

CHAPTER VII.

Revolt of Socorro—Insurrection of 1794—Spanish Viceroys—Revolt of Caracas in 1810—Revolt of New Grenada—The Viceroy Amar—Miranda—Bolívar—Monteverde reconquers Caracas—Bolívar passes over to Curaçao—He abandons it—Returns by Cartagena to Caracas—Is defeated—Crosses the Cordillera—Seizes Santa-Fé—Marches to attack Castillo at Cartagena—Is defeated—Passes over to Jamaica—General ambition—Morillo subjects the country.

By one of those sudden impulses, which even the sagacious policy of Spain could not foresee, the Americans roused themselves from their lethargic supineness, and shook off the trammels of ignorance.

In 1781, the imposition of a tax, called the *Alcavala*,* caused the province of Socorro to rise. For the first time the American population flew to arms; and marched against the rebels, who had advanced even to the gates of Bogota. The archbishop, a man who was much esteemed, met them, and succeeded by his temperate and persuasive remonstrances in appeasing the tumult. The Socorro was pacified. As a reward for important service, the archbishop received the vicerealty. Spain, ill at ease, immediately or-

* Benedicto Domingues. Memoria Manuscrita.

dered the numerous and rebel population of the Socorro to be decimated, by sending a great portion of it to the pestilential plains of the coast.

Spain now thought its empire as firmly reestablished as ever; its foundations were, however, shaken. Every shock felt by the mother country, vibrated even through the lowest hut of America.

In 1794 the fermentation became more general in New Grenada. Some intelligence of the state of France had reached them, and the principles which were then prevalent there had found their way into South America; the *Rights of Man* had even been published at Santa-Fè. This movement was suppressed, the copies of the book were burnt, and the translators of it, who were very young, were sent to Spain in irons.

All these measures could not arrest the dangers which threatened the mother country; they only retarded it.

The news of the imprisonment of the King of Spain, in 1808, was a spark which kindled a general conflagration. French agents arrived in the name of Joseph, to demand from the Caracas the oath of fidelity. Their orders and proposals were answered by cries of *long live Ferdinand VII*, and by depriving of their situations all persons suspected of being attached to the French interest. This first act was the signal of

independence ; for the mad expedition of Miranda, the agent of England, in 1806, did not extend beyond the capture of a few places : driven from his ephemeral conquests, this general had only time to effect his escape to Trinity Island.

By a singular election, Spain had conferred the command of her provinces upon none but old men without capacity or courage—the soldiers who defended them, effeminated by a long peace, gained over by gold and the blandishments of their friends, for a great number of them were Americans, desired nothing more than to betray the Spanish cause. Quito, which had already been in a state of revolt, in 1809, had, with difficulty, been made to return to her obedience ; she was the first to raise again the standard of rebellion, in 1810 ; this, however, did not affect the rest of the country. It was not the same with that of the Caracas, which burst out on the 19th of April, 1810, and was followed by a manifesto. In this the avowed object was that of guarding against the pretensions of Europe, the intrigues of the French cabinet, and the designs which the central junta might have upon the country ; of maintaining the political character, of supporting to the utmost, the legitimate dynasty of Spain ; of assisting Ferdinand VII on his liberation from captivity, and of preserving the honour of the Spanish name, by offering an asylum to the refugees

of that generous nation. The secret intentions of the conspirators were easily to be seen through, in the ambiguous expressions of the *pretensions* of Europe, and *political character*.*

It was not long before the revolution broke out at Santa-Fè: when the news arrived that all Spain had bowed beneath the yoke, it was no longer possible to prevent the insurrection; the inhabitants flew to arms, under the pretext that the troops of Bonaparte were about to enter New Grenada. A junta was formed on the 23rd of July, 1810, which declared that they acknowledged Ferdinand VII as the sovereign of Cundimarca, the ancient name which was again restored to the viceroyalty; a courier was at the same time dispatched to Caracas, to inform that city of the resolutions which had been adopted; with orders to subscribe to them. Caracas then no longer dissembled its projects, and answered that it would never acknowledge kings, nor adopt any form of government but such as might be established by its representatives.

The inhabitants of Santa-Fè de Bogota, although ignorant of the answer of the town of Caracas, did not themselves abide by their first resolution.

The viceroy Amar, of a mild disposition, was incapable of adopting the measures required by

* *El Espagnol*, a periodical work printed at London, 1812.

circumstances ; a quarrel between a Creol and a Spaniard, which was carefully inflamed, was the signal for revolt ; the viceroy was dragged to prison, and then, by a strange caprice, was placed a few days afterwards at the head of the government. Finally, on the 15th August, he was carried off from the palace, and sent to Carthagena, under the pretext that it was his intention to sell America to Bonaparte at the rate of two reals per man and one real per woman ; the women carried their animosity so far as to ill treat the vice-queen.

The news of this revolution soon spread through all the provinces, and each of them, declaring its independance, had its congress, representatives, ministers and presidents. It was a singular and novel spectacle to see ministers of state of one and twenty years of age, and presidents of four and twenty : the conduct of affairs was confided to rash and adventurous young men.

What is worthy of remark in the American revolution, is the rare integrity of the viceroys. All fled, not one accepted a sceptre, which was doubtless offered them.

It is difficult at first to understand why the military, who had taken up arms in the name of Ferdinand VII, should suddenly have declared against him. But the men who had every where placed themselves at the head of

the insurrection, were the principal personages of the country, titled men; little satisfied with the distinctions, which had been conferred upon them less as a reward for their merit, than as a compliment to their fortune, they imagined themselves called to pass from the rank of the first of American subjects, to that of sovereigns.* Accustomed to consider the favorites of the monarch as their masters, if they were not actually so, the people obeyed whatever impulse they gave them. As soon as regiments were formed, and discipline established, they looked upon the lieutenants, captains, and colonels, appointed by a dozen persons, as lawfully commissioned. During several years, no others were known; their names became dear to the multitude, for they spoke the language of enthusiasm, and employed the fascinating charm of American authority and glory, which began now to be separated from that of Spain. It was therefore not difficult to persuade the people to unfurl a standard different from that of the mother country.

In 1814, after the re-establishment of peace

* One of the causes which have prevented the Spanish Monarchy in America from becoming, like that of Charlemagne in its decadence a feudal government, is that there were none of those fortified castles in which the European nobility entrenched themselves, and defied their sovereign. In America, all the towns, with the exception of a few maritime places, are unfortified.

in Europe, the Spaniards reappeared in America; relying on their strength, they disdained to parley with the insurgents; and before they called upon them to surrender, began by firing on them. It was easy now for the American chiefs to persuade their soldiers that the peninsula had sworn to exterminate them. Attack was therefore answered by defence. Thus, on one side, there were rebels, on the other, enemies; the cause of Ferdinand VII was almost entirely abandoned.

Miranda had returned to Caracas in 1811, and easily obtained the command of the troops. Unfortunate in his new expedition, he was obliged to fly to Guyara, to embark on board an *English corvette*, which was waiting for him in that port. As the governor of this place, was one of his creatures, he thought himself in perfect safety: he was however deceived; the officers of the garrison determined to give him up to the Spanish general in order to secure their own pardon. He was accordingly delivered into the hands of the Spanish commander, who, upon this condition, gave a free pardon to all the garrison of la Guyara. Miranda, sent from prison to prison, at length died in that of Cadiz.

In 1533, the overflowing of the Cotapaxi, coincident with the arrival of the Spaniards, had struck terror into the Indians, and the conquest of Quito by foreigners, was the consequence

of this convulsion of nature. A similar event insured them victory two hundred and seventy nine years afterwards, that is in 1812. In the alarming earthquake which desolated Caracas on the 26th of March of that year, the people imagined they saw the hand of God punishing rebellion. They every where demanded their former masters, abjured their errors, and Monteverde, without any difficulty, reconquered Venezuela.

The joy at being again united to the mother country was now general, when, suddenly renouncing the clemency which had insured him victory, Monteverde imprisoned the sons of all the most respectable families, and by thus oppressing the province, furnished fresh pretexts to the insurgents.

The English were at that time in possession of Curaçao, which they made the centre of the continental revolution, although they no longer subsidized it so liberally, but had almost abandoned it to the chance of events. Bolivar lived at Curaçao under their protection. The faults of Monteverde were the origin of his ambition. Encouraged by the English, and by his own immense property, he imagined that he could conquer the provinces which were smarting under the tyranny of Monteverde, and act the part of Washington.

He set out for Carthagená at the head of

fifty followers, took the route of Moupox, Ocana and Cucuta, and met the Spanish general Correa, whom he defeated ; his numbers now increasing as he advanced into the interior, he appeared under the walls of Valentia. Here he found Monteverde, a battle ensued, and fortune decided in favour of audacity. Monteverde, beaten, escaped to Puerto Caballo and took refuge within its walls. Valentia opened its gates to the conqueror. He did not stop here, but in the month of August 1819, entered Caracas, which he soon after quitted to re-enter Valentia.

Upon the intelligence of Monteverde's defeat, Bobes, who was at the head of a thousand cavalry, marched against Bolivar, and routed him, Caracas again returned to its duty. These reverses did not however discourage Bolivar ; he did not seek refuge amid the forests of the Oronooko, but scaling the Cordillera, arrived at Tunja, and found victory where he only sought for an asylum.

Narino, who, when younger, had distinguished himself by revolutionary principles, had returned into the kingdom. His name was sufficient to place him at the head of the insurrections which he had so ably directed. All the members of the congress, established at Santa-Fè, had retired, after investing him with a dictatorship, so much the object of his wishes.

A congress had been established in each pro-

vince ; so that Narino was only acknowledged in that of Santa-Fè. This was however too small a theatre for his ambition, an army was therefore dispatched under the command of Barraña, to establish his authority in the provinces of Tunja and Socorro, the inhabitants of which were partizans of a federative government. But he had confided arms to traitors, the soldiers and their chief being gained over by the congress of Tunja, disobeyed his orders and marched against him. They encamped to the number of 5,000 men upon Montcerrate, a mountain at the foot of which Santa-Fè is situated, Narino had only 2,000. He offered his enemies to capitulate, asking permission to retire, but was refused. Upon hearing the answer of Barraña, despair and rage inflamed the little band of the dictator of Santa-Fè, and availing himself of this disposition, he rushed upon the rebels, completely defeated them, and re-entered Santa-Fè victorious.

This city, which had been for three centuries the capital of a vast kingdom, refused to enter into the confederations which the other provinces were desirous of establishing, for this would have destroyed the supremacy it still enjoyed. In vain did it plead its situation, its riches, and the services it had rendered the cause of independence ; the provinces constantly refused to acknowledge it as the centre of government.

The congress of Tunja in the mean time

participated in the consternation spread throughout the country by the victory gained over Baraïa. Narino knew not how to profit by his success, while the turbulent congress of Tunja, did not lose the opportunity of getting rid of the object of its fears. Quito, which had been in a state of insurrection a year previous to the general revolution, had again fallen into the power of the Spaniards. Pasto was about to share the same fate. Narino was offered the command of the army on the 9th of January 1813. Remembering that empire could only be attained by attaching the army to him by the ties of victory, he accepted it, began his march, and defeated the Spaniards in two engagements ; but was himself completely routed in a third.

At his departure, he had made very prudent arrangements, having placed at the head of the government his uncle Alvares, who participated his hatred against the congress and the confederation. It was soon known at Santa-Fè, that Narino, after having lost his army, had fallen into the hands of the enemy. The factious recommenced their machinations, but were restrained for some time by the firmness of Alvares, whose efforts however, were at last paralyzed by a still more dreadful war than the former.

The reader already knows that in 1814, Bolivar, defeated in Venezuela by General Bobes, had escaped to Tunja, accompanied by a small

number of soldiers of the plains. He proposed to the congress, who were uneasy respecting the proceedings of Alvares, to march against him. His offer was joyfully accepted, and a few soldiers were added to those already under his orders. Upon Alvares learning the invasion of this new enemy, he dispatched troops against him, they were defeated, and Bolivar, without losing an instant, followed up his success with such ardour, that he entered Santa-Fè, while his enemies still supposed him in the mountains.

The taking of this town cost some blood ; Narino being much beloved by the soldiers of Alvares. In three days however all opposition was at an end, and Alvares, no longer able to defend himself, delivered into the victor's hands that dictatorship, which his nephew had lost together with his liberty in the mountains of Pasto.

Thus in the nineteenth century, were renewed the wars which the Spanish captains waged with each other at the commencement of the conquest. This first invasion of the Cordillera, by the savage tribes of the plains, caused much distress to the peaceful inhabitants, by giving them a foretaste of the wars, and dreadful irruptions which they must one day expect from the same quarter.

Bolivar was hated by his fellow citizens of Caracas, and little liked by the people he had just

subdued ; the former being jealous of his success, the latter, because they had for a long time considered the inhabitants of Caracas as foreigners. It was for this reason, that in 1815 when he required a considerable sum to enable him to march against Castillo, his personal enemy, who was shut up in Carthagena, it was so readily granted him. The battle took place under the walls of that city, here Bolivar's good fortune abandoned him, as he was completely defeated, and his soldiers dispersed. Being fortunate enough to obtain permission to exile himself, he embarked for Jamaica, whence he proceeded to St. Domingo. Here a dutchman of the name of Brion, assisted him with funds, and Bolivar again set out for the continent, disembarked at Marguerita, marched to Guyara, and amid the deserts of that country, continued to harass the generals who were sent against him from Caracas. So many battles, attended with such various success, together with the legislative assemblies created in every province, had given rise to a general ambition. Every one was aiming at the dictatorship, and preparations were being made on all sides to wrest it from the hands of respective rivals, when Morillo, who had arrived from Spain, with a well disciplined body of troops, presented himself before Carthagena : this place was vigorously defended,

but at last European tactics prevailed; the Columbians were vanquished, and the gates of Carthagena were opened to the victor.

The respect which Spain still commanded, was favourable to the march of the Spanish general, and the inflexibility of his character subdued all opposition. One faction only now remained, that of the metropolis, Morillo marched against the capital, which, far from making the least opposition, received the conqueror with transports of delight.

But these days of joy were soon changed into those of sorrow. Spain having imagined that the prodigious success of the convention in 1793, was only owing to the system of terror it had adopted, imitated this fatal example in America. The most dreadful means were resorted to for the purpose of intimidating the insurgents.

European pride had persuaded the greater part of the Spanish soldiers, that the Americans were without energy or courage; and they consequently treated them with the same contempt, as Quesada, Pizarro, and Cortez had done the native Indians.

Times, however, had changed; to men ill armed and terrified at the sight even of the Spaniards, had succeeded a race, mild, indeed, in disposition, but courageous and conscious of their equality with the inhabitants of the other hemisphere.

The more Americans Morillo ordered to be shot, the more the general discontent increased. The latter had imagined that the Spaniards would return to the system of mildness and parental affection, which they had followed for three centuries; but, on the contrary, found in them only executioners; they had hoped the Spaniards would regard as brothers men who were estimable for their intelligence and acquirements; the Spaniards hastened to teach them that knowledge only entitled them to proscription and death. The Spanish generals, after having glutted their fury and satisfied their pride, by humbling the men of the New World, who had dared to place themselves in competition with them, thought they had for ever insured the obedience of the rest of the inhabitants. Considering the silence of terror as complete submission, they lived in the utmost security.