

CHAPTER XV.

1814.

NUMEROUS EMIGRATION WHICH ACCOMPANIES THE LIBERATOR TO BARCELONA — SUFFERINGS — SINGULAR IDEA OF BOLIVAR — BATTLE OF ARAGUA, DISASTROUS IN ITS CONSEQUENCES — THE LIBERATOR PROCEEDS TO CUMANÁ — PROJECTS TO SUSTAIN HIMSELF AT GUIBIA — PERFDITY OF BIANCHI — THE LIBERATOR AND MARIÑO RESCUE A GREAT PART OF THAT WHICH BIANCHI WAS CARRYING OFF — THEY RETURN FROM PAMPATAR TO CARUPANO — CONSPIRACY OF RIBAS AND FLAR — IMPRISONMENT OF MARIÑO — BIANCHI FREES HIM — DEPARTURE OF THE LIBERATOR AND MARIÑO FOR CARTAGENA — MANIFEST OF BOLIVAR — POSITION OF AFFAIRS IN COSTA-FIERRE — DEATH OF BOVES AND RIBAS.

WHEN the Liberator set out from Caracas on his retreat to Barcelona, he was followed by a numerous emigration, which feared more the excesses of Boves and his hordes, than the fatigues and risks of an uncertain pilgrimage. Families fled disconcerted, confused, horror-stricken, each one learning as well as they could the inconveniences of the road; and the royalists would overtake them, and massacre them without pity. This would increase the anxiety, and every one would hurry their flight, without stopping to take rest or food, by rough roads, weak ladies and children on foot, the heart afflicted! Many perished from fatigue, from fear, from fever. For this reason very few arrived at Barcelona.

The Liberator saved the troops and the military elements which he was able to take from Caracas, and organized about 2,000 men with which to resist the divisions which Boves had sent out in his pursuit, and to protect the rest of the emigration.

Whilst at Barcelona, as Bolivar held these vicissitudes which so deeply affected the republic, as transitory accidents, because in his mind Colombia was to exist sovereign and independent, he thought of sending to Europe a plenipotentiary to open relations between Venezuela and Great Britain! A wandering, if not insensate, would this idea appear to many. Being without means and resources, lost, defeated, forcibly absent from the capital, and to think, in the settlement of diplomatical relations, when it is well known that all courts and cabinets are always in favor of the one that wins, was a levity and indiscreet thought, to say the least. But the Liberator who never vacillated for a moment in the belief of the republic; who had the powerful conviction of the independence, looked upon this deputation as very natural and in order, seeking per-

haps, by instinct, in the pleasing exercise of the common rights of nations, the compensation of the inexorable disgust, which the unheard of barbarities of the Spanish chieftains sought to have produced in his mind.

To judge Bolivar properly in this act, it is requisite to feel as he felt, and to have the faith, the intense confidence, impulsive of the firmest conviction which he had.

The Colonel Ducoudrays Holstein, absurd adversary of the Liberator, as has already been referred to in another part, writes that, "Bolivar, endeavoring to obtain the protection of the British government, dispatched on the 12th of May to London, Colonels Lino Clemente and John Robertson, with the view of obtaining favorable treaties of commerce; that the commissioners embarked in the ship 'Palma,' and that on their arrival at St. Thomas, the Danish governor refusing to recognize their diplomatical character, they returned to La Guayra." All this is invention; and I would add, *stupid inventions*. At the date which is mentioned, the Liberator was busy with the preparations for the battle of Carabobo; Colonel Clemente was not dispatched to London nor to any other destination, and even having been, it cannot be understood what the governor of the Danish Island of St. Thomas should have to do with him and his diplomatical character. What is certain in this subject, is, that the Liberator wrote from Barcelona on the 2d of August to Don Pedro Gual, saying to him that he had resolved to send one of his generals to England to treat with the government of His Britannic Majesty upon the relations of Venezuela; but that, requiring for this project a man of war, which should conduct in safety the Envoy, he commissioned him to place in the hands of the Admiral of the Barbadoes a document in which this favor was solicited." In this all remained, because the ulterior events decided the life of the republic, and the country's soil returned into captivity.

With the two thousand men which the Liberator organized at Barcelona, he marched to the town of Aragua, where Colonel Bermudez had situated himself with one thousand men more, which Marino had sent from Cumana. The royalist army was approaching by El Chaparro, numbering eight thousand men, commanded by Brigadier-General Jose Tomas Morales; and on the 17th of August, the two armies were in sight of each other.

The Liberator efficaciously aided by his companions-in-arms, Ribas, Bermudez, etc., he had worked at Aragua with untiring activity to fortify the town, and to draw advantage from his position on the river: but the numbers of the royalists were disproportioned, and the exit of the encounter doubtful; above all, Bermudez having wished to make the resistance in the fortified portion of the town; an erroneous opinion, because thus the cavalry was rendered useless, which was excellent, and commanded by distinguished officers. Bolivar had disposed to make the first opposition at the ford of the river Guagua, by which the highway passed; but in that new theatre in which he stepped, and already knowing the jealousies which were manifested by the officers of the East and the West, and more than all the haughty and rash disposition of Colonel Bermudez, he was obliged to condescend, permitting this one to modify the plan which he had traced out.

At about 8 o'clock of the 18th the royalists opened their fire, and soon after the combat was bloody within Aragua itself. The republicans displayed an imponderable bravery. The right wing, led by Bolivar in person, resisted vigorously and surpassingly. Death mowed down at pleasure the most precious

lives; there, the brave Carvajal died (*the rampant tiger*), that famous llanero who governed the bridle of the horse with his mouth, and the arms with both hands; there fell, doing prodigies of valor, wounded seven times, Pedro Salice, commandant of the "Battalion Caracas," composed of the most select of the Carracanian youth: there this battalion lay stretched, even to the last soldier! there also Cedeño, Bermudez, Monagas, Zaraga, fought with wonderful intrepidity; chiefs who came from the honorable class of the people; soldiers of great boldness, active and brave. But at the end of seven hours of a well-contested combat, the independents were forced to abandon the field; the Liberator, with some remnants took the road of El Carito to Barcelona; Bermudez proceeded to Maturin. Morales entered Aragua!

The citizens fearing, took refuge in the church; more than one thousand were massacred even upon the altar, where the sacrifice had just been offered, and if in the holy temple there was no mercy, what would it be in the barracks and houses of the city? Thus it was that more than 8,500 patriots perished. peaceful inhabitants, helpless of both sexes, for no other crime than that of being Americans!

The Liberator knowing that the defense of Barcelona was impossible after the unhappy battle of the 16th, marched to Cumana, with the remnants which he managed to save from the bloody field of Aragua. To that place also the Generals Ribas and Piar also proceeded.

From the moment that Marino was informed of the defeat, he proclaimed martial law, and in concord with many of his officers he endeavored to concentrate in Guiria all his forces and the resources which he possessed.

Guiria is an excellent position, and it is besides near to Trinidad to receive help.

Marino invited the citizens of Cumana to emigrate to the coast of Guiria; he recalled the vessels of the fleet which cruised in those seas, and put on board of them the arms and munitions that were there to remit them to the mentioned destination with greater security; and he also shipped the treasure and twenty-four cases of manufactured silver and jewels that Bolivar had taken from the churches of Caracas. He only awaited the arrival of the Liberator with the troops to agree to the last measures.

Cumann was abandoned. Her dwellers fled frightened.

On that same night, that of the 25th of August, the Liberator arrived. The principal chiefs and officers assembled in his apartment, and whilst he partook of a soldier's meal, they conferred on the policy they should follow. During this, a sergeant presented himself, giving notice that the fleet was sailing out. The hour, which was advanced, and the agreement, which in order to effect the departure, should exist with the garrison of the fort of San Antonio, caused them to suspect a perfidy on the part of the chief. This was an Italian, named José Bianchi, a sort of filibuster, a man without faith, who searching wealth, had placed himself in the service of Venezuela to find an asylum in her ports, and a market in her cities for the sale of his prizes. Marino had confided in him in that desperate situation; but Bianchi, as soon as he had an occasion to be unfaithful, was so at his full liberty, as if the very fact which bound him to his obligation, should move him to be disloyal.

Aditum nocendi perfido prestat fides.

(Sawac. OEdip. Act. III.)

Thus when he beheld in his power so much wealth, he was unable to resist the temptation of possessing it; and although there were on board several officers, he declared to them his purpose, and besides, proposed to despoil the officers themselves.

This unhappy event was more transcendental than a defeat.

The Liberator confided to Generals Ribas and Piar the command of the forces left on land, and taking Marino along with him, he embarked in pursuit of Bianchi, with the hope of reducing him. It was midnight. In effect, the presence of Bolivar and Marino amongst the vessels of that unfaithful adventurer, and the proper and severe manner in which they treated him, caused Bianchi to be disconcerted, who made use of the pretext that he had worked in this manner to defray himself the expenses and pay of his naval force. Then the Liberator understood that it was convenient to dissimulate, hoping to force Bianchi to a complete restitution, and even to suffer the penalty which would be imposed on him at Marguerita, where he was to provide himself with water and provisions. The Italian, however, balked his hopes; because mistrusting, that which Bolivar thought, he anchored out of the reach of cannon at Pampatar. The Liberator succeeded finally that Bianchi should place at the disposition of the government of Marguerita the arms and munitions, and that he should give up part of the fleet with two-thirds of the treasure and effect which were on board of them. Bianchi then set sail with three vessels and a third of the manufactured silver and jewels (eight cases), with which he satisfied himself for the pay, as he said, of forty or fifty thousand dollars which the cities of Marguerita and Cumana owed to him for prizes which he had brought to their ports.

As soon as the Liberator had obtained that restitution, he removed with Marino to Costa Firme, he embarking in the brig "Arrogante," and Marino in the schooner "Culebra." The small expedition was commanded by the patriot commandant Felipe Esteves, and set their course to Carupano, which was still free. They arrived the 8d of September at night, and the following day the Liberator, fearing the perfidious conduct of Bianchi, who had followed in his wake, he directed to the citizen Felipe Esteves two communications, which I copy as follows:

"The traitor Giuseppe Bianchi, approaching this coast with the vessels of his command, and it being very probable that he intends to take away the two schooners which we have brought, I expect that you will make them come under the fire of the forts, to guard them against the attempts of that villain.

"God keep you.

SIMON BOLIVAR.

Carupano, September 4, 1814.

"CARUPANO, September 4, 1814.

"The citizen Captain Joaquin Marcano has been destined to receive the sixteen cases of manufactured silver which are on board of that vessel, according to the account which citizen Jose Paul preserves in his power. God keep you!

"SIMON BOLIVAR.

"To the citizen commandant of the schooner 'Arrogante.'"

The cause of our independence was in peril; unexampled disasters baffled the laudable undertaking of constituting the country; and even Bianchi, the Italian fillibuster, had come to increase the calamities and misfortunes. One more should take place at Carupano, which was to deprive the republic of the

genius of Bolivar, and in effect it was realized, the same 4th of September on the morning of which the Liberator appeared at that port.

The military chiefs of the province, instigated by Ribas and Piar, had formed on agreement of proscription against the Liberator and Marino, accusing them of having deserted the army and escaped to the Antilles; and proclaimed, in consequence, Ribas and Piar the prime movers of such criminal conduct, first and second chiefs of the troops. Thus the recent services of the Liberator and the patriotic solicitude with which he was seeking his companions-in-arms to continue at their head to defend the liberty of Venezuela and of America, were counterpoised with insults and vexations. Ribas, who was then at Cariaco, came to Carupano the 4th; he disowned Bolivar, and threw General Marino into prison. Intolerable ingratitude! Unbridled ambition! Ribas owed to Bolivar his military grades and the elevation and rank which he had reached. Little time had passed when, speaking to the municipal body and notables of the people of Caracas, he had undone himself in fervent praises to Bolivar; even yet many were reading that important document which attributed complete justice to the conspicuous merit of the Liberator, and already now he destitutes and proscribes him, and disowns him, and, forgetting his virtues, he insults his character and offends his patriotism.

Fortune opened the way; and what was singular, that Bianchi having been informed of what was going on, he presented himself in military aptitude, protecting the destituted, and ordered Ribas, threateningly, to place Marino in liberty, and him and the Liberator to embark for any port of New Granada. Ribas could not resist, and agreed to permit the embarkation of the two chiefs. Bolivar embarked with Marino the 8th of September on board of the "Arrogante" for Cartagena.

Before leaving, he placed in the hands of Ribas, thirty-six quintals of manufactured silver and jewels of gold, and the money he had redeemed from Bianchi, wishing that they would serve for the liberty of his country.

On his departure from the shores of Venezuela, the Liberator published in the same town of Carupano a "manifesto" directed to his fellow-citizens, in which he rendered an account of his operations, and justified himself of the charges which Ribas had made of his being the catastrophe of his country. The Liberator, superior to adversity, and always master of himself and his passions, did not say one word of the insubordination of his subalterns; he did not even belie the accusation of Ribas; he did not complain (as complaint breeds discredit), and separating himself from that whirlwind of ambition and unfortunate malignancy, he offered his fellow-countrymen to return to liberate them, swearing to them that the august title of Liberator which they had conferred on him would not be vain. "Liberator or dead," he said to them, "I shall always merit the honor you have made me."

This document is as precious as it is unknown. This affords me the pleasure of publishing it entire:

"Simon Bolivar, Liberator of Venezuela, and commander-in-chief of its armies, to his fellow-citizens:

"FELLOW-CITIZENS:—Unfortunate is the magistrate who, author of the calamities or the crimes of his country, sees himself forced to defend himself before the tribunal of the people from the accusations which his fellow-citizens make against his conduct. But he is most happy who, having passed through

the dangers of war, of politics, and of public misfortunes, preserves his honor intact, and who presents himself innocent to exact from his own companions of misfortune, an upright decision, poor without culpability.

"I have been selected by the fate of arms to break your chains, as I have also been, to say thus, the instrument of which Providence has availed itself to fill to the brim the measure of your afflictions. Yea, I have brought you peace and liberty; but behind these inestimable treasures have come along war and slavery. Victory led by justice, has always been our guide up to the ruins of the capital of Caracas, which we snatched from the hands of her oppressors. The Granadanian warriors never withered their laurels whilst they combated against the rulers of Venezuela; and the Caraquenian soldiers were crowned with equal fortune against the ferocious Spaniards who attempted anew to subjugate us. If inconstant destiny caused victory to alternate between us and our enemies, it was only in favor of the American people, which an inconceivable madness caused to take up arms to destroy its liberators, and to return the sceptre to its tyrants. Thus, it appears, that heaven, for our humiliation and our glory, has allowed that our conquerors be our own brethren, and our brethren only triumph over us.

"The liberating army exterminated the enemy's troops, but it has not been able, nor should not have exterminated a people for whose happiness it has fought in hundreds of combats. It is not just to destroy the men who do not wish to be free; nor is it liberty which is dispensed of under the dominion of arms against the opinion of fanatic beings, whose deprivation of mind causes them to love their chains as social bands.

"Do not lament for yourselves, but for your countrymen, who, instigated by the furors of discord, have submerged you in a stormy sea of calamities, whose aspect alone causes nature to shudder, and which would be as horrid as impossible to be depicted to you. Your brethren, and not the Spaniards, have torn your bosoms, have shed your blood, firing your hearth-sides, and have condemned you to expatriation. Your clamorous shouts be directed against blind slaves who pretend to bind you to the chains which they themselves drag; and do not be provoked against the martyrs, who, fervent defenders of your liberty, have lavished their blood in all the fields, who have run all perils, and who have not thought of themselves to save you from death or from ignominy. Be just in your sorrow, as is just the cause which produces it. May your fears not lead you astray, citizens, to the extreme of considering your protectors and friends as accomplices of imaginary crimes, of intention or omission. The director of your destinies, no less than his co-operators, have not had any other desire than that of gaining a perpetual glory for you, which should be for them an immortal glory. But if events have not corresponded to their views, and if unexampled disasters have baulked this laudable undertaking, it has not been on account of any defect, inaptitude or cowardice; it has been thus, by the inevitable consequence of a gigantic project, superior to human efforts. The destruction of a government whose origin is lost in the obscurity of time; the subversion of established principles; the alteration of customs; the change of opinion; and the establishment finally of liberty in a country of slaves, is a work as impossible of suddenly executing as it is out of the reach of all human power; so that our excuse for not having obtained that which we have desired, is inherent to the cause we follow; because, thus as justice justifies the audacity of having undertaken it, the impossibility of its acquisition qualifies the insuf-

iciency of the means. It is praiseworthy, it is noble and sublime to vindicate nature outraged by tyranny; nothing is comparable to the greatness of this act; and even when desolation and death be the reward of such a glorious attempt, there is no reason to condemn it because it is not what is attainable that should be done, but that to which right authorizes us.

In vain have unheard-of efforts gained innumerable victories, bought at the dear cost of the blood of your heroic soldiers. A small number of successes on the part of our antagonists has thrown down the edifice of our glory, the mass of the people being led astray by religious fanaticism, and seduced by the incentive of denouncing anarchy.

To the flambeau of liberty which we have held out to America as the guide and object of our attempts, our enemies have opposed the incendiary torch of discord, of devastation, and the great stimulus of the usurpation of honors, of fortune, to men debased by the yoke of slavery, and rendered stupid by the doctrine of superstition. How could the simple theory of political philosophy preponderate, without any other support than truth and nature, against vice, armed with the unrestraint of licentiousness, limited only to its reach, and converted suddenly by a religious imposture into political virtue and christian charity? No, it is not ordinary men, those who can calculate the eminent value of the rule of liberty, in such a manner that they prefer it to blind ambition and a base covetousness. Your fate has depended upon the decision of this important question; it was in the hands of our countrymen, who perverted, have judged against us; for the rest, all the remaining has been consequent to a determination more dishonorable than fatal, which ought to be more lamentable for its essence than for its results.

It is malicious stupidity, to attribute to public men, the vicissitudes which the order of things produces in states, it not being in the sphere of the faculties of any general or magistrate to check in a moment of turbulence, of shock, and of the difference of opinions, the torrent of human passions, which, agitated by the movement of revolutions are increased by reason of the force which resists them. And even when great mistakes, or violent passion in the chiefs, caused frequent prejudices to the republic, these same prejudices should, notwithstanding, be appreciated equitably, and their origin be sought in the primitive causes of misfortunes: the fragility of our kind, and the empire of the fate of all events.

Man is the weak toy of fortune, upon whom he accustoms to calculate many times with reason, without ever being able to rely on her, because our sphere is not in contact with hers, and is of an order much superior to ours.

To pretend that policy and war march to the grade of our projects, to work at random with only the force of our purposes, and assisted by the limited means which are in our power, is to wish to acquire the effects of a divine power by human springs.

I, very far from entertaining the foolish presumption of conceiving myself to be innocent of the catastrophe of my country, suffer on the contrary the deep sorrow of believing myself the unhappy instrument of its dreadful miseries; but I am innocent, because my conscience has never participated in the willful error of malice, although on another side I may have operated badly and unsuccessfully. The conviction of my innocence is persuaded to me by my heart, and this testimony is for me the most authentic, although it may seem a proud delirium. Here is the reason why,—despising to answer each one of the

accusations which in good or bad faith can be made against me, I reserve this act of justice which my own defense exacts, to execute it before a tribunal of wise men, who will judge with righteousness and skill of my conduct in my mission to Venezuela: of the Supreme Congress of New Granada, I speak of that august body who have sent me with their troops to assist you, as they have heroically done, until the last one has fallen on the field of honor. It is just and necessary that my public life be examined carefully and judged with impartiality. It is just and necessary that I satisfy those whom I may have offended, and that I be indemnified from the mistaken charges, which is due to me. This great judgment should be pronounced by the sovereign whom I have served. I assure you that it shall be as solemn as it can possibly be, and that my actions will be vouched for by undeniable documents. Then will you know whether I have been unworthy of your confidence, or whether I merit the title of Liberator.

I swear to you, beloved countrymen, that this august title, which your gratitude attributed to me, when I came to break off your chains, will not be vain. I swear to you that, Liberator or dead, I shall always merit the honor you have conferred on me; there being no human power on the earth which will detain the course that I have determined to follow, until I have returned immediately to liberate you by way of the West, sprinkled with so much blood, and ornamented with so many laurels. Hope, countrymen, for the noble, the virtuous people of New Granada, who shall return anxiously to gather new triumphs, to lend fresh assistance, to bring you anew liberty, if your bravery should not have already acquired it. Yes, yes; your virtues alone are capable of combating successfully against that multitude of madmen, who ignore their own interest and honor, because never has liberty been subdued by tyranny. Do not compare your bodily force with that of your enemies, because matter is never comparable to spirit. You are men, they are animals; you are free, they are slaves.

Fight then and you shall conquer. God concedes victory to constancy.

SIMON BOLIVAR.

CARUPANO, 7th September, 1814.

Carupano remained in a state of dull agitation, when Bolivar, abandoning the land of the East, left for Cartagena.

It was about 10 o'clock of the morning of the 9th September.

At this same hour Piar was entering with 300 men from Margarita, to gather the bitter fruit of his ambition! ... *

Ribas, haughty and extravagant, received him grandly. How could this inconsistent power last, acquired as it was by such culpable means?

The republic was about to be sepulchred—ambition annihilated it. Piar was defeated at Sabana del Saldo, almost all his soldiers perishing under the sword

* In the mutiny of Ribas and Piar at Carupano, Restrepo mentions General Bermudez. It is not shown that he was implicated in that treacherous intrigue. Bermudez was at that time at Maturin with Cedeño, Monagas, Zaraza, and other chiefs, who routed Morales on the same days; but it is true that afterwards Ribas, Bermudez, Piar, understood each other perfectly to organize respectable forces, although very soon insubordination, pride, and the most fatal rivalry, divided them to lose definitively the country and the first also his life.

of Boves; Bermudez was routed at Magueyes; Ribas at Urica, where all lay stretched, all the republican infantry, from its brave commander, Blas Jose Paz del Castillo, to the last soldier. The East was subdued. The edifice of republican glory had fallen into decay. Destiny, inconstant, which protected the hosts of liberty in 1813, abandoned in 1814. . . . Who can oppose himself to the inexorable rule of fate! The forces and victories of the asturian Boves, of fearful memory, held all the patriots in consternation;* and although many times they fought with unfortunate success, never could our chieftains flatter themselves of having defeated him decisively. Continuing without cessation the war, he at last met his death in that terrible battle of Urica, where an obscure republican soldier whose name has not been discovered, pierced his breast with his lance! . . . †

He was succeeded by Morales, who caused great injuries in the east, and decimated it, performing cruelties, which I cannot relate with the pen. Gabazo entered with his fleet in the Golfo Triste, and blockaded the coast from Trinidad to Yrapa, so that none could emigrate without being arrested, killed, and thrown into the water, without distinction of age or sex. All succumbed to steel, to fire, to the ferocity of those implacable tyrants, who fed themselves in the extermination of docile and generous people.

Oppressed by a violent yoke, submerged in innocent blood, Venezuela lay prostrate, controlled by ferocious chiefs overflowing with anger, frenzy of death, immoderate ambition for rule, unquenchable hatred for the American name. The Liberator did not do little in delaying the mortal blow which the royalists prepared against the liberty of Colombia. The duration of his government was troubled, fatigued by repeated wars, and ferociously fought by the arms of Boves, Calzada, Morales, Cagigal. The country devastated, commerce, arts, agriculture destroyed, the cities pillaged, entire populations swept away, still Bolivar, in his great effort, found recourse capable of delaying the rapid progress of such ardent enemies. And disobedience alone could afflict; the fatal example of insubordination; the stupid rivalry; pride, author of so many crimes!

The fruit of so many years of labors, of so many combats and generous efforts dedicated to re-establish the rule of justice and liberty, was lost. Not even

* The entry of the ferocious Boves in Cumana (October 16; 1814,) had been marked by rivers of blood, which flowed to stain the waters of the sweet Manzanares. The royalists assassinated all they met in the streets and public places indistinctively, women, children, aged and infirm. Carmen Mercie, a woman, was dragged out of the church and murdered by an officer in the presence of Boves, who laughed at the contortions of the fetus in the womb of the dead mother. ONE THOUSAND PERSONS perished on that day, and at night Boves celebrated that frightful massacre by a ball, which ended at three o'clock in the morning by the execution of the greater part of the musicians.

† In that epoch it was generally said that it was Morales, the lieutenant of Boves, who killed him to succeed in his place; and this was proved by the circumstance of Morales having ordered to be assassinated all those who in the council of officers held to name a chief to replace Boves, had voted for Cagigal or any other chief who was not Don Francisco Tomas Morales. It is inconceivable that nothing is said of these crimes, brought forth by ambition and thirst for command by Torrente and other Spanish historians. As if, if they should hush them, that history would not recall them!

the shade of independence now remained. Despised, the patriots dejected vassals and slaves, Venezuela was plunged into chaos. Again the people drag the wretched chain, now more for the crime than for the misfortune; and Bolivar, the man of faith in the future, of constancy and zeal, he whose daring was not diminished by the miseries of the present, abandoned it, exiled, disowned by his own relatives, by his most favored generals! But, alas! in the changes of fate, the unfortunate have more to hope for and the fortunate more to hold. Ribas did not enjoy long the command, and Bolivar returned to tread on his country's soil, sword in hand and hope in his heart, to destroy the obstacles which despotism opposed to the emancipation of the New World.*

* General Jose Felix Ribas was the uncle of Bolivar. Ribas was married to the lady Josefa Palacio, sister of Concepcion, mother of Bolivar. The Liberator gave him all his ranks in the militia. On the 5th of October, 1813, he made him from a colonel that he was, to field-marshal of the armies of Venezuela and commandant-general of the liberating arms; and in the proclamation to the victors of La Victoria, in February of 1814, he styled him "the conqueror of tyrants; the hero of Niquitas and Horcones, against whom adversity can do nothing," etc. Ribas was proud, impetuous, of elevated stature, of graceful demeanor; his eyes blue and full of fire, his brow broad, his mouth small and closed by thin but firm lips. He loved his country with delirium, and also loved glory. He was daring in war, and brave, showing a valor worthy of Achilles. After that unhappy act of ingratitude with Bolivar, which dimmed his merits, he lived but a short time, and without rest, as if Providence had taken upon itself to chastise the fault which men left unpunished. Defeated at Urica, and completely destroyed at Maturin, he took the route to the plains of Caracas with two officers. In the mountains of Tamanao, near to the valley of La Paecua, sick and despairing, he wished to repose a few hours. He sent to the village a negro slave to seek for food, and he informed on his master. According to rumor, the royalists found Ribas in a profound sleep; they tied him and carried him to the town. There they tortured him by blows and words, and cruelly killed him. His head was sent to Caracas, and placed in an iron cage on the highway of La Guayra, with the red cap which he always used as the emblem of liberty.