

ING 026

Ann MacVicar Grant

*Eighteen Hundred and Thirteen:
A Poem, in Two Parts*

[selecciones]

1814

PROYECTO OLE 11
ARCHIVO ELECTRÓNICO DE FUENTES PRIMARIAS
POESÍA PATRIÓTICA PROESPAÑOLA EN INGLÉS, FRANCÉS, ALEMÁN Y PORTUGUÉS (1808-1814)
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...

Nor yet the tyrant thought his reign complete,
Though abject monarchs grovelled at his feet,
On the Tiara though he scornful trode,
And o'er dejected Rome triumphant rode.
Though new-made kings, like images of snow
That melt before the sun's meridian glow,
The pillars of his state, were planted round,
And all his mandates heard with awe profound,
His evil Genius, in a fatal hour,
Suggests a bolder stretch of lawless power;
He snatched the Iberian crown with daring hand,
And tore their guiltless monarch from the land;
Nor trampled on their ancient rights alone,
But with a mean usurper filled their throne.
Then burst the smothered flame on every side,
By Spanish honour waked, or Spanish pride;
Urged on by dire Revenge, they pant for breath,
And rush impetuous to the work of death.
Who has not heard the applauding world's acclaim
Of Britain's generous aid, and Wellesley's deathless name,
While mortals with presumptuous pride elate,
Anticipate the dark decrees of Fate,
Or calculate, on this terrestrial ball,
How high the strong may rise, how low the proud *must* fall;
Nor bow the heart, nor lift the awful eye,
To own the Omnipresent Deity,

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Whose potent will confounds their airy schemes,
As day's effulgence scatters morning dreams.

...

While British ardour lightened o'er the plain,
The Lusitanian genius waked again,
And moved with Wellesley's conquering bands along,
To prove how oft the weak confounds the strong;
By what unlooked-for means the Almighty hand
O'erthrows the schemes by wild Ambition planned,
Back to its channel calls the o'erbearing flood,
And brings from seeming evil real good.

Meanwhile Iberia's lofty spirits woke,
And spurned indignant at the Gallian yoke;
Her warriors rushed impetuous to the plain,
And long maintained the glorious strife in vain;
New armies only rose to fight or fall
Before the wiles, or whelming power of Gaul.
Though Moore at sad Corunna checked their pride,
And in the arms of weeping Victory died;
In every heart though patriot valour glowed,
In every field though blood profusely flowed;
Still ineffectual proved the fatal strife,
And seemed a hopeless waste of human life;
Till Wellington to head the conflict came,
With cool experience sprinkling Valour's flame;
And British legions lent their tempered fire
To rash resolves that blaze but to expire.
As when in summer's pride a forest burns,
The hasty flames subside and rage by turns,
With ready axe the sturdy peasants run,
Hew down a path, and think the work is done;

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Yet though the summer woods are moist and green,
And fountains gush, and marshes intervene,
Still midst the ashes lurks the smothered fire,
With every breath rekindling sparks aspire,
Till all aghast the baffled rustic sees
The rushing blaze increasing with the breeze.
By British aid an impulse thus was given
To sparks enkindled by the breath of Heaven.
The new-born glories send a lustre forth,
Gild Europe's gloom, and warm the frozen North:
The germ of future conquest, nourished here,
Expanding, flourished in this wondrous year;
The last bequeathed, in its disastrous close,
A fatal legacy of human woes.

...

Now Doubt and Fear suspicious vigils keep,
And wonder at the avenging thunder's sleep;
It sleeps no more; the red right arm of Heaven
To mortal hands commits the sulphurous levin;
Confined no longer to the subject main,
It bursts tremendous o'er th' Iberian plain;
From proud Vittoria shouts of triumph rise,
The joyful tumults echo through the skies,
And fill th' applauding world with glad surprise.

And, hark! the dreadful blasts explode again,
The Pyrennean barriers rise in vain;
Again they hear the British thunders roar,
And yield their shelter to our foes no more.
The bulwarks stretch'd across from every mound,
The towering heights with many a fortress crowned,

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That seem to cast a look of scorn below,
And hurl down ruin on th' ascending foe;
The fatal missive, and the fiery shower,
With all the dread artillery of their power,
Before our hero's prowess melt away
As snows beneath impetuous showers decay.

The sanguine cross, that want of old to shine,
Terrific on the plains of Palestine,
At Cressy over captive monarchs flew,
And rose on Poictier's plains in triumphs new,
No longer comes with horror and affright
To fill the land, or blast the patriot's sight,
But on the Gallic soil propitious waves,
Announcing freedom to a land of slaves.
Such are thy triumphs, matchless Wellington!
Well may green Erin boast her gallant son;
The nations freed by thee shall long record
The conquests of the great, the valiant Lord.
While sounds of ecstasy from Britain rise,
And spread the notes of triumph through the skies;
While grateful Europe joins the world's acclaim,
And proud Aggression trembles at thy name;
Thy country's harp, with richest, mellowest tone,
Shall fondly claim thy honours as her own,
And seem, upon Vittoria's bloody plain,
To hail old Taura's hero chiefs again.
The sanguine wreaths of fame let others boast,
Who lead o'er prostrate foes a lawless host,
And wave Alecto's torch, where terror reigns
Midst smoking villages, and plundered fanes,
While round them, mutter'd curses in mid air

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Mix with the widow's sigh, the orphan's prayer;
Those powerful pray'rs that never rise unheard,
While vengeance heavier comes, the more deferr'd.
Thou, who dost Britain's awful thunders wield,
In council calm, resistless in the field,
The dread of Britain's foes, of Britain's friends the shield,
Proceed in thy unstain'd illustrious path,
While the commission'd ministers of wrath
Forsake their conquests, and disgorge their spoil,
And foil'd on every side, on every side recoil;
Of all thy host the father and the friend,
What countless blessings on thy head descend!
The grateful plaudits of thy country's foes,
Like whisper'd music, soothe thy short repose;
How sweet repose to that untroubled breast,
By no regrets, or guilty fears oppress,
Who rules to bless must conquer but to save,
The high distinction of the truly brave.

With fearless eye the Gallic peasant sees
The British ensigns waving in the breeze;
The British camp, to him a gallant shew,
Inspires no present dread, proclaims no future foe;
The wondering natives crowd with one accord,
To gaze insatiate on the mighty Lord;
With hope and fear but newly reconciled,
They view a chief so dreadful, yet so mild;
With glad surprise their wonted awe forego,
And find a guardian where they shunn'd a foe.

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