

**THE SPANISH CONSCRIPT
AND HIS FAMILY:
A TALE OF NAPOLEON'S
CAMPAIGN IN RUSSIA**

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The Spanish Conscript and His Family: A Tale of Napoleon's Campaign in Russia by Miss Jane Strickland

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A Tale

OF NAPOLEON'S CAMPAIGN IN RUSSIA.



BY

MISS JANE STRICKLAND.

" Not always full of leaf, nor ever spring,
No endless night, nor yet eternal day,
The saddest birds, a reason find to sing,
The roughest storm, a calm may soon allay.
Thus with succeeding turns, God tempers all,
That man may hope to rise, yet fear to fall."

LONDON:
H. G. CLARKE AND CO., 66, OLD BAILEY.

1846.

1527

LONDON
MAIL, PRINTER,
G. HELMSTADT
STRAND.

INTRODUCTION.

THE incidents upon which the following narrative is founded, are to be found in MR. JAMES'S travels in Russia, where they are thus related:—"We were interested extremely, by the appearance of two Spanish children among those we saw at the Foundling Hospital, at Moscow. Their father was supposed to be a chaplain, accompanying the Spanish forces employed in the French service, during the late invasion of Russia. He died at Moscow; and their mother, who had been delivered of an infant during their stay, fearing to hazard the vengeance of the inhabitants in their return to the city, endeavoured, with her little family, to accompany the retreating army. Her strength seems to have been very unequal to the attempt; and when they last saw her, she was lying on the road-side, unable to proceed—her body quite exhausted, and her mind, (as might be gathered from their description,) in a complete state of delirium. The daughter, though only eleven years of age, took charge of her brother, and also of her infant sister, whom she carried upon her back for many leagues. This little party followed the troops during all the severity of the weather, without any other provisions than the scraps of offal, or horse-flesh,

which the half-starved soldiers could spare them from their meals. After many escapes, they at last reached Krasnoi; but during the action which took place there, they were frightened by the appearance of a squadron of Cossacks, and fled to conceal themselves in the forest; here they remained two days without food, till they were found by a Russian soldier, crawling as well as their little strength would permit, along the snow. Their feet were entirely bare, and being seized by the frost, had become useless; their language was not understood; and had they even been skilled in the Russian tongue, their voices feeble, and inarticulate, could have availed them nothing. Their appearance however, was sufficient in this country to proclaim their situation, and procure them commiseration. The Grand Duke Constantine happened to fall in with them soon after their discovery by the soldier, and ordered them to be well taken care of—finally, giving them a place in this asylum. Their countenances were intelligent, and they were said to possess some talent. We may hope that the singular story of the first part of their lives, will be followed by a more happy career in the land that has adopted them."

The reader will perceive that in some places, particularly in the early part of the narrative, I have deviated from the account given by Mr. JAMES, because it is intended for the amusement and instruction of the young, to whom the parentage, real or supposed, of these children might present an unpleasant example of immorality. I have then given them a pastoral education in the Pyre-

nean mountains, and have represented them as the offspring of virtuous wedded love. To make the tale more complete, I filled up the outline, by marrying one of the female orphans to her preserver. For the history of the disastrous campaign in Russia, I am indebted to various celebrated French authors; from Dumas, I have taken the description of the Grand Duke Constantine.

In selecting the history of these Spanish orphans, for this little work, I have been influenced by the wish of presenting to the eyes of the young,—the all-sufficient Providence of God. Nothing could be more dreadful than the situation of these children, yet; though thousands and tens of thousands, fell around them, they were wonderfully preserved, and had a home and new country provided for them. The unprincipled ambition of Napoleon and his final fall, presents its striking moral to those whose parents or relatives, remember these events of modern times, to which, indeed, ancient history offers no parallel. In the patriotism of Count Rostopchin, we see what a disinterested man may do for his country; while in the retreat of the French army and its dreadful sufferings, we behold the consequences that arose from the desire of acquiring universal empire, at the expense of the lives of human beings. To make these truths more apparent to those whose minds, are now forming for the future, is the object of these unassuming pages.



THE

SPANISH CONSCRIPT'S FAMILY.

CHAPTER I.

THE MOUNTAIN HOME.

“ Domestic happiness thou only bliss
“ Of Paradise that has survived the fall.”—COWPER.

The boundless ambition of Napoleon, unsatisfied by the success of his military career,—success that in modern times has no parallel,—still lured him forward with the hope of the conquest of Europe, and if that could be achieved with the subjugation of the world.

In 1812, England and Russia alone opposed a bulwark to his power. The naval superiority of England rendered a successful invasion im-