

Thirdly,—We are in absolute want of a good, detailed, and exact history, of the events of the revolution, and of the contending parties on the Main, from 1810, to the present time. It is a fact, that the people of the United States know little or nothing with certainty, of what has passed, and is still passing in Colombia. Our Gazettes give some accounts, but they are few, and exceedingly imperfect.

The imperfect and erroneous statements which have been published, and the exaggerated proclamations and bulletins have chiefly influenced public opinion; the *habit*, too, of thinking general Bolivar, a great and extraordinary man, a hero, has been growing since 1813, and has increased to such a degree, that it will be a difficult task to convince men of the exaggeration of their ideas, and extravagance of their notions respecting him.

So far as I am concerned, I am able to declare, that I have neither desire nor interest to flatter, or calumniate general Bolivar. I vouch for the correctness of all the facts contained in these memoirs, well knowing that this work will obtain only that degree of credit with the public which it may appear to merit by its accuracy and candor.

CHAPTER II.

Birth of Bolivar—His family—Visit to Europe—Marriage. Errors in the biographical sketch of his life in Schermer's Magazine.

Simon Bolivar was born in the city of Caracas, July 24th, 1783, and is the second son of Don Juan Vicente Bolivar y Ponte, a militia colonel in the plains of Aragua; his mother, Dona Maria Concepcion Palacios y Sojo; and both were natives of

after great resistance, and a heavy fire, the strong fort of Santa Rosa, by storm. The division of general Morano distinguished itself by its bravery and coolness, &c. &c. The fact is that general Par with his twenty five men, jumped over a low wall of this *strong* fort, and found it empty, the Spaniards had fled as soon as Par approached and could not have been taken or killed, being already more than four musket shots distant from him.

When I saw this pompous bulletin signed with my name I asked Bolivar how my name came to such a paper, a real and ridiculous satire upon our forces which did not exceed 300 men, but from which 75 divided into *four divisions* were more than sufficient to drive 25 enemies from Santa Rosa. He answered laughing, that Ballet (our printer) was anxious to finish the bulletin before midnight; and that he ordered captain Chamberlain, his aid-de-camp, to write it, under his dictation, and that I not being at home he

Caracas, and were Mantuanas.* They died; the first in 1786, the latter in 1789.

Young Bolivar was sent to Spain at the age of 14, in compliance with the customs of the wealthy Americans of those times, who usually spent in one year in Europe, the amount of several years income at home; seeking offices and military decorations, that were often put up to the highest bidder, under the administration of Manuel Godoy, Prince of the Peace. The young Americans were likewise accustomed to go to Spain, to complete their education, and to pursue their studies in the profession of law, physic or theology; for according to the laws of the times, no American was admitted to the bar, and allowed to practise in his profession in the Universities of old Spain, nor could he exercise his profession at home. Without a diploma from a University in Spain, no American could, at least in New Grenada, have the honor of being a Capuchin Friar! But as the object of young Simon was, to see the world, and not in any manner to study seriously, he paid little attention to any pursuit, other than that of pleasure, and of satisfying his desire to witness the different scenes of life. He, however, devoted some time to the study of Jurisprudence.

He was at this period, lieutenant in the corps of militia in the plains of Aragua, of which his father had been commander. He had an elder brother, who died in 1815, and two sisters, who enjoyed an annual income of from 40 to 50,000 dollars, the produce of several considerable estates, and particularly of an extensive *Hato*, on which were raised large herds of cattle. These estates were at no great distance from the city of Caracas; and at one or other of them, Bolivar and his family usually resided. San Mateo was, however, the place he always preferred. It was the largest of his possessions, where between 1000 and 1500 slaves were regularly kept, before the revolution. His residence in the valley of Aragua, not far from the lake of Valencia, was beautiful and striking. The famous Boves destroyed it in 1814.

sent it, with my name, as chief of the staff to the printer." The bulletin may be found in many Gazettes, particularly in the Caracas Courant, July 1816, with my name. Neither Bolivar nor myself were present at this skirmish. He commanded quietly on board Admiral Brion. I arrived in another vessel, a brig, after all this was done.

Some time afterwards I handed to general Bolivar a Gazette from Baltimore in which was reported this *fortunate and glorious victory*, and in which was added that general Bolivar's army was 7000 men strong in infantry and 3000 in cavalry. I could mention many other cases of a similar description.

* Los Mantuanos, or los familias Mantuanas, were, in Caracas, a kind of nobility and this is the distinctive title there of rich families of birth. In New Grenada the noble families of high birth, were never called Mantuanas, this distinction existed alone in Caracas.

From Spain Bolivar passed into France, and resided at Paris, where he remained a number of years, enjoying at an early period, all the pleasures of life, which, by a rich young man, with bad examples constantly before him, can, there, easily be found. I have remarked that whenever Bolivar spoke to me of the Palais Royal, he could not restrain himself from boasting of its delights. It was on such occasions, that all his soul was electrified; his physiognomy became animated, and he spoke and acted with such ardor as showed how fond he was of that enchanting abode, so dangerous to youth.

His residence in Paris, and especially at the Palais Royal, has done him great injury. He is pale, and of a yellowish color, meagre, weak and enervated.

I have spoken of Bolivar's residence in Paris; and I ask, if such a school could inspire him, or any other young man, with an inclination for continued, deep, and laborious study; to that school I apprehend it to be in a great measure owing that he cannot attend with assiduity to business, for more than two or three hours in a day; during the greater part of which he is sitting, or lying down upon his hammock, talking about indifferent matters with his favorites and flatterers. The answer of *avis-de-camp* on duty, to those who wished to speak to him, while he was thus occupied, generally was, that he was very much engaged in his cabinet. He scarcely ever writes at all himself, but dictates, or indicates to his secretary, what he wishes to have written. In consequence, as I apprehended, of the flattery, to which he had been accustomed since his residence in Paris, he is greatly inclined to adulation, and is very vain. But in the school where he acquired these two faults, (I mean those circles in Paris which call themselves *bon ton*,) he learned also the dissimulation to conceal them.

Bolivar returned in 1802 to Madrid, where he married one of the daughters of Don Bernardo del Toro, uncle of the present Marquis of this name. His father in law, who was born in Caracas, resided in Madrid. Bolivar was but 19 years of age, and his lady 16. They returned, in 1809, to Caracas, and lived in a retired manner on their estates. Shortly after, his lady was taken ill and died, without leaving any offspring.

Bolivar acquired, in the course of his travels, that usage of the world, that countess and ease of manners, for which he is so remarkable, and which have so prepossessing an influence upon those who associate with him.

In the year 1823, Mr. Ackerman published in London, a very interesting monthly periodical in the Spanish language, under the title of "El Mensajero." It is entirely devoted to the affairs of the new Spanish republics. It contains, among other articles, a

Biographical Sketch of Gen. Bolivar, in which the author asserts that the young Bolivar, during his residence in Paris, gave himself up to all the possible amusements of young men of his age: "Still," said the author, "he was assiduous to obtain the dear object he has had always in view, as the accomplishment of all his wishes, and his ambition, namely, *that of making with eagerness, all possible acquaintances which might have been useful to him for the emancipation of his country!*"

I must beg leave to assert, that shortly before the revolution of the 19th of April, 1810, at Caracas, the names of general Miranda, Don Manuel Guadalupe, the Corregidor T. M. Espana, Narino, Zea, and others, appeared on the list of those who declared their intention to liberate their country from the Spanish yoke. On the memorable day of the 19th of April, when the captain-general Emparan was deposed, and his functions performed by a patriotic Junta, the chiefs of this revolution were the alcalde [mayor] Don Martin Tobar, Don Francisco Salas, Carlos Machado, Mariano Montilla, Joseph Felix Ribas, and others; but the name of Simon Bolivar is not among them; he was at his ease, on one of his estates, in the valley of Atagua, and refused to take any part in it, although his cousin, Joseph Felix Ribas, labored to engage him as an active associate. Shortly after, the Junta gave him his option of a civil or military post, under the new patriotic government. Their offer was refused, and the pressing solicitations of his friends and relations were of no avail. Finally he accepted the appointment of a commission to London, with the grade of colonel in the militia. M. Louis Mendez y Lopez, who, during several years, was the agent of Venezuela at London, was at this time, his colleague in the mission.

If Bolivar, as stated in Mr. Ackerman's Magazine, had from his youth formed the idea of liberating his country, he would have seized this opportunity of joining the chiefs of the revolution, and would have accepted a post under the government of the Junta, and the congress: He did neither, although the members of these two bodies in 1810-11, offered him any post that might suit his views. On his return from London, he retired to his estate, without taking any part in public affairs.

Mr. Ackerman's Magazine says, secondly, that Bolivar, *from* the time of the earthquake, came to join Miranda, who had then his head quarters at Vittoria, and that he was a colonel in the army. This is a mistake. Bolivar was named *eight months before* the earthquake, governor of the fortress of Porto Cabello; but he came not to join Miranda at Vittoria. After his secret departure from that fortress, and his leaving his garrison in the night, he dared not appear before Miranda; because he justly feared that

he should be tried before a court martial, for having secretly, in the night, together with some of his officers, and without leave or orders, left the strongest place in Venezuela, which Miranda had confided to his care. He sent Thomas Montilla, one of the officers who embarked with him, to Victoria, with the news of this event, and with his excuses to general Miranda; the particulars of which I mean to give in their proper place. Bolivar was then lieutenant-colonel in Miranda's staff.

It is also asserted in the same article, "that the loss of Porto Cabello, diminished, in nothing, Bolivar's influence over the army." This is another mistake. Soon after the loss of Porto Cabello, which, in consequence of Bolivar's secret departure, fell into the hands of the Spanish commander, Don Domingo Monteverde, (June 1812,) the republican general Miranda felt so depressed by this unexpected loss, that he capitulated with Monteverde at Victoria, in July 1812. In virtue of the capitulation, congress, the republic, and the army of Venezuela, were entirely dissolved, and members of each saved themselves as well as they could. What, therefore, could be the influence of Bolivar over a disbanded and dissolved army? The author of the biographical sketch appears to be ignorant of a well known fact, viz. the arrest of general Miranda, at Lagunera, by Simon Bolivar, Dr. Miguel La Pena, and the military republican governor of Lagunera, lieutenant-colonel Manuel Maria Casas; and that lieutenant-colonel Bolivar embarked soon after, with a passport signed by the Spanish general Monteverde, and with a letter of very high recommendation from the latter, to a merchant then at Porto Cabello, with his own bag ready to sail for Curacao, requesting, nay, urging him to receive the lieutenant-colonel Bolivar on board of his vessel.* If, therefore, Bolivar could have had, at this time, any influence with the patriotic army, how would he, how could he have obtained a passport, and, moreover, the letter, from the Spanish general-in-chief?

These, and many other particulars, prove clearly that in a great part of the accounts given and published of Bolivar's life, the writers have endeavored to attribute to him qualities and motives, which he himself had never thought of before.

All that can be said, with truth and impartiality, of general Bolivar's patriotism, is, that it began with his being at the head of the army and the government: or, to speak more plainly; general Bolivar began from 1813, to be a zealous and ardent patriot, because, from January 6th. that year, until the present day, (July 1828,) he has not ceased to have, either, the three powers, legislative,

* I have these particulars from the merchant himself.

executive and judiciary, united in himself,* or to have, together with the executive power, the direction of all civil and military operations. the congress of Colombia and Peru, having been entirely submissive to the wishes of its President, Liberator or Protector, as will be shown more particularly in the course of this Biography.

CHAPTER III.

Events previous to the Entry of Bolivar into the regular army of Venezuela—First causes of the Revolution at Caracas—Napoleon's invasion of Spain, and its influence upon the Spanish Colonies—Propitious movements for the Americans to rise against their oppressors—Policy of the Cabinets of St. Cloud and St. James's, in regard to the Spanish Colonies—years 1807 and 1808.

It will be necessary to give some account of the state of Europe, and of the West Indies before the revolution; and to show the primary causes of a revolution which undermine the colossal power of Spain, and promised freedom and prosperity to the Spanish Americans.

Napoleon, the Spanish government, and the Holy Alliance, have contributed to provoke and foment the bloody war between Spain and its colonies; and have powerfully assisted the latter to become free and independent: Napoleon, by his invasion; the Regency and Cortes, by sending to the Man chiefs remarkable for ignorance and weakness, or for cowardice, duplicity, and cruelty. The want of a steady and well planned system of moderation, and of a policy adapted to these critical circumstances have done more harm to Spain than to America. Millions of Americans have suddenly awakened from their lethargy of three hundred years; have been forced to defend their property and their lives, and have at last succeeded in driving their oppressors from their territory, and in declaring themselves free and independent. If Spain had

* The following historical facts will prove it, as *dictator* at Caracas in 1813 and 14, as *supreme chief* in 1816, 17, 18 and 19 in Venezuela and New Grenada, as *President Liberator* at Colombia, as *Protector* in Peru and Bolivia from 1820 until 1826. And again from the 23d of November 1826 until the present day (July 1828) he holds the *Dictatorial* power in consequence of the commotions in Venezuela and Valencia under Gen. Paez. (See his decree dated Bogota, Nov. 1826, in the *Appendix*, among the documents under No. 5.)