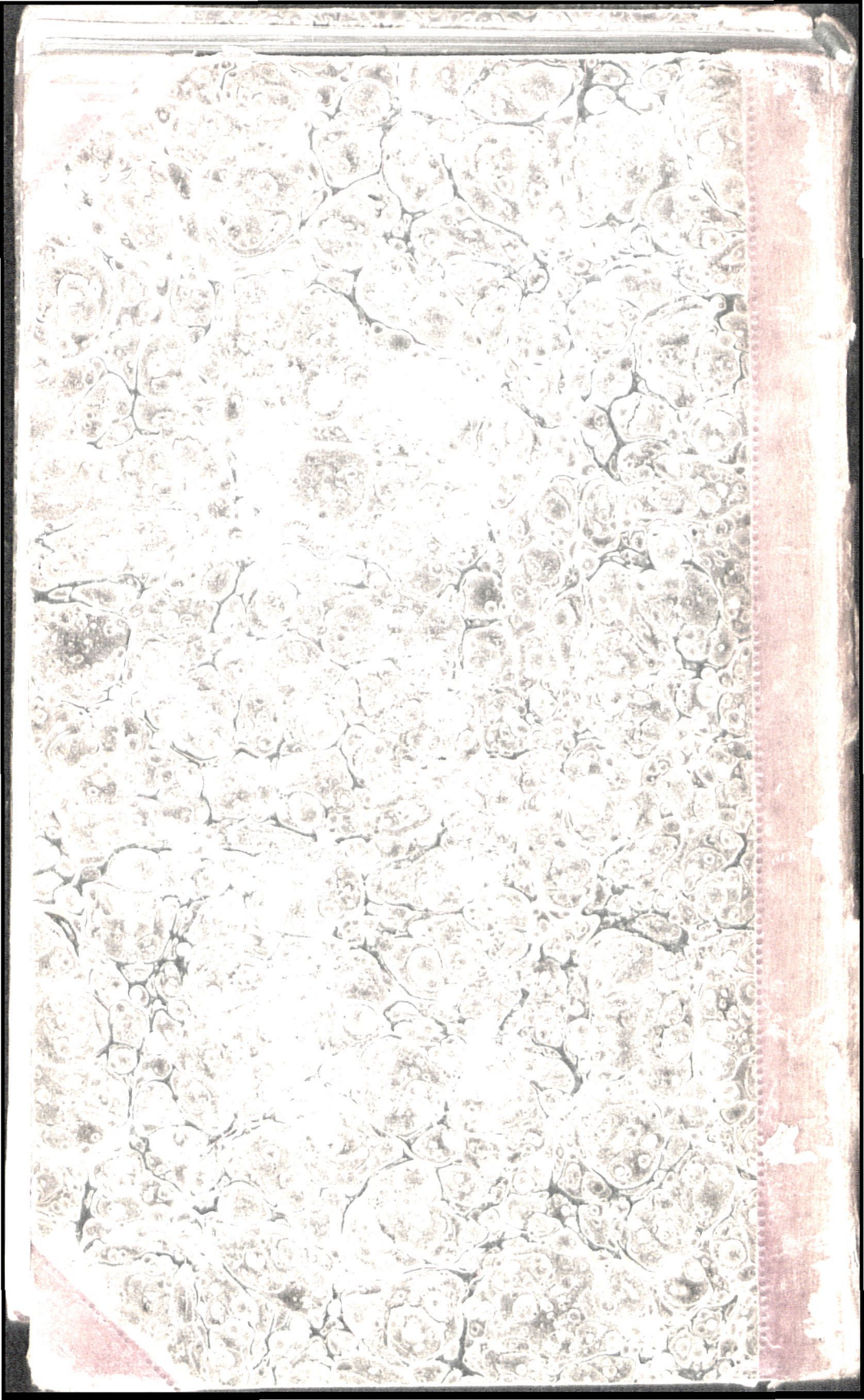


RECOLLECTION  
OF THE  
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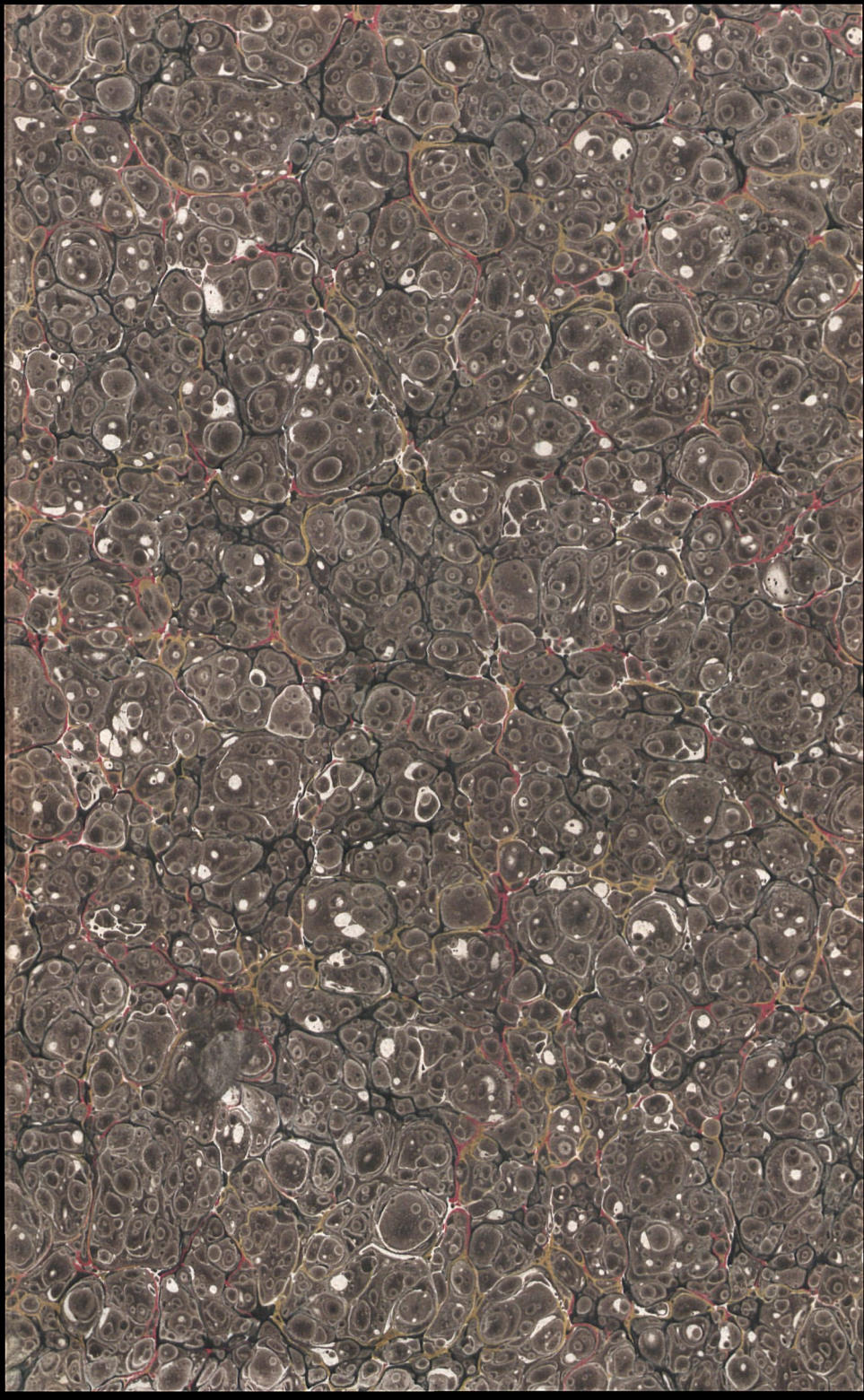




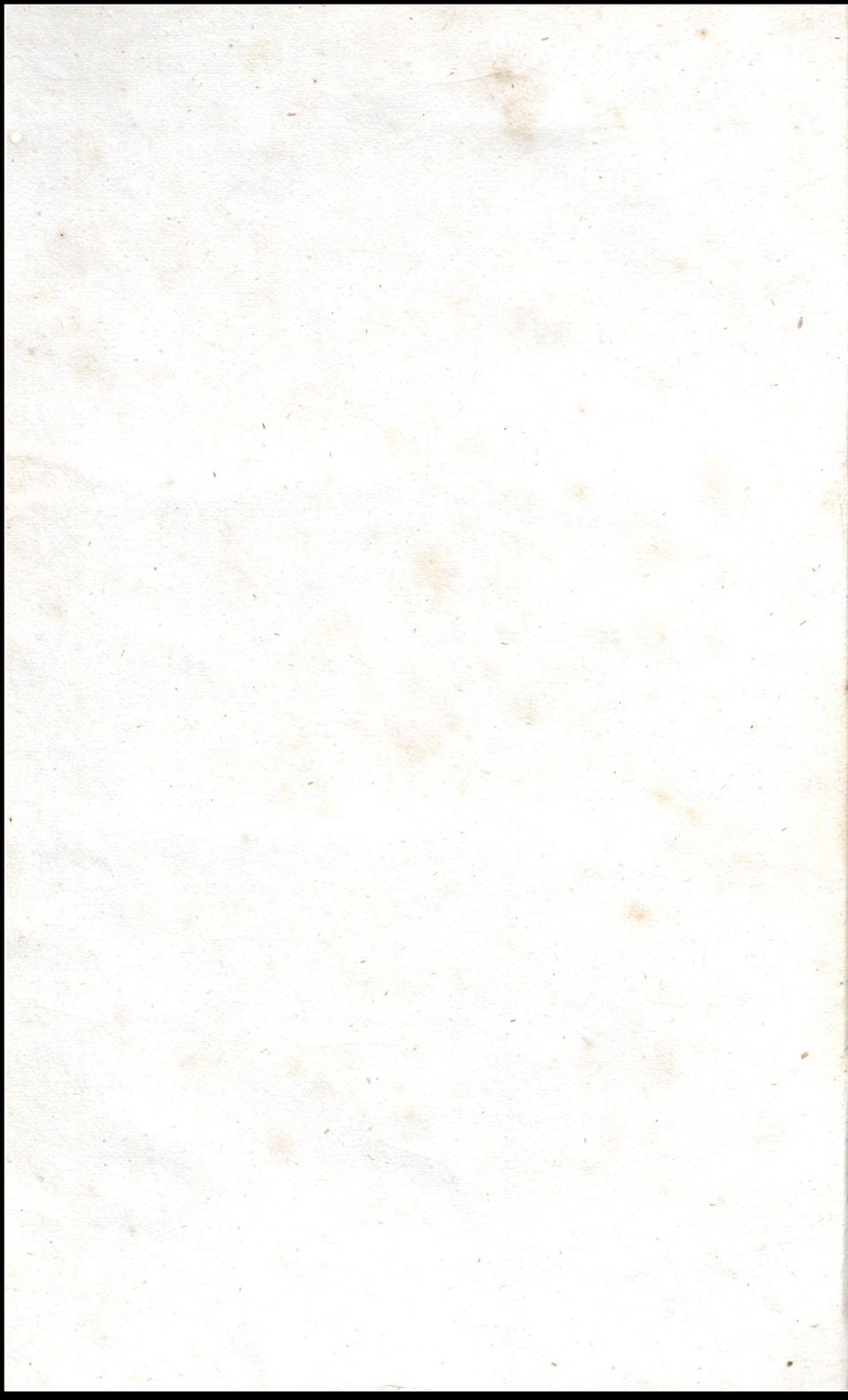




















RECOLLECTIONS

OF THE PENINSULA

OF INDIA

LONDON



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*Mr Kellers 19/10/11-1826*

RECOLLECTIONS

OF

THE PENINSULA.

*J. Hoyle there*

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BY THE AUTHOR OF  
SKETCHES OF INDIA.

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FOURTH EDITION.

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## PREFACE.

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THE following pages have occupied and amused the leisure of my winter evenings, in a dull uninteresting garrison on home service.

I relate what I saw, thought, and felt, as a man, a traveller, and a soldier, during five interesting years.

The style of a soldier can need no apology ; it is beneath the notice of a scholar and the critic. We pass our lives in conversing with mankind ; they in conversing with books. We only observe and draw hasty conclusions ; they observe, compare, and study. Ours is a life of action ; theirs of repose. We write to amuse ; they to instruct.



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He, to whom the interest of foreign scenes, the animation of the daily march, and the careless gaiety of camps are familiar, may be expected to languish in the solitude of a barrack-room, and to feel restless at a life of dull and wearisome inaction. Accustomed to the array of thousands, he turns with indifference from the parade of a regiment; nor can the ordinary duties of a quiet garrison be supposed to satisfy him who has served with armies in the field. The life of a soldier abroad is one of foreign travel, as well as of active employment; and it combines, therefore, rational enjoyment with honourable service. The cam-



paigns of the British army in Spain, had peculiarly that character; for we moved over large tracts of country, and our operations were not, as is often the case in war, confined to marches and countermarches in particular districts. The British soldiers, who landed on the banks of the Tagus, visited, in succession, those of the Douro, the Ebro, and the Bidassoa; were encamped under the walls of Madrid, and bivouacked on the Pyrenean mountains. In those scenes, and on that service, many of us experienced feelings of contentment, joy, and pride, for the return of which we may look, perhaps, in vain. At the distance of time at which I write, all that was disagreeable in campaigning is forgotten; while that which delighted, is, especially in my present frame of mind, very fondly remembered.

The unpretending volume I offer is not copious; but the few anecdotes I relate are true, the military sketches are faithful, and my descriptions of towns and scenery are, with all their imperfections, at least my own. For the reflections, opinions, and

warm (perhaps romantic) expressions of feeling I have scattered through these pages, they are such as naturally arose to me, both as a soldier and a man.

It was in the last week of June, 1809, that I embarked at Portsmouth, to follow and join my regiment, which had already sailed for Portugal. On the tenth morning after my departure from England, the vessel which bore me was passing under the rock of Lisbon, impelled by a favourable breeze, and she in a very few hours dropped her anchor in the harbour of Lisbon, nearly abreast of Belem Castle, and about a mile from the shore. Few scenes can compare with that which feasts the eye of a traveller, who, from the deck of a vessel in the Tagus, first gazes on Lisbon, rising proudly and beautifully above him. The northern bank of the river on which this capital is built, makes a handsome and sweeping curve throughout the whole extent of the city, which, including its suburbs, covers several hills, rising more or less abruptly from that quarter where its quays, squares, and some of its



most regular streets are conveniently disposed. The number of palaces, convents, and churches, which crown this amphitheatre of buildings; the dazzling whiteness of the houses; the light appearance of the windows and balconies; the tasteful arrangement of plants, flowers, and shrubs on their roofs and terraces; the golden orange-groves which adorn the suburbs; and the stately specimens of Indian or American botany, which are, here and there, scattered through the scene, produce an effect which may be felt, and which may be conceived, but which cannot be described.

Boats from the shore soon crowded round our vessel, and I leaned over her side to look, for the first time, at natives of Portugal. The dark-brown complexion, bare and muscular throat, expressive eye, and white teeth, together with the general vivacity of their deportment, strike an Englishman, at first, very forcibly: their costume, too, is quite new to him, and I think, very picturesque. Short petticoat-trowsers of white linen, a red sash, and their legs and arms

free and naked, mark very strongly the difference between the boatmen of the Tagus and the Thames.

The British troops at Lisbon were at this time all encamped in the Prince's Park, a large enclosure above the suburb of Belem, carefully preserved. In an old ruined house, the only building in or near the encampment, the mess of my regiment still held its social sittings; and here, round a rudely constructed table of casks and planks, seated on portmanteaus, stones, or knapsacks, we enjoyed our evening far more than we had often done at a board better provided, and in the most commodious mess-room. The conversation no longer ran in the same dull, unvarying strain, on scenes of expensive folly and fatiguing amusement; the dignity of our profession, which will naturally in such scenes glide from the view, again rose before us, arrayed in its best and brightest colours. New prospects and eager hopes gave an animation and interest to the discourse, which, seasoned as it was by some excellent wine, made time fly swiftly,



and it was midnight before I entered my tent. Here a couch of heath, freshly gathered, with my knapsack for a pillow, and a blanket for a covering, invited me to repose ; but I was far too happy to sleep.

The night was hot : I opened the door of my tent, raised all the walls, and throwing myself on my bed of heather, I indulged in waking dreams. We can only command the services of sleep when we are contented or weary ; but when our happiness arises from the prospect of still greater enjoyment, the mind is too active for slumber, and the very body becomes restless. At four in the morning I refreshed myself with dressing, leisurely, in the open air ; and at five the corps was under arms, to be inspected by General Catlin Crawford.

One thousand and seventy bayonets, all fine-sized, efficient men, then mustered under our colours. My regiment has never been very roughly handled in the field, although it has borne handsome share of honourable peril. But, alas ! what between sickness, suffering, and the sword, few, very few of those men are now in existence. We



had yearly supplies of men from the depôt; they too have for the most part disappeared.

Our inspection over, I set forth, with some companions, to devote a day to Lisbon. We passed from the bridge of Alcantara, by one continued street, through the suburbs, to the city.

The appearance of every thing around me was so totally novel, that it is impossible for me to describe the singular, yet pleasing impression produced on my mind. To find myself walking amid a concourse of people, differing in feature, complexion, and dress, so widely from the natives of England; to hear the continued sound of a language I could not understand; and to find myself, though a youthful foreigner, an object of notice and respect, as a British officer, was at once strange and delightful. The picturesque dress of the common peasants; the long strings of loaded mules; the cabriolets; the bullock-cars, as rude and ancient in their construction, as those in the frontispiece to the Georgics of the oldest Virgils; the water-carriers; the lemonade-sellers; and, above all, the monks

and friars in the habits of their orders : the style of the houses, the handsome entrances, the elegant balconies, the rare and beautiful plants arranged in them, all raised around me a scene which, real as it was, seemed almost the deception of a theatre. In the small square of San Paulo, we stopped, and breakfasted in a light, cheerful room, which looked out on the quay. Here, while sipping my coffee, I commanded a view of the noble harbour, crowded with vessels; while many pilot and fishing barks, with their large, handsome Latin sails, were coming up or going down the river; and, nearer the shore, hundreds of small neat boats, with white or painted awnings, were transporting passengers from one quay to another, or to the more distant suburbs of Alcantara and Belem. The whole of this picture was lighted up by a sun, such as is only to be met with in a southern climate, and so bright, that it appeared to animate every thing on which it shone. Immediately under the window of our café, some Moorish porters, of whom there are many in Lisbon, were occupied in their surprising



labours. Their Herculean frames, small turbans, and striking features, and their prodigious exertions in lifting and carrying immense and weighty packages, presented us with a new and uncommon scene. My mind naturally reverted to that era in past ages, when these Moormen, now so degraded, and, politically considered, so insignificant, swayed the sceptre of this beautiful land, and when, from the very source to the mouth of the golden Tagus, the crescent was triumphantly displayed. We proceeded, immediately after breakfast, to take a survey of the city; and ascending a very steep, though well-built street, made our way to the church of San Roque. My attention was arrested in passing the magnificent house, or rather palace, of the Baron Quintella, by the sight of one of those large groups of beggars, so common in this country. Round the gateway, and under the walls of this mansion, they lay, indolently stretched out, and only implored our charity by extending the hand. To follow, and importune us, was an exertion they never dreamed of; and in this last particu-



lar, they must be allowed to irritate a passenger far less, than the sturdy beggars occasionally met with in London, and the more numerous swarms, which infest half the towns in Ireland.

In the southern countries of Europe, openly professing the Roman Catholic religion, the giving of alms is considered an imperative duty; and according to their means, all persons supply the wants of the necessitous. From the gates of the convents, from the kitchens of the wealthy, food is daily distributed to a certain number of mendicants; and there is no person, however humble his condition, if he be above want, who does not give a something in charity, every day of his life. Hence, secure of the means to support their wretched existence, they betake themselves daily to their respective stations, await the summons from the porter of the monastery, or the palace, and thankfully receive the small coin of the casual passenger. It is true, that such scenes are painful; but we must learn the cause of them, before we abuse the nation by which they are presented.