

## CHAPTER XI.

### END OF THE YEAR 1813.

REPLY OF BOLIVAR IN ANSWER TO THE COMPLIMENTS DIRECTED TO HIM FOR THE VICTORY OF ARAUCA — CONSIDERATION — HIS LETTER TO THE CONGRESS OF NEW GRANADA — IDEAS OF BOLIVAR UPON THE UNION OF AMERICA TO RESIST EUROPE — CONSPIRACY OF THE SPANIARDS AGAINST MONTEVERDE — END OF HIS CAREER IN VENEZUELA — BOVES—NORALES — HELP SOLICITED FROM MARIÑO BY THE LIBERATOR — BRIEF STROKES OF THE PEN WHICH DESCRIBE SOME OF THE EASTERN CHIEFS.

THE commander-in-chief was contented by the victory which he gained over the enemy; beholding himself free from the trouble, which was naturally inspired by two combined armies, who were threatening the existence of the newly-fledged republic. Complimented by his secretaries and officers of his staff, he returned them sincere thanks; and that their hearts should not be cooled, in the middle of the loyal expression of his acknowledgment, he said then: "It is true that our liberating arms have vindicated Venezuela; the largest army that has as yet attempted to subdue us lies stretched on the battlefield; but we must not yet repose: other glories await us; and when our country's soil shall be entirely free, we will march out to fight the Spaniards in point of America, where they rule, and cast them into the ocean. Liberty shall exist under the protection of your swords." Admirable words, which were reproduced by Antonio Muñoz Tebar, Secretary of State and Foreign Affairs, in the report he presented at the termination of the year, and which reveal the stupendous purpose which was entertained by that extraordinary genius!

From the commencement the Liberator had perceived clearly the vastness and intricacy of his work. He was to carry on war, creating armies; he should liberate America, forming an opinion which did not exist. It was necessary that he should inspire the feeling of the country and destroy the power which oppressed it, not only in Venezuela, but in New Granada, in Quito, in Peru, because *one alone was the country of all the Americans*, its people united by the bonds of mutual misfortunes, and because no nation should remain in bondage, *slavery being a cancer which spreads through and devours the entire body.*

But what was the position of affairs that he should entertain so many hopes? The triumph of Arauca, it is true, had been complete, but our people offered unfortunately an example of stupidity and aberration singular in the annals of the civilized world. I have already mentioned something in the foregoing chapter. The extortions of the royalists overran the limit of wickedness; their chiefs lived upon their heavy fines and scandalous pillage; they assassinated for vengeance, for hate, for pleasure; they outraged the reduced and desolate families; . . . . and so many cruel and unsupportable measures did not produce

in the people uprisings of irritated suffering, nor was there even sufficient food to cause them to favor the patriots and increase our forces. The Spaniards held secure their military roads and the line of their operations; they formed deposits of provisions and warlike effects, whilst the dominion of the independents most commonly did not extend any further than the narrow limits of their quarters. . . . . Great calamity of those times! Such was the condition of the populace and ignorant people, who, without any discretion, favored the old slavery which they had known from their birth, and repelled the liberty offered to them by the Liberator! To the inexperience of some was joined the absence of unity, the want of moral adhesion, and the evil instincts of others; to the perils of war was united the weakness of the convictions of many; along with the threats of Spain and her agents, it was necessary also to have in mind the reverses, treasons, errors, rivalries, indiscretions, obstacles of all classes, the scarcity, the want of resources, the snares of the people against which bravery is useless. . . . . Who, then, does not marvel at the purpose of redeeming America with such baseness? Who does not admire the wonder of that constancy, the temper of that inflexible soul, to which everything was easy, feasible, conquerable, in treating of undertakings of liberty and glory!

Gigantic are the creations of a gigantic heart . . . . . In this we have the explanation of the sublime conceptions of the Liberator.

Being impressed, however, by the fact of beholding his countrymen composing the royalist armies, combating in the name of a tyrannical and imprisoned king, and opposing themselves to the triumph of the sacred cause of the country, and after he had referred to them the victories obtained over Yanes and Ceballo, he said:

"We have meanwhile to lament an evil sensible enough; that our country should have lent themselves to be the hateful instrument of the wicked Spaniards. Disposed to treat them with indulgence, in spite of their crimes, notwithstanding they continue in their wickedness, and others given up to robbery, have placed in the deserts their residence, and others flee to the mountains, preferring this hapless fate, instead of returning amongst their brethren and taking refuge under a government which labors for their good.

"My sentiments of humanity have been unable to behold without compassion the deplorable state to which you have been reduced, Americans, allowing yourselves to be so easily led to enlist under the banners of the assassins of your fellow countrymen. The legitimate government of your country opens to you, for the last time, the gates of happiness. Choose, fellow-countrymen, either to come to enjoy freedom under an independent government, or to perish miserably in the forests, victims of a just persecution. I give you my word of honor to forget all your past faults, if within the lapse of a month you return to your firesides. Under this safeguard, sacred to me, you will be able to take possession quietly of the good which the country offers you, and you can afterwards aspire by your good conduct and useful services to the considerations of the government of Barcelona and Guayana. The armies of Spain, numerous and haughty, have perished; as killed on the battle-field, prisoners in our fortresses, they crossed the ocean only to increase by their misfortunes the splendor of our triumphs.

"What could not be done by the numbers of the Spanish troops, was effected by the disturbances of the people, excited to sedition by some Europeans. The rapidity of our conquests was forced to stop before the increased number

of the hostile forces, which were springing up on all sides; and more battles have been fought for the occupation of Venezuela than to free her, when her territory was bristling with Spanish bayonets.

"Fortune following the steps of the army, has caused it to triumph in forty battles. At one moment she abandoned our flag, and the republican arms were defeated at Bobare, Yaritagua, Calabozo and Barquisimeto. Misfortunes which have been of service to Venezuela in obtaining. If there are any amongst you who will yet resist this opportunity to enter into order, it must be that he is a monster, unworthy of all generosity, and ought to be abandoned to the vengeance of the law."

General Bolivar never allowed to pass unheeded an opportunity to manifest his sensibility and generosity. A thousand magnanimous and merciful acts adorn his long and extraordinary career, whilst that, on the part of the royalists, the chronicles of the time do not recall a single act of humanity, in compensation for so many cruelties, for so much extermination and death.

The Liberator reported to the Congress of New Granada the reconquest of the freedom of the West; he detailed some of the facts which he deemed worthy of special mention and ended with these eloquent and feeling sentences:

"The liberating arms have in one moment destroyed the power of Monteverde, and carried victory from the Magdalena to the immortal actions of Mosquitero and Araure.

"On the battle-field of Mosquitero, more than 1,000 men of the Spanish army lay stretched in the dust, thus paying their rash audacity; almost at the same time, on the heights of Bárbula, at Los Trincheras, and on the hills of Vigirim, the expedition recently arrived from Spain, dishonored the banners of that nation, by shameful defeats, which afforded us three celebrated victories.

"If, on any occasion, the warlike virtues overcome numbers and chance, it was on the plains of Araure, where Ceballos and Yañez combined, at the head of 8,700 men, suffered the most complete defeat, dimming the lustre of their former successes. More than 7,000 were fighting on one and the other side; the welfare of the republic depended upon the result. The superhuman bravery of our soldiers inclined the balance in favor of our arms, which in one moment reduced all to nothing.

"The first and most agreeable advantage obtained by the victory of Araure, is that of having cleared the way for my communications to Your Excellency, and the illustrious Granadanian people, liberators of Venezuela. In order to prevent, in future, obstacles of this class, I have adopted the most energetic measures to secure the safety of Barinas and the western portion of Caracas. Having known by experience that this is the portion of Venezuela most subject to disturbances, I wish to eradicate the seed of these seditions; and in place of the weak government which has nursed them, I have appointed governors, at the same time military and political, who, at the head of armed forces, will restrain the disturbers, and shall defeat the irruptions which are caused by the Spaniards. I have thought it convenient that I should, in this case, change the instructions of Your Excellency, for in them Your Excellency has never prescribed to me, a conduct incompatible with the safety of the people which I should liberate. I have not been able to fulfill the views of Y. E., availing myself of the other means which Your Excellency had marked out to me.

"Notwithstanding the independence of Venezuela is secured, I foresee the end of the mission with which the generosity of Your Excellency thought fit

to honor me. I am preparing already, from the field on which I am now camped, the convocation for an assembly of representatives, elected by the people. With this I have fulfilled the orders of Your Excellency; I will put the seal to your generous views by leaving deposited with the Representative Congress the sceptre of power with which Y. E. armed my hands to chastise the tyranny of my country.

"The possession of supreme authority, so pleasing to the despots of the other continent, has been for me, idolatrous of liberty, the most wearisome and hateful. The evident peril of the country imposed on me the law of exercising it; because only with it could I, in our weak state, resist the shock of the enemies and conspirators. Let my country then return to fulfill the destinies to which she had been elevated by the forefathers of her liberty. Let her return to be happy under the sheltering laws which were decreed by her august representatives, and that magistrates appointed by a popular and legitimate election, be the depositaries of the rights, to preserve them in all her dignity and glory."

"I repeat to Y. E. what I have declared in my proclamations: I shall not retain any part of my authority, although it be the people themselves who confide it to me. My only ambition, which is that of combating for liberty, will be satisfied by any destination which will be conceded to me in the army which will operate against the enemies.

"I have the honor of being, Y. E., etc.,

"BOLIVAR."

Early in the morning of the 20th December, the Liberator set out for the line of Puerto Cabello to review the fortifications erected by the Chief Luciano D'Elhuyar; from Puerto Cabello he returned to Valencia, and from Valencia he accompanied the Archbishop Don Narciso Coll and Pradt to the Villa de Cura. This prelate was making his pastoral visit, and the Liberator pressed on him the necessity of cementing the people in the principles of fraternity and enlightened religion.

From the town of Cura, he traveled to Caracas, where he arrived on the night of the 29th.

In that moment he devoted himself to dictating measures for public safety, for military and civil organization, for increase of incomes, and did not rest until morning. It was necessary for a respectable army to subdue the insurgents of the plains, which threatened with their lances to wound the heart of the republic; and to this Bolivar dedicated himself in preference. "The fatigues of war have not yet commenced," he repeated, foreseeing undoubtedly the formidable encounter, in which were to be shed rivers of blood; "but we will conquer. The seed of liberty, which is now sown, should give its fruit. If there is anything which is never lost, it is the blood which is shed for a just cause." Wonderful to say, in the midst of these arduous cares, one of which alone was sufficient to take up all the attention of the most expert and able, the Liberator still found time to occupy himself with the relations of the remaining people of the liberated portion of America. His ideas on this point were extraordinary, and more than all, at this epoch, with his searching perspicuity he sounded the abysses of the future, he overran the continent, and the intrigues and ambitions of Europe, caused to conceive a vast, and to a certain point, impossible plan, but which was represented to him as the necessary counterweight for the equilibrium of the universe. As no historian has made

these things known, great under all concepts, my readers perhaps will thank me for offering them a copy of some paragraphs from the report of the secretary of foreign affairs, dated 31st December, 1818, and published in the 80th number of the "Gaceta de Caracas," a rare document, and always more precious. It reads thus :

"With respect to New Granada, the policy of Your Excellency (he spoke of the Liberator) has not alone conducted to contract our alliance with her. It pretends more ; to form from both regions a nation. Considerations of the greatest importance cause this measure to be indispensable. The interest of New Granada, our own, the views of the cabinets sufficiently manifested on this subject, oblige Y. E. to accelerate this step. Our force shall spring from this union. The enemies of the American cause will tremble before such a formidable body, which united will resist them on all sides. Power and the interior prosperity will arrive to its culminating point, when our elements of power and prosperity, directed by one impulse, are caused to agree to form a grand total . . . Why cannot New Granada and Venezuela form themselves into a solid reunion ? And even, why cannot the whole of South America reunite under an only and central government ? The lessons of experience afforded should not be lost on us. The spectacle which Europe now offers to us—deluged in blood to re-establish an equilibrium, which is always perturbed, should correct our policy to protect it from these bloody dangers. . . . We now find ourselves in those happy dispositions of being able to give, without difficulty, to our policy, the motion most convenient, Your Excellency, whom America beholds victorious, who is the glory and hope of his fellow citizens, is the one most proper to reunite the votes of all the Southern regions, and occupy yourself from this moment, forming at one time the great American nation, and protect her from the evils which the system of governments has brought on Europe.

"After this continental equilibrium, which Europe seeks, where at least, it seems, she should find it in the bosom of war and disturbances, there is another equilibrium, sir, and which affects us all : the equilibrium of the universe.

"The ambition of the nations of Europe brings the yoke of slavery to the remaining portions of the world, and all these portions of the world should try to establish the equilibrium between them and Europe, so as to destroy the preponderance of this last. I call this the equilibrium of the universe, and it should enter in the calculations of American policy.

"It is necessary that the strength of our nation be able to resist successfully all the aggressions which may be attempted by European ambition ; and this colossus of power which should oppose itself to that other colossus, cannot be formed without the reunion of all South America as one whole nation, so that one government can apply its grand resources to one end, which is that of resistance, with all of them, the foreign attempts ; in the meantime, that it should interiorly multiply itself with the mutual co-operation of all, will elevate us to the climax of power and posterity."

I do not treat here of contradicting nor of affirming these ideas ; I have only wished to offer to my readers a demonstration of the elevated views of the statesmen of that time, and principally of the Liberator, who, far from trembling for his own existence, nor fearing the future, conceived from the battlefield the thought of restraining the increase of Europe, and to oppose to her scandalous usurpations the resistance of the whole of America combined under one flag, to the cause of common independence and of right ! The mind does

not reach to understand, but the thought was noble, the design magnanimous !

“ In magnis voluisse est est.”

Such was the state of affairs towards the end of the year 1813 ; Bolivar knew that the regiment of Solomon which set out from Puerto Cabello for Coro, had almost all perished on the way by unspeakable privations ; but neither did he ignore that the royalists had entered Calabozo, after having completely defeated Colonel Aldao and his thousand men, heroically but uselessly immolated on the altar of the country.

The campaign of 1814 had already opened in dark and gloomy colors. In Venezuela only the smoke of battles was to be seen. Deplorable condition of human nature which mostly has in perspective misfortune and sorrow !

At this time Don Domingo de Monteverde, the *beneficent reconqueror*, deposed from his command, and maltreated by a council of Europeans installed at the factory of Puerto Cabello (December 28th), embarked along with his staff for Curacao.

Miserable end !

The stupid captain-general had sown the doctrine of insubordination and rebellion, and now he reaped the fruit of his immorality and of his scandalous conduct.

“ Never more,” says Baralt, “ did this weak and good-for-nothing man return to the country to whose unprincipled and debauched conduct Spain should attribute much and more principal part in the loss of Venezuela.” Restrepo, copying from Baralt, adds that, from “ Curacao, Monteverde passed over to Spain,” etc. Both historians are in fault. Monteverde returned to Venezuela as soon as the triumph of the Spanish arms allowed him. He dwelt at the town of Maiquetia, separated from public affairs, comprehending by this time his utter insufficiency ; in his presence Don Juan Antonio Rojas Queipo pronounced the funeral oration of Yanez and Boves, on the 14th of February, 1815, which oration was printed at Caracas in the printing-house of Gutierrez, Monteverde defraying the expenses ; and not only did he dwell in, but he took possession of, confiscated property of the patriots ; enjoying that which did not belong to him, and presenting them to his friends as if they were legally acquired goods. Read the letter he addressed to Don Salvador Moxo, and the original autograph of which I hold in my possession. It is as follows :

“ MAIQUETIA, October 28, 1815.

“ *Senor Don Salvador Moxo :*

“ DEAR SIR :—By your esteemed favor of the 25th current, I have known with pleasure that my relative and agent, Don Fernando Monteverde, had in my favor sold at auction a farm, by which I am now paid of all my credits against the treasury. I had already been informed of this by this same person, as also of the deep interest which you manifested in it ; I return you my most grateful thanks for so much kindness shown, and I place at your disposition this farm, and all that depends on my scanty faculties. I wish you the greatest satisfaction in your new employ, and that you may be assured of the feelings of affection and respect of your humble servant,

“ DOMINGO DE MONTEVERDE.”

In addition I will say, that Monteverde embarked at La Guayra the 7th of

July, 1816, on board of the ship "Esperanza," which, in the company of twenty-five merchant vessels, and convoyed by the brig-of-war "Tigre," set sail for Cadiz. Whilst at sea he was forced to remove, along with Rojas Quipeo, to the "Tigre," as the mainmast of the ship had been struck by lightning, causing a leak by which she filled and disappeared in the sea.

Monteverde absent, and Solomon destroyed in the arsenals of Coro, there remained Boves in possession of Calabozo, on the point of falling with his "llaneros" like a torrent upon Aragua and Caracas.

This point now demands that I should make known who and what the new Atila, whose name, coupled with the horrible and memorable havoc by which Venezuela was devastated, may serve as an injury to tyrants. Let us see who was this Boves whom Diaz and Torrente depict as the greatest of the Spanish chieftains who set foot in America, and who in reality was nothing else than a blood-thirsty savage, who craved for human blood, and who found pleasure only in the devastation and death of Americans.

The true name of Boves was Jose Tomas Rodriguez. A native of Gijon, and by profession a pilot's mate.

During the years of 1808 and 1809, he practised piracy, and resulted in being condemned to the prison of Puerto Cabello by a sentence which declared him a *sea-thief*.

On his arrival at the place of his punishment, several Spaniards (the Señores Jove) interested themselves in favor of the young Asturian, and his sentence was commuted from the prison to a mere confinement to the limits of the city of Calabozo. Thus was justice dispensed in this poor America!

At Calabozo Jose Tomas Rodriguez was employed at a haberdasher's store, when the revolution of 1810 broke out.

Wishing to obliterate his former conduct, which bore such an ugly stain, he changed his name, and called himself *Boves*.

At the beginning, he adhered to the revolution, speaking ill of the Spaniards against whom he surely entertained resentments, although unjust ones; afterwards he was put in prison for causes which I ignore, and was still in prison when Antonanzas entered Calabozo in 1813, and placed him in liberty.

Boves came out of the jail like a wild beast, burning with rage.

His savage and blood-thirsty character carried him into the war. He formed some cavalry, and was at San Juan de los Morros, and at Aragua displaying his wickedness. At this epoch all Spaniards believed themselves authorized to recruit and command forces. It is unnecessary to say that each one conferred on himself the rank he wished, and their exploits consisted in murdering the innocent and defenceless Colombians.

On Bolivar's entry into Caracas, Boves proceeded to Barcelona, where the Spanish General Don Juan Manuel Cagigal was in command; but, he fearing the attacks of the liberators from the West and the East, who by opposite roads, some had arrived at Cumaná, others at Caracas, he marched to Guayana. On crossing the Orinoco, Boves manifested to Cagigal his wishes of remaining on the territory this side of the river, in order to harass the insurgent bands. Cagigal praised the thought! . . . . and Boves stayed as chief, without any one to answer to, searching at his will victims with which to satiate his fury. There also remained with him, with the same view, Don Francisco Tomas Morales, as the second in command; an *isefio* so wicked that even Boves found him to be *atrocious!*

One and the other were daring and untiring; but between them existed the difference that Boves murdered systematically, having sworn to the destruction of the Americans; Morales assassinated for pleasure, finding relish in human sacrifices. Boves was passionate, inexorable; Morales, ungrateful, stupid and envious. Both were a terrible scourge (*flagellum Dei*) which God launched in his anger against unhappy Venezuela.

When these men made their appearance at the head of 4000 "llaneros," and entered Calabozo, after having defeated the brave Aïdao, BOLIVAR repeated with urgency to General Marino the solicitation for help.

The East was intact; Marino free from all attention. Nothing seemed more proper than the two generals should combine their efforts, and advised of the common perils to join themselves to cause it to disappear. In this manner the liberty of Venezuela would have been complete and secure. The pressing solicitude of Bolivar for the co-operation of Marino, is weighed by General Blanco, an ocular witness, saying: "his entreaties were even written with the blood shed on our battle-field." Nor did he forget to flatter the self-pride of the Eastern chieftain, causing to influence in his coming to the West, his glory and convenience.

But Marino did not stir. His troops who were able to resolve the problem of independence, remained in their quarters. Youthful, handsome, and graceful, brave without ostentation, of free and easy manners, Marino was just the man to gain the good will of people, and he was beloved by all; his soldiers worshipped him; led by him they would have come to Caracas and fought at Calabozo, at Valencia and anywhere; and joined to those of Bolivar, they would have easily destroyed on this occasion, and forever, the enemies of the republic! But Marino was ambitious, and his sole idea was the supreme command. He did not contest the glories of the Liberator (although he had his own, and very brilliant) but he did not wish to be less, and sought by the artifice of inaction, that Bolivar, pressed by the circumstances, should recognize his authority and submit to his orders.

Of how many sorrowful and disastrous evils was not this blind and obstinate rivalry the cause!

Along with Marino were Piar, an ardent follower of the revolution, intrepid and lucky; Valdes, an officer of honor; Armario, Azcue, Videau, men of energy, and more than all José Francisco Bemudez, a man full of valor, of an imponderable audacity, with an aspect and outline of body, not for the dress, but in itself truly manly and soldierly. . . . . Each one of these chieftains were worth an army, and if Marino had condescended! . . . . .

But it had been decreed that the year 1813 should close amongst anxieties and perils. What will be the fate of the republic in 1814?

BOLIVAR, with his enlightened and penetrating mind, had fathomed the depth of the evils which could happen; but, "formed as the fire from Heaven to shine in the midst of tempests," nothing terrifies him! . . . . . no obstacle detains him . . . . . and if adversity visits him, when most cruel the proof, so much more strengthened and worthy shall we behold him come out of it.