

Terms used in War.

I was musing, the other day, on the many forms of expression that we meet with, and read over without emotion, as things of course, though they involve every thing that is dreadful to human nature. Among them, I was calling to mind some of the phrases that are used in reference to war. There is, in many of these, such a brevity and careless ease, that we hardly seem required to pause upon them. 'The troops were driven into the river.' 'The town was taken by storm.' 'The garrison were put to the sword.' 'The city was given up to pillage.' 'The place was burned to the ground.' These light and tripping phrases are common place in military despatches, and, yet, what fearful excesses! what dreadful sufferings they involve!

Let us take one of them, and for a moment examine it in a few of its ramifications. True it is, that we are now at peace; but a calm is often succeeded by an unexpected storm, and the quietude of Vesuvius is followed by the loud bellying of the burning mountain. Peace and war depend much on the public mind, and of that public we all form a part; it may be well, therefore, to keep alive in us that hatred, which a review of the cruel excesses of war is calculated to inspire. Let us take, for our examination, the expression, 'The city was given up to pillage.' Those who have read much scenes of warfare, well know that imagination is not likely to exceed the reality of the miseries which war has generally produced. The narratives of Labaume and Porter, Wilson, Segur, Dufens, and others, bring to our view such extravagant scenes of calamity and cruelty, such displays of horrible enormity, that we wonder why mankind do not, with one united and universal cry of abhorrence, exclaim against the practice and principle of heart-hardening and demoralizing war. But let it not be thought that I have any pleasure in blackening the reputation of a soldier: neither would I presumptuously brand the brow of him who differs with me in opinion; but, feeling as I do, that the word of God is the word of peace, and that war is a bitter evil; and knowing, as I do, how thoughtlessly we receive and retain the opinions of those around us, right or wrong, I claim the liberty of free

speech, while I endeavour to excite more consideration and sympathy among the advocates of war, than is usually manifested.

"The city was given up to pillage." What is the real meaning of the term, giving up a place to pillage? for it expresses itself so little, that it may be worth while, for once, if it be only for the sake of impressing it on our memories, to make ourselves familiar with the signification, as explained by past experience. It means, then, neither more nor less, than this, that an infuriated soldiery are given free leave and liberty to indulge, without restraint, their selfish, brutal, and cruel passions, in plundering, burning, and destroying the property of unoffending people; and in ill-using, maiming, and murdering them without control. This is the plain meaning, so far as we can gather it from the most authentic records of the occurrences, which have taken place in cases of the kind. Indeed it must be so; for, in giving armed and revengeful soldiers permission to pillage, you give them leave to take, by force, the property of those who, naturally enough, will make a struggle to retain it: the consequences are inevitable, and strife is succeeded by bloodshed. How fearful, then is the expression, 'The city was given up to pillage!'

The enormity of giving up to pillage is not seen or felt, when we read of it as taking place in a distant part of the world; it comes not home 'to our business and bosoms,' as it would do, were the occurrence to take place under our observation; but rapine and murder are crimes wherever they are practised, and pain and heart-rending calamity are as hard to endure in one part of the world as in another.

'The city was given up to pillage.' There will be no harm in applying this to the immediate town or city in which we dwell; the place wherein we possess property, and where those live who are dear to us, as the ruddy drops that warm our hearts; and here let no one accuse me of wantonly harrowing up human feelings. Let no man tell me that I do wrong in painting war in its own sanguinary colours! I am persuaded it is because Christians have been guiltily silent as to war's abominations, that so little repugnance is felt against strife and bloodshed. To shrink from a painted battle is