

CHAPTER XXVII.

1818 AND 1819.

BATTLE OF ORTIZ—SURPRISE OF RICON DE LOS TOROS—IMMINENT RISK OF BOLIVAR—HE FALLS SICK AT APURE—MARCH TO ANGOSTURA—MISFORTUNES OF THE PATRIOTS—LABORS OF THE LIBERATOR AT THE CAPITAL—EXPEDITION AGAINST NEW GRANADA—THOUGHT OF ASSEMBLING A CONGRESS AT GUAYANA—MANIFESTO OF BOLIVAR—MARCH TO MATORIN—DEFEAT OF MARIÑO—BOLIVAR RETURNS TO ANGOSTURA—FAMOUS DECREE OF THE 30TH OF NOVEMBER—THE LIBERATOR GOES TO THE APURE—RESPECT AND SUBMISSION OF PAEZ—HE RE-ESTABLISHES ORDER AND DESCENDS THE ORINOCO TO ANGOSTURA.

THE cliffs of Semen, abandoned by the dispersed patriots, were not occupied by the royalists. . . . So costly was the victory, that breath was scarcely left to the victor to sing victory!

The army of Bolivar marched by Parapara and Ortiz, towards Rastro (March 19th), and that of Morillo, which provisionally remained under the orders of Don Ramon Correa, awaited the arrival of Latorre to march towards Calabozo, without meanwhile harassing the retreat of its contraries.

The Liberator lost no time; he reorganized and increased the columns (this was now easier) and remounted the cavalry; he dispatched General Pedro Leon Torres to the Apure to order to his relief the forces of Paez and Cedeño; and placed Calabozo in the best state of defence, so much so, that when Latorre came upon Calabozo, he was surprised at not finding dispersed and demoralized troops as he believed, but a respectable army, almost equal to that he fought at Semen.

On this he retreated precipitately to Ortiz.

Bolivar, indefatigable, pursued him, harassing his rear-guard, and so near, that they arrived almost at the same time at Ortiz (26th of March). Latorre occupied the heights at the entry to the town with almost one thousand infantry and a squadron of cavalry. Bolivar determined to force those positions, combating for upwards of five hours without ceasing, with extraordinary bravery, and our troops even succeeded in taking the first height; but nothing was gained by this, as Latorre fell back to the second, the cavalry rode over rocks and hills to reach the Spanish battalions, and 500 horsemen dismounted to aid the infantry; but the ground, full of declivities and fissures, was an insuperable obstacle against which the intrepidity and valor of our soldiers were fruitlessly dashed.

Bolivar abandoned the bold undertaking; and Latorre, fearing to be attacked a second time, and then perhaps surrounded, retreated at night, silently, to Cura.

In this encounter on the heights of Ortiz, the brave Colonel Genaro Vazquez

was mortally wounded. He died, in effect, the next day. Vazquez was an officer of good service; patriotic; of proved valor, and of incomparable dexterity with the lance. It is affirmed that it was him who gave Morillo so formidable a lance-thrust that it nailed him to the saddle.

As the attempts of the Liberator to penetrate to Caracas by the road of Cura were in vain, he changed his plan. "If we do not succeed soon in occupying the capital," he said, "we will take possession of the West!" . . . And on the spot he ordered Paez to march by Pao to operate against San Carlos. (31st March.) He went to Calabozo to raise soldiers. He sent Monagas to Barcelona; Zaraza to Sombrero; Soublotte to Guayana . . . all with the order of recruiting men. He was besides preparing provisions, and collected horses. So opportune and successful were his measures, that in less than eight days he saw himself at the head of 600 soldiers and some well-mounted cavalry. With this force he thought of increasing the army of Paez, who was on the road to San Carlos, and he immediately set out (8th of April), by San José de Tiznados. In this town he awaited the column of the Colonel Justo Briceno, who could not arrive before the 16th, and by evening of the same day, at sunset, he marched out to take up positions at the Rincon de los Toros, half a league distant from San José.

The Colonel Don Rafael Lopez was approaching very near at the head of six royalist squadrons, and with the special order not to permit the junction of the Liberator with Paez; but Bolivar ignored it.

Lopez, who was daring, and meditated a surprise, approached the camp of Bolivar as near as he could, protected by the deceitful light of the moon, which was already setting, and even succeeded in taking prisoner the servant of the chaplain of the Liberator, Fr. Esteban Prado, who was seeking in the field some lost horses. By the servant, Lopez was informed of the minute things and the details of the liberating general's camp, even to the spot where Bolivar slept, and the officers and sergeants who commanded the patrol. With such abundant data, a captain of dragoons of La Union, Don Tomas de Renovales,* conceived the project of killing Bolivar that night, and offered to execute it. Lopez thought the blow was certain, and gave permission to Renovales; he himself preparing to attack the patriots at daybreak.

Renovales chose thirty-six soldiers, who volunteered to accompany him; but he only took eight. When he had already got close to the spot where Bolivar slept, he met the patrol of the sub-chief of staff, Colonel Francisco de Paula Santander. He was asked several questions by this chief, and they were all satisfactorily replied; and bringing the servant with him by his side, the assassin walked on with the safety of a member of the camp. Baralt affirms that "Bolivar, being awake when Santander was examining Renovales, he left his hammock almost naked, and retired to some distance, from whence he heard the reports, and supposing with reason his troops to be surrounded, he fled

* Baralt says (copying from Montanegro), "Don Mariano Renovales." This is an error. The Spaniard who offered to assassinate the Liberator at Rincon de los Toros was named Tomas. Don Mariano de Renovales was a Spanish lieutenant-general, who was at London towards the end of 1817; from this capital he wrote to the Liberator through the medium of Don Luis Lopez Mendez, offering his services to the cause of American independence, and the Liberator answered on the 20th of May, 1818.

from that spot without daring to return." This is untrue; and the circumstance of making the Liberator retire almost naked because he had only heard the examination of a patrol, seems to be an invented story, to represent him as a coward, when he was not.

The royalist historians imagine him to be fleeing by accident in *his shirt-sleeves*. . . To them this ridiculous fable is appropriate. Santander, who had a little of the peninsular accent, did not discover the deception by the pronunciation of Renovales; he was going towards the tree where the Liberator was, to receive orders, and Renovales, who affirmed to give an account of his commission, also followed to the same point. The Liberator seated himself in the hammock, to be in aptitude to hear better and dispatch; and when the assassin and his eight companions fired he was immovable. The balls passed above his head, and wounded the horses which were feeding near by. "Neither is it true," as says Montenegro, and Baralt reproduces, "that the chaplain Prado and the Colonel Salcedo lost their lives there." No; none of those who slept in that spot were wounded or killed. The Spanish party, in their retreat, met only the Colonel Fernando Galindo, and a soldier thrust his bayonet into his body. Besides, to contradict fortunately that of Bolivar fleeing from the spot without daring to return, it is sufficient to say that the Liberator, knowing, although late, the proximity of the royalists, gave his orders to await them, evading the alarm, that could have been produced on that fatal night. Thanks to these dispositions, our troops were ready to meet the enemy at dawn of day, and if Bolivar had fled, without daring to return, it is clear that he would not have been present in the ranks at daybreak to direct the battle.

The Spaniard Torrente relates it in a different manner. "Renovales, proximate to the appointed spot," he says, "fell in with the patrol commanded by the sub-chief of staff, Santander; the obscurity of the night, the identity of language and uniforms, and the skill with which Renovales gave the countersign, opened the road to him for the consummation of his purposes. On approaching the hammocks, they all fired at one time and bayoneted those who slept in them. Providence who conserved the days of Bolivar, in the same manner that it pleases itself for its inexorable ends in giving vitality and life to poisonous insects, wild animals and birds of prey, who do not have, in appearance, no other instinct than that of causing injury to the remaining beings, disposed that Bolivar should rise from his bed for an *urgent necessity*, a few moments before the surprise; which casual incident saved him from the death suffered by his three companions.

According to this, it is not now that he fled naked when he heard the examination of Renovales, but that, *for an urgent necessity* (all an invention of Torrente), he was distant from the spot of the surprise.

Ducoudray-Holstein, on his side, who has nothing to do neither with the nakedness of these, nor the necessity of those, relates the surprise to the full of his wish, and depicts Bolivar as full of fear, taking advantage of a few instants to jump from the hammock to the horse, and running at full speed, without stopping to think of his soldiers and friends who remained surrounded.

Those who show themselves least hostile to the Liberator, accusing withal, of having allowed himself to be surprised. As if surprises and accidents could be evaded in a country divided in ideas and affections, and where the nature of the soil and its geological formations are perfectly adapted for the ambushes and stratagems of war. From the moment that an unexpected accident gave the

royalists information of the password and countersign, the surprise was practicable with success. Caesar was surprised in his camp on the borders of the river Sambra. Demetrius at Gazza; Sempronius, at Trébia. . . . Notwithstanding, it has occurred to none to accuse these great leaders for them; and, if well considered, they had less excuse than Bolivar.

As Bolivar had suspected, the troops of Lopez did not wait the light of day for the struggle, and, before daybreak, they had began it bloody and not uselessly. At the first attack, a part of our cavalry gave way amazed and perturbed, and this occasioned the destruction of the infantry. The republican troops scarcely resisted. The royalists actively pursued our dispersed soldiers, and all that was in the camp was lost.

But, the pleasure of the victory was embittered, for the victor on seeing the body of Lopez, his heart pierced by a ball at the termination of the weak struggle.*

On that day, on which so unfortunate a star influenced over the destiny of the country, the Liberator saw himself in great risk of dying, or what was worse, of falling prisoner; because, fleeing after losing the battle, he entered a dense forest; he endeavored to pass through it on horseback, but it was impossible; he then dismounted and took off his hat and coat so as not to be known, and sallying again on the plain, the enemy was *literally* on him; none of those who were fleeing wished to give his horse to Bolivar, though he asked it of several. Finally, a cavalry soldier, who recognized him, had the generosity of giving him the well-equipped horse he mounted, he remaining in the risk of perishing.

The historians of Colombia and Venezuela do not mention who was this well-deserving soldier, who saved Bolivar from certain death. . . . History, which is the witness of times, is not often the life of memory, as it leaves to perish in silence names which the purest gratitude would consecrate to immortality. I have taken great pains in finding out who was this soldier, in order to make known his name to posterity; and my pains have not been in vain. . . . as I believe I can affirm that he is named LEONARDO INFANTE, of Maturin, the same who, then a colonel, died a few years since at Bogota. It is unascertainable if it is this one or another who killed the Lopez; but, the horse he mounted, and which he generously offered to the Liberator, was that of Lopez, and on the silver stirrups could be seen the initials, R. L.; a circumstance which left no doubt of the death of that terrible enemy.

The Supreme Chief considering that no important enterprise could be undertaken with that remnant of forces which he was able to concentrate at El Rastro, he gave them in charge of General Cedetto, naming him Commandant-General of the plains of Calabozo; and he determined to march and join Paes, whom he then knew to be in the neighborhood of Pao. He departed then with forty men who volunteered to accompany him, and, traveling three days and three nights, he found himself at the ford of Guaderrama, on the river Portuguesa; he was there informed that Paes was near San Carlos; but, the travel being dangerous on the road which led to this point, he resolved to proceed to

* Lopez was a native of Barinas, a man of color, intrepid, and of singular abilities for guerrilla warfare. He served the king with a wonderful decision, and caused great injury to the patriots, who were rejoiced on knowing that they were now free from such a formidable enemy.

San Fernando de Apure by way of Camaguan, from whence he reinforced the division of Cedeño, and levied new bodies to operate in the persecution of hostile bands.*

The Liberator passed at San Fernando almost the whole of the month of May in sickness; as the evils and misfortunes of the country succeeded in breaking down his iron constitution. He was there informed of the loss of the battle of Cojédes (2d of May), bitter for Paez and the independents, although not very pleasing to the royalists; and, he was also informed of the defeat of Cedeño at the Cerro de los Patos, and the taking of Calabozo by Morales (20th of May). All that had been gained at the commencement of the year was lost. There was no longer any money, arms, nor ammunition. The other articles of war were scanty. The republican army was destroyed; the infantry, at least, the essential base of all regular armies, did not exist, and a great portion of those horses which were brought from the fertile pastures, washed by the Aruca and Apure, had fell into the power of the royalists, or had perished. The mind of Bolivar, which alone preserved itself integral and better tempered, drew forth from misfortunes opportunities of hope, and from the abandonment of fortune motives for victory and greatness.

* I with pleasure take advantage of a note which the General Daniel F. O'Leary communicated to the Sr. Restrepo, on the mode of life of the Liberator on the plains of Venezuela. Said note is the following:

"When Bolívar was on the plains, his life was that of a 'llanero.' He would rise with day, and mount his horse to visit the different bodies of troops that were near. On his way he would encourage every one with a few affectionate words or flattering remembrances. He followed the marches with his staff, and at mid-day he would dismount and bathe, when there was a commodity; breakfast on meat like all the rest, and repose in his hammock. Then he dictated the orders which he had to communicate and dispatched his correspondence, which he did continually moving in his hammock. After the troops had eaten their short ration of meat, the march was continued until five in the evening, the hour customary to encamp, choosing, if possible, some tree or small bush. If the scene was not varied by some encounter with the Spaniards, each successive day represented monotonously the same events; of raising the camp, marching during the day and encamping anew at night always under the canopy of heaven, as they never had any tents. Generals, chiefs, and officers were, in respect to the mode of living, on a foot of entire equality with the soldiers; they participated in the same fatigues, they ate the same rations, water and meat, prepared in the same manner. Even in dress they were all equal, the Liberator using on the plains no distinction; it even sometimes happened that his wardrobe gave way. It is evident, then, that those campaigns of Venezuela were the most painful in the agitated life of the Liberator and his well-deserving companions-in-arms. The Liberator was then in all the vigor and strength of his age (thirty-six), and he exposed himself to suffer the greatest fatigues, as riding fifteen and twenty hours at a time, with great rapidity, and only eating a piece of roast meat. The innumerable cattle, which pastured on the vast plains washed by the Orinoco and its affluents, were the indispensable base to attain the independence of Venezuela. Without them the patriots, poor, miserable and houseless, would have perished of hunger, of sickness, and of all kinds of pains, hid in their dens in the dense solitary forests. But the abundance of cattle and horses saved them, and finally conducted the tri-color flag to Caracas, La Guayra, Puerto Cabello, casting out the Spaniards, who for more than three hundred years had ruled, peopled and civilized the country."

The Liberator sent to Barcelona, Cumana and Guayana, the Generals Urdaneta, Valdes and other chiefs, to recruit men, with which to form a new army, and he himself left for Angostura on the 24th of May, carrying with him his staff and a few columns of infantry.

He arrived at Angostura on the 7th of June.

Bermudez arrived at this point almost at the same time as the Liberator; and informed him of the complete loss of Cumana; of his defeat at "Puerto de la Madera," and of the new contrarieties of Marino, who had been the cause of his defeat. He was also informed there of the loss of Marino himself at Cumana-coa, and the preponderance which was seemingly being taken by the royalists on all sides; increasing its conflicts the news that were received from Apure, that "the troops had disowned the authority of Bolivar and named Paez chief of the army and supreme dictator of the country."

Bolivar then saw himself in one of those horrible situations where the greatest minds are dejected and crestfallen. Never had fortune in the theatre of the world represented such different characters. She showed herself favorable to the royalists who feared reverses, and severe to the independents who expected her favors. . . . All was wisdom on the part of Providence, so that men might learn how to understand, fear and hope, in order that the mind may not be exalted by this, nor humiliated by that, more than is just.

The Liberator, at one look of the penetrating sight which discovers all, considered the circumstances by which he was surrounded, rendered graver by the want of money, by the want of men, by the want of subordination and good understanding amongst the subaltern chiefs; he considered how morally pernicious his downfall would be (as misfortunes frighten away even friends); but, determined to confess his ruin, he also desired to revive the hopes of liberty and glory in the minds of good patriots. For this reason, replying to a handsome letter for the Sr. Pueyrredon, Supreme Director of the Provinces of La Plata, and speaking to the inhabitants of that fortunate country, he said: *Undoubtedly Venezuela, consecrated entirely to holy liberty, considers her sacrifices as victories. Her torrents of blood, the string of her towns, the absolute ruin of all the creations of man, and even of nature; she offers all on the altars of the country. She is to-day plunged in mourning; to-morrow, when covered with laurels, she has extinguished the last tyrants who profane her soil, then she will invite you to one sole society, so that our motto may be UNION IN SOUTH AMERICA. Yes, the country of America should be one alone.*

Bolivar was scornfully abandoned by fortune; and she abandoned him, when he least expected; but, then, becoming still more haughty, it could be said that he aspired to wrench by force her favors. Like Charles VII of France, he could exclaim: "I appeal from the insults of fate to the greatness of my heart, and my sword." . . . And we will see whether his firmness availed him.*

* The letter which the Liberator wrote to the Sr. Don Juan Martin de Pueyrredon, supreme director of Buenos Ayres, was in reply to another of this personage, who wished to be the first to write to Bolivar. The unanimous vote of the Congress of Tucuman had elected him on the 29th of July, 1816, supreme director of the republic; and in such a character he wrote to our Liberator. Pueyrredon was a man, under many titles; one of the most distinguished Argentines of that epoch. Young, brave, endowed by nature with a martial and cavalier aspect, which was heightened by a careful education. Learned and indefatigable enter-

The days following the arrival of the Liberator at Angostura were employed by him in merely administrative occupations. The Republic should strengthen itself as much by armies as by laws; and, perhaps, the Liberator recalled that famous saying of the Emperor Justinian: "It is proper that the supreme power be adorned not only with arms, but also with laws,"* or that other of Tullius:—"Athens derived as much from the victories of Themistocles as from the laws of Solon."† He reorganized the supreme government, which, during his absence, had been in charge of the Council of State; he appointed secretaries; he dictated many measures for organization, and created the "Correo del Orinoco," a weekly periodical, the Sr. Francisco Antonio Zea, a fertile and elegant writer, being appointed editor.

But afterwards, turning all his attention to the affairs of the war, he named Marino Commander-General of the operations in the province of Cumana, generously forgetting his faults, and proving that he knew how to command *because he knew how to dissemble*; he organized new bodies at Upata, at Angostura, and in some towns of the province of Barcelona; he gave energetic orders for the suppression of the mutiny on the Apure, and dispatched Bermudez from Angostura to take possession of Guiria, in combination with the Admiral Brion. The occupation of Guiria had for its object the protection of the commerce of Angostura; to co-operate to the operations of Marino, and to deprive the royalists of Cumana of all the resources which they drew from the leeward coasts.

Whilst the Liberator was attending to the administration of the free country, and that he was issuing new decrees on the exemption of foreigners from service, upon contraband, and the mode of performing the judgment for confiscation, providing the governors of the provinces with police, &c.; he was also occupied in sending to Casanara, with arms and ammunition, the General Francisco de Paula Santander, naming him chief of the column which should be formed, and which would compose the vanguard of the liberating army of New Granada. Bolivar never forgot the Granadanians, from whom he had received so many proofs of friendship and esteem, and acknowledging these favors, he exhorted them to join their efforts, working mutually for independence; because "*the day of America has arrived,*" he said to them.

Santander was accompanied by several Granadanian and Venezuelan chiefs, and marched from Angostura, on the 26th of August, ascending the Orinoco. At his departure, the Liberator gave him many printed copies of the proclamation, which he directed to the Granadanians; and pressing the hand of Santander: "Farewell, general," he said, "you may rely that Morillo is worth nothing. Hold it as certain, and communicate it to all, that the Spanish power in America is crumbling to pieces in the midst of its apparent prosperities!" . .

The proclamation he gave him read thus:

priser, he distinguished himself soon in the defence of Buenos Ayres against the English, and fighting in Upper Peru against the Spaniards. He it was who combined the plans of the invasion of Chili, for which purpose he came to Cordova to speak with San Martin; and it was he who reinforced the army of Salta, to resist the furious attacks of the General Don José de la Serna. Pueyrredon saved Buenos Ayres, and to him was reserved the honor of publishing the act of independence of that wealthy American nation.

* In prom. instit.

† CIMONO, *Ofis.*

" GRANADANIANS :

"The army of Morillo no longer exists; new expeditions which come to reinforce also have disappeared. More than twenty thousand Spaniards have drenched the soil of Venezuela with their blood. Hundreds of combats, glorious to the liberating arms, have proved to Europe that America has as just revengers, as she has magnanimous defenders. The world amazed, contemplates with joy the miracles of liberty and of valor against tyranny and force. The Spanish empire has employed its vast resources against handfuls of men, unarmed and even naked; but animated by liberty. Heaven has crowned our justice. Heaven, which protects liberty, has filled our desires, and has sent us arms with which to defend humanity, innocence and virtue! Generous and warlike foreigners have come to place themselves under the standard of Venezuela. And can the tyrants continue the struggle, when our resistance has diminished their force, and increased ours!

"Spain, which Ferdinand afflicts by exterminating dominion, touches at her end. Swarms of our corsairs annihilate her commerce, her fields are desolate, because death has followed her children; her treasures drained by the twenty years of war; the national spirit drowned by taxes, levies, inquisition and despotism. The most fearful catastrophe runs rapidly over Spain. Granadanians! the day of America has arrived, and no human power can delay the course of nature, guided by the hand of Providence. Join your efforts to those of your brethren; Venezuela with me goes to free you, as you with me in past years have liberated Venezuela. Already our vanguard covers with the brilliancy of its arms some provinces of your territory, and this same vanguard, powerfully assisted, will cast into the sea the destroyers of New Granada. *The sun shall not complete the course of its actual period, without seeing in all your territory altars raised to liberty.*

"Headquarters of Angostura, August 15th, 1818, eighth year of the independence.
SIMON BOLIVAR."

This promise, which seemed a madness, was strictly fulfilled . . .

As soon as the Liberator had issued the proclamation, which has just been read; he disposed the embarkation of his guard of honor for San Fernando, and he prepared himself to cross the Orinoco at Soledad, to continue on to Maturin. His object was to review the troops of Marino and Bermudez; to establish formally the siege of Cumana, if the place could not be taken by assault, and to give Brion orders for his last operations; but the amount of administrative labor was such, that in spite of all the efforts he made to leave for Angostura, he was notwithstanding delayed until the end of October.

One of the attentions by which his mind was preoccupied, was that of the convocation of the Congress.

The meeting of a national assembly offered positive advantages; in it the Liberator should find a shield against his offenders; a source of justification in his measures and of resources in his operations. Perhaps there are not wanting some who should oppose the supreme power of Bolivar; and this one, never attached to the command, beheld with pleasure, that limits should be put to the pretexts of the ambitious, falsely covered with the mantle of republicanism and liberty. On the 10th of October, then, he assembled the Council of State, and opening the session in person, he proposed the convocation of the Congress of Venezuela for the 1st of January, 1819; he manifested the neces-

sity that the supreme government should take a republican form, and that there should be called to compose it other distinguished citizens, who could establish it on solid foundations; that a warrior like him, drawn frequently to the battle-field, it was impossible that he could be at the same time the magistrate and the creator of the republic; finally, that nothing was so much opposed to his personal character and destiny, than the exercise of the government, repeating that the time had arrived that other enlightened citizens should relieve him from his functions. In consequence, he proposed to the Council that it should appoint a special committee, so that it might discuss the mode of making the popular elections, and that it should present a project of law for the convocation of the self-constituted Congress of Venezuela. The subject being discussed, it was agreed in the same session that the convocation of the Congress was convenient and even necessary, and the indicated committee was appointed. It was composed of the citizens Juan German Roscio, Fernando Peñalver, Juan Martinez, Ramon Garcia Cadiz, Luis Peraza and Diego Bautista Urbaneja, members of the Council. The supreme chief chose as its president, General Rafael Urdaneta, and as secretary, Garcia Cadiz.

The committee ended its labors, and the law was adopted and ordered to be executed. Thirty-five representatives were to compose the second Venezuelan Congress, and the inauguration of the body was fixed for the 1st of January, 1819.

On this occasion, the Liberator gave a manifest "to the Venezuelans," convoking the Congress and sketching the history of the events of the former years. What a precious document! When one reads the sublime productions of the Liberator, there comes to the mind those words which were said of Cæsar: *Eodem animo scripsit quo bellavit.* He wrote in the same manner that he struggled. . . . and his struggles were Titanic!

The manifest or convocation reads thus:

" VENEZUELANE !

" The Congress of Venezuela should fix the fate of the Republic, fought and wandering so many years. Our wounds will be healed under the care of a legitimate representation. It is not by a vain ostentation, nor to make my apology, that I shall speak to you of myself. I have served you, and I shall render you an account of my conduct. When the convulsions of nature plunged the people of Venezuela in the most profound dejection, General Monteverde caused our newly-fledged Republic to be null. I, who feared tyranny more than death, abandoned the shores of Venezuela, and I went to seek the war carried on against the tyrants in New Granada, as the only relief to the pains of my heart. Heaven heard my desires and groans, and the government of Cartagena placed under my orders four hundred soldiers, who in a few days liberated the Magdalena and the greater portion of the province of Santa Marta. Immediately I marched to Cúcuta, and there victory decided for our arms. Venezuela saw me appear in her territory, crowned with the favors of fortune.

" The Congress of New Granada gave me the permission of redeeming my country. Very soon I had the happiness of re-establishing the authorities constituted in the first epoch of the Republic in the provinces of Mérida, Trujillo, and Barinas. The capital of Caracas received the Granadarian soldiers in its bosom; but Puerto Cabello, covered by its walls, afterwards called my attention by its resistance; and it scarcely gave me time to take measures that should

save from disorder the vast country that we had snatched from the tyrants of Spain.

"The expedition of Salomen caused the royalists to conceive new hopes, and, although defeated at Bárbara and Las Trincheras, it infused such courage to our enemies, that almost simultaneously the Llanos and the west of Venezuela rose against us. The battles of Mosquitero and Araure gave us back the Llanos and the West. Then I flew from the battle-field to the capital; abdicated the supreme power, and rendered an account to the people the 2d of January, 1814, of the events of the campaign and of my military and civil administration. The people in a mass replied in a unanimous voice of approbation, conferring anew on me the dictatorial power which I already exercised. New reverses called me to the campaign, and after the most bloody struggle, I returned from the field of Carabobo, to convoke the representatives of the people that they should constitute the government of the Republic.

"The disaster of La Puerta plunged into chaos our afflicted country, and nothing could then parry the bolts launched against her by the anger of Heaven.

"I marched to New Granada; I gave an account to the Granadanian Congress of the exit of my mission; they rewarded my services, confiding me a new army of Granadanians and Venezuelans. Cartagena was the tomb of this army, which should have given life to Venezuela. I abandoned all for the weal of my country; I voluntarily chose an exile, which could be of good to New Granada, as well as to Venezuela. Providence had already decreed the ruin of these unhappy regions, and sent them Morillo with his exterminating army.

"I sought an asylum in a foreign island, and I went to Jamaica alone, without resources, and almost without hopes. Venezuela and New Granada lost, I still thought of expelling their tyrants. The island of Hayti received me hospitably; the magnanimous President Petion lent me his protection, and under his auspices I formed an expedition of three hundred men, comparable in valor, patriotism and virtue to the companions of Leonidas. Almost all have already died; but the exterminating army has also perished. Three hundred patriots came to destroy fifteen thousand Europeans, and have succeeded.

"On my arrival at Margarita, a general assembly made me Supreme Chief of the nation; my intention was to convoke there the Congress. A few months afterwards, in effect, I convoked it; the events of the war did not allow, however, this desired act of the national will. Guayana free, and the greater part of Venezuela also free, nothing now impedes us to return to the people their sovereign rights.

"Venezuelans! Your arms have destroyed the obstacles opposed by tyranny to your emancipation. And I, in the name of the liberating army, place you in possession of the privilege of your imprescriptible rights. Our soldiers have fought to save their brethren, wives, fathers and sons; but they have not fought to oppress them. The army of Venezuela only imposes on you the condition of preserving intact the sacred deposit of liberty. I impose on you another not less just and requisite for the fulfillment of precious condition; elect as magistrates the most virtuous of your citizens, and forget if you can in your elections, those who have liberated you. As for me, I renounce forever the authority you have conferred on me, and I shall never admit any other, which may not be military, as long as the unhappy war of Venezuela lasts. The first day of peace shall be last of my command.

"Venezuelans! Do not look back upon the past events, but only to be her-

rified at the evils which have destroyed you; hide your sight from the mournful monuments which recall your cruel losses; think only of what you are going to do, and remember well that you are all Venezuelans, natives of the same country, members of the same society, and citizens of a same Republic. The clamor of Venezuela is liberty and peace; our arms shall conquer peace, and your wisdom will give us liberty.

“SIMON BOLIVAR.

“Headquarters of Angostura, 23d of October, 1818, 8th of the independence.”

This interesting document was the butt for the sarcasms and scoffs of the Spanish Government, who, in this manner (little proper), wished to diminish the impression which it was destined to produce amongst the sensible men of the world. Convoke a Congress! Such a step announced the establishment of a popular representative government capable of doing good; and this had always been the thought of Bolivar, who understood the great importance of establishing governmental forms, because, on being once established, they are sustained by time.

Bolivar at last succeeded in tearing himself away from Angostura and marching to Maturin; he was there on the 2d of November, and wrote to White: “I proceed this evening to the headquarters of Mairno, who should be at Cariaco or on Cumana, as he marched from San Francisco on the 24th. I shall very soon join him, and together, we will press the siege of the city. But it could not be as the Liberator thought, because at Guanaguana he received the sorrowful news of the complete defeat of Marino, who, having operated against the orders he had, he was unable to resist the forces of the Spanish Lieutenant-Colonel D. Agustin Noguera, and fled to Santa Maria. The Liberator, then filled with sorrow, returned to Angostura! “Who does not lose hope and even judgment,” he exclaimed, “on considering so many errors and blunders! Above all the evils by which we are tormented, we have unskillfulness, hurry, presumption. All wish to command fortune! Extravagance!”

From Angostura he sent Colonel Avendaño to take charge of the command of the province of Cumana; he destined Marino to organize new forces to Barcelona, and endeavored, by means of appropriate measures, to remedy the evil as much as possible. On this, a grave question alarmed the minds of the independents; such was the intervention which, it is said, Spain solicited from the other European powers to end the struggle in America, subjecting her anew to her arbitrary dominion. The insinuations of the cabinet of Madrid were positive and urgent, as the nature of the subject demanded it. England, such a liberal nation, was a great hope for the republicans; but Bolivar could not expect that the ministers of Great Britain should oppose the pretensions of King Ferdinand. It was reserved to him to make a vigorous and determined opposition, and, in effect, he did so. The decree of the 20th November contains the famous ratification of the principles of independence, proclaimed on the 5th day of July, 1811. This decree was issued with solemn pomp, and was translated into three languages, being sent to all parts to manifest the unchanging, heroic determination of the Venezuelan patriots.

The decree is as follows:

“SIMON BOLIVAR, SUPREME CHIEF OF THE REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA:

Considering that when the Spanish Government solicits the mediation of the

high powers to re-establish its authority under the title of reconciliation over the free and independent people of America, it is necessary to declare to the face of the world the feelings and decision of Venezuela :

That, although these feelings and this decision have been manifested in the Republic since the 5th of July, 1811, and more particularly since the first announcement of the solicitude of the cabinet of Madrid, it is the duty of the government, in which resides the national representation, to reiterate, declare them legal and solemnly :

That this frank and sincere declaration is not only due to the high powers in testimony of consideration and respect, but indispensable, to calm the minds of the citizens of Venezuela.

Being assembled in a national convention, the Council of State, the High Court of Justice, the Governor Vicar-General of this diocese, the staff, and all the civil and military authorities, after having carefully examined the conduct of the Spanish government, have had present :

1st. That a cordial reconciliation has never entered into the views of the Spanish Government ;

2d. That Great Britain having proposed it on two occasions since the first day of the misunderstandings, it has insultingly refused it ;

3d. That at the same time they treated of reconciliation, she blockaded our ports, sent armies against us, and plotted conspiracies to destroy us ;

4th. That Venezuela having submitted under a solemn capitulation, hardly had this one laid her arms when she violated it in all its parts, sacrificing thousands of citizens whose rights she had sworn to respect ;

5th. That having carried on a war of extermination against us, without respecting sex, age or condition, she has broken asunder the social bonds and has awakened a just and implacable hatred ;

6th. That this hatred has been exalted by the atrocities which she has committed, and by the bad faith with which, in all respects, she looks on us ;

7th. That all America, and particularly Venezuela, is intimately convinced of the absolute impossibility of Spain to re-establish in any manner her authority in this continent ;

8th. That all America is now satisfied of its strength and its resources ; knows our natural advantages and means of defence, and is convinced that there is no power on earth sufficient to bind her anew to Spain ;

9th. That when they should be, she is determined to perish first before submitting anew to a government of blood, fire and extermination ;

10th. That finding ourselves in possession of liberty and independence which nature has conferred on us, and that the very laws of Spain herself and the examples of history authorized us to recover by arms, as in effect, we have executed it, it would be an act of madness and folly to submit ourselves, under whatever condition, to the Spanish government.

For all these considerations, the government of Venezuela, interpreter of the national purpose and will, has held it convenient to proclaim to the face of the world the following declaration :

1st. That the Republic of Venezuela, by divine and national right, is emancipated from the Spanish nation and constituted into an independent, free, and sovereign State ;

2d. That Spain has no justice to reclaim her domination, nor Europe the right to submit her to the Spanish Government ;

3d. That she has not solicited nor will ever solicit her incorporation to the Spanish nation ;

4th. That she has not solicited the mediation of the powers to reconcile with Spain ;

5th. That she will never treat with Spain only as equal to equal, in peace and in war, as all nations mutually do ;

6th. That she only desires the mediation of the foreign powers so that they interpose their good endeavors in favor of humanity, inviting Spain to adjust, and conclude a treaty of peace and friendship with the Venezuelan nation, acknowledging and treating her as a free, independent, and sovereign State.

7th. Lastly, the republic of Venezuela declares that since the 19th of April, 1810, she is fighting for her rights ; that she has shed the greater part of the blood of her sons ; that she has sacrificed all her wealth, all her privileges, and all that is dear and sacred amongst men, to recover her sovereign rights ; and that to maintain them untouched, as Divine Providence has conceded them, the people of Venezuela are resolved to bury themselves entirely in the midst of their ruins, if Spain, Europe, and the whole world attempt to bend her under the Spanish yoke.

Given at Angostura, the 20th of November, 1818, eighth year of our independence.
SIMON BOLIVAR."

A few days after having issued this proclamation, the Liberator marched from Angostura to the plains of the Apure (21st of December). It was necessary to oppose Morillo in that probable scene of his operations, and to reduce Paez, that he might return to the path traced out to him by his duties.

Paez, whom a Colonel Wilson and other of his friends and associates had proclaimed "Supreme Director of the Republic," disowning the authority of the Liberator, had accepted without repugnance that rank. But the Liberator, who on this occasion, and in the first moment affected an intentional neglect, believed that it was now convenient to arrange it ; as a mistake should not be allowed to be converted into a right. He set out then to see personally who were those who insulted his character and denied his authority ; and a good fortune wished that he should not meet them ; because Paez himself, impelled by a noble feeling, did not pretend to sustain himself against the irresistible influence of the Liberator, acknowledging his authority without delay, and without sorrow, as he said. Bolivar was informed that the officers and chiefs who had signed the act of his disavowal had assembled anew, and were endeavoring to cause a rising, insisting in their design. The circumstances could not have been more critical. The friends of Paez were determined men, unforeseeing and unable to weigh the scandal they were about to give, and the peril to which they exposed themselves, dividing opinion with the enemy in front, whose triumph was then inevitable! . . . It was then a necessity to evade such great evils and preserve the dignity of the government and military discipline. The Liberator called Paez to a private conference, and manifested to him his firm determination never to accede to the baneful pretensions of a faction, who would destroy the republic with their design, and ruin the law of subordination ; that he would know how to maintain his dignity, and that for it he would not retrocede from any sacrifice.

Paez excused himself, saying that "he had no part in the plans of those delinquents," and offered the Liberator that he would influence them to desist from the projected rising. And thus he fulfilled it.

Such an action secured the reputation of Paez, and cemented the authority of Bolivar.

This one rewarded the good behavior of Paez, ascending him to the rank of general of division, and conferring on him the command of the cavalry.

This fire, which would have devoured all the labors and glories of the independents, having been extinguished, the Liberator determined to return to Angostura with greater urgency, as he received news of the arrival of an English battalion, contracted for the service of Colombia by the Colonel Elson. Bolivar passed a review of the army at San Juan de Payara, on the 16th of January, 1819, and haranguing the soldiers, with that seducing eloquence, of which the military history of the world has few examples: "Llaneros," he said, "you shall be free, although the whole world should oppose itself. Your lances and these deserts free you from tyranny. Who can subjugate the immensity! Prepare yourselves for combat; your brethren of Guayana, of Barcelona and Caracas, will be at your sides. The intrepid General Paez will lead you to victory, and the genius of liberty will inscribe your names on the anniversaries of glory. Llaneros! you are invincible!"

On the 28d, after having given Paez his last instructions and held a conference with the chiefs of the army, filling them with reasonable hopes, he departed for Angostura . . . He went to install the new Congress, which had been unable as yet to assemble. He went to give that *decisive* blow, cementing the republic in the opinion, the queen of the world. He went to fix the fortune of Venezuela, until then uncertain and vacillating, and to cause the wounds of the war to be healed, under the shelter of wise and generous institutions. Venezuela will not yet cease to mourn; she shall yet pass many bloody days; but she shall also experience days of glory and fortune, and finally she will come forth unharmed and vigorous from the fierce storm, which had threatened to submerge her in the abysses.*

* When the Liberator left the Apure to return to Angostura, he had already received official news of the arrival at Venezuela, of English troops who came hired for the services of the republic. On the former year (1818), impelled by a generous feeling of sympathy, Colonels MacDonald, Campbell, Wilson, Hippiisley and Gilmore had come with about 850 or 400 men. The most considerable expeditions were first, those of Colonel James English (1,200 men), equipped by Messrs. Herring & Richardson; second, those of Colonel Elson, dispatched by Messrs. Hurry, Powsel & Hurry, (680 men, besides 800 Hanoverians, commanded by the brave and faithful Colonel Uzlar); third, the Irish legion, equipped by General D'Evereux (1,750 men). In all, with these expeditions, with the small parties and officers, arrived in 1818, and those enlisted by Colonel Macirone MacGregor, who operated on Porto Belo, and the river La Hacha, there came about 5,000 men, from whom must be deducted those wrecked on the coast of France with Colonel Skeene (800 men), who never arrived on our shores. Torrente writes that "not less than 9,000 foreigners came to Venezuela, and to the kingdom of Santa Fé!" . . . But these are calculations of Torrente, to which should not be paid the least attention. Great part of these English troops who had fought with fortune in the Peninsula, died in our war of independence. The officers remained in Colombia. English, who had been a quartermaster in the army of Wellington in Spain, and who spoke a little Spanish, Uzlar, Elson, D'Evereux and his good officers, models of subordination and military discipline, merited the friendship and praises of Bolivar, Zoa, of Brion, and of all the disinterested patriots.