

**A MEMOIR OF MAJOR-GENERAL  
SIR R. R. GILLESPIE: KNIGHT  
COMMANDER OF THE MOST  
HONORABLE ORDER OF THE BATH**

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A Memoir of Major-General Sir R. R. Gillespie: Knight Commander of the Most Honorable  
Order of the Bath by Sir William Thorn

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**SIR WILLIAM THORN**

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A M E M O I R

OF

MAJOR-GENERAL

**SIR R. R. GILLESPIE,**

K. C. B.

A  
M E M O I R

OF  
MAJOR-GENERAL

SIR R. R. GILLESPIE,  
KNIGHT COMMANDER

OF THE MOST HONORABLE ORDER OF THE BATH, &c.

by Sir Wm Thorn  
FELIX, QUI TANTA LUCEM MERCEDE RELINQUIT.  
*Status.*

AS HE HAD A FULL APPETITE OF FAME BY JUST AND GENEROUS  
ACTIONS, SO HE HAD AN EQUAN CONTENTMENT OF IT BY ANY  
SERVILE EXPEDIENTS.

*Character of Viscount Falkland by Lord Clarendon.*

LONDON:

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1816.

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# MEMOIRS

OF

MAJOR-GENERAL

SIR R. R. GILLESPIE,

K. C. B.

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**O**F all the monuments that can be erected to commemorate the public services of eminent men, the historical detail of their actions, and a faithful delineation of their virtues, will ever be found the most honourable to the deceased, and the most useful to the living. Marbles and inscriptions may be very becoming marks of national gratitude, and proper stimulants to the imitation of illustrious deeds, but whatever be the utility of these performances, as objects of taste, feeling, and patriotism, their moral influence is contracted within narrow limits: and such is the natural imperfection of the human mind, that it

loses the impression of the most splendid works of art, when they are no longer within the reach of observation. There is also an unavoidable disadvantage in the productions of the statuary, that they are necessarily confined to single incidents in the lives of heroic characters: from which circumstance, it happens, that while the spectator is attracted to the contemplation of a particular scene of glory, he is deprived of the more substantial benefit which he would receive in estimating the entire merit of departed greatness. The humblest chronicler, therefore, may, without the imputation of vanity, lay claim to indulgence, when he reports in a strain of simplicity those facts, which, but for his care, would fade away from the memory, and leave even statues and mausoleums subject to regret and complaint in a future age, for the want of accurate and minute memorials illustrative of their subjects. Impressed with this consideration, and sensible of the obligation laid upon contemporaries to record, while they have it in their power, the virtues which they have witnessed, the writer of these sheets has ventured to publish an unadorned account of a com-



mander, whose amiable qualities endeared him to his friends, and whose splendid services, though displayed in distant regions, will ever entitle him to the admiration of his country. So long, indeed, as military virtue shall be held in esteem, and so long as our national history shall be read with pride and emulation, so long will the name of this heroic character be mentioned with enthusiasm, and his exploits pointed out as examples of imitation.

ROBERT ROLLO GILLESPIE was born at the paternal seat of Cumber, in the county of Down, January the twenty-first, 1766. His grandfather, who married a daughter of Lord Rollo, removed from Scotland, to take possession of some estates in Ireland, in the year 1720. The son of this respectable gentleman espoused for his third wife a lady of the first connexions, who was also of Scottish extraction, being the sister of James Bailie, Esq. of Innisharie, in the county of Down, and many years representative in the Irish parliament for the town of Hillsborough. There were no children by the two first marriages; and the only fruit of the last

was the subject of the present memoir, who, in consequence, experienced from the fondest of parents every indulgence, though at the same time they were studiously attentive to the right direction of his moral principles, and the cultivation of his understanding. The elements of instruction he received from his mother, who was in all respects a most accomplished woman, and knew well how to blend authority with affection. But at an early age he was brought to England, and placed in a private seminary at Kensington, known at that time by the name of Norland House, and rendered fashionable as a place of education by the expence with which it was conducted, and the rank and wealth of the pupils. What advancement in learning our youth made at this place does not exactly appear; but if his attainments were neither so extensive nor deep as to rank him among scholars, his general taste for letters, and the elegance of his conversation, plainly evinced, that, whatever might have been his irregularities, he had not failed in an application to his studies when at school, nor neglected to improve what he had acquired in the vicissitudes of active life. It

was the wish of his friends that he should follow the profession of the law ; but the course they adopted was ill calculated for that object, as, instead of training the mind to constant discipline and patient investigation, it may almost be said to have given an excessive latitude to the passions, and to have opened perpetually new scenes of pleasure to the imagination. Instead of taking a house in the immediate vicinity of the metropolis, the parents fixed their residence at Bath, where, during the vacations, young Gillespie was introduced into all the gay circles at that seat of amusement and dissipation. Accustomed to the unlimited gratification of his wishes from his very childhood, and thus habituated at the most critical period of life to scenes of extravagance in this receptacle of the wealthy and the idle, the weak and designing, it is not at all to be wondered that he should return to school with a lessened inclination to study, or that he should contract an insuperable aversion to the laborious application which was necessary to qualify him for distinction at the bar. To that distinction, however, parental ambition and regard continued to look with a fixed and anxious solicitude; and,