CHAPTER V

THE SECOND DOWNFALL OF VENEZUELA, 1813-14

BOLIVAR'S position, in the centre of a circle of enemies standing at various distances, most of them considerable, from him, should have impressed upon him that safety lay in keeping his forces united, and falling in succession upon his adversaries, beginning with the nearest, Rosete. Instead of that, he committed the fatal mistake of dividing his troops. Urdaneta was sent westwards with one force to gather in the troops of Garcia de Sena and those at San Carlos for operations against Ceballos, the Spanish commander in Coró, and later against Yañez. At the same time, Campo Elias was sent southwards towards Calabozo, to deal with Boves and Morales, who had destroyed Montilla's force at Calabozo. About this time also, Bolivar wrote to Mariño, the Dictator of the East, inviting him to a conference at Caracas for the arrangement of the mutual position of the two leaders. But before Mariño could possibly arrive, if he were willing to come, Bolivar found himself called away from the capital by news of disasters. The force of Garcia de Sena, now commanded by Valdés in consequence of the illness of Garcia, had been beaten at Yaritágua, not far from Barquisemeto, by Ceballos, issuing from Coró with 1300 men. Shortly before, another republican commander, Aldao, had suffered defeat at Bobare, west of Barquisemeto. At the same time Yañez, who had reorganised his forces

at San Fernando on the Apure, marched upon Nutrias with 2500 men, inflicting defeats there, and at Guanare, Obispo, and other places on republican parties. At Barinas he had executed the governor, and had his body cut up into small pieces. He was rapidly approaching Ceballos, and the united forces threatened disaster to the besiegers of Puerto Cabello, and to Valencia.

Against these misfortunes must be set a victory gained on the 14th October by Campo Elias, at Mosquitero,[1] over Boves. Unfortunately, however, this converted Spaniard had done the republican cause more harm than good by massacring the American prisoners as well as the Spaniards, and treating the whole country side with the utmost ferocity! Bolivar would have enlisted the Americans in his own army; for, in his proclamation of war to the death, he was careful to exempt Americans.[2] The great danger was, therefore, for the moment, in the west. Bolivar accordingly marched to the rescue of Urdaneta, who was encamped at Gamelotal on the slope of the Altar mountain, facing Barquisemeto. Bolivar, sending a battalion ahead to reinforce Urdaneta, marched as rapidly as possible with the rest of his force. On the 10th November he was within three miles of Barquisemeto, at Cabudare. In front of him was the victorious Ceballos, barring the advance of Urdaneta into the province of Coró. Bolivar at once attacked, and, after two hours' fighting, Ceballos was forced to retire on the Carora road. But, in the midst of the pursuit, some one sounded the retreat on the republican side. Panic resulted, as a report got about that Ceballos' retirement was merely a stratagem to draw his enemy

[1] Mosquitero is not shown on the map. It is on the left bank of the R. Guarico, north of Calabozo, about three-fourths of the way from that place to Sombrero.

[2] Nevertheless, Bolivar, on the 6th September, had issued a decree of death against all Americans joining the Spaniards in revolt (Restrepo, ii. 182).

into an ambuscade. Bolivar's men took to their heels, hotly pursued, and were only saved from utter disaster by the fortunate presence on the river Cabudare of a squadron of cavalry, which charged the pursuers and covered the republican retreat. This stopped Ceballos' pursuit, but Bolivar and Urdaneta, when they succeeded in rallying their troops on the Altar mountain, found they had been so badly beaten as to necessitate retirement to San Carlos in order to refit. It was also clear that there was nothing now to hinder the junction of Yañez and Ceballos, so Bolivar returned to Valencia to bring up reinforcements. Not only did the two Spaniards unite, but Ceballos urged Salomon to break out of Puerto Cabello and join them, either at Barquisemeto or San Carlos, marching by San Felipe and Nirgua. Salomon accordingly issued, on the 16th November, with 1000 men, and had reached the heights of Vigirima, on the road to Valencia, where he encountered Ribas with 500 men, chiefly students whom he had collected in Caracas, now practically denuded of troops. Bolivar, who had directed Ribas to hurry up with everything he could collect, now joined him with the troops from Valencia. On the morning of the 23rd November, Bolivar endeavoured, by four hours of firing, to provoke Salomon into a descent to the plain in front of him. He failed, and was equally unsuccessful on the 24th. On the 25th he changed his tactics, and sent Lamprea to seize some heights covering Salomon's left wing, whilst d'Elhuyar acted similarly on the opposite flank. These points appear to have been weakly held, for both were captured by midday, whilst Bolivar, advancing against the centre, withdrew Salomon's attention from his flanks. Seeing his position threatened on both flanks, Salomon, under cover of darkness, withdrew again to Puerto Cabello. Probably he would have had a better chance of success had he followed Ceballos'

suggestion of marching on San Felipe, instead of into the heart of Bolivar's army towards Valencia. His idea was to march by Guacara to the valley of the Aragua, or, at any rate, to divert attention from Ceballos and Yañez.

Bolivar now returned to Valencia to prepare for the campaign against Ceballos and Yañez. He ordered Campo Elias to leave a force to contain the royalists towards Calabozo, and to bring the rest towards San Carlos.[1] On the 28th November, Bolivar marched for San Carlos, where, on the 1st December, he found himself in command of 3000 men. He could get no information in a country which was now once more entirely royalist, and, believing Ceballos to be at Barquisemeto, he made for that place. On the way, he heard that Yañez had seized Araure on his left rear, and Ceballos also had moved thither. He at once turned back in that direction after them, leaving some cavalry to protect his communications with San Carlos against raids by the royalist guerillas who swarmed in the country. Passing the river Coyede on the 3rd December, he was before Araure on the 4th, in sight of the 3500 men of Yañez and Ceballos. On the morning of the 5th, they were gone, and Bolivar sent Manrique to regain contact with them with the advance guard and 400 cavalry. Manrique, who had orders not to hazard an attack, discovered Ceballos drawn up at the foot of some wooded heights, his front covered by a lake, and his flanks protected by woods. Disregarding his orders, Manrique attacked, with the result that he was utterly defeated before Bolivar's arrival with the main body. When Bolivar came up, he renewed the battle. Part of his cavalry had some success against Ceballos' infantry, but the rest was already broken by infantry and artillery fire when Bolivar saved the situation with the infantry,

[1] Campo Elias had had 2500 men in his battle with Boves at Mosquitero.

and completely defeated the Spaniards, who dispersed with the loss of 300 prisoners, the whole of their 10 guns, a quantity of supplies, and 1000 killed and wounded. Amongst Bolivar's troops on this day was one battalion composed of the remains of the infantry who had fled at the recent battle of Barquisemeto. By way of emphasising his disapproval of their conduct, Bolivar had dubbed them the "Nameless Battalion" ("Batallon sin Nombre"). At Araure they redeemed their reputation by their gallantry, and were rewarded with a name, that of the "Victor of Araure" ("Vencedor de Araure"). Amongst their opponents was the battalion "Numancia," which Yañez had organised at San Fernando, entirely of Venezuelans.

After his victory, Bolivar fixed his headquarters at La Aparicion de la Corteza, sent back his spoils to San Carlos, despatched columns to recapture Barinas, Barquisemeto, and other places, and himself went to Valencia, which he reached on the evening of the 8th December. On the 20th, he visited the besieging force in front of Puerto Cabello, returning thence to Valencia, and again reaching Caracas on the 29th to prepare for operations in the south against Boves and Morales.

Here, in reply to the compliments of his officials on his recent successes, he uttered words which were decidedly premature in their optimism. He spoke of having already avenged Venezuela, of having prostrated the best army which had aimed at her enslavement, and went on to state his views of the necessity of going on to liberate, not only Venezuela, but the whole of Spanish America, and of creating a united American nation in Venezuela, New Granada, Quito, and Peru. Again, Larrazabal admits that, "it was necessary to liberate America by creating a public opinion which did not exist."[1] To the Congress of New Granada, Bolivar

[1] Larrazabal, I. 246.

wrote, reporting his successes, and asserting that "the independence of Venezuela is assured." Again, in instructions to his Secretary for Foreign Affairs, he puts forward his desire for the union of Venezuela and New Granada as one nation, a scheme which he steadily pursued to the end of his life, only to die seeing its defeat by the separation of the two. The scheme was never really practicable; the differences of character of the two populations were too great, the area of the two countries was too vast for management by a single government, and the jealousies of the leading men of either were a bar fatal to it. At this particular time the chief supporter in New Granada of Bolivar's scheme of union was Camilo Torres.[1]

Bolivar, at Caracas in December 1813, had a difficult political position to deal with amongst his own countrymen. Openly opposed to a Federal government, as unsuitable to the circumstances of a people struggling to throw off a foreign yoke, he had set up a provisional government, which was practically nothing but an absolute autocracy, with Bolivar himself at its head as Dictator. No one else had any real power, though there were many hungering for it. Under these circumstances, it is not in the least surprising that there should have been a rapid spread of hostility to Bolivar, and of intrigue against him. It was not from the lower classes that he had to fear opposition, for they had no politics. His opponents were men of his own class, the wealthy and influential creoles, who, one and all, with true South American vanity, considered themselves at least equal in ability to Bolivar, whose advancement they envied and resented, feeling that, under him, they were in no better position than they had been under the Spanish rulers. His admirers boast that his absolute rule had been blameless and excellent. But there were certainly abuses under it.

[1] Larrazabal, p. 249.

Ducoudray-Holstein, a prejudiced witness certainly, says there were many complaints of Bolivar's behaviour as an absolute sovereign; of his following of his own caprices; of the influence over him enjoyed by his mistress and other women, who distributed appointments in many cases; of his disorganisation of the finances; of his neglect of the army, which was in a very poor state; and, finally, of his persistent evasion of demands for the assembly of a congress. Probably, too, his proposed union of Venezuela with New Granada was unpopular in Venezuela, whose people were as jealous of New Granada as the latter country was of them.

Aware of the strength of the feeling against him, Bolivar sought to appease it by summoning, for the 1st July 1814, a general meeting of the principal people of Caracas, with the greater part of the population in the streets outside as a background, and perhaps a threat.

This meeting Bolivar addressed at length,[1] vaunting his achievements and those of his companions-in-arms towards the liberation of the country. Having made the most of this, he proposed to resign his power into the hands of representatives of the people. No one ventured to propose acceptance of this offer, and only those spoke who were prepared to advocate Bolivar's retention of supreme power. That he had any intention that his offer should be accepted few will be ready to believe. This device of a resignation tendered, often with repeated protests of its finality, but without any intention that it should be accepted, became almost a habit with Bolivar, often his trump card. In the present case, it was certain that the best hopes of the republic lay in his retention of power. Whilst accepting this popular confirmation of his position, Bolivar had the good sense to refuse a proposal to erect a statue of himself at Caracas.

Before proceeding to describe his next campaign, some

[1] O'Leary, Docts., xiii. p. 410.

mention may be made of the fate of Monteverde when he retired wounded to Puerto Cabello, after the defeat of Las Trincheras. He was, he found, out of favour with the Spanish Junta, which had been set up in the city, and presently he found himself compelled to resign his command. At the close of 1813, he embarked for Curaçao. According to Baralt and Restrepo, he sailed thence direct for Spain, but Larrazabal[1] affirms that he returned to Venezuela when the Spanish arms were again successful, and did not leave for Spain till the 7th July 1816. He appears to be right, for his statement is supported by quotation of a letter from Monteverde, dated Maiquetia, 29th October 1815. However, as Monteverde took no important part in Venezuelan affairs after December 1813, the matter is of no importance.

To Monteverde as Captain-General succeeded Cajigal, a Spanish gentleman, humane, and moderate, who, in 1812, might have been successful in pacifying the country, but was too much of a diplomat, and too little of the rough soldier, for these later days.

The new enemy, whom Bolivar was about to meet to the south of Caracas, requires some description.

With all due allowance for South American exaggeration, it is impossible not to regard José Tomas Boves as one of the most atrocious ruffians who have ever disgraced any country. Born in Spain, at Gijon, about 1770, and then surnamed Rodriguez, he was in early life a pilot. Then he emigrated to Venezuela, where he became half pirate, half smuggler, and, in 1809, was sentenced at Puerto Cabello as a "sea-robber" ("ladron del mar"). Thanks to the kindly intervention of two Spanish gentlemen, his imprisonment was commuted to simple detention at Calabozo, in the plains between the Orinoco and the northern hill tract of Venezuela. At the outbreak of the revolution in 1810, he changed his

[1] I. 252.

name to Boves, and joined the insurgents. Getting again into prison, he quarrelled with his friends, and transferred his services to the royalists, who had released him in 1812. He raised a body of cavalry and turned bandit in the King's interest—and his own. It was he who raised the insurrection of the negro slaves in 1812. When Bolivar entered Caracas in 1813, Boves joined Cajigal, the Spanish commander in the east, at Barcelona, and marched with him for Guayana, before the advance of Mariño and Piar. But, instead of crossing the Orinoco with Cajigal, he persuaded that commander to leave him to collect forces amongst the inhabitants of the plains, with whom his residence at Calabozo had rendered him familiar.

These "Llaneros,"[1] as they were called, were a half wild, uncivilised race, largely of mixed Spanish and Indian blood, living widely scattered in solitary huts, or in small groups of huts. They were cattle-breeders by occupation, subsisting mainly on the flesh of their herds, often unseasoned even with salt, which was scarce in these inland plains. The cattle being practically wild, had, when required for use, either to be lassoed, or else ridden down on horseback, and cast by a dexterous twist of the tail, which was a special accomplishment of the Llaneros. As a consequence of this necessity, the Llaneros were also breeders of horses, which they rode magnificently. They were skilled in the use of a long spear, which they wielded lying along the near side of the horse, thus affording practically no mark above the animal for an enemy to aim at. They were capable of being made into a very terrible cavalry of an extremely irregular type. To reckless bravery they added absolute ignorance and illiteracy. To discipline generally they were entire strangers, and it was only when one of themselves, a man such as Paez, of whom

[1] "Llano" in Spanish, a plain. "Llanero," a plainsman.

much will be heard presently, was able by a strong personality to take the lead, that they could be commanded at all. Naturally, to such men it was of very little consequence whether the government at Caracas was represented by Monteverde on behalf of Spain, or by Bolivar the Dictator of the Republic. Neither monarchy nor republic could do much good, or much harm, to men living under these conditions, having no property beyond the cattle and horses which they alone could manage, and scattered over vast plains, covered with long grass and seamed with rivers, watercourses, and morasses, in the midst of which they could defy pursuit by any punitive force. Under ordinary circumstances, they had no special predilection for or object in fighting ; but they were as susceptible as any other half-civilised race to the attractions of plunder, and it was this motive which alone, for the present at least, could enlist them on either side. They had nothing to gain in the way of liberty, of which they enjoyed as much as they could desire. They had the strongest objection to leaving their native plains. So long, then, as the Spaniards held the towns in the Orinoco valley, Angostura, San Fernando, and a few others, and were the only known authority, the republicans could look for no help from these people, who cared as little for them as for the Spaniards.

Boves, starting on the collection of his force, was a man quite ready to offer to the Llaneros great prospects of plunder, unhindered by any scruples on the part of the commander. His previous career raises a presumption against any tenderness of conscience on his part. He was, moreover, a perfect monster of cruelty, who seemed to delight in useless bloodshed for its own sake. Stories innumerable are told of his ferocity. Briceño Mendez relates that Boves was in the habit of tying his victims to posts, and exposing them naked to the rays of the tropical sun and the torment of

tropical insects, often aggravated by a previous flogging, which left the wretched creatures a mass of sores on which the flies settled. There the poor wretches were left, so far as Boves was concerned, to die of hunger and thirst. One other famous story of his brutality may be related. He had ordered the decapitation of an old and harmless prisoner, not even a soldier, when the man's son, a mere boy, fell at Boves' feet, imploring mercy for his father. "Will you," was the reply, "submit to have your ears and nose cut off, in order to save your father's life?" The boy accepted, and bore unflinchingly this terrible torture. All that Boves did was to order both father and son to be beheaded, the one as a rebel, the other as a potential enemy.

On the other hand, to give Boves what little credit is due to him, he was, considering his opportunities, an able leader. On his own followers he imposed an iron discipline in the field, treating cowardice or disobedience amongst them with the same severity which he meted out to the enemy. His courage was admitted by friends and enemies alike. Wherever the fighting was most desperate there was Boves to be found, dealing death on all sides and exposing himself without a shadow of fear. Such a man had little difficulty in gathering round him, besides the savage Llaneros, every ruffian and jail-bird in the country. So desperate and depraved were his men that even the Spaniards nicknamed them the "Infernal Division."

His second in command was Tomas Morales, a naval adventurer like Monteverde, but far more of a savage than the other. In this respect he ran a fair second to Boves. Each has characterised the other. Of Morales, Boves said that he was 'atrocious,' whilst, after Boves' death, Morales said of him that he was, "a man of merit, but too bloodthirsty!" Arcades ambo!

Boves had, as already mentioned, destroyed the force which Bolivar had sent against him under Montilla in August 1813. He had subsequently been heavily defeated by Campo Elias at Mosquitero. Now, at the close of 1813, he was threatening the valley of the Aragua and Caracas itself with a force of 4000 men from Calabozo.

Bolivar, earnestly appealing to Mariño for help, went off to visit the siege works in front of Puerto Cabello, which he reached on the 16th January 1814. There he learned that Mariño's jealousy had prompted him to stop his westward march, and even to order away the small squadron under Piar, which was blockading the place by sea. With difficulty Piar was persuaded not to sail away, whilst Bolivar made a fresh appeal to Mariño. In it he recognised Mariño as "Dictator of the East," a move which at last induced that vain young man to march, though too slowly and too late to save the situation.[1]

Boves was now at Calabozo, whilst news came in that Yañez, recovering from his defeat at Araure, had collected 2000 Llaneros on the Apure, and had retaken Barinas, from which Garcia de Sena had unaccountably retired. Yañez had massacred the survivors of the garrison of 120 men which had been left in the place. Garcia, without any attempt at fighting, retired through the difficult gorges of Merida to Trujillo, losing most of his men by hardship or desertion on the way. There he left the remnants of his force, and himself fled to Valencia. Yañez, having taken Barinas, laid siege to Ospino, of which the small garrison refused to surrender. A chance shot in a skirmish put an end to Yañez on the 2nd February. His body, falling into the hands of the enemy, was torn to pieces by the townspeople in their fury. To him succeeded Calzada, who from a private soldier in 1810 had now risen to be lieutenant-colonel, a

[1] O'Leary, Documents, 13, p. 426.

man of the stamp of Boves and of Yañez himself. Reassembling the troops which had fled on the death of Yañez, Calzada returned to Ospino, which he took and burned. Again advancing, he took Araure and threatened San Carlos. The whole country in this direction was infested by royalist bandits.

As a final blow to the republican cause, came the news that Boves, advancing from Calabozo, had encountered Campo Elias at La Puerta and completely defeated him. Boves, who had been severely wounded, in order to secure the fruits of his victory, pushed forward Rosete, with a strong column, into the valley of the Tuy, where Ocumare[1] was taken and sacked, many of its inhabitants being massacred. Rosete, like many of the Spanish leaders, was of low origin, being in fact in 1812 the keeper of a miserable tavern. It was men of this stamp who were responsible for many of the Spanish cruelties. Amongst the higher classes there was no doubt cruelty, but some of them, men of the stamp of Cajigal or Salomon, could not be accused of such atrocities.

The news of Boves' victory filled Caràcas with horror and consternation. Bolivar, almost alone, retained hope. The news reached him when he was in front of Puerto Cabello. He at once hastened to Valencia with a large part of the besieging troops, ordered the fortification of the already famous position of La Cabrera, and placed it in charge of Campo Elias, who had reached Valencia after his defeat at La Puerta. To Ribas at La Victoria Bolivar sent instructions for his conduct as advanced guard, and to Urdaneta in the west he wrote to hurry up the pick of his division. Bolivar himself, with all the troops he could collect, marched to meet the new and terrible enemy. He could expect no help, at present, from

[1] South by east from Caracas. To be carefully distinguished from Ocumare de la Costa, a port between La Guaira and Puerto Cabello.

Mariño, who was marching slowly from Barcelona at the end of January 1814.

On the 12th February, Boves, with his army of Llaneros and ruffians, fell furiously upon Ribas at Victoria, which was prepared for defence. The fighting raged for hours with the utmost desperation. The houses and the streets were converted into a veritable shambles, deluged with the blood of royalists and republicans. By four o'clock in the afternoon the outnumbered patriots had been driven into the centre of the town, and their end seemed to be at hand, when suddenly a cloud of dust was seen in the west. It indicated the approach of Campo Elias with his troops from La Cabrera. Sending on an advance guard under Montilla, Campo Elias followed as quickly as possible, and attacked Boves with such fury that in an hour Victoria was cleared and Boves driven back in disorder on to the neighbouring heights. He is said to have lost 1000 men. He now received reinforcements from Cura during the night.

In the morning of the 13th Ribas, his men encouraged by their success of the previous day, assumed the offensive, driving Boves from his position and capturing guns, muskets, ammunition, and large quantities of supplies. Prisoners there were none, for quarter was not given when the fierce Campo Elias was present.

This victory was everywhere announced to the patriots with the greatest satisfaction, and Bolivar, in a proclamation, awarded unstinted praise to Ribas and his men. The Liberator now used part of Ribas' force to observe Boves, whilst the general himself was sent with the rest against Rosete, who had fortified himself in Yare, near Ocumare in the Tuy valley. Ribas executed his mission with complete success, putting Rosete to flight and reoccupying Ocumare. The streets of that town exhibited a ghastly spectacle, for they were strewn with the dead and dying inhabitants massered by Rosete.

Neither sex nor age had been spared by the savage Spaniard, and a large proportion of the victims were women and children. Ribas captured Rosete's correspondence, which included, it is said, a plan for a rising of the Spanish prisoners in Caracas and La Guaira. An iron was also found which Rosete used for branding Americans on the forehead with the letter P (patriot). A similar iron had been taken at Araure bearing the letter R (republican). Bolivar's position at Valencia, before the defeat of Boves and Rosete, had been a very critical one, and it was the immediate cause of a measure taken by him, which it is impossible not to regard as a terrible crime. The position at Caracas and La Guaira was equally difficult, for they were threatened by the advance of Boves and Rosete; every man was required to fight, and it was difficult to spare guards for the numerous Spanish prisoners at both places. It will be remembered that, when Fierro fled from Caracas and embarked at La Guaira, in the beginning of August 1813, great numbers of Spaniards had been captured by the republicans at both places. The prisoners are stated to have numbered 4000 or more, and were confined partly at Caracas, partly at La Guaira. They were not by any means all soldiers, but comprised numerous peaceable citizens, merchants, and others. Had Monteverde ratified the capitulation signed by Fierro's emissaries, these prisoners should have been released, and it was pointed out to him that, under the Trujillo proclamation of war to the death, they were all liable to execution if he refused ratification. But he would not yield. On the 8th February, Bolivar received a report from Leandro Palacios, governor of La Guaira, saying that there was imminent danger from the multitude of Spanish prisoners in the place, combined with an insufficient garrison. Bolivar's reply was terrible in its brevity and its ferocity. "I order you,"

he wrote on the same day, "to shoot all the Spanish prisoners in those dungeons, and in the hospital, without any exception whatever." Similar orders were issued to the civil and military commanders in Caracas. That is Larrazabal's version.[1] O'Leary[2] quotes the same order.

The executions took place without any semblance of trial, on the 14th, 15th, and 16th February, at La Guaira and Caracas simultaneously. O'Leary gives the total number of Spaniards and Canary Islanders thus executed as 800—Larrazabal says 886. Ducoudray-Holstein, not speaking from personal knowledge, places the figures as high as 430 in La Guaira and 823 in Caracas. Mitre,[3] following Restrepo, puts the number at 866. He gives details of the execution as carried out by Arismendi, some of them being given by Restrepo also. He says that Bolivar's order was for the execution, *excluding* those who had taken out letters of naturalisation, and was signed by his secretary. On this Arismendi remarked: "The Secretary of the Liberator is a fool: he has put '*with exception*' instead of '*including*.'" The writer goes on to say that Arismendi set the prisoners to make a great funeral pyre on which to burn their bodies. When it was ready, the prisoners were brought up in batches and done to death by the soldiers with bayonet, axe, and poniard, and their bodies, still quivering, were thrown upon the fire. Many of them, he says, were men who had saved the lives of patriots at the risk of their own. This massacre is ghastly enough in all conscience, even according to the least exaggerated account as to numbers and details, and its horror is aggravated by the admitted facts that many of the victims were innocent even of having borne arms,

[1] Larrazabal, i. 284. [2] i. 191.

[3] Pillings' translation, p. 345. The account is apparently based on that of Torrente (ii. 74), who gives the total at 1000 roundly, and gives details of the massacre as above.

and that they were not prisoners executed in more or less hot blood immediately after a battle, but had for the most part been for months in prison.

Larrazabal, Restrepo,[1] and O'Leary, the latter rather half-heartedly, endeavour to excuse Bolivar's action; but it is best to look to what he himself said in an attempt to justify it in a lengthy manifesto issued, under his orders, over the signature of his secretary,[2] at the very moment when the massacre was in progress, on the 14th February. It is too long to quote *in extenso*, but may be briefly summarised. Scarcely resisting the temptation to plead as justification the three centuries of Spanish oppression, this extraordinary document begins with the bloody suppression of the revolt in Quito in 1810, which "armed us with the sword of reprisals to avenge it on all the Spaniards." A merit is made of the abstention from massacres in the Caracas revolution of 19th April 1810, and the employment in high posts of some Spaniards thereafter. Then follow several pages of details of the massacres and other atrocities committed by men like Antoñanzas, Boves, Yañez, Zuazola, and other Spanish leaders, without any admission of the atrocities which were committed on the other side, such as Campo Elias' massacre of Spaniards and Americans alike, and the Liberator's own massacres on the march to Caracas. Bolivar vaunts his own clemency and good faith regarding the capitulation of Caracas in 1813, and details the refusals of Monteverde to agree even to an exchange of prisoners. Then he alleges plots of the prisoners, in communication with Boves and Rosete,[3] and again refers to the brutalities of these two Spaniards in Ocumare and elsewhere.

[1] Restrepo, ii. 225, etc. [2] Larrazabal, i. 285.

[3] It will be remembered that Rosete's papers captured by Ribas are said to have confirmed this, but even so they were not taken till after the issue of the orders of the 8th February.

The whole attempted justification is practically based on two grounds: (1) the atrocities of the enemy, justifying reprisals in the same form; (2) the danger of the position, with Boves and Rosete threatening Caracas, and backed by conspiracies among the prisoners.

No one, probably, belonging to a truly civilised nation will for a moment admit the validity of the first argument, and it is difficult even to allow it as an extenuation of the cold-blooded orders issued by a man of Bolivar's education and advantages. As for the second ground of defence, Boves and Rosete were, no doubt, a great danger when the orders issued on the 8th February, but the defeat of the former, at La Victoria on the 13th, had disposed of them for the moment. The executions only began next day, and might have been stopped. As for the plots of the prisoners, their existence is not to be lightly assumed, though it is not in the least improbable. It is certain that, in any case, many were slain who certainly took no part in them. Allowing Bolivar every possible advantage in his argument, is it possible to suppose that he will now be held blameless by anyone outside of South America?

On the 20th February, Bolivar established his headquarters at his own farm of San Mateo in the Aragua valley.[1] He commanded but 1200 infantry and 600 cavalry, and, as Boves' great strength lay in his numerous Llanero cavalry, the Liberator's object was to draw him into the hilly country. He was, at the same time, hard put to it to keep a check on the royalist guerillas about the Lake of Valencia, threatening his communications with the blockading force in front of Puerto Cabello under D'Elhuyar, as well as with Escalona at Valencia, and Mariño, now slowly coming up from the east. On the 25th, Boves with 7000 men, chiefly cavalry,

[1] The manifesto just described is dated, Headquarters at San Mateo, 14th February 1814. Is it possible that it was ante-dated?

attempted to pass the river Aragua at Cagua, near San Mateo, but was checked by Mariano Montilla, and retired at night.

On the 28th, Boves again advanced against a heavy fire from the trenches with which Bolivar had garnished his position. The royalist loss was heavy, but Boves continued the fight all day. At night, being wounded himself, he once more fell back on the heights behind him. In this day's action Bolivar lost a good officer in Colonel Villapol, a Spaniard by birth, who had joined the independent party. A still greater loss was that of Campo Elias, who was wounded, and died a fortnight later.

Boves was, after this, lying wounded at Villa de Cura, when the attempt by a young officer, Cedeño, sent by Bolivar with twenty men to try and capture him, failed.[1] On the 9th March, news arrived of the return of Rosete, now recovered from his recent defeat at Yare, to the Tuy valley, whence he seriously threatened Caracas, now practically undefended.

Boves also, cured of his wound, was preparing a fresh attack on San Mateo. Bolivar now sent Montilla, with 300 men, to Caracas with drums beating and making a great show, so as to alarm the Spaniard for his right flank. When he discovered that he had been fooled, Boves was furious. His next attack, on the 11th March, was again repulsed. Nothing more happened

[1] When a gallant Spaniard, later on, made a similar attempt on Bolivar, the Venezuelan writers speak of it as an attempted assassination!

Cedeño played a considerable part after this. He was one of those who kept alive the guerilla warfare in Venezuela between 1814 and 1816. He was afterwards a member of the Council of State at Angostura, and governor of Guayana. Born in Apure in 1784, he was killed at the battle of Carabobo in 1821. His division were hardly engaged in that battle, but Cedeño, armed with a lance, must needs take a personal share in the pursuit, and was shot down by a stray bullet when he was snatching a hurried meal. His valour was such that Bolivar gave him Ney's title, "the bravest of the brave."

till Bolivar, making a night march, fell upon Boves at daybreak on the 17th, inflicting a severe blow on him. Once more, on the 20th March, Boves, rendered desperate by the news that Mariño was at last approaching, furiously attacked Bolivar. Beaten off, he renewed his efforts on the 25th, directing them specially against the park and hospital, which were defended by Antonio Ricaurte, a young Granadian. The house in which was the hospital was the dwelling-house of the farm. It was to be assaulted by a special column, whilst Boves diverted attention by vigorous attacks all along the line. Boves himself, riding with desperate valour into the very midst of the fighting, and hurling against the patriots his reckless Llaneros, led charge after charge. Meanwhile, his assaulting column had got in silence round the flank of the enemy, and only came into view when it was close upon the hospital.

Now it was that Ricaurte[1] heroically sacrificed himself. First he removed the wounded, then ordered all his men to evacuate the house. He alone remained behind. Even Bolivar thought there was nothing left but to die fighting as the Spaniards charged with shouts of victory on the key of his position. They were already entering the house when a fearful explosion occurred. Ricaurte had fired the powder magazine, blowing himself, the empty house, and a large part of Boves' column to destruction. His gallantry saved the battle, for Boves, witnessing the destruction of his column, retired once more to the heights. On the 30th, he raised this siege of San Mateo, moving off by the road leading to San Sebastian and Villa de Cura.

But, though Boves was beaten off, Bolivar had suffered losses which he could ill afford. Two hundred officers and 1500 men were *hors de combat*, as the result of the

[1] Born at Bogotá, 1792. Joined Bolivar with the Granadian contingent at Cúcuta in 1813.

prolonged defence. Bad news, too, came in, telling of the defeat of Urdaneta at Barquisemeto by Ceballos and Cajigal with 1000 men from Coró. Unable to make a stand at San Carlos, Urdaneta fell back on Valencia, whence he reported to Bolivar that he expected to be attacked. Bolivar implored him to defend himself to the death, as Valencia contained all the magazines and ammunition. Meanwile, Urdaneta was to send 200 men to D'Elhuyar's besieging force at Puerto Cabello. Bolivar promised that, as soon as Mariño's arrival enabled him to crush Boves, he would return to rescue Urdaneta. Valencia was attacked by Ceballos and Cajigal, who now had 3000 men, and, on the 30th and 31st March, nearly the whole town was captured.

On the latter day, Mariño had met Boves at Bocachica,[1] defeated him, and driven him back by Guïgue and the south side of the lake on Ceballos at Valencia. Then he marched to join Bolivar at Victoria.

Boves, though his rearguard was harassed by Bolivar's cavalry, arrived at Valencia with 3000 men, thus raising the besieging force to 6000. The garrison of Valencia was still holding out in the centre of the town, though suffering from the want of water, very hard pressed, and much reduced by desertions. It was the 2nd April when Boves reached Valencia, where the fight against Urdaneta raged all day. By evening, the defenders were reduced to the most desperate straits. Attacked on all sides, their position riddled by artillery, they had almost abandoned hope, when suddenly the attacks ceased. Ceballos' courage had failed him on the arrival of the defeated Boves, and at the prospect of the appearance of Bolivar and Mariño behind him. As a matter of fact they only met that day at Victoria, but Ceballos abandoned his attack on Valencia and fell back towards Tocuyito.

[1] Not shown on map. It is not far from Cura.

After a cordial meeting with Mariño on the 2nd April, Bolivar reached Valencia on the 3rd with reinforcements, only to find the place out of danger. On the 5th, he was back at Victoria, whence, after persuading Mariño to advance on Valencia, he paid a flying visit to the lines in front of Puerto Cabello. When he got back once more to Valencia, he found that Ceballos and Boves had separated, the former having gone to San Carlos, whilst Boves had marched for Calabozo to recuperate.

Bolivar now organised a force of 2000 infantry and 800 cavalry, partly his own men, partly Mariño's. He left Mariño in command, and himself returned to Puerto Cabello.

Mariño, marching on San Carlos, had to halt at Tinaco, ten miles short of that place, waiting for artillery and supplies. Then, hearing a false report that Ceballos had evacuated San Carlos, Mariño advanced through a hostile country, despite the warnings of Urdaneta, who knew the state of the country better.

On the 16th April, Mariño found himself on the plain of Aroa, short of ammunition, and faced by 2500 men drawn up in line of battle. First of all his cavalry was defeated, then Cedeño's men, overtaken by panic, gave way, and the troops were driven back to Tinaco, which they reached on the morning of the 17th. Mariño was not to be found, for he and others had made off as soon as Cedeño's men yielded. As they passed Tinaco they had destroyed the park and carried off the horses. At Palomeras, as the troops continued their retreat on Valencia, they found the artillery waggons had been fired by Mariño to prevent their capture. There, too, were found Mariño and Cedeño, whom the troops rescued from a handful of Spaniards surrounding them on a hill.

Bolivar was celebrating the anniversary of the 19th

April outside Puerto Cabello, and preparing to assault the place, when he received exaggerated accounts of Marino's defeat, representing the force of the Dictator of the East as utterly destroyed. Yet he did not lose hope. Turning to Palacios, he said, "Our position becomes more critical, we are alone to control the furious torrent of devastation; but we will stop it." Then he returned to Valencia, where he found the disaster was not quite so bad as he had believed. He at once proposed to start again to fight Ceballos. That general, however, as Bolivar learned, had been again reinforced by troops brought by Cajigal from Coró, and was at the head of 3000 men.

Bolivar, therefore, hurried off to Caracas for more troops. Thence he sent on Ribas with 800 men, followed by ammunition, medicines, and other supplies, whilst he himself went by Carabobo to take command in person of the new expedition. Just before he started he received a deputation sent from Cartagena to communicate to him the resolution passed by that city in his honour, and also the powers conferred on him by the Chamber of Representatives in the matter of the confederation of Venezuela and the State of Cartagena. This latter project, Bolivar remarked, must be put off for the present, looking to the existing precarious state of affairs in Venezuela.

On the 10th May he was at Valencia again; on the 12th he reviewed his troops; on the 17th he was on the plain of Carabobo in presence of the enemy.

He had got together 5000 men, but those who had come with Mariño were unreliable and deserted freely. Urdaneta, meeting a body of 200 such deserters who had lost their way, brought them back in custody of his own troops. By way of example, all their leaders were shot at Valencia, and one in every five of the rank and file.

Bolivar reorganised this army in four divisions, the right wing under Bermudez, the left under Valdés, centre under Florencio Palacios, and the cavalry under Freites. Urdaneta was chief of the staff, whilst Mariño and Ribas were seconds in command under Bolivar.

Perhaps Mariño might have made difficulties about being reduced to this position had he not felt how completely he had put himself out of court by his fiasco at Aroa.

There was no fighting worth mention till the 28th May. On that day the battle began at 1 P.M. and was decided by 4 P.M., when Cajigal, forced back on to the heights, found himself unable to defend them, and was driven back in disorder with very heavy loss.

His infantry was almost entirely cut up or captured, whilst there remained in Bolivar's hands the whole of the Spanish artillery, 500 muskets, 9 standards, 4000 horses, and large stocks of munitions of all sorts. The colonel of the Spanish regiment "Granada" was captured, and several other leaders were killed.

Cajigal, Ceballos, Calzada, and others fled towards Barinas.[1] When the pursuing victors under Urdaneta reached San Carlos, they found that the barbarities of Calzada there had been as great as those of Rosete at Ocumare. He had spared neither sex nor age, nor did he treat a priest any better than a layman.

Bolivar, after his victory, again committed the fault of splitting up his army, instead of keeping it united for the destruction of Boves and the capture of Puerto Cabello, which still held out in face of a very feeble blockading force. Urdaneta was sent westward to recover the country which had been lost, Ribas went back to Caracas, Mariño and Jalon were sent towards Cura to face Boves. Bolivar himself went to Caracas.

[1] Larrazabal, i. 312. He speaks of this as the "celebrated battle of Carabobo." He should have called it the "first," for there was a much more celebrated battle on the same field in 1821.

Boves, reaching Calabozo after his separation from Ceballos, had displayed his usual energy in repairing the losses of Bocachica, and was now again at the head of 5000 Llaneros and 3000 infantry. He had, as mentioned, only 3000 men in all when he joined Ceballos at Valencia, and it is surprising to find him so soon again at the head of more men than he had at Bocachica.

The fact appears to be that, in all these battles of undisciplined troops, once disaster commenced the greater part of the defeated army dispersed all over the country, and filtered back to their starting-point, where they were quite ready to join again on the reappearance of their leader. The knowledge of this doubtless moved Boves to leave Ceballos and go where he knew he could recruit again when, *primâ facie*, the better course would have been for the two to hold together. Had they done so, the fight at Carabobo might have had a very different result.

On the 12th June, Mariño, hearing of Boves' approach, advanced to La Puerta, a place of peculiar ill-omen for the republicans in this campaign.[1] Mariño had but 2300 men when Boves, on the 15th, showed only a small portion of his force. Mariño, thinking he had only an equal force before him, proposed to attack. At that moment, Bolivar, arriving from Caracas, took over the chief command. He was not to blame for the dangerous position into which Mariño had got himself, and he proposed to retire. It was too late, for Boves, who had concealed his numerous cavalry in the neighbouring ravines, fell upon Bolivar with immensely superior forces, and simply swept him off the field, with a loss of nearly half the republican force. Boves, as usual, massacred his prisoners, amongst whom was Jalon, the man who had

[1] La Puerta is not shown on the map. It is a short way east of Cura at the bifurcation of the roads to S. Sebastian and S. Juan.

formerly had a narrow escape of being hanged in revenge for the execution of Zuazola in front of Puerto Cabello. Boves was guilty of a refinement of cruelty towards this unfortunate general, for he treated him with civility, sat down to dinner with him, and then turned round upon him and had him hanged. Jalon's head was cut off and sent to Calabozo as a present to Boves' friends. At this battle there perished Freites (by his own hand), Garcia de Sena, Aldao, and Tebar, Bolivar's secretary. Mariño escaped with difficulty. Bolivar and Ribas got away also to Valencia, and thence to Caracas, where they arrived on the 16th June.

On that day Boves was in Victoria, where he also divided his troops, sending 2000 to Caracas under Gonzales,[1] and marching on Valencia himself with the main body. After beating and massacring the force at La Cabrera, he laid siege to Valencia, on the 19th June, with 3000 men. The place was held by Escalona, who fought desperately, hoping to be succoured by Bolivar or Urdaneta. Boves was furious, and sent the most ferocious threats to the garrison, but Escalona would not yield. By the 22nd, the Spaniards had fought their way far into the city.

The ferocity of the besiegers is illustrated by an anecdote. Two brothers on the republican side, apparently hoping to save their lives, deserted to the enemy. When they reached Boves' camp, bull's horns were bound on to their heads and they were turned loose in the midst of a ring of horsemen, to be tormented and done to death with lances, like bulls in the ring.

On the 24th June, Boves learned that D'Elhuyar, finding himself now between two fires, had raised the siege of Puerto Cabello and embarked with his troops

[1] Ducoudray-Holstein says he was informed by witnesses on both sides "that the column of Colonel Gonzales did not exceed 550 men; that the second, under Colonel Mendoza, was less" (i. 194).

for La Guaira. Leaving Morales in charge of the attack on Valencia, Boves marched for Puerto Cabello, where he procured fresh supplies of ammunition, was joined by Cajigal, Ceballos, and Calzada with 1200 men, and then returned to Valencia, where he now had 4000 men. In the town there was a mere handful of defenders, hard pressed by the attack, and suffering grievously from hunger and thirst. They still held out gallantly till the 9th July, when, after a salute of twenty-one guns fired by the royalist batteries, a white flag announced the advent of emissaries from Boves. They reported the occupation of Caracas by the royalists, and the retreat from it of Bolivar. The negotiations which ensued ended in the conclusion of a capitulation by which the lives, property, and liberty of the defenders were guaranteed. Next day Boves entered the place, and, with atrocious profanity, swore in the presence of the Holy Sacrament to respect the lives of all. Immediately he was in possession of the arms deposited in the great square, disregarding alike the terms of the capitulation and his solemn oath, he brutally massacred Espejo, the governor, 90 of the principal inhabitants, 65 officers, and 310 troops.

We must now return to Bolivar, who, on reaching Caracas on the 16th June after his defeat at La Puerta, found the capital in a terrible state of panic and disorganisation. His own military position was desperate, owing mainly to his foolish dispersion of his forces after Carabobo. With Urdaneta far away in the west, cut off from Caracas by Boves at Valencia, there was nothing to be hoped for from that direction. The Liberator assembled the people and endeavoured to inspire some hope in them; he demanded from the churches all the plate not actually required for use. All his measures were in vain, and an early attack was threatened by Gonzales, now approaching from Victoria. From the

south, Caracas was threatened by the guerilla Machado, moving over the Pass of Ocumare. With the few troops Bolivar could command, the defence of the capital was impossible. He saw that he must evacuate it to prevent further disaster, and his own capture.

On the 6th July, after wasting some troops in a useless attack on Gonzales, the Liberator set out on his retreat eastwards to Barcelona, leaving to the mercy of Boves all who elected to remain behind. Mercy with Boves of course meant massacre, pillage, and confiscation. Cajigal, at least, was a man of moderation, and he was now Captain-General in name. In reality, he was powerless, and all authority was vested in Boves and Morales. The contempt with which Boves treated his nominal chief is illustrated by his brief report to Cajigal of his victory at La Puerta: "I have recovered the arms, ammunition, and the honour of the Spanish flag, which your Excellency lost at Carabobo." So trying was his position with this ruffian that Cajigal withdrew to Puerto Cabello, rather than submit to the open shame of sanctioning what he could not prevent. He duly reported Boves' misdeeds to the Spanish government, which, quite satisfied with success, had nothing but praise for them.

It was the 16th July when Boves entered Caracas. As usual, his first act was to promise oblivion of the past. This was very shortly followed by general orders for the shooting of all who might be held to be accomplices in the death of Spaniards. Bands of assassins roamed through the city, murdering, robbing, and committing every other atrocity.

Boves himself set out, on the 26th July, in pursuit of Bolivar, leaving Quero[1] to carry out his orders in

[1] Quero, a Venezuelan who had served the republican cause under Miranda, went over to Monteverde in 1812. He could be thoroughly trusted to carry out orders in the spirit of Boves.

Caracas. Bolivar had twenty days' start of his pursuers, and he needed it all, for he was not marching with a mobile army. He had, indeed, some 2000 troops, including D'Elhuyar's force, which had arrived from Puerto Cabello at La Guaira and Caracas, but he was also accompanied by a large part of the population of Caracas, on whom the prospective terrors of the march had less effect than the anticipation of the horrors of an occupation by Boves. The roads to be traversed were bad at their best; now, in the height of the rainy season, they were mere lines of mud and slush. There was no accommodation for housing this multitude of people of all classes, all ages, and both sexes. Ladies, accustomed to comfortable living, found themselves, after a long day of tramping through a sea of mud or over rugged, rocky roads, compelled to lie for the night in the open, drenched to the skin by the pitiless rain, without even a fire, and almost starving. Despair drove them to desperate deeds, and they were constantly haunted by the dread of being left behind to fall into the hands of the royalist guerrillas. Mothers, unable longer to nourish, or even to carry, their children, were seen to hurl them over precipices, rather than leave them to die by the roadside. All the horrors of the retreat from Moscow were here, except the cold, which was made up for by the rain. For twenty days this miserable "Emigration of 1814," as it was called, dragged on until Barcelona was reached, just as Boves was starting in pursuit from Caracas. By that time, the emigrants had been terribly reduced in numbers by the hardships of the road, by famine, and by fever. From Barcelona, notwithstanding the desperate condition of his enterprise, Bolivar contemplated sending one of his commanders to London to open up relations between republican Venezuela and Great Britain. This at a time when the republic was on its last legs! There is something here

of the strange admixture of comic opera which seems to be inseparable from many things South American. The idea was worthy almost of the Presidency of Don Cipriano Castro of our own times.

Morales, Boves' second in command, leading the pursuing force by El Chaparro, appeared, on the 17th August, before Aragua, south of Barcelona. The place was fortified and occupied by Bermudez, with 1000 men sent back from Cumaná by Mariño, who had accompanied the flight to Barcelona.

Morales attacked in the morning of the 18th August. The fortifications enabled Bolivar and Bermudez to hold out for some hours. Apparently there was some disagreement between them, for Larrazabal says that Bolivar wanted to use his cavalry, which was good, in the open country behind the river Aragua,[1] but was compelled to give way to Bermudez, who was all for a passive defence of the town.

The fighting in Aragua streets was furious for seven hours. Then the republicans were driven out and put to flight. Bolivar, with some of the remnants, made for Barcelona, whilst Bermudez took the direction of Maturin.

Morales, a good second to Boves in ferocity, signalised his victory by wholesale massacres, which were carried even to the church, where many were killed, seeking sanctuary at the high altar. Larrazabal says 3500 inhabitants of Aragua were slain, but it is perhaps permissible to doubt this figure.

When Bolivar reached Barcelona with the few worn-out troops from Aragua, he found the inhabitants bent upon opening their gates to Morales, rather than risk the horrors of a sack. It was hopeless to attempt a defence under these circumstances, so Bolivar, accompanied by Ribas and Piar, set out for Cumaná, whither the poor

[1] This town of Aragua, and the river of the same name, must not be confused with the valley of Aragua at the east end of the Valencia lake.

remnants of the Caracas emigration had already dragged their weary limbs.

When Bolivar reached Cumaná, he found it almost deserted. Mariño, hearing of the disaster of Aragua, had proclaimed martial law (scarcely necessary under the circumstances one would have thought), and, in agreement with his officers, resolved to fall back on Guiria, almost the extreme point of Venezuela. The position at Guiria was good, and at the worst there was always a possibility of escape to the British colony of Trinidad, which was in sight just across the landlocked Gulf of Paria. The inhabitants of Cumaná were invited to emigrate to Guiria on the ships which had come back to Cumaná when the siege of Puerto Cabello was raised.

What happened at Cumaná it is very difficult to ascertain with certainty. Let us first take the account put forward by Bolivar and Mariño themselves in the *Cartagena Gazette* of the 30th September 1814.[1] According to this, Mariño was in great straits, abandoned by his troops, part of whom had embarked on board the squadron commanded by Bianchi, an Italian adventurer, who, it was reported, had decided to sail away with all the treasure brought from the churches of Caracas. Bolivar and Mariño were, therefore, obliged to embark with him in order to save the property. Arriving at the island of Margarita, and afterwards at Carúpano on the mainland, they found those places in a state of anarchy, "in consequence of the seditious views of some military chieftains, who were anxious to raise themselves to the high station of chief magistrates." Ducoudray-Holstein, always bitterly hostile to Bolivar, accuses him and Mariño plainly of deserting their companions in order to save their own lives. He also says that they could not land at Margarita because Arismendi,[2] who commanded there,

[1] Ducoudray-Holstein, i. 193.

[2] Juan Bautista Arismendi was born in Margarita in 1786 of parents in moderate circumstances. He received little or no education, and was scarce

threatened to shoot them as deserters, a threat which was repeated by Bermudez, whom they found at Carúpano.

O'Leary's story is that they sailed with the intention of landing somewhere on the coast in order to rally the republican forces. Both at Cumaná and Margarita they were unable to land on account of the seditious attitude of the other leaders. Nothing is said about Bianchi.

Larrazabal's account is again different. He says Bianchi sailed whilst the leaders were holding a council of war in Cumaná, the Italian meaning to appropriate the treasure. Bolivar and Mariño sailed after him, and succeeded in coming to an arrangement, under which he disgorged part of his plunder, which he pretended he had seized on account of arrears of pay of himself and his fleet. Under this arrangement, Bianchi returned two-thirds of the treasure, and gave up to Bolivar and Mariño part of the fleet. The arms and stores were to be landed in Margarita by Bianchi, who thus had left to him three ships and 40,000 or 50,000 pesos in treasure. The two remaining ships carried Bolivar and Mariño to Carúpano, where they arrived on the 3rd September. Afraid that Bianchi, repenting of his bargain, might attack him, Bolivar anchored under cover of the shore batteries. When Bolivar and Mariño landed, they found Ribas and Piar in possession. These two accused them of desertion, and Ribas even put Mariño in confinement. Then occurred a genuine comic-opera situation, for Bianchi appeared on the scene, took the part of Bolivar and Mariño, and

able to read and write. Short and broad in figure, with yellow hair and bright piercing eyes, Arismendi was of pleasant manners and of great energy and considerable natural ability. He was strong willed and cruel. Bolivar made him governor of Caracas in 1813, and it was he who carried out the massacre of the prisoners in February 1814. After the retreat from Caracas in that year, he returned to Margarita as governor, and his immense personal influence and popularity with the islanders gave him a power such as no one else exercised among these poor and hardy fishermen.

insisted on Ribas allowing them to embark for Cartagena. Before leaving, they made over part of the treasure for the defence of the country.

From all this confusion of accounts, all that seems possible to infer with certainty is that the two Dictators were in very bad odour with their subordinates who, perhaps, having witnessed the failure of the leaders, thought they could do better themselves, and, at any rate, were determined to get rid of Bolivar and Mariño. Before leaving, Bolivar fired a parting shot in the form of a verbose manifesto, dated 7th September, to his "fellow citizens," of which the general sense can be sufficiently inferred from the following passages:[1] "Your brothers, and not the Spaniards, have torn your breasts, spilt your blood, burnt your dwellings, and condemned you to expatriation. Your cries should be directed against those blind slaves who seek to bind you with the chains which they themselves bear. . . . I swear to you that, Liberator or dead, I will always merit the honour which you have conferred on me. . . . Hope, my compatriots, in the noble and virtuous people of New Granada, who will return, anxious to gain fresh triumphs, to lend you new help, and to bring you renewed liberty, if your own valour has not already gained it."

Before following Bolivar on his journey, we will recount briefly what happened in the eastern districts of Venezuela after he and Mariño left them.

Piar arrived at Carúpano on the 9th of September, just as Bolivar sailed. Bermudez was at this time at Maturin with Cedeño, Monágas,[2] Zaraza,[3] and other

[1] O'Leary, Docts., 13, p. 467.

[2] José Tadeo Monágas, born on the plains of Maturin in 1784, was one of the principal guerilla leaders who kept up the war in the interval between 1814 and 1816. He managed to survive all the perils of the war, and was President of Venezuela in 1847 and 1858. He returned from banishment in 1864, and died after taking Caracas and Puerto Cabello.

[3] Zaraza, another of the guerilla leaders, was a native of Chaguaramas. His carelessness cost the republicans more than one defeat in 1818. He died at Caracas in 1825.

leaders, and had obtained some successes over Morales' detachments. Boves was in Cumaná on the 16th October, his passage everywhere marked by rivers of blood. Amongst the republicans there was disunion; for the men of the east objected to the supremacy in command of Ribas, whilst those of Caracas and the west equally disliked being under Bermudez. These two disagreed in their views of what was expedient; for Bermudez wished to await Boves at Maturin, whilst Ribas was for marching to meet him. This latter opinion eventually prevailed, and, on the 5th December, 3000 republicans met a larger force under Boves at Urica. The result was disastrous, and but few of the patriots succeeded in escaping to Maturin. But the victory cost the Spaniards dear, for Boves, ever in the forefront of the battle, dealing death in every direction, refusing quarter to all, was killed by a republican spear which pierced his body.

To him, more than to any other man on the royalist side, was due the complete subjugation of the Venezuelan republic of 1813-14. His vices were many, his virtues perhaps were limited to courage worthy of a better cause. Some accused him of keeping his courage up with drink; but, as O'Leary justly remarks, such courage does not last, whilst of Boves none ever pretended that he was for an instant wanting in bravery. As for his personal appearance, he was tall, with red hair, dark eyes, and a fair skin. Larrazabal quotes, as exactly applicable to him, the description given by Paulus Diaconus of Attila: "Broad of chest, hideous of expression, the forehead lowering, the nostrils wide, the eyes deep sunk, the head massive, with a restless and horrible look, wandering round like that of a tiger watching its prey . . . born for the desolation of the universe."

In the command he was worthily succeeded by

Morales. Piar's force had already been destroyed by Boves at Salado, Bermudez's at Magueyes.

The unfortunate Ribas, after his utter defeat at Urica, fled to Maturin, where his ruin was completed. Thence he tried to make his way, with two of his officers, to the plains of Caracas. Broken and ill, he halted for a few hours in the mountains near the valley of La Pascua. Thence he sent a negro servant to seek provisions in the town. The man betrayed his master to the royalists who seized Ribas asleep and carried him to the town. There he was slain to the accompaniment of insulting words and gestures. His head was sent in an iron cage to Caracas, and exposed on the road to La Guaira, wearing the Phrygian cap which he used as an emblem of liberty. He was Bolivar's uncle by marriage, and was for long one of his most trusted chiefs, but, in the end, his ambition brought him into collision with the Liberator, and resulted in his death. Venezuela, with the exception of a few guerillas under Cedeño, Monágas, and Zaraza, was in the power of the royalists. What had become of Urdaneta will be related presently. The coast was now in part blockaded, from Trinidad to Yrapa,[1] by a Spanish squadron under Gabazo, which stopped all emigration in that direction

Thus rose and fell the second republican government in Venezuela. The campaign of 1813-14 was Bolivar's first in chief command, and had served to mark him out, not indeed as a great commander, but as one of the greatest determination and with an almost unlimited power of imposing the strength of his own personality on his subordinates. We have spoken of battles, but it must be remembered that throughout this campaign Bolivar never commanded a force of a strength greater than that of a European brigade. His troops were of a quality which would have entitled them to no respect in

[1] West of Guiria, nearly in the north-west corner of the Gulf of Paria.

a campaign in Europe. Amongst them were a certain number of regulars, men who had formerly been in the Spanish service, but the majority were recruits picked up as he went along. Their training was of the scantiest, their discipline almost nil. Yet they fought splendidly on many occasions, and were even able to defeat regular Spanish European troops. Not that we would vaunt the fighting value of these, for Wellington's Peninsular experience showed that it was not great. Still they were probably superior to any of the local troops in training and discipline. As for arms, the republicans at this period were rarely well provided, and a victory was largely valuable for its captures of muskets, ammunition, and artillery. The forty-five men with whom Mariño and his friends landed at Guiria were chiefly armed with spears or bows and arrows. It was only as they surprised and cut up the Spanish detachments that they were able to arm themselves in modern fashion. Uniforms of course there were none, except such as were found in the Spanish arsenals, or were worn by the men who deserted that service for the republican camp. In later years Colombian troops were a strange motley in this respect. Many of them were clad in uniforms bought from dealers in second-hand garments who had bought up, as a speculation, old French, Prussian, Austrian, or Russian uniforms after the fall of Napoleon. Many of them had possibly been filched from the dead by the ghouls who wandered over the battlefields of Europe, robbing the dead and even the wounded, as was the case at Eylau and Heilsberg.

The following extract from O'Leary's description of the recruits gathered in 1819 will give some idea of the raw material obtainable, and the difficulties of making soldiers out of it. "There was much to be done to transform these unhappy, though patriotic, peasants into soldiers and give them a martial appearance. Nothing

could be less military than their clothes; a hat of grey wool with a broad brim and a low crown, covering a head which recalled that of Samson before the fatal scissors had shorn him of his long thick hair; an immense square blanket of coarse wool, with a hole in the middle for the head to pass through, hung from the shoulders to the knees, giving the impression of an armless man. However easy it was to be certain that they were well set up and strong, and to impart a martial aspect by merely removing the 'ruana,' as the blanket was called, by taking away the hat and cutting their hair, it was quite a different matter to teach these men to handle a musket, or to fire it without shutting both eyes, turning the head to the rear, and so causing much greater danger to themselves and their fellows than to the enemy."[1] Yet these same recruits formed nearly one-third of the force with which Bolivar, within a few days, gained the decisive battle of Boyacá! How far such infantry corresponded to trained soldiers must be left to the reader's imagination. Clearly troops of this class must have been incapable of manœuvring or of shooting with any accuracy, though O'Leary adds that "they presented an imposing appearance—*from a distance.*"[2]

Evidently most of the battles must have consisted largely of a rough-and-tumble scrimmage carried out by an armed mob.

[1] O'Leary, i. 573.

[2] The following description is taken from Chesterton's book (vol. ii. p. 158): "A creole force usually consisted of men and lads of all ages and colours, some naked, others with merely a shirt or a pair of drawers; a few wore old military jackets without pantaloons; some were bareheaded, while others had straw hats or hairy caps. Such as were armed with muskets often strapped their cartouches round their naked loins, whilst the majority had no other arms than pikeheads loosely fixed upon short rough sticks. They marched in Indian or single file, and were unrestrained in their movements by practical exercises. . . . Still these men were the very men adapted to the regions they inhabited; and in the hour of trial, as Morillo had too fatally proved, were more than a match for the heavily accoutred Europeans."

As for the numbers engaged, an industrious writer in the *Carreo Nacional*[1] has made out a table showing the number of combats of all sorts in which the Colombian army was engaged in the years 1810-1826 in Venezuela, New Granada, Quito, and Peru. There were 696 engagements, in which the numbers of troops *on both sides* totalled 973,000. That gives an average of about 1400 men, republicans and royalists, engaged in each.

Bolivar showed in this campaign no remarkable strategical qualifications. The direction of his advance was practically prescribed for him by circumstances in New Granada. It is true that he was successful in planting his army right in the centre of a widely dispersed enemy, when he debouched from the mountains of Merida, but that, looking to all the conditions, was probably more by good luck than good guidance. He was himself divided, and, had Marti succeeded, as he should have, in destroying Ribas at Niquitao, Bolivar's position would have been a very dangerous one.

The leaving of Yañez in unbroken force south of the Apure, in a position to threaten Bolivar's communications with New Granada, was fraught with danger. As was shown later, Bolivar would have done better to break up Yañez's force, to establish himself on the Apure and the Orinoco, and thence to operate northwards against the capital and the north of Venezuela. That would probably have resulted in his gaining over the Llaneros who formed the majority of Boves' forces. It, however, might have enabled Mariño and Piar to gain the credit of taking Caracas from the east, and have left Bolivar in a less commanding political position.

Later, when Bolivar found himself in a central position, he showed that he did not appreciate his advantages. The distances were so great between the various hostile forces that, had he kept his whole army together, he

[1] A Bogotá newspaper. Issue of 20th July 1908.

could probably have crushed Boves and Rosete before any of the others could interfere. Then he would have been at liberty to turn against Yañez, Ceballos, and the rest. Again, he might have begun by dealing more strongly with Monteverde in Puerto Cabello. If he had followed him thither with the greater part of his army immediately after the capitulation arranged by Fierro's envoys, it is by no means improbable that he might have stormed the place and got rid of Monteverde for good. Whilst he was doing this, he could have contained Boves with a small force. That was not difficult in the hilly region, seeing that Boves' strength lay largely in his Llanero cavalry, who were comparatively useless in the hills.

On the whole, it may be said that very little of the military art was displayed on either side.