

## CHAPTER VI.

1811 AND 1812.

EVENTS FOLLOWING THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE—MIRANDA TAKES COMMAND OF THE ARMY—HIS INGRATITUDE TO BOLIVAR—THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION OF VENEZUELA—COLOMBIAN ERA—DECREES OF CONGRESS—ENGLAND OFFERS TO MEDIATE SO AS TO PUT AN END TO THE DISSENSIONS IN AMERICA—ANSWER OF THE CORTES—OPERATIONS OF MONTEVERDE AT SIQUINIQUE—EARTHQUAKE OF THE 26TH MARCH, 1812—TERRIBLE EFFECTS OF THIS PHENOMENON—TREASON OF MONTALVO—MONTEVERDE AT SAN CARLOS—DICTATORSHIP OF MIRANDA—BOLIVAR AT PUERTO CABELLO—NEGLIGENCE OF MIRANDA—CONSPIRACY IN THE CITADEL OF PUERTO CABELLO—INSURRECTION OF SLAVES IN WINDWARD ISLANDS—INTERVIEW OF THE MARQUIS OF CABA—LEON WITH MIRANDA—UNFORTUNATE RESULT.

“IF the discovery of the New World,” the Congress of Caracas proclaimed in its Manifesto to the nations of the earth, “was one of most important events to mankind, the regeneration of this same world, degraded from that moment by despotism and slavery, will not be of less importance. America, arising from the dust and casting off her chains, and by going through the political degrees of nations, in her turn conquers the Old World, without invading, enslaving or brutalising it. The revolution of most use to mankind will be that of America, when constituted and governed by herself; it will receive with open arms those very nations of Europe trampled on by politics, fleeing from the horrors of war, and harassed by the fury of contending passions; who, thirsting for peace and tranquillity, will cross the ocean without the ferocity and cupidity of the heroes of the sixteenth century, as friends and not as tyrants, as equals and not as masters, not to destroy but to build up, not as wild beasts, but as men who scandalised by our former misfortunes and taught by their own, will not change their reason into evil instinct, nor will they desire that our history be that of bloodshed and wickedness. Then navigation, geography, astronomy, industry and commerce, having been improved by the discovery of America for her evil, will be converted into so many more sources of accelerating, consolidating and completing the happiness of both worlds.”

Fond hope! golden dream of our forefathers! . . . . .

Spain, to whom the Independence of America caused more rage than the foreign despotism which threatened her herself, will employ all her resources to torment us; she will carry on a war of desolation, and will renew the horrors of the Conquest! . . . . . If the chiefs of Coro and Maracaibo raised troops and caused Venezuelan blood to flow when the Junta of Caracas, after 19th of April, swore allegiance to Ferdinand VII. and promised to recognize the integrity and political unity of the Spanish nation; when she received with open arms her brethren of Europe and offered them a refuge amongst her misfortunes and calamities. . . . . What will they do now when it is declared that the bonds of

slavery have been cast off, and that Venezuela calls herself *free and mistress of her own actions*? What will they do, when a voice coming forth from the midst of their oppression cries out to them, that Spain never had any right to possess any portion of America, that this did not belong to them, because usurpation gives no right; and that Venezuela will defend her liberty at the cost of the lives, the fortunes, and the honor of all her citizens?

The declaration of the 5th of July did, in effect, enrage the peninsulars more and more! "Our moderation will restrain them," thought some patriots; but it was not thus, as their reconcentrated hatred soon burst forth.

The news of the Declaration of Independence of Venezuela, proclaimed by Congress, arrived at Valencia on the morning of the 8th, and on the 11th the royalists gave the cry of rebellion, impelled by some notable priests, and soliciting help from Ceballos and Miyares in Coro and Maracaibo, they took up arms against Caracas. The government on the spot ordered out an expedition against the insurgents of Valencia, who had already occupied the lake and had arrived at Mariara, confiding it to the command of the generals Toro, the marquis and his brother D. Fernando. Between Cabrera and Cerritos, the first cannon was fired at the Spaniards. But they contrived to defeat our troops; and the national Executive Power was forced to send reinforcements to Maracay, giving then the command of the military operations to Miranda.

At the interview which took place between the members of the Executive Power and Miranda, with the object of conferring upon him the command of the troops which should march against Valencia, this chief took advantage of the secrecy of this conference to accept on certain conditions, one of which was that Simon Bolivar, Colonel of the battalion of Aragua, destined to reinforce the expedition, should, on some pretext, be separated from his command. This condition appeared at once to be unjust and repulsive; but the Executive wishing to secure Miranda, from whom they expected important services, consented to what this one demanded, and Bolivar was charged with an insignificant mission, his battalion being sent out commanded by the next in rank. Bolivar at once presented himself in the hall; he complained bitterly of the injury done to him, "*depriving him of serving his country in this first occasion of peril. What will they say of me,*" he asked, "*when it is seen that my battalion goes to battle, and that its chief remains with this or that pretext? That I am a coward or a traitor.*" . . . . And he placed the Executive either in the necessity of revoking the order, or having him judged by Court Martial. The first extreme was adopted, as there was no cause for more, and Bolivar co-operated in his rank in the campaign and siege of Valencia, until the city having capitulated on the 18th August, 1811, Miranda forwarded him to the Executive with the news, at the gates of which he arrived at the break of day on the 15th. . . . . Glorious essay, in which the future Liberator accredited his ardent zeal for the welfare of the country, his respect for the Government, and his unbounded obedience to the chief who commanded him! \*

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\* Miranda, as it is seen, repaid with jealousy and ingratitude the favors showed to Bolivar. "He had great fear that this one," writes a friend of the Liberator, "should 'take away his glories.' He was accustomed to call him 'a — youth to be dreaded.' He would give him commissions which did not correspond to him, and always procured to have him at a distance from all the military operations against the enemy; but Bolivar, of a superior mind, whose soul never felt the stings of vengeance,

The bloody siege of Valencia caused the loss of 800 men to the country, who became unfit for combat—being numbered amongst the wounded, the distinguished General Fernando Toro, whose left leg was fractured by a musket-ball; and amongst the killed was the Captain Lorenzo Buroz.

Simultaneously with these events the banner of insurrection was raised by sixty individuals, natives of the Canary Islands, who united and armed themselves at Teque, near Caracas, crying out "Death to the traitors! Long live the King and the Inquisition!" This conspiracy was promptly subdued. Men without experience or influence, and encouraged by the secret agents of Melendez and Cortabarría, could not spread far their reactionary ideas. Don Juan Díaz Flores, a native of the Canary Islands, and Don José María Sánchez, a Caracenean, the ringleaders, paid with their lives the rash attempt.

Others were also destined to the same fate on the evening of the 15th July in the same year.

The Declaration of Independence being made known through all the provinces, it was received with joy in all parts. As the uncertain and irregular state of affairs in Venezuela had disappeared, the Deputy, Don Francisco Javier Ustariz, submitted to Congress the plan of a Constitution, which was the cause of interesting discussions. The legislators were inclined to give the preference to the Federal system, having in view the brilliant example of the first and most enterprising of the Republics of the world. However, the most thoughtful men, and Miranda who had practical experience of matters of such deep importance and results, defended the Central Republican system, because, they said, the Federal system is the perfection of a Republic, and cannot be established amongst a people who have lived three hundred years deprived of their rights, and which, if at present, commencing to prosper, it is owing to foreign circumstances. Bolívar supported this dictamen amongst his friends, believing that federation was inadequate, and impossible amongst ignorant people, without any experience of public existence, not accustomed to interfere in State affairs, and, consequently, without the requisite knowledge to comprehend the construction of a government expressly complicated. From the 2d of September, on which day the project of a Constitution was read, up to the 21st December, on which it was signed, the Congress listened to eloquent and logical orations, sparkling with principles of liberty, declaimed in lucid and enthusiastic words; although, at last, on account of inexperience, the Assembly allowed itself to be fascinated by certain brilliant theories not adaptable to the country.\*

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always looked upon that aged republican General with love and respect, and distinguished later on with cordiality his sons. I have registered this fact on purpose so that may be seen how from the very first notable situation in the life of Bolívar, jealousy, odious rivalry, envy, that tyrant to merit and virtue, did all in their power to trouble him. Miranda first opened the scene, which was afterwards followed through with equal eagerness by Labatut, Castillo, Berumdez, Ribas, Mariño, Santander, and Páez. The glory of Bolívar was a spectacle of rage and sorrow to the eyes of selfish emulation. And from these stores of perfidy and malignity finally issued the darts which wounded the magnanimous heart of the Liberator of America.

\* "El Publicista," a newspaper of that epoch, registers some important acts and fragments of the worthy speeches of the founders of our Independence. As there

The Federal Constitution of Venezuela contains two hundred and twenty-eight articles, distributed in nine chapters—the one of most interest being that relative to the *rights of man*. The possession and enjoyment of property was secured to them, personal liberty (because every man has a right to presume himself innocent until the contrary is proved) and the inviolability of the domestic hearth. The process of torture was abolished, and all such acts which would prolong suffering were declared criminal.\* Personal right, titles of nobility were abolished, and the wicked traffic of African slaves was condemned forever!! . . . . .

Most certainly, more could not be desired from a Spanish colony, and at that, the less favored of all the rest. . . . . How many nations in the Old World sprang into existence, displaying such abundance of greatness and liberality!

Congress also ordered that in all official documents, besides the common era, the Colombian era should be added—a word formed from the name of Columbus and selected in his honor, because it was right that the first territory that should shake off the colonial yoke in South America should be named Colombia.

Colombia! what a heavenly inspiration! what a magnanimous inspiration! How much gratitude is meant by this word, pronounced by the heroes, who first gave liberty to the New World! Europe, indifferent, had consented to the plunder of the most merited glory; but America splendidly repaired this injustice, inscribing, from the first day of her emancipation, in the book of immortality, the illustrious name of her discoverer! . . . . . †

The publication of the fundamental law excited the joy of all the united provinces, and gave them hopes of reaping the desired fruits of a long and secure peace. Congress, in directing an elegant harangue to the people of Venezuela, said, in reference to the Constitution: "We confide and recommend the inviolability of this law to the fidelity of the legislators, to the government,

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was only one press (that which Miranda brought to Coro in 1806,) and stenography was unknown among us, very few of the important discussions of the first self-constituted Congress are preserved.

\* In Venezuela the article which abolished torture was not opposed, (*infamous crucible of truth*), and the practices introduced to afflict and torture the accused, with bad treatments. In Spain, when the abolition of torture was proposed in the Cortes (1811) there were still some who approved of its application, and the Deputy Hermida, of hard heart, stood up to defend such a barbarous law. Ferdinand VII. ordered to apply to Don Juan Antonio Yandiola in 1817, as an accomplice in the conspiracy of Richard, the torture known under the name of a heavy ball and chain which caused the loss of his life. What retrogression!—what disgrace to humanity! And thus they wished to govern America!

† Miranda was the first who in honor of Columbus named Colombia the countries in America which should free themselves; and Bolivar prophetically wrote: "New Granada will unite to Venezuela to form a central Republic. . . . . This nation will be called Colombia, as a tribute of justice and gratitude to the discoverer of our hemisphere." (*Letter to a gentleman of Jamaica, written from Kingston the 6th Sept. 1815.*) This letter, without contradiction, is the document which best reveals the incomparable ability of Bolivar, his talent, his penetration for reading clearly in the future, so as not to deceive himself in the difficult appreciation of things.

"to the magistrates and employees of the union and of the provinces, and to the watchfulness and virtues of the heads of families, and to mothers, wives and citizens of the State."

The Executive, on its part, ordered the printing of 12,000 copies of the Constitution, to be everywhere abundantly distributed; and by the beginning of the year 1812, all the magistrates, which were instituted and designed in the fundamental proclamation, were installed into their respective places.

Valencia was designated as the capital of the State, "by reason (it was said) of being situated in the centre of the United Provinces." Congress then resolved to adjourn, all the representatives being cited to reunite in Valencia the 1st day of the following March (1812); and, before adjourning, Congress wished to give an example of unprecedented generosity, pardoning those imprisoned for the conspiracy of Valencia, condemned to death. This act saved the life of the Provincial of the Order of San Francisco, Fr. Pedro Hernandez, principal promoter of that event! . . . . of Don Jacinto Istueta, of Don Clemente Britapaja and others.\*

Congress ordered the extinction of the Holy Inquisition.

Although the provinces of Venezuela, with regard to the Inquisition, depended upon the tribunal of Cartagena, and this one had already been abolished since November in the former year, the deputies wished to abolish the Inquisition in principle, and by a special law. Having been established in Spain in the year 1481, during the reign of Ferdinand and Isabel, it spread its devastating influence in America, seeking victims where there were only innocents. Of all the Inquisitions, *the most bloody and most hateful* was that of Spain. The considerandum of our law contains strong accusations against the abuses of that tribunal, which, in the name of a merciful God ignored pity, and in the name of a God of clemency, was never disposed to pardon.†

Amidst all these events, the year 1811 ended in rejoicings and hopes, enterprises and fortunes. . . . .

The patriots being encouraged by these proofs of their justice, full of courage, virtues and constancy, hoped to always maintain peace, and to consolidate the handsome institution, which the nation had given to herself, without even supposing, for a moment, that to so much kindness, to such exemplary conduct, outrages should follow; mad cruelties, in which ignorance amply satiated herself, unheard of atrocities, war of extermination! . . . . .

At the same time that the Congress of Venezuela was giving such signal proofs of moderation, civilization and generosity, and when all that part of America that had been Spanish, from the northern limits of New Mexico down to the Cape of Los Hornos, was in motion to gain its independence,

\* These pardoned criminals, writes Restrepo, were for the greater part the most persevering enemies of the patriots, being some of them the authors of the imprisonment and persecutions which were suffered by their benefactors, surpassing them all, the fanatical priest Hernandez. In Venezuela, as in New Granada and Quito, was felt in the course of the revolution that the Spaniards and royalist Americans, benefited by the patriots were their most cruel enemies when the first mentioned were in prosperity.

† It is known that the obstinate heretics, named impenitents, and those who relapsed were burnt; the only favor done to these last, in consideration of human weakness, consisted in hanging first before throwing them into the flames!

England tendered to the Regency her frank and sincere intervention to put an end to all dissensions between Spain and her colonies. This intervention Venezuela solicited from the very first days of her political metamorphosis; but the Regency of Cadiz refused to accept, *because they were certain of being capable of subduing and chastising the rebels!*

The revolution having already made such progress, and its reconquest appearing less probable, Sir Henry Wellesley, English Ambassador at Cadiz, insisted upon the necessity of an understanding to put a stop to the continuation of a civil war between the different portions of the Spanish monarchy, by, at least, affecting a temporary arrangement. The Cortes, seeming to admit the mediation of a power from whom she derived the resources which she needed to carry on the war against Napoleon, put, as the first condition, that the entire provinces of America should "recognize and swear obedience to the Cortes and the Spanish Government;" but it being understood that the term dissenting was only applicable to the provinces of Rio Plata and the new kingdom of Granada and Cartagena, for as to Venezuela she was to be treated in a different manner. The Cortes considered they were too lenient; it was thus expressed by them.\*

Whenever any proposition about America was brought up, the Spanish deputies would speak insultingly of the inhabitants of these poor Republics; and the debate becoming so bitter, Don José Mejía, deputy for Santa Fé de Bogota, and an American by birth, was, on several occasions, forced to beg them to discuss the matter in secrecy; hurt, that in Spain, who called herself the mother, words so full of bitterness and insult should be heard against her children. Whatever reasons of equity and right were alleged by the Americans; however just were their protests; as the majority was interested in keeping the New World under their power and arbitrary tutorship, the matter was ended by being transferred to the Committee of Ultramarine Affairs, where it always remained; and to revive the war, managing, with all their power, without regarding cost, and by any means, that America should return to be the slave of Spain.

Notwithstanding, as the British Government flattered itself of being able finally to open negotiations of peace with success, commissioners were sent to America. They were Messrs. Cockburn (the same who, being then an Admiral, carried Napoleon to the Island of St. Helena), Sydenham and Morier, this last being Chargé d'Affaires at Washington. The two first-named Commissioners and Mr. Hopner, Secretary to the Commission, an employee in the Bureau of Foreign Affairs, arrived at Cadiz, and in union with the Ambassador, Sir H. Wellesley, they had several conferences with the Spanish Ministers. According to the orders and instructions of his Government, the English Ambassador directed to them a comprehensive note of all the articles which should serve as a basis to the negotiation. Among the principal were those of cessation of hostilities, blockades and all acts of mutual injury; a complete, just and free representation of America in the Cortes; liberty of commerce; admission to the posts of viceroys, governors, etc., to the Americans indistinctively with the Spaniards. The Regency declared that these articles were inadmissible!†

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\* Decree of 19th June, 1811.

† Those who desire to have a slight knowledge of the hatred and bad will which reigned in the Cortes of Cadiz against us, read the "Manifesto" given to light by one of the deputies of that Estamento the Señor Alvarez Toledo. This animosity

The document was sent to the Cortes; and after bitter disputes, and the great vituperation of their discourses, it was resolved to answer simply "that they had taken note of it."

On this the Commissioners returned to their country, and Mr. Morier, who had already proceeded as far as Jamaica, re-embarked for the United States.

The only thought which reigned in Cadiz, was that of subjugating America. Over in Spain the contest was hot. Every day there was a battle, cities taken and lost, fierce engagements; but in the midst of all this disturbance and affliction, none thought for a moment to give up their pretended rights upon the New World, and the whole Spanish nation would have perished before ever consenting in giving justice to America for declaring her independence.

Truly, when Toreno writes that "Orphan Spain, abandoned by her kings, sold like cattle, and treated as rebels, it was very proper of her dignity that she should declare to the whole world, by means of her representatives, the right which assisted her to constitute and defend herself—a right of which she could not be despoiled by the abdications of her princes, although they would have been voluntary and free." When he wrote this, we repeat, we cannot conceive what reason the historian finds to deny to us, true orphans, neglected and treated as rebels and insulted, the right of constituting and defending ourselves, declaring it to the world by means of our representatives! . . . . . Justice should be unique, and, to be such, it has to be blind, that is to say, impartial!

With such warlike statistics the year 1812 opened! . . . . .

The loyalists (those who lived amongst us) persuaded that fortune would favor them, sustained the insurrections on the banks of the Orinoco River, to make frequent incursions and forays in the lands of Barcelona and Cumaná. In the West they were kept under arms, although making no demonstration,

filled with surprise and admiration all the foreigners and men of impassionate judgment and sense. What had America done to merit such injury? What motive for such deep rancour? Twice was caused to be read, and always with signs of peculiar satisfaction, the writing of the Count Agreda, in which the Americans were called "a race of monkeys, full of vices and ignorance, unworthy of representation or of being represented." "I do not know," said the deputy Vallente, filled with the same ideas as the Count Agreda, "I do not yet know to what class of animals the Americans belong." "If these," said another, "complain of having been tyrannized three hundred years, we will tyrannize them three thousand more." And the Count Toreno transported with joy after the battle of Albuera, "I rejoice still more at this victory," he said, "because now we can destine these victorious troops to subdue the American insurgents." . . . . . No circumspection, there was no respect as is seen in those parliamentary discussions; and all was permitted, even that which is not permitted in the controversy of two decent persons, when millions upon millions of Americans were treated of. Nor even the consideration of there being in Spain many of them estimable, and even in the Cortes themselves, full of wisdom and moderation, retained these orators carried away to insult us with insolence. But we rise above these unmerited injuries, and retribute them, causing Spain to suffer our glory. *Quand je vois un homme mettre en doute, si les individus nés dans les colonies sont Français, je me demande si la tête m'a tourné,* Napoleon said. But much on the contrary the Spaniards asked in the Cortes whether we were human beings, or to what class of animals we belonged.

expecting an opportunity to take advantage of the military reinforcements which Miyares had promised from Maracaibo.

Meanwhile a company of marines arrived at Puerto Rico, led by Don Domingo Monteverde, frigate captain, and he was one of those who formed part of the military chieftains, along with arms, munitions and money, which were brought to Coro by the General Don Juan Manuel Cagigal, to carry on the war against the insurgent provinces. At the same time a conspiracy was being prepared in favor of the Spaniards, at the town of Siquisique. Don Andres Torrellas, curate of this town, and inimical to the independence, in connivance with Don Leon Cordero and the Indian Juan Reyes Vargas, sent a communication to the Governor of Coro, Don Jose Ceballos, asking help to rise up against the so-called insurgent government of Caracas.

This conspiracy in effect took place (15th March), the Indian Reyes appearing as ringleader, on whom the republican government had unworthily conferred the grade of Captain. Ferdinand VII. was proclaimed, and Vargas marched towards Carora, taking possession of the parish of the Rio del Tocuyo. When Miyares (who was accidentally at Coro) had notice of the movements, he determined to equip a small force of 320 men to proceed and to protect them, and at the proposition of Ceballos, Monteverde was appointed to the command. He left Coro the 10th March, in company with priest Torrellas, and arrived without opposition at Siquisique on the 17th. There, some four hundred men presented themselves to be armed; and assisted by the advice and persuasion of the priest Torrellas, and more than all by the loan of money which the priest Pedro Perez Guzman, curate of Coro, made him: perceiving his forces considerably augmented by the troops of the treacherous Cacique, Monteverde marched out, resolved to invade Carora. He had no orders to do this. The occupation of Siquisique was the only and final object of his expedition. The first disobedience, as Baralt truly says, would have been his last feat, and the end of his career, if blind fortune would not have persisted in protecting him, changing into successes his most stupid blindness.

Monteverde was a native of Orotava in Tenerife, a person of no education. Since the year 1788, he had dedicated himself to the navy, and assisted at the defence of Ferrol when that place was bombarded by the English whilst on their way to Egypt. He came to America with the rank of Captain of frigate, and here where his military and political conduct was censurable in a high degree, he ascended to the rank of Field Marshal of the royal army, conferred on him by that gross and debauched prince Ferdinand VII., always ready to protect perfidy and encourage crime. As much as was missing to Monteverde, justice and prudence, was abundantly replaced by petulance and vanity. Fond of commanding and bombastic, he sought fame, without knowing that esteem is better won when least solicited, because it depends on human respect. The loyal historians acknowledge that he trespassed on his order by his invasion of Carora; but they justify him by saying, "the wish of doing better service to the king, and by that noble ambition which is the first quality of a soldier." Easy way to justify a fault of insubordination, opening the way to all aspiration, and substituting for military obedience and discipline, first and greatest quality of that profession, the arbitrary and personal caprice of each chief!

At Carora there was a force of six hundred patriots, superior in numbers to that of Monteverde, commanded by the Commandant Don Manuel Felipe Gil, and which in case of necessity could be supported by the main portion of the



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of the Colonel Don Diego Jalon, stationed at the patriots was easy and safe, falling upon Bar- of Monteverde was certain, if he suffered any hostile country. But as his good luck wished soldiers missing his direction and encourage- themselves when Monteverde arrived. Sorely lers still contrived to resist for an hour and a (March 28.) Monteverde took eighty-nine ts and munitions. The royal soldiers sacked

easy would a hostile city; they killed several patriots,

abusing with impiety their victory.

stiffness began to look favorably on the arms of the royalists, and coldly on the Independents; and it was decreed that the insubordination of Monteverde was the root of all our most cruel sufferings.

When the news of these successes was received in Caracas, many causes of fear and anxiety unexpectedly arrived; events of another kind which left this city and many towns of the mountains submerged in the most cruel desolation.

On the 26th of March an earthquake took place, which converted into ruins the most flourishing towns of our Republic.

It was four o'clock in the evening, the sky was extremely transparent and brilliant; a profound calm which increased the force of an intolerable heat. A few drops of water fell, there not being a single cloud visible which would drop it; the churches were crowded with people who were assisting at the ceremonies of the Catholic religion. (It was Holy Thursday!) At seven minutes past four a fearful noise, accompanied by a sudden trembling of the earth, announced to all a great catastrophe. The movement of the trepidation was violent. The churches, the buildings, could not resist, all crumbled into pieces, and fell with awful din, burying in their ruins thousands of inhabitants. "I saw," relates an ocular spectator, "the greater part of the church of San Jacinto, crumble to its foundations; and there, amidst the dust and death, I beheld the destruction of a city which was the delight of the natives and foreigners." What horror! what confusion! all ruins! . . . . Lamentations which lacerated the hearts! And the earth always trembling! and that tremendous noise, which inspired fear, and froze the hearts of the bravest, still resounding in the space, spreading itself like unto the echo of the voice of the Angel of the Apocalypse, announcing the destruction of the earth! . . . .

Caracas, Barquisimeto, La Guayra, Merida, all were converted into heaps of ruins! . . . . San Felipe disappeared! In one moment, the convulsions of nature destroyed the patient work of three centuries! . . . . And the inhabitants, astounded and wandering in the plazas and fields, implored the pity of the Omnipotent!

"To that inexplicable noise," writes Diaz, "followed the silence of death. The groans of those who were dying in the Church of San Jacinto. I surmounted the ruins and entered its interior. . . . On the highest spot I met Don Simon Bolivar, who, in shirt-sleeves, was stepping over them, occupied in the same search. The utmost terror or desperation was depicted in his countenance. He recognized me, and addressed the following impious and extravagant words: 'If nature opposes herself, we will wrestle with her, and force her to obey.' . . . . The plaza was already crowded with people, who gave forth the most penetrating cries, etc. . . . Bolivar, with that forethought with which he was

especially endowed, understood immediately the great fruit which would draw from this horrible catastrophe, presenting it to Heaven "for the sin of independence." And on seeing Jose Diaz, known as a Goth, even without being spoken to by this one, which are not extravagant, but samples of ability, and superior capacity. This same Diaz who was to write afterwards so many stupidities, and sustaining, like a fanatic, that Caracas, guilty, received the chastisement, which was executed by the arm of Divine justice, that "the earthquake was a punishment from Heaven for their sacrilegious acts of rebellion against their legitimate monarch."

This same Diaz did not reach with his mind so far as to comprehend that he could think afterwards the very same thing which Bolivar had already foreseen. And that phrase, "We will wrestle," demonstrates what was the irrevocable decision of that man, which nothing could repel, not even the changes nor the tremendous phenomenon of nature.

As Bolivar had divined, by his admirable gift of intelligence, it happened. Fanaticism took advantages of this terrible event of the 28th March, to make war against the system of liberty and independence. Hardly had this phenomenon passed, when the Prior of the Dominicans, Fr. Felipe Lamota, and Father Salvador Garcia de Ortigoza, mounted on a table in the midst of the frightened and awe-stricken multitude, preached that the earthquake was a *manifest punishment of Heaven; the infliction of a God irritated against the innovators who had cast off the most virtuous of monarchs, Ferdinand VII., the Lord's anointed.* And as there was great pains taken to demoralize opinion and propagate error, the clergy, in general, addicted to Spain, took advantage of the smallest accidents to prove the manifest will of God against the independents. The Temple of the Trinity, which, supported on massive pillars its roof, was situated in the southern and most elevated part of its grand plaza. On the opposite extreme the scaffold was placed, where months before the conspirators Diaz Flores, Sanchez, and others, had been executed. The church that was in proximity to the veteran barracks was a military chapel, and on one of the pillars of an alcove, named that of Los Remedios, destined to the use of the troops, the shield of Spain was painted. This temple was crumbled to its foundations; and an enormous portion of one of its pillars was thrown off violently, and rolling down the plaza, struck against the scaffold, and destroyed it! . . . . Alone the pillar with the shield stood erect, and was distinguishable from the points of that crumbled mass of ruins! . . . .

The reader may judge how forcible were the arguments which, based on these strange circumstances, were presented to the fear-stricken consciences of the people! The earthquake, besides, having taken place precisely the same day on which two years previous the Spanish authorities had been deposed!

The government assembled in the plaza of the Cathedral at about five o'clock in the afternoon, to take the necessary measures in this unexampled desolation. As soon as notice was given of the exceedingly seditious sermons preached from the portico of San Felipe and in the Plaza San Jacinto, and the deep sensation it had created, the two priests were ordered to be imprisoned, and the pillar to be thrown down; but the evil had been done, and was now incurable. The impression had been powerful; and the feeling of independence had lost its integrity. The royalist priests, possessed of the evangelical sea demanded from the public sorrow respect to the superstitious and homage to

despotism. Subversive discourses, based on mutilated texts from the Holy Bible, and repeated in all parts, brought over the afflicted multitude, and succeeded in totally changing public opinion.

It is undoubted that, if the violent earthquake of the 28th of March had not taken place, the republican arms would have punished severely the intent of Monteverde, and spared the calamities in which the country was involved by his victory.

The Spanish chieftain having recognized his exposed situation, had endeavored to fortify Carora, *although with small probability of being able to resist an ordinarily-prepared expedition.* Ceballos, understanding the imminent peril that Monteverde was running, he ordered him to evacuate the place, "so as not to be cut off by the troops at Barquisimeto, reinforced by a portion of the two thousand men quartered at Valencia." It was not within the range of human provision, confesses the Spaniard Torrente, that Monteverde could have preserved himself at such a distance from the headquarters of Coro, had it not been for the mentioned extraordinary event of the earthquake.\* But at Caracas, six hundred men had died in their barracks; the numerous garrison of La Guayra was reduced to a few soldiers; six hundred militiamen, who were on their way to San Felipe, to assist the troops camped there, arrived just in time for the catastrophe, and were sepultured with their brethren. A body of twelve hundred men who were passing a review at Barquisimeto, and two columns of three hundred each who were on the march, disappeared in the abysses of destruction! . . . . All provisions, military parks, resources, the hope of new campaigns, all was annihilated in a few moments, *without battles for liberty, without defeats for despotism!*

And how was it possible to speak any more of country to a population dispersed and hid amongst ruins! Of sacrifices, to citizens who possessed only rutiish! Of liberty and national duties to a son, a father, a husband, who were detained clasping the sepulchres by an intense sorrow!

Monteverde, taking advantage of these circumstances, which were to contribute him triumphs little hoped for, determined to undertake the campaign without waiting for the reinforcements which he had asked from Coro.

He took possession of Barquisimeto, whose inhabitants, terrified, had sworn allegiance to the king, moved by the subversive sermons of a priest who preached to them from upon these very ruins. At Yaritagua, after an identical exhortation, Ferdinand of Bourbon was sworn to, as an expiation pleasing to the Supreme Being. El Tocuyo, and other neighboring villages, imitated the same contagious example, all giving notice of it to Monteverde. . . . .

In this manner, a great extent of territory was occupied by this Spanish chief; he increased his troops with the artillery, small arms, and ammunition which he disinterred from among the ruins of Barquisimeto; through the means of one of his lieutenants Trujillo was occupied; another surprised and took the town of Araure, and he himself set out for San Carlos.

There Colonel Diego Jalon had thirteen hundred men, though little disciplined; but this brave officer, bruised, with a leg almost crushed, could not lead them. Colonel Miguel Ustariz, second in command, took charge, and, with instructions from Jalon, he set out to meet the victorious Monteverde. The

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\* This event (the earthquake) opened the country in a great manner to the conqueror of Carora. (Dias' "Remembrances of the Rebellion of Caracas.")

combat took place, in which the royalists had no advantage; but Monteverde was confident, because the commandant of the cavalry of the Pao, Don Juan Montalvo, a Spaniard in the services of the Republic, having passed over to him, assured him that the cavalry (the principal arm upon which Ustariz relied) would flee or pass over, as in effect it did, the Captain, Cruces, arriving little afterwards with his soldiers, to place himself under the orders of Monteverde.

Such villainous conduct completed our defeat; some few faithful soldiers, Ustariz and the commandant, Miguel Carabaño, commanding the staff, arrived at Valencia.

Monteverde entered San Carlos, he sacked it, and continued his march towards Valencia, where there were no forces to oppose him.

The 4th of April, at half-past three in the evening another frightful movement of the earth was felt, which continued, without ceasing an instant, though with less force, until eleven and thirty-five minutes of the night. The history of the catastrophes of the globe does not present a phenomenon of equal duration; it lasted eight mortal hours! . . . . A submersion was with reason feared; it seemed as if support was wanting to what was called *terra firma!*

This new earthquake caused ruins amongst ruins, and increased the misery and affliction.\*

The General Government was amazed with such frightful phenomenon, by the progress of the royal arms, and above all by the defection of our own soldiers; they were lacking in material resources, and without moral force, as opinion had been weakened, it was thought necessary to place the common fate in the hands of one man. The matter was calmly thought over, and all agreed that the present position required the investing of absolute power in one person, capable of exercising it with courage, with activity and determination. The executive delegated all its powers first on the Marquis del Toro, and afterwards, by excuse of this one, to General Francisco Miranda, who, entitled Generalissimo, and had the supreme authority over the forces of the Republic on land and sea. Miranda, on account of his services, of his talents, and the sobriety of his behaviour, richly merited that important nomination. . . . †

The General Government retired to La Victoria (26th April).

On the night of this day Miranda marched towards Caracas, where he went to seek for resources to carry on the war. On the way, he forwarded the officer, José Austria, for the purpose of informing Colonel Bolivar (who was then

\* This is the place to record a generous act of which no historian has spoken, and which then and always will have among us the highest regard. When the great catastrophe of Caracas was known in the United States of North America, Congress, assembled at Washington, unanimously decreed the sending of five vessels loaded with flour to the coast of Venezuela to be distributed among the most indigent inhabitants. Such a generous succor was received with the most lively gratitude; and this solemn act of a free people, said Humboldt, this proof of national interest, of which the grown-up civilization of Europe offers few examples appeared a precious bond of the mutual benevolence which should unite for ever the people of the two Americas (Pera. narrat.)

† In Venezuela, as in Rome, imminent peril and universal anxiety created the Dictatorship. "In hoc tantarum expectatione rerum, sollicita civitate, Dictatoris primun creandi mentio orta est." (Tit. II, L. v. 18.)

on his farm of San Mateo) to prepare himself and to join him, and be employed in the service of his country.

It thus happened. . . . .

Two hours afterwards, Miranda arrived at the house, and communicated to Bolivar, that he should immediately proceed to Puerto Cabello and take the command of that place. Puerto Cabello contained large deposits of military stores; in its principal fortress there was a prison in which were confined many Spaniards. Bolivar accepted reluctantly, because, as he said to the Commander-in-Chief, that inactive command was the least proper for his character, disposed to be in motion and diligent. But, as Miranda insisted, Bolivar accompanied him to Caracas, and proceeded without delay to his destination (29th April).

Early in the morning of the 1st of May, the Commander-in-Chief marched out of Caracas with the forces which he had been able to collect. It was then that were heard, for the first time, detonations and repeated cannonading, which resembled a combat. Miranda, surprised, ordered the army to halt; and he himself stopped on the heights of La Laja, fearing that the enemy were effecting a landing at La Guayra. Ignoring the causes of those noises, which resembled the discharges of artillery, he marched into La Guayra as soon as he was informed that nothing had happened there. It was the eruption of the volcano of San Vicente. That mountain was vomiting forth the inflammable matter contained in its bosom, and its noise reached us! . . . . .

Monteverde occupied Valencia the 8d of May. He was accompanied from San Carlos by the Presbytery, Don Juan Antonio Rojas Queipo, a true disciple of Torquemada; Fray Pedro Hernandez, the conspirator of Valencia, pardoned by Congress; and three more priests, the Dra. Manuel Vicente Maya, Nepomuceno Quintana, and the father, Don Pedro Gamboa, this latter a very vulgar person, all apostles of despotism, and whose sermons were of more service to Monteverde than his cannon.

Seeing the importance of pressing the royalist General, and force him to evacuate the important position of Valencia, he covered the point of Guayos with a strong detachment under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Antonio Flores. The exit of our troops was not doubtful, on account of their determined efforts; but a fatal star presided over the destinies of the country. In the midst of the firing of an advanced body, the treason of the Captain of Grenadiers, Pedro Ponce, a Spaniard, who had passed over to the enemy with his company! . . . . . Infamous action! By this the triumph of Monteverde was secured, which he would not have succeeded in in any other manner. On this fatal day, many were wounded and taken prisoners, being among the first-mentioned the Lieutenant of Sappers, Francisco Avendaño.

The mind of Miranda was, by these events, left in suspense and tortured; and, from that time, he unfortunately began now to operate without any concert. When circumstances required calmness and determination, and when, more than ever, it was the obligation to oppose, in all directions, the invasions of the enemy, impeding him, at least, in his movements, Miranda retreated with his army to Cabrera, and by this allowed Monteverde to extend his invasions, and to combine his plans on a larger scale. Unfortunate mistake! Don Eusebio Antonanzas, second in command to Monteverde, did not delay in

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\* This Pedro Ponce was Captain of the company which formed the escort on Holy Thursday, (19th April,) in the cathedral, when Emparan was taken.

occupying Calabozo and the town of San Juan de los Morros, important for their military position, realizing in those places the unlucky reconquest.

The Generalissimo established his head quarters at Maracay, and made known to all that his system in the future should be merely on the *defensive*. He excited the patriotism of the Venezuelans by a beautiful allocution (21st May), and awaited in expectancy the succession of events which might transpire! . . . . . Pernicious, unhappy thought! Did not Miranda understand the cost and peril of his inaction? That it was preferable to augment his forces, and quickly put an end to the war, so that the enemy should not push on and collect new energies? To the general who weakens the minds of his soldiers with pusillanimous and silly resolutions; he who, distrusting on account of any accident, loses faith in his final victory, and now awaits miracles to recuperate, it is evident that ruin overtakes him, and defeat is not far off. General Miranda knew this too well, being, as he was, so intelligent in the science of war; but he forgot in that critical emergency, and not only did he err, but, in the obstinacy of his error, pretended to find those who approved his policy.

But it happened to the contrary, as the patriots now began to lose faith and confidence in that chief. The discouraging inactivity of the Republican arms, caused, it appears, by unknown plans; the frequent and intimate correspondence of the Commander-in-Chief with the Governor of Curaçao: the dispatching of Molini, Private Secretary of Miranda, on a secret mission to England; the freedom offered to the slaves, in violation of the sacred rights of property, and the publication of martial law, caused the good name of the Dictator to fall to the ground, which now only inspired discontent.

As Antonanzas advanced towards Cura, Miranda retreated to La Victoria, burning before the large and well-provided warehouses of the commissary department of the army.

All this appeared as a defeat, when it was only an imprudent disposition; and oh! inexplicable contrariety! as if they were in time of peace, on the arrival at La Victoria, a general order was given to cleanse the arms—inensate operation, in which they were surprised by Monteverde. However, our troops joined in the combat in still fixing their muskets, and fought with such determination that they repulsed the royalists and put them in a shameful flight. All clamored for an active pursuit of the enemy, which, at least, would have balanced their invasion; but deaf to this exigence of the army, the Commander-in-Chief ordered the different divisions back to their quarters. His plan of campaign, he repeated, being simply on the *defensive*; and such a declaration only increased and rendered universal the discontent.

In this action was distinguished highly the Colonel Juan Pablo Ayala, intrepid patriot, loyal, constant, worthy of all honor, as loving for the independence, as he was invariable in his desire to serve his country. Juan Pablo was amongst those officers who most urged the General-in-Chief to abundantly collect the fruits of this victory; but he could not succeed, because Miranda, affecting a tenderness, which was really only indolence, was obstinate, in not varying from his system, and to be on the *defensive*.\* Thus, with forces amounting to

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\* Witnesses who were present, and of knowledge in the art of war, affirm that if Miranda, as begged of by him the officers of his army, had pursued Monteverde,

12,000 men, whom if he had known how to put them to use, he would have been able to solidly found the empire of liberty, while a handful of adventurers were destroying the Republic, because of the mistaken calculation of the man in whose hands she placed her fate in the unhappiness of those times. Monteverde was no more than a *daring and insubordinate adventurer*, according to the expression of Urquisona *to whom fortune was the only plank of salvation*; \* . . . . but it was not reserved to General Miranda to overthrow him!

At La Victoria, Miranda received a communication from Colonel Bolivar, informing him of his just fears of being attacked; firstly, because the enemy were aware that Puerto Cabello could not be defended; secondly, because the vast deposits there contained would incite their cupidity. Miranda, did not decide, however, anything. Anteriorly Bolivar had written to him proposing an expedition of the most promising results. In substance it was this: That a well-equipped column should be sent to Choroni, in which port they would embark in the brigs of war "Argos" and "Zeloso," and brought to Puerto Cabello, would execute a rapid movement to the rear of the enemy, placing him between two fires; an operation easy, practicable and altogether military. It would have been the evident destruction of Monteverde; but the Generalissimo did not accept it, and things continued in their same state—the Republicans at La Victoria, the Spaniards at San Mateo—their General beginning now to recognize the imprudence of his undertaking, deprived as he could be, from one moment to the other, even of the recourse of an honorable retreat. Such was now the state of affairs, that even their own victories did not give security to the Spaniards.†

"Monteverde imagining, with too much confidence," says Torrente, "that all should give way to the rapidity of his manœuvres and to the strength of his arm, endeavored to surprise the insurgents early one morning. The exit justified the truth of his plans; they were taken, in effect, the soldiers of Miranda being off their guard; but being favored by the position, encouraged by their numbers, and confiding in the knowledge and intelligence of their commander, they made a desperate defense, repulsing the enemy with sufficient loss, and leaving them in such a weak state after their unlucky attempt, that they could scarcely number 500 disciplined troops, the rest being recruits or 'inexperts.'" ‡

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he could have destroyed him and secured the cause of independence (Restrepo, History of Colombia, vol 2.)

\* A written relation of the origin and progress of the disturbances of the provinces of Venezuela.

† The Brigadier Ceballos, a prudent and circumspect officer, rightly feared the risks by which could be surrounded the column which the disobedient Monteverde commanded; he communicated to him, insinuating on him to risk no new conquests, made known to him the danger he ran at such a distance from the headquarters at Coro, and finally suppressing the personal resentments he entertained for that insubordinate subaltern, who did not mind his authority, he set out with seven hundred men to save him from the catastrophe into which he would have inevitably been sepultured. . . . . Events unfortunately took a different turn. Ceballos was made ridiculous; Monteverde elevated, and the Republic disappeared to make place for the empire of vengeance, of humiliations, which prepared for her the advisers of the stupid Alenc.

‡ Torrente. History of the American Revolution. Vol. i. p. 303.

In the midst of his natural ignorance, Monteverde feared that Miranda would cut off his retreat—an easy operation, and easily executed, much more so, as he could dispose of forces at Puerto Cabello, and attacking him in front, obtain his complete destruction. Troubled by this care, he held a council of war, and all the officers supported the plan of retiring to Valencia. The amount of ammunition was scarce, as they had only 4,000 cartridges, and they could not provide themselves from Coro, and even less from Puerto Rico and Maracaibo, the case being too urgent. The retreat was considered indispensable, and Monteverde was on the point of ordering it; but the Presbitero, Don Juan Antonio Rojas Queipo, earnestly supplicated him “to delay it for three days, *“so as to see what would happen during that space of time, that would change for the better the present situation,”* and to prevent the troops from forcing him to execute the agreement of the Council, he took him along to Cagua, a town close by.\*

The advice of Queipo was an advice of a priest. Monteverde, who was anything else but a soldier, did not find any answer for him, and began to await from time, hopes which truly it could not give him. Alas! if Miranda had only wished to operate! . . . . .

But the ruin of the Republic was destined, and the decrees of destiny are inexorable!

In these critical circumstances, Monteverde, surrounded by priests and sacristans, was staying at Cagua with more fear than tranquillity. The Castle of San Felipe de Puerto Cabello, raised the Spanish flag (8th June) in consequence of a conspiracy executed by the prisoners and the garrison, who intimated to Bolivar to surrender the city. The Commandant, Pedro Aymerich, the residing and responsible commander of the fortress, had left the place a few moments, and, in his absence, the conspirators (that same Dr. Jacinto Yxtueta, pardoned by Congress), Dons Francisco Sanchez, Inchauspi, Baquero and others, approached the unworthy officer, Francisco Fernandez Vinoni, that day commanding the garrison, he allowed himself to be carried away by the sedition, and putting the prisoners at liberty, co-operated with his soldiers to the consummation of a crime most unfortunate and transcendental for the patriots. As the castle commands the bay and its batteries, it forced the vessels anchored in the bay to surrender, and began to fight the city.

The defence was impossible. Bolivar, however, attempted it, and sustained for three days the fire of the fortress, and strongly reiterated the solicitude of reinforcement from the Generalissimo. On the 4th of July was known that, instead of the reinforcement promised by Miranda, Monteverde was marching on the city. The advanced detachments afterwards passed over to the royalists, and Bolivar sent the only men which he could reunite, to the number of two hundred, to keep them in check. The combat took place at the spot called San Esteban, and the patriots were defeated. The fire from the fortress, in the meanwhile, spread consternation on all sides, and produced the incendiarism of the brig of war “Argos.” Bolivar still wished to defend himself with forty men who remained with him; but, being abandoned the 6th of July by his soldiers, he determined to embark at Borburata with eight officers who accompanied him, amongst them, Tomas Montilla, Francisco Ribas Galindo, and Miguel Carabaño. “He owed his salvation,” writes Restrepo, “to the brig

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\* Urquinaona. Written Relation, p. 116.



'Zeloso,' commanded by the faithful Spaniard, Martiarena, on board of which he went to La Guayra.' Almost the same words are used by Baralt and Diaz, this and those copying from Montenegro. Ducoudray-Holstein, who fabricated history as was convenient to him, says that Bolivar secretly abandoned his post and embarked, as if possessed by fear, at night, without the knowledge of the garrison, in a schooner commanded by a Danish captain in the service of the Venezuelan government, arriving early in the morning at La Guayra, from which point he went to San Mateo, sending Montilla to apprise Miranda. There is no reason for us to take any notice of the malign falsehoods of this calumniating man, who knew not even the geography of the positions in which he placed his victims. Bolivar could not go to San Mateo, occupied as it was by the royalists; and on his way he would infallibly be obliged to pass by La Victoria, where Miranda was posted; and in that case, he would not have to dispatch Montilla to inform him, of what had occurred. It is clear then that Colonel Ducoudray did not know what he was writing. For the rest, those who copied from Montenegro, who named Martiarena by mistake, or perhaps to ennoble the memory of him, who was his friend and college-mate, it is well to say that the commander of the "Zeloso" was the frigate Captain Don Pedro Castillo, who, on several occasions, lent his services to the Republic, and that on leaving the waters of Borburata, the crew of the vessel, which was all composed of Spaniards with the exception of two, attempted to revolt, and turn the bow of the vessel to Puerto Cabello; that Bolivar, having had timely notice, woke up his officers, went on deck, accompanied by Ribas and Montilla, spoke to the mariners, and offered them one hundred and sixty doubloons of gold, which was all he had, if they would land him at La Guayra; that the sailors agreed, and at the end of four days they anchored in this port, and Bolivar gave the money he had promised. The loyalty of Martiarena remains in all its integrity; but it ought to be understood that, in the salvation of Colonel Bolivar, he had no opportunity to exercise it.

Miranda was informed of the unhappy events of the fortress the 5th of July, in the evening, at the moment he was leaving a banquet which he had given to his officers and others, distinguished citizens, to celebrate the anniversary of the declaration of independence. "Venezuela is wounded to the heart," he exclaimed, in a deep voice, after reading the despatches and communications. "You have allowed her to be wounded," murmured, in a low voice, many of the officers, who did not approve the manner of proceeding of the commander-in-chief, and who had already sown division in the army. Meanwhile, the soldiers openly deserted; the dissatisfaction was becoming universal, and the position was becoming every moment worse and unsustainable. A decided determination from Miranda, which would have sprung from a certain rapid inspiration; a valorous act of bravery against this multitude of inconveniences, would have arranged it all in favor of our cause; but Miranda, weakened by these defections, already wearied by age, and being inwardly persuaded that he was termed as a *coward* and even as a *traitor*, labored under a certain weariness which did not leave his mind free to govern; he became more and more irresolute, and because he committed one mistake, it seemed to him but constancy to keep on. As if a mistaken judgment brought on obligations.

In this state of anxiety, the tocsin was sounded at Caracas at twelve o'clock on the night of the 18th of July. A new calamity was coming to discharge itself upon this city groaning under misfortunes! The slaves of

Curleupe, Capaya, and, in general, of the valleys of Barlovento, seduced and raised by three Spaniards, Don Isidoro Quintero, Don Manuel Elizaburu, and Don Gaspar Gonzalez, this last a captain, whom the republican congress had allowed to preserve his grade, were marching upon Caracas, after having committed several murders at Guatire, executed with barbarous cruelty. The decree of Miranda, which called all the slaves to the military service, was one of the causes of this revolution, as the owners convinced that they would lose them, wished with them to do all possible injury to the patriots. Of how many evils is not a revolution, not well-weighed, the cause of!

The following day, after daybreak, Don Antonio Fernandez de Leon, Marquis de Casa-Leon, Director-General of Customs, embarked for La Victoria; and availing himself of the difficulties by which the commander was surrounded, he energetically depicted to him the miserable extreme to which the city had been reduced; the necessity of ending that war between brothers by an honorable treaty; the uselessness of any resistance which should not be done against the Spanish arms; the new and tremendous evil of the insurrection of the slaves; the commencement of war of colors, etc.

Casa-Leon was thought a patriot, and had even been sent under arrest to Spain, in May, 1809, for being among those who asked the Governor and Captain-General the establishment of a "Junta Suprema de Caracas." . . . . Miranda listened to him without mistrust. Cognizant of the situation of affairs, and foreseeing the observations that Miranda could make in respect to his person, offered the general means to live in a foreign country, so that, he said, *in his old age he would not find himself indigent*. As if commodities and joy could be found in exile, and as if the smoke of home was not preferable to the stranger's fire.

*Patriæ fumus, igne alieno, luculentior.* Miranda reflected on what the Marquis had said to him. He remained thoughtful. The proposition contained in itself such intrinsic importance and gravity, that it was impossible to determine immediately. Casa-Leon pressed him anew with more efficacious arguments; he said he would speak with Monteverde, and would arrange all matters; that the moments were precious, and that nothing was more advantageous in that hopeless conflict than to agree to. . . . . After some time of inward combat, of mortal wrestling, Miranda thought the idea ingenuous, and adhered to it. "I am willing," he said to his interlocutor, showing plainly what his soul suffered in approving that irreparable misfortune. . . . .

After one year's liberty, and when resources were in abundance to defend the country and destroy its enemies; when one energetic blow would re-establish the fortune and decorum of the republican arms; Miranda descended to propose a negotiation for peace with an insolent adventurer, and surrendering his banners, submitting anew the country to the slavery of the Peninsular government! . . . . Oh, unhappy idea! Oh, shameful thought, worthy of the most everlasting and cruel censure!

Who inspired Casa-Leon to go and talk with Miranda? Who gave sagacity to his speeches, weight and authority to his words, to decide the mind of the old warrior?

By what fatal destiny, did not Miranda know to resist like Sertorio or die as Leonidas?

Baralt wishing to explain the conduct of General Miranda (most difficult undertaking!) says: "The patriots seeing themselves deprived of the most impor-

tant fortress of the Province (Puerto Cabello) or along with it their cannon and warehouses, they caught fear. . . . They murmured at first and certainly unjustly, against the General who commanded them; afterwards, against the one who had afforded Monteverde such an immense advantage, permitting him to take breath and recuperate his strength. These allow themselves to be carried off by fear, disaffection is spread: the soldiers desert openly, many of the distinguished and notable persons follow their example. Miranda, perturbed, already sees the negroes invading Caracas, and entering the city with fire and blood as they had done in other parts: knowing that the officers of the army do not confide in him and despise him, he already persuades himself that they are capable of buying his ruin at the price of a public calamity: he believes there is no opinion nor patriotic virtue amongst that crowd collected by co-action, novelty or the hope of plunder: that there is no people, there is no principles, and that consequently victory was impossible. However exaggerated these reflections may appear, it is not difficult to conceive that they could have and should have operated with a man irritated by the rivalry of his companions-in-arms, and deeply hurt by frequent disaffections of the soldiers, and the very recent one of important persons, who deserted his camp and went over to the enemy. For the rest, in no other manner (as there was neither treason nor cowardice) can be explained the hurry which Miranda had in capitulating, being superior to the enemy in numbers, and being able to re-establish his fortune by a well-directed and daring blow of energy." . . . .

The intention is indeed laudable, of searching to gild, to varnish, so as to cover over and give a good appearance to the conduct of the Generalissimo Miranda; but it is not easy to find it. Perhaps the mind would be more tranquil with that saying of the ancients for all explanation:

"Cui vult Deus perdere, prius dementat!"

As to me, respecting the memory of the distinguished old man, I would wish that in my complaint should be perceived the just sorrow of reason which moves it.