

THE SUBALTERN

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649205325

The subaltern by G. R. Gleig

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

G. R. GLEIG

THE SUBALTERN

Everyman, I will go with thee, and be thy guide,
In thy most need to go by thy side.

GEORGE ROBERT GLEIG, born at Stirling in 1796, son of Bishop Gleig. Served in the army, 1813-14. Ordained in 1820; Chaplain of Chelsea Hospital, 1834; Chaplain-General of the Forces, 1844-75. Died at Stratfield Turgis, July 1888.



THE SUBALTERN



G. R. GLEIG

LONDON: J. M. DENT & SONS LTD.
NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO. INC.

All rights reserved
Made in Great Britain
at The Temple Press Letchworth
and decorated by Eric Ravilious
for
J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd.
Aldine House Bedford St. London
Toronto . Vancouver
Melbourne . Wellington
First Published in this Edition 1915



EDITOR'S NOTE

As his *Life of Wellington*, already published in this series, shows, Gleig had the advantage of drawing on his own experience in his military tales and records, or in those of them that count to-day. In *The Subaltern* this was more marked than in the later books, for it is his autobiography slightly recoloured,—the story of his own Spanish and other adventures in the Wellington campaigns, before he was turned from a soldier into an army-chaplain. It is accordingly the most real of all his tales, and although it is written for the most part in the demure sententious style of the market novelists of that day, the touch of reality and the effect of the things seen and remembered save it and give it life. We find the saving touch in the last passages of the deadly assault on St. Sebastian and the street-scenes after the capture, where the orgy and debauch of the English soldiery were of a kind to satisfy the new Huns themselves. When Gleig in his cartoon calls up the tall houses in the Old Town of Edinburgh, he makes you believe in his personal share in the episodes, just as his portrait of "Duro" in the following chapter makes you feel that his dedication to the Great Duke and its reference to "a few bloody fields" had some grit in it. The fact is when Gleig is using the palaver of the ordinary annalist and telling you that some scene or another was such as to defy all the powers of language to describe it, he is merely a literary puppet. When he tells how his thirst led him to the blue slimy stream in the valley of the Bidassoa, and he saw a man's arm stick out, black and putrid, from the water, he is telling us what he had actually gone through, and the page has the virtue that every human document, genuinely set down, has in its evidence. There indeed Gleig justifies his existence as a man with a pen who had something to tell.

Born in 1795, son of the Bishop of Brechin, George

Robert Gleig after his Peninsular campaign became, as elsewhere described, a parson, and a Chelsea Hospital Chaplain. He wrote enormously after his first comparative success with *The Subaltern*—novels, histories, biographies, travels, sermons, and most of his works are now waste paper. Macaulay did not spare him in reviewing his *Memoirs of Hastings*: but he has survived, in spite of a heap of unnecessary works, because he had adventures and some spirit in his youth, and could tell his tale.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Campaigns of the British Army at Washington and New Orleans, 1821; *The Subaltern* (*Blackwood*), 1825; *The Chelsea Pensioners*, 1829; *The Country Curate*, 1830; *A History of the Bible*, 1830-31; Allan Breck, 1834; *The Chronicles of Waltham*, 1834, 1861; *Sequel to same*, *Things Old and New* (*The Novel Times*, vol. i.), 1845; *Life of Sir Thomas Munro*, 1830; *Lives of Military Commanders* (Lardner), 1830, etc.; *History of the British Empire of India*, 1830-1835; *The Hussar*, 1837; *Chelsea Hospital and its Traditions*, 1838; *Germany, Bohemia, and Hungary visited in 1837, 1839*; *Life of Warren Hastings*, 1841; *Memoir of Major-General Craufurd*, 1842; *Sketch of the Military History of Great Britain*, 1845; *Sale's Brigade in Afghanistan*, 1846; *The Story of the Battle of Waterloo*, 1847, 1907; *Life of Lord Clive*, 1848, 1907; *The Light Dragoon*, 1851; *The Leipzig Campaign*, 1852, 1856; *India and its Army*, 1857; *Essays: Biographical, Historical, and Miscellaneous*, 1858; *Life of Arthur, First Duke of Wellington* (Founded on Brialmont's Work), 4 vols., 1858-60; revised ed., 1862; People's ed., 1864; *The Soldier's Manual of Devotion*, 1862; *Life of Sir Walter Scott* (from the *Quarterly*), 1871; *History of the Reign of George III., to the Battle of Waterloo, etc.*, 1873; *The Great Problem: can it be solved?* 1876; *Personal Reminiscences of the First Duke of Wellington*, ed. by Mary E. Gleig, 1904.

The author's works include also two volumes of sermons. *The National Library* was conducted by him, and he edited a series of school books, to which he contributed a *History of England*. He was for many years a contributor to *Fraser*, *Blackwood*, the *Edinburgh*, and the *Quarterly*.

TO HIS GRACE
ARTHUR, DUKE OF WELLINGTON

MY LORD DUKE.—I trust that I shall not be deemed guilty of an act of unpardonable presumption, if I venture to dedicate to your Grace a little volume, of the merits of which you have been pleased to speak in terms far more flattering than they deserve.

The Subaltern's story is a plain relation of so much of a soldier's active career as was passed in the army under your Grace's command. The narrator's rank and position were not such as to afford him an insight into the plans of those campaigns in which it was his fortune to take an humble part; neither has he made any attempt to describe events to which he was not an eye-witness, or to offer opinions upon subjects concerning which he neither is nor was a competent judge. But it is a matter of high gratification to him to be aware, that his sketches have received the sanction of your Grace's approval; and that you have pronounced them to be correct pictures of the scenes which they seek to represent.

It is scarcely necessary to add, that the space of time spent where your Grace won glory for yourself, and incalculable benefits for the whole of Europe, was the happiest in his life; and that it adds not a little to the satisfaction arising from a glance back into the stirring scenes which marked it, that he is enabled, thus publicly, to subscribe himself, with sincere admiration and respect.—MY LORD DUKE, Your Grace's most obedient servant, and follower in a few bloody fields,

THE SUBALTERN