours was therefore terrible; and one may judge of the fury with which both parties fought, when the enemy, in quitting the field, left it completely covered with dead.

“ The interior of the redoubt presented a horrid picture. The dead were heaped on one another. The feeble cries of the wounded were scarcely heard amid the surrounding tumult. Arms of every description were scattered over the field of battle. The parapets, half demolished, had their embrasures entirely destroyed. Their places were distinguished



only by the cannon, the greatest part of which were dismounted and separated from the broken carriages. In the midst of this scene of carnage, I discovered the body of a Russian cannoneer, decorated with three crosses. In the one hand he held a broken sword, and with the other firmly grasped the carriage of the gun at which he had so valiantly fought.

*Retreat of the Wounded.*

“The most horrid spectacle (continues our author) was, the interior of the ravines, where almost all the wounded, who were able to drag themselves along, had taken refuge to avoid further injury. These miserable creatures, heaped one upon another, and swimming in their blood, uttered the most heart-rending groans. They frequently invoked death with piercing cries, and eagerly besought us to put an end to their agonies.

*Moscow at a distance.*

“While the fourth corps was constructing a bridge across the Moskwa, the staff, about two o’clock, established itself on a lofty hill, whence we perceived a thousand elegant and gilded steeples, which, glittering in the rays of the sun, appeared at the distance like so many flaming globes. One of

these globes, placed on the summit of a pillar, or an obelisk, had the exact appearance of a balloon, suspended in the air. Transported with delight at this beautiful spectacle, which was the more gratifying, from the remembrance of the melancholy objects which we had hitherto seen, we could not suppress our joy; but, with one spontaneous movement, we all exclaimed, *Moscow! Moscow!* At the sound of this wished-for name, the soldiers ran up the hill in crowds, and each discovered new wonders every instant. One admired a noble *chateau* on our left, the elegant architecture of which displayed more than eastern magnificence; another directed his attention towards a palace or a temple; but all were struck with the superb picture which this immense town afforded. The walls, variously painted, the domes covered with lead or slates, or glittering with gold, offered the most pleasing variety; whilst the terraces before the palaces, the obelisks over the gates, and, above all the steeples—really presented to our eyes one of those celebrated cities of Asia, which we had thought had only existed in the creative imagination of the Arabian poets.

*The Conflagration of Moscow.*

“No cry, no tumult was heard in this scene of horror. Every one found a-

bundantly sufficient to satisfy his thirst for plunder. Nothing was heard but the crackling of flames, and the noise of the doors that were broken open—and occasionally a dreadful crash caused by the falling in of some vault. Cottons, muslins, and in short all the most costly productions of Europe and of Asia were a prey to the flames. The cellars were filled with sugar, oil, and vitriol: these burning all at once in the subterraneous warehouses, sent forth torrents of flames through thick iron grates, and presented a striking image of the mouth of hell. It was a spectacle both terrible and affecting. Even the most hardened minds were struck with a conviction that so great a calamity would on some future day, call forth the vengeance of the Almighty upon the authors of such crimes.

“The hospitals too, which contained 20,000 wounded Russians, now began to burn. This offered a harrowing and dreadful spectacle. Almost all these miserable creatures perished. A few who still lingered, were seen crawling, half burnt, among the smoking ruins; and others, groaning under heaps of dead bodies, endeavoured in vain to extricate themselves from the horrible destruction which surrounded them.

*"In the morning, about the dawn of day, I witnessed the most dreadful and the most affecting scenes which it is possible to conceive; namely, the unhappy inhabitants drawing upon some vehicles all that they had been able to save from the conflagration. The soldiers, having robbed them of their horses, the men and women were slowly and painfully dragging along these little carts, some of them contained an infirm mother, others a paralytic old man, and others the miserable wrecks of half-consumed furniture; children, half naked, followed these interesting groups. Affliction, to which their age is commonly a stranger, was impressed even on their features; and when the soldiers approached them, they ran crying into the arms of their mothers."*

#### THE RETREAT.

*"The soldiers, vainly struggling with the snow and the wind which rushed upon them with the violence of a whirlwind, could no longer distinguish the road, and, falling into the ditches which bordered it, there found a grave. Others pressed on towards the end of their journey, scarcely able to drag themselves along, badly mounted, badly clothed, with nothing to eat, nothing to drink, shivering with cold, and groaning with pain. Becoming selfish through despair, they affor-*

ded neither succour, nor even one glance of pity to those who, exhausted by fatigue and disease, expired around them. How many unfortunate beings, on that dreadful day, dying of cold and famine, struggled hard with the agonies of death! We heard some of them faintly bidding their last adieu to their friends and comrades. Others, as they drew their last breath, pronounced the name of their mother, their wives, their native country, which they were never more to see. The rigour of the frost soon seized on their benumbed limbs, and penetrated through the whole frame. Stretched on the road, we could distinguish only the heaps of snow which covered them, and which, at almost every step, formed little indulations like so many graves. At the same time, vast flights of ravens, abandoning the plain to take refuge in the neighbouring forests, croaked mournfully as they passed over our heads; and troops of dogs, which had followed us from Moscow, and lived solely on our mangled remains, howled around us, as if they would hasten the period when we were to become their prey.

“From that day the army lost its courage and its military attitude. The soldier no longer obeyed his officer. The officer separated himself from his general. The regiments, disbanded, marched in dis-

order. Searching for food, they spread themselves over the plain, burning and pillaging whatever fell in their way. The horses fell by thousands. The cannon and the waggons which had been abandoned served only to obstruct the way. No sooner had the soldiers separated from the ranks, than they were assailed by a population eager to avenge the horrors of which it had been the victim. The Cossacks came to the succour of the peasants, and drove back to the great road, already filled with the dying and the dead, those of the followers who escaped from the carnage made among them.

*The Retreat continued.*

“ Marching from Smolensko, a spectacle the most horrible was presented to our view. From that point till we arrived at a wretched ruined hamlet, at the distance of about three leagues, the road was entirely covered with cannon and ammunition-waggons, which they had scarce time to spike or to blow up. Horses in the agonies of death were seen at every step; and sometimes whole teams, sinking under their labours, fell together. All the defiles which the carriages could not pass, were filled with muskets, helmets, and breast-plates. Trunks broken open, portmanteaus torn to pieces, and garments of every kind were scattered over the valley. At every little distance, we met with trees, at the foot of which the soldiers had attempted to light a fire, but the poor wretches had perished ere they could accomplish their object. We saw them stretched by dozens

around the green branches which they had vainly endeavoured to kindle; and so numerous were the bodies, that they would have obstructed the road, had not the soldiers been often employed in throwing them into the ditches and the ruts.

“We can scarcely imagine a picture more deplorable than the bivouac of the staff. Twenty-one officers, confounded with as many servants, had crept together round a little fire, under an execrable cart-house scarcely covered. Behind them were the horses ranged in a circle, that they might be some defence against the violence of the wind, which blew with fury. The smoke was so thick that we could scarcely see the figures of those who were close to the fire, and who were employed in blowing the coals on which they cooked their food. The rest, wrapped in their pelisses or their cloaks, lay one upon another, as some protection from the cold: nor did they stir, except to abuse those who trode upon them as they passed, or to rail at the horses, which kicked whenever a spark fell on their coats.”

### THE RESULT OF THE CAMPAIGN.

These may be considered as imperfect sketches, many of them hastily drawn, of *horrific scenes*, which distinguished a campaign, that ended in the return of a few miserable stragglers out of 400,000 warriors, who, we are told, had crossed the Niemen but a few months before; elated, it is probable, with the hopes of success, and buoyed up in the delusive expectation of soon returning, crowned with the spoils of the vanquished; for, we are informed that it was by the light of the flames of Moscow that the author penned the account of its conflagration;—and it appears, that he had to pursue his melancholy task of recording passing events, generally at night, beside a wretched fire, almost benumbed with cold, and surrounded with his dead and dying companions!

And can *such scenes*, to a repetition of which, the opening of a campaign so naturally leads, be contemplated with *pleasure*? Not surely by men possessing the smallest portion of the milk of human kindness. These can be beheld with complacency and delight only by *demons*, strangers at once to the softer feelings of humanity, and those exalted conceptions of superior intelligences, by which, the multitude of the heavenly host were taught to sing, at the birth of HIM, WHOSE LIFE AND DOCTRINES WERE SO EMINENTLY CALCULATED TO GIVE PEACE TO THE NATIONS: "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth PEACE, good will toward men.*"