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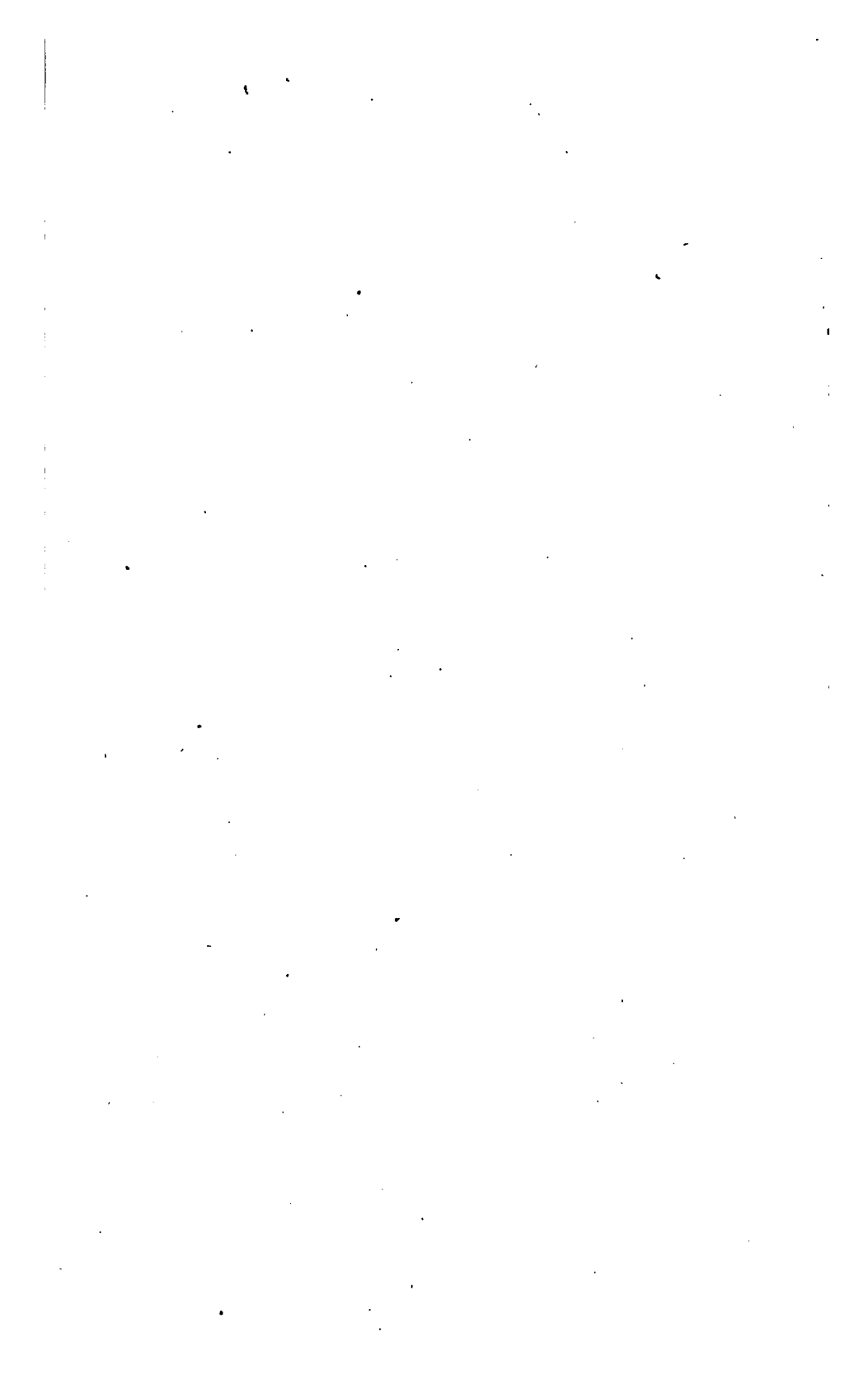
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RECOLLECTIONS

SERVICE OF THREE YEARS

DURING THE

WAR-OF-EXTERMINATION

IN THE REPUBLICS OF

VENEZUELA AND COLOMBIA.

BY

AN OFFICER OF THE COLOMBIAN NAVY.

"MOVING ACCIDENTS BY FLOOD AND FIELD."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

I.

LONDON:

HUNT AND CLARKE,

YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

1828.

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INTRODUCTION.

IN presuming to offer the following volumes to the notice of the public, it is simply intended to convey a proper idea of a conflict which, in all the combined contingencies and horrors of intestine commotion, has seldom been equalled, and never exceeded. The struggle is now over; and it is gratifying to know, that although it has been attended with terrible severity, and its object purchased dearly, it has been crowned, so far as regards independence of Spain, with the most complete success. The torrents of patriotic blood which have stained the soil of Colombia have not been shed in vain; Liberty has reared its standard triumphantly and lastingly on the shores of Southern America; and there is now little doubt, if the affairs of the various Republics be conducted with

due zeal and fidelity, that they may ultimately enjoy the choicest blessings which peace and freedom can bestow.

In taking upon himself the attempt of giving a correct estimate of the nature of the war, the author aspires to no literary merit. Conscious of his deficiencies in this respect, he expects not praise, and will be content if he escape censure. He is aware too that there are many in England who are far more competent to the task he has undertaken than himself, which conviction has delayed the publication of his work a considerable period. As, however, no other participator in the contest has indicated an intention of the kind, in submitting his own reminiscences, and the results of his actual experience, he has no reason to believe that he shall prevent more competent individuals from a similar undertaking.

His object has been to combine with a description of the personal adventure, which was inseparable from the service he was engaged in, the various incidents of the Revolution for a specific period; the characteristic traits and dispositions of such of the

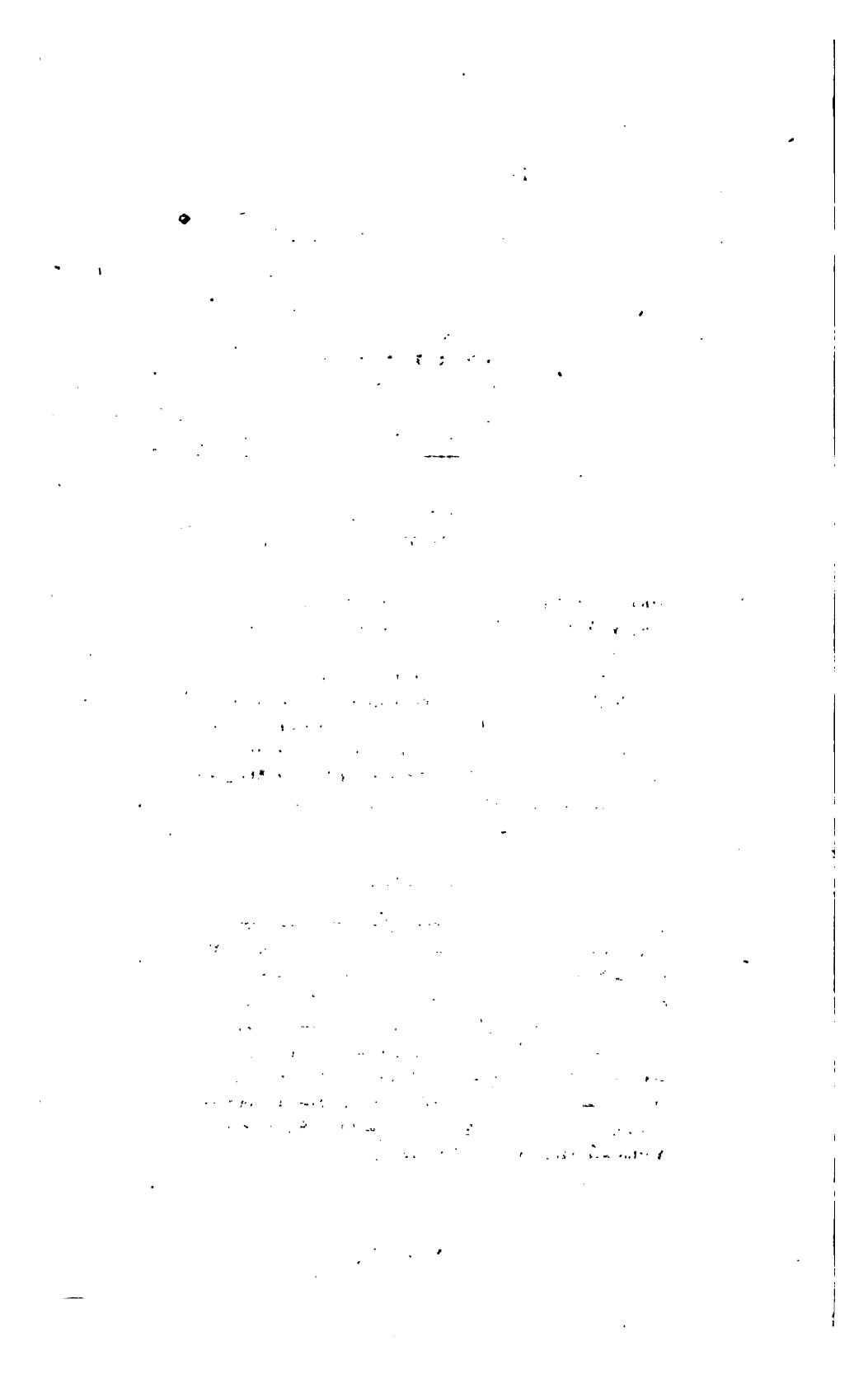
chiefs as became known to him, and some information as to the country which was the theatre of the scenes he portrays; and to detail the whole with perspicuity. Beyond this he has not aimed; the nature of the duty which the author had to perform destroyed all opportunity of scientific research. Worn down by harassing marches, long abstinence, and labouring under the baneful effects of so varied a climate, a sojourner in his circumstances had little inclination to occupy the very few hours that could be allotted to rest in the pursuit of knowledge. His attention was necessarily and forcibly directed to the means of prolonging existence from hour to hour, and the cravings of nature superseded the desires of intellect. Add to all this the impossibility of preserving journals or memoranda, which were so liable to be lost in different ways, and it will not excite wonder that the information he has been able to give has not been more ample. On three occasions during his stay he was deprived of every article that he possessed. The task of acquiring such information as will delight the votaries of science, can only

be expected from those who have visited the country at less turbulent periods, and whose avocations were of a nature to allow them more leisure and opportunity for its due performance.

There are many circumstances which he has described relating to the customs of the country and manners of the inhabitants, which may not have been observed by persons who have recently been there; but it must be remembered that civilisation has made considerable progress since the intercourse of Colombia with England has been extended, and its independence recognised. It has also been, and is the case there as well as here, that the "schoolmaster is abroad;" and being enlightened by education, the manners and morals of its natives may have undergone a considerable change. The author has merely endeavoured to represent things as they were while he was there, and this he has done as correctly and faithfully as possible, and in no instance has he heightened by description any statement which might seem to affect the people of the Republic, either individually or collectively. On the

contrary, in all his representations, both of persons and circumstances, he has endeavoured to convey his own honest convictions, without prejudice or partiality; and if in one or two particular instances he may differ in his estimate of conspicuous persons from notions more generally entertained, he ventures to hint, that the sequel is still to arrive, which alone can settle the question of comparative correctness.

June 5, 1828.



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RECOLLECTIONS

OF

A THREE YEARS' SERVICE,

&c. &c.

CHAPTER I.

Reflections on the general Character of the Colombian Revolutionary War—War of Extermination under General Morillo—Contract of the Venezuelan Republic with Colonel English for the Formation of a British Brigade—Author's Situation, and the Effect of the Levies for South America on his Intentions—Major Beamish's Battalion, and Author's Engagement to command the Vessel which conveyed it—Death of the Major on the Voyage—Reception at the Island of Margarita—Delivery of the Troops.

NOTWITHSTANDING the great interest taken by the British public in the momentous struggles of the natives of South America for freedom and independence, little has hitherto been afforded of a nature to produce an adequate conception of the suffering and sacrifices with which they have been attended. This is partly owing to the nature of all intestine conflicts for mastery, in which the attention of every one concerned is too much

engrossed by action, and the excitement attendant upon it, to find leisure or temper for narrative and description. From the nature of things, therefore, the latter are usually postponed to a period when those, who must necessarily supply the information, can avail themselves of the faculty of memory with due composure; and when a requisite store of facts for investigation and comparison can be selected by the parties whose province it is to arrange them. It is but just now that we are acquiring digested accounts of the genuine complexion of the war in the Spanish Peninsula, which formal memoirs, it is scarcely necessary to say, have been materially benefited by the personal experience of individuals who have been more or less engaged in it.—The following narrative, in a similar way, aspires to the humble merit of furnishing a few characteristic traits and circumstances illustrative of the thirteen years of eventful warfare and vicissitude which have terminated in the emancipation of Colombia from the Spanish yoke.

As connected with events which will prove pregnant in consequences to myriads yet unborn, details, calculated to advance a due acquaintance with the actors and incidents which have given a character to the foregoing arduous contest, would not be wholly unprofitable, even if destitute of the transition and variety which more spontaneously secure attention. This, however, is far from being

the case with the revolutionary hostilities of Colombia. In these victory and defeat, hope and despair, succeeded each other in rapid alternation; and it frequently happened, that the unpractised talent and want of experience of those at the head of affairs, rendered success and disaster in the field almost equally embarrassing. A sombre intensity is also given to the contemplation of this war, by the melancholy fact, that it was for some years one of mutual extermination. A Turkish policy, in all its horrors, being formally adopted and proclaimed by the Spanish commanders, was unhappily forced upon the Venezuelans in self-defence. The best and dearest blood of the inhabitants, in consequence, flowed profusely on all sides; their fairest towns and cities were laid waste; and one of the finest portions of the globe became a grievous theatre of rapine, devastation, and murder. It is scarcely hazardous to assert, that there was never a period, in any age or country, in relation to which history has recorded more premeditated slaughter, or greater cruelty in the application of tortures more dreadful than death itself. From the Spanish official returns alone, it appears that upwards of eighty thousand persons were barbarously massacred by various modes of execution, of the most painful of which, Morillo, in his despatches to his own government, avowed himself the inventor. The records of the Inde-

have been

pendents make the number reach nearly two hundred thousand; and with every allowance for misrepresentation on both sides, the waste of human life was most enormous. It must also be recollected, that this amount excludes the thousands who were put to death by the royal army as it marched through the country, when every town and village was destroyed, if any suspicions existed of its attachment to the Independent cause. Men, women, and children were in this manner indiscriminately immolated, whose fate was usually referred to in the following brief and very frequent sentence in the Royalist despatches:

“The pueblo (village) or town of ———, with all its inhabitants, have disappeared from the face of the earth.”

The returns here alluded to, exclusively relate to those who were brought out from prisons, or chained together in rows, to meet their doom after every action which terminated in favour of the Royalists. In one of the letters from Morillo to King Ferdinand, which was intercepted by Captain Chitty of the Colombian navy, (that unrelenting chieftain thus describes the measures which he adopted on entering the city of Santa-Fe-de-Bogotá ;

“Every person, of either sex, who was capable of reading and writing, was put to death. By thus cutting off all who were in any way educated, I

hoped to effectually arrest the spirit of revolution."

That such an extraordinary official document should be authentic might be fairly doubted, if the savage deeds, therein described, had not in reality been perpetrated, and left too many undeniable proofs of their commission. All persons in the cities of Santa-Fe and Carthagena, holding official situations in the provincial administration, who were attached to the insurgents, or who were distinguished by talents or attainments, together with their wives and children, were thrown indiscriminately into dungeons, until the appointed day of execution arrived, when in each place upwards of six hundred persons were either hanged or shot. On these barbarous occasions the husband was frequently put to death in the sight of the wife, and the child in that of the parent, until all had suffered who were on the spot. It is a well known fact, that in the latter city ten or twelve females were spared, merely owing to the extreme weariness of the executioners; on which account alone they were allowed one hour to leave the town, and one week to quit the country. Many of the gibbets, upon which the bodies were chained together in clusters of four or six on each, are still standing—significant memorials of the ferocity of these temporary conquerors.

Such were the appalling features of a conflict,

the details of which can only be rendered bearable by a conviction that the endurance has not proved in vain; but which, as forming a portion of the history of a very eventful and remarkable era in the human progress, merit correspondent attention. At least, it is under this supposition that the following "Recollections" have been composed, as already observed, with a view to add to the variety of evidence supplied by personal experience and adventure, to the mass of particulars, the arrangement of which must be the future task of the historian, whose pen is seldom more instructively employed than in recording the successful struggles for freedom of long oppressed and balefully misgoverned communities.

In the commencement of the summer of 1818, Colonel English (so termed in the Colombian service, but who originally belonged to the British commissariat) came to England, having contracted with the republic of Venezuela for the raising of a brigade in Great Britain and Ireland, to assist in the cause of South American independence. That gentleman had previously engaged as supercargo to a vessel trading to the United States, where he was about to settle, when the idea occurred to him of offering his services to the Congress of Venezuela. The contract which followed was extremely liberal in its provisions; and had the government been enabled to reap

the advantages which it had anticipated, it would have been highly beneficial to all the parties concerned.

At this period the war of extermination was raging with redoubled fury, and the Congress, as well as the people of Venezuela, began to despair of their ability to clear their country of its blood-thirsty oppressors, unless favoured by foreign assistance. Such aid, in a direct and national manner, they could not procure; and the long-cherished hope which had animated them to so many exertions, and supported them under so much endurance, was yielding to the adverse circumstances which surrounded them, when Colonel English made his proposal to form a British legion from the numerous regiments, which he foresaw would be disbanded on their return from the occupation of France. The feasibility of the scheme being at once perceived, it was received with the utmost enthusiasm; and the colonel immediately received the necessary authorities, signed, in the name of the Republic, by the President Bolivar. The more informed part of the Venezuelans foresaw the advantages which afterwards accrued to their country, from the service of a body of men of whose discipline, bravery, and fidelity, in consequence of witnessing the surprising feats achieved by the handful of troops taken out by Sir Gregor M'Gregor, they had been

led to form the most exalted notions. Moreover, they fondly looked up to Great Britain as a country, the natives of which were most inimical to the bigotry, priestcraft, and superstition they were now so anxious to overthrow. Liberty too being their great object, to whom could they more properly apply than to those who enjoy it as a birthright and who have ever maintained it with their blood, to aid them in their last, and as since proved, their best effort, to consummate their highly valued independence?

To Colonel English, in the event of his succeeding to raise the proposed number of men, was guaranteed the rank of general of division, with a provision for himself and family for life; while every encouragement was offered to the soldiery who would volunteer in the noble and inspiring cause. Thus empowered, a few weeks' residence in England enabled the colonel to raise a brigade of 2000 men, consisting of cavalry, infantry, and artillery, selected from the regiments reduced by the British government (amounting to nearly 40,000 soldiers); and a finer body of troops, for its number, was perhaps never seen. Colonel English was, however, destitute of the means required to finish the contract; and found himself obliged to dispose of it to Mr. Herring, a highly respectable merchant of London, who had no reason to regret the purchase. This gentle-

man executed it with a degree of spirit and liberality which reflects the greatest credit on him. The clothing and appointments were exactly in the British style, and exceedingly well supplied; and twelve ships were fitted out and stored abundantly with provisions, and all things necessary for the prosperous conveyance of the brigade to the island of Margarita, which had been appointed the depôt.)

Having been paid off at the conclusion of the late war, I had been in England nearly sixteen months, when this expedition was first made a subject of conversation through the medium of the newspapers. I had found a life of indolence, although varied by the multifarious pleasures of the metropolis, ill suited to one who, for the nine previous years, had been accustomed to the unceasing bustle of active service. I had besides an unconquerable passion for my profession, the rough scenes and continued changes in which accorded with my disposition. I felt miserable when I saw that I was most likely doomed to prolong the life of inactivity I was then leading; and that there was no probability of my being again employed under the glorious flag of England. Nothing, therefore, was more calculated to delight me than the prospect that my services would be acceptable in the reputable cause of Venezuela. I at once made up my mind, and eagerly com-

menced preparations for the trip ; and in total opposition to the wishes of friends, and in spite of their entreaties, commands, or threats, determined at all hazards to persevere.

It was my intention to wait for the expedition, and to proceed in one of the vessels to Margarita, to solicit a rank in the Venezuelan navy from the authorities there. It happened, however, that a gentleman who was related to my family by marriage, named Beamish, and who had held the rank of major in the British army, resolved, at his own expense, to raise a small battalion in Ireland (to form a portion of an Irish legion then in contemplation, but soon afterwards given up), and to purchase a vessel to carry them out. The command of this vessel I urgently solicited, and obtained it, although not without some apprehensions, as I was deemed too young for the charge. Major Beamish then purchased a ship of 280 tons burthen, in London, in which we immediately proceeded to the Cove of Cork, where I waited for the men. In less than a month three hundred troops were raised and shipped, for whom clothes and accoutrements were purchased at a government sale of militia stores. The officers were chiefly private friends of the major, all of whom, with the exception of two, had seen service ; and the whole formed a part of the force which subsequently performed so many gallant actions under

the brave Colonels Rooke and Mackintosh, in the conquest of New Grenada,

(We sailed) on the 17th of July, 1818, from the Cove of Cork, amidst the reiterated acclamations of the friends of the troops, who had assembled with the populace to take a last farewell. Both officers and men were in the highest spirits; and as for myself, I was far from being the least elated. The first ten days of our passage were pleasant and agreeable, although not exactly favourable for our course; but the uniform cheerfulness and affability of our chief rendered us all, as if by general consent, happy. While thus proceeding, and looking forward to the time when we should be engaged in the cause of freedom with the liveliest satisfaction, and the most sanguine expectations of success, an event occurred which suddenly threw a gloom over the whole of us. Major Beamish, who in a short time had so much endeared himself to all parties by his kindness and urbanity, (was walking on deck on the morning of the second Sunday after our departure, conversing in his usual pleasant manner, when I observed him to reel suddenly as if giddy. I immediately requested him to take my arm, and walk below. He complied; but just as we reached the companion he again staggered, exclaimed, "God bless you; I am dying;" and fell dead instantly. Every effort which the skill of the surgeon and his assistant

could suggest was resorted to, in order to restore animation, but all proved fruitless; the last spark of life was extinct by the sudden and fatal attack of apoplexy.)

I should have been much grieved at the loss of so worthy a man at any time; but under such circumstances it was truly great and perplexing, as the whole weight and responsibility of the undertaking fell upon me. To add to the difficulty and painfulness of my situation, the greatest consternation prevailed among the soldiers, who were much attached to their leader, and who, with the two officers who had never served, made a formal request that the ship might forthwith proceed to a port in England or Ireland. Such a step as this was neither agreeable to the known wishes of my deceased friend, nor consistent with the interests of his family, who would have a claim upon the Republic, if the ship and troops arrived at their destination; whereas all the expense incurred by him would have been forfeited, had I listened to this unreasonable proposal. Neither, on the other hand, was it suited to my own inclinations, or those of the senior officers of the battalion, who experienced the most poignant regret at the melancholy decease of their commander; but who coincided with me, that it would be decidedly improper to return. In conjunction therefore with Captain Mardyn, on whom as senior officer the

command of the troops devolved, I remonstrated with the discontented, and finally refused to accede to their wishes. Symptoms of mutiny then began to manifest themselves; but as I had expected something of the kind from information conveyed to Captain Mardyn by his servant, and had taken precautionary measures to guard against any serious results, they had little effect upon me or my brother officers. I had secured the small arms and ammunition; the seamen I knew I could rely on, four of whom had sailed with me before on his Majesty's service; and these, with the officers and their servants, well armed, formed a force capable of doing serious mischief against the mutinous party, although far less numerous.

Thus resolved, I deemed it necessary to summon the officers of the battalion to a council in my cabin, and had the satisfaction to find, that, with the exception of the two before mentioned, they were determined not to yield to any threats; and that they would afford me every assistance in their power to quell the mutiny. The two young officers inveighed loudly against forcing men to repair to a foreign land, to fight for people whom they never saw; on which Captain Mardyn naturally enough desired to know, why they had volunteered to do so? and reminded them, that no force had been used in the first instance; but that the

act of entering the Venezuelan service had been entirely their own. They made no distinct reply to these forcible queries, but left the cabin.

Soon after this meeting I went on deck, accompanied by four or five of the officers, when a general rush took place, in order to force us overboard; but as we were provided with side arms, of which the mutineers were destitute, and others coming to our assistance, the foremost of the malcontents had much the worst of it. Their ardour seemed a little cooled by this reception, and a parley was mutually agreed upon. My antagonists were, as before, very violent, and still demanded our immediate return to Ireland, pressing me for an answer on the spot, which I purposely avoided giving as long as possible, wishing to gain time to prepare against a desperate attempt, which I had reason to expect they would make to gain possession of the ship. I observed that they were arming themselves with handspikes, spars, and every other means of an offensive nature within their compass, and consequently felt assured of an attack the very first opportunity.

We had eight twelve-pounders on board, but they had not yet been brought from the hold, and I wished to have two of them placed on the quarter-deck, mounted on their carriages, and loaded, with a view to intimidate the mutineers, and bring them, if possible, to terms, without risking the

effusion of blood that must have unavoidably followed a personal conflict. A party of the seamen were thus employed, while the ring-leaders were pressing me for a definitive answer, which I at length gave them, at the represented request of Captain Mardyn, in the following terms :—"Those who meanly wish to desert the cause for which they came on board with their own consent, may have the boats, with provisions, and find their way back as they can; but the ship, and all who remain in her, shall proceed to their original destination."

A consultation ensued among them on this announcement, in which there appeared to be much opposition. The most violent were for destroying all who were averse to their return; others murmured a little; but the greater part seemed touched with the rebuke, and evidently wished to make reparation for their past misconduct. However, as the most inflamed of the party were obviously preparing for another attack, by a preconcerted signal I had a hundred muskets loaded and with fixed bayonets brought on deck, to use as occasion might require. At the sight of this formidable preparation the most daring seemed appalled, and inclined to listen to the solicitations of the more peaceable, who were actively engaged in persuading their companions to countenance the voyage.

It now occurred to me that this disturbance must have originated with some evil-disposed person, who had excited the spirit of discord, and urged on the men to open violence, while he himself kept in the back-ground. Judging from the inquiring looks cast by the most active of the party to one of the young officers whom I have before mentioned, and the averted and embarrassed expression of countenance of the latter, my suspicions immediately fell upon him. I communicated my thoughts to Captain Mardyn, who however did not agree with me, but rather attributed the behaviour of the men to the consternation produced by the death of their commander, and uncertainty as to their ultimate destination, and expressed a hope that all would subside in a few days if they could for the present be pacified. My opinion nevertheless remained unchanged, and I determined to go forward among them, and endeavour to ascertain the truth. From this step Captain Mardyn and the other officers earnestly endeavoured to persuade me, apprehending that I should be thrown overboard; but I had more confidence in them; I knew that Irishmen, although easily heated, are as easily cooled; and imagined, that as the majority of them were really inclined to return to their duty, if the tide were taken at its turn, the result would be favourable. I accordingly went forward, first throwing my sword and pistols

on the deck, and asked them directly if my suspicions were correct. The poor fellows were taken by surprise, and several of them answered in the affirmative, and, agreeably to my expectations, pointed out Mr. Jenkins, the officer whom I had suspected, as the person who had misled them.

This fellow, who had received many obligations from the liberal hand of poor Major Beamish, if the information subsequently given me was correct, even before the death of that officer had endeavoured to persuade the men to aid him in an attempt to seize the ship, and destroy all who were opposed to him, in order that he might take the troops to Margarita, and represent the expedition as one of his own forming. In this act of atrocity they at once steadily refused to join, but when, upon the major's demise, he told them that I and Captain Mardyn had poisoned him, and that we intended to take them to the West Indies and dispose of them for slaves, they became much alarmed, and ignorant and credulous as they were, it was no wonder they should be anxious to see the shores of old Ireland again.

As soon as Jenkins found himself detected, he threw off all disguise, and commenced a long harangue to the men, but they now refused to listen to it. Rendered desperate by this neglect, he then seized a handspike, and levelled a blow

at my head with it, which I avoided, and seizing him by the throat, I asked him if he would remain quiet during the remainder of the voyage. He promised most solemnly in the affirmative; but I had no sooner let go my hold, than he once more flew to the handspike, and again tried to strike me, but missing his aim, he attempted to knock down Captain Mardyn. I now perceived that nothing short of violent measures would produce any effect on such a character, and resolved at once to apply them. He was but a weak young man, about five feet five inches in height, and of slender formation, so that I found no difficulty in disarming him, which was but the work of a moment, although in the short scuffle he bit my arm severely. I had not the slightest wish to hurt him, but was determined to convince him that I would no longer be trifled with, or have my life endangered; I therefore ordered two of the seamen to pass a rope round his waist, and to throw him overboard, leaving him to paddle some minutes in the water in a state of uncertainty. This expedient proved conclusive; on being hoisted on board again he was pale and ill from fright, and did not recover during his stay with us sufficiently to leave his cabin, and consequently he never afterwards gave me any trouble.)

The men were now restored to ease and tranquillity, and although greatly damped by our in-

auspicious outset, mirth and hilarity began once more to prevail. No farther occurrence worthy of observation took place during the voyage, which was terminated by our arrival at the Island of Margarita on the 29th of August, 1818, after a passage of forty-three days.

On landing I proceeded to the Government House, to make known the object of my visit, and there found the Generals Arismendez and Urdenetta making all the preparations their limited means would allow for the reception of the first division of the British legion, which was expected in a few weeks, according to advices received from General English. These officers were equally surprised and delighted at the supply afforded by Major Beamish, more particularly as he had never intimated such an intention to any member of the Venezuelan government, nor had he made any stipulation for such a service. General Arismendez declared that so implicit a confidence manifested in the liberality of the Congress deserved to be most handsomely rewarded, and that it considerably enhanced the value of the attempt to serve the Republic; adding that, while he had a voice in the government, he would take care that it should not pass unnoticed. He also expressed great regret at the premature death of the major, and both the generals appeared anxious to pay every respect to his memory in their power. I informed

them that I had preserved his remains, and that I was anxious they might be entombed with military honours as soon as convenient to them, and begged that a day might be fixed for that purpose. The second day after our arrival was appointed, and I then returned to the ship, bearing the thanks of the two generals to the officers of the battalion, for the steady zeal they had displayed in fulfilling the wishes of their late commander, together with an assurance, that while Venezuela possessed the power of being of service to them, they could prefer no request that would not be attended to.

In the afternoon, the generals with their staff-officers came on board, and invited us all to supper, and to take up our quarters, if we pleased, at the Government House. I therefore went on shore again in the evening, with the officers of the battalion, and found a most sumptuous repast prepared for us. During this entertainment we were informed that His Excellency the President Bolivar had originally intended to employ the British legion in the conquest of New Grenada, to which bold attempt strong inducements were formed by its comparative opulence, and the literally bankrupt condition of Venezuela. Circumstances however becoming daily more critical, the president had ultimately determined not to wait for the British auxiliaries, but to assemble all the force which he could muster, amounting to about

1500 men. With these troops, including several of the gallant Englishmen under Colonel Rooke, who had come out with Sir Gregor M'Gregor, ^{who} ^{superadded} ^{flippantly} ^{at Angostura,} he had proceeded across the cordillera of the Andes, on his hazardous expedition; and such being the state of affairs on our arrival, the generals had already come to a determination to despatch Major Beamish's battalion to his assistance, without delay. Happily this speedy appropriation of the timely succour so unexpectedly afforded, was as politic as it was expedient, not only meeting with the approbation of the officers and the men, but being a measure which inspired them with greater confidence than any other could have done, as it tended to place them under the command of Colonel Rooke,* who was related to their late leader by marriage. We were also informed by Urdenetta, during the temporary absence of Arismendez, that Bolivar, just before his departure, had nominated the former general to the command of the entire force raised by English, and had enjoined him to leave Angostura, the capital, where he then was, and to repair to Margarita to receive it.

* This brave and excellent officer was shortly after (on the 25th of July, 1819) so severely wounded at the battle of Tunja, in New Grenada, as to occasion his death. He was succeeded by Major Mackintosh, who was equally brave and skilful. To the great military experience and courage of the latter are to be attributed in a great measure the decisive victories of Boyaca in New Grenada, and Carabobo Venezuela.

We all returned on board that night, intending to disembark the battalion, and to prepare for the funeral of Major Beamish the following day. Accordingly the next morning the men were landed in good health, and in the highest spirits, and while the officers were reviewing them, I occupied myself in the melancholy duty of superintending the formation of the grave, and in other preparations for the interment of my departed friend. Every thing being at length in due order, his remains were deposited in a small spot of ground enclosed for the purpose, about a quarter of a mile from the town of Juan Griego, with every mark of respect and honour; and I had subsequently the satisfaction of witnessing the erection of a monument to his memory, by the command of General Arismendez, who inscribed upon it a very appropriate epitaph of his own composition.

The following day the battalion was re-embarked, and we proceeded up the river Orinoco, for Angostura, whence the troops would commence their long and laborious march to the headquarters of Bolivar. I had orders from General Arismendez, in the event of my falling in with the squadron of Admiral Brion, to deliver the troops to him, and he would forward them to the capital, while I returned to wait the general's further commands. I happened to meet the squadron at the mouth of the Orinoco, where I accordingly re-

signed the men to the charge of the admiral, and thus was happily enabled fully to complete my allotted share of duty in this peculiarly circumstanced expedition.

This speedy release was so far fortunate, as it afforded me a better opportunity for attending to the affairs, and securing the effects of my deceased friend. The ship was my principal care; for never having heard the major express any intention of devoting her to the service of the Independents, I was desirous of selling her to the best advantage, that the produce might be transmitted to Mrs. Beamish. On my return to Margarita, therefore, at the recommendation of General Arismendez, who took a lively interest in all that related to the deceased, I placed the ship in the charge of an English merchant, named Ripley, for that purpose. By him she was sent for sale to Jamaica, as vessels could be purchased at Margarita, or any port belonging to the Republic, for a mere trifle. I then forwarded the property which the major had on board, together with his papers, to England; retaining only the account of his expenditure in the formation and transport of the battalion, which I kept back with the intention of presenting it to the Congress, when the country should attain to a more prosperous state.

CHAPTER II.

The Author's Residence with General Arismendez—Description of the Island of Margarita—Its Invasion by General Morillo—Merciless Proceedings of that General—Successful Resistance of the Natives, under General Arismendez — Trophy of Victory — Bravery of the Females—Old Women's Battery.—Hospitality of the Islanders—General Arismendez — Capture of his Lady—Threat of General Morillo on that Occasion—Firmness of General Arismendez—Extraordinary Deliverance of Madame Arismendez —Their Kindness to the Author—Character of the Family.

HAVING received a most cordial invitation from General Arismendez and his lady to take up my residence with them, until the return of the squadron to receive on board the British brigade (when the general assured me that he would procure me a command), I was induced to accept it, and experienced the greatest attention and kindness. My time was chiefly occupied in walking or riding about the island, of which, as it stands forward very conspicuously in the Revolution of Colombia, and has shown so determined a resistance to the repeated attempts of the Spanish government to reduce and enslave it, some description may not be altogether uninteresting.

The island of Margarita is situated in $11^{\circ} 30'$ north latitude, and about 64° west longitude, and is thirty-five leagues in circumference. It is si-

tuated between thirteen and fourteen miles distant from the Spanish Main; about two days' sail from Jamaica, and not quite so much from Barcelona. A ridge of impassable mountains extends through its centre from one extremity to the other; separating Juan Griego and Pampatar, which are the only towns on the island, the former being the chief. From one to the other there is but one accessible road, cut by the natives, which at the summit of the mountain forms a most difficult defile, with a drawbridge that when down admits but a single file of men. This defile is so strong by nature, independently of what it owes to art, that fifty good soldiers might with ease defend it against five thousand.

Save a little valley here and there, which is verdant and productive of maize in great abundance, the whole island is extremely barren; and but for the five valuable fisheries attached to it, would not yield sufficient food for its inhabitants. By far the greater part is beyond the reach of cultivation, being so thickly covered with the prickly pear tree as to render it impassable; and the few roads, or passages, which the natives have cut through it, are so narrow, that the malignant wounds occasioned by its thorn can with difficulty be avoided. The attraction which European flesh possesses for this thorn is truly wonderful. If standing within two or three inches of its point, it

will sometimes dart like an arrow into the skin ; and the extraction is always attended with considerable pain. If neglected, it works deeper and deeper, until in a few hours the whole of it is buried, and in such cases mortification not unfrequently ensues. In no other part of the world is the prickly pear found in such abundance, or possessing such venomous qualities; and this, added to the other natural defences of the island, and to the unyielding bravery of the Margaritians, almost precludes the possibility of its being reduced, even after a landing has been effected.

The recovery of Margarita was for a long time the ardent wish of the Spanish government, whose generals made repeated descents upon it to no purpose. Morillo, who of all the Spanish commanders was the best calculator of the advantages to be won or lost in Colombia, foresaw that while the Independents had one hundred men left, and held possession of Margarita, they could always effect a revolution among its natives, as it afforded a secure rendezvous for an assisting force, of either ships or troops. For this reason he always recommended its reduction in his despatches, even subsequently to his own unsuccessful attempts upon it. Accordingly when Ferdinand, who placed the most unlimited confidence in that officer's opinions as a general, ordered a body of 30,000 men to be sent out under General

O'Donnell, the first object of the expedition was to be the seizure of this gallant little island. Had this force, which was immense in comparison of the army of Venezuela, ever reached its destination, the result must have been fatal to the independent cause; but fortunately the noise produced in Europe by the equipment of the British legion, and the much talked-of expedition from Ireland, under General Devereux, with other causes, excited a mutiny among the Spanish troops assembled at Cadiz in the spring of 1819, and they positively refused to embark; so that the idea was necessarily abandoned. Morillo had previously (in 1816) accomplished a landing with 17,000 of the best troops of Spain, escorted by a fleet of ships of war and transports, amounting to nearly seventy sail. He possessed himself of Pampatar, the heights of which he fortified, intending to make it a depôt for his forces; and immediately prepared for an attack on Juan Griego. At this time there were not 300 muskets in the island belonging to the natives, yet General Arismendez, at the head of a chosen band, broke the pass at the mountainous defile before described, and with the principal part of the male population, occasionally aided by the females, who always fight at Margarita in the event of invasion, took up his abode in the mountains, where they existed on sugar-cane. Here he

seized every opportunity of harassing or annoying the enemy, which he could easily do, as he never relinquished the command of the defile during their stay in the island; and thus he found means not only to destroy their foraging parties, but by night to attack their very camp, and plunder their stores. By this marauding system of warfare, in which he was always victorious, he considerably enriched himself, and in a very short time had a numerous body of followers well armed, and furnished with every necessary for the kind of warfare in which they were engaged.

From the extreme height and inaccessible nature of the mountains which separated the warring chiefs, Morillo could never pass to the opposite side of the island, but was compelled to limit his operations to the vicinity of Pampatar, which directly faces the main land. In order to revenge himself on this spirited people for their gallant resistance, that ferocious leader proclaimed the bloody war of extermination, and relentlessly carried it into execution upon all who unhappily fell into his hands. Neither age nor infancy, sex nor condition, was spared; and the cruelties practised by Morillo, and his tiger-like band, were as horrible as the worst that ever stained the history of any country, and exceeded in atrocity the fell acts of the most blood-thirsty of the barbarous hordes,

who, to borrow a line from a well-known poet, have been mysteriously allowed to "shut the gates of mercy on mankind."

As it is but too easy to imagine, the islanders were not backward in retaliating; and eventually, it is perhaps doubtful which party committed the greatest excesses. It must however be remembered, that the invaders were the original projectors of them; and that the poor Margaritanians were goaded into the commission of atrocities in their own defence, which, under any other circumstances, their humane dispositions would have revolted at. They saw their liberties threatened and endangered; their wives, children, and kindred, daily butchered and quartered; and the reeking members of beings the most dear to them exposed to their gaze on every tree and crag of their native forests and mountains; nor was it until hundreds had been thus slaughtered, that they pursued the same course. The result was, that the Spaniards were worsted. I myself saw upwards of seven thousand of their skulls, dried and heaped together in one place, which is not unaptly termed "Golgotha," as a trophy of victory. Each of these skulls bears the deep cuts of the machetti, a long knife resembling a sabre in shape, and of admirable temper, which is used in time of peace to cut sugar-cane, and for other agricultural purposes; and in war as a weapon of defence, being a very

formidable one in the hands of an expert native. These skulls are still preserved, by the orders of General Arismendez, whose hatred and vengeance have ever been implacable. Thus, after a continued series of defeats, Morillo, in the sequel, found it not only useless, but impossible, to remain longer in the island, which he left with few more than 6000 men, having sacrificed upwards of 10,000 of his army, in his vain attempt to subdue it.

The natural productions of Margarita are, the sugar-cane, which grows in great abundance; a little tobacco; the cassava root, of which a coarse bread is made; maize, or Indian corn; and a variety of tropical fruits. Part of the soil is fertile, and affords very good pasture; but the whole island is quite destitute of water, which the inhabitants are obliged to import from the continent, no spring having ever yet been discovered. About ten or fifteen miles from Pampatar the beautiful pearl fishery is situated, which Messrs. Rundell and Bridge have obtained permission to work for a limited time; and which first induced the Spaniards to take possession of the island; its name most likely originating in the same circumstance. They built a castle called Monpadre, and employed a vast number of negroes as divers; but these were all put to death by Morillo, and it is unlikely that they will ever be replaced by others of equal dexterity.

The natives are a quiet, simple, obliging, and inoffensive race ; brave, generous, hospitable, and eager to perform any office of kindness for strangers. They are addicted to no excesses, but are hardy, abstemious, and most enthusiastically attached to the place of their nativity, which, except in cases of extreme urgency, they never leave ; seeming to inherit a resolution to live and die only for it. They are very expert shots, frequently killing rabbits, of which there are plenty in the mountains, while running, with a single bullet.

In no part of Colombia has there been so much steady courage and zealous patriotism manifested, as in this heroic little island. In time of war, when a sail approaches, three guns are fired at the Fort la Ciudad, and in a few hours every soul capable of bearing arms, or of rendering the least assistance, is assembled at this point ; the women sharing equally with the men in the dangers and fatigues of the campaign. During the first attempt of Morillo to invade their country, these gallant Amazons constantly worked the guns in the battalion under General Gomez ; and the havoc which they made among the enemy, sufficiently proved the skill and dexterity they had acquired in the management of their artillery. At one time, when the entire Spanish squadron aided in a descent on the coast, and were seen off the mouth

of the harbour, these females actually carried, in one night, materials for the erection of a battery of four twenty-four-pounders; which they afterwards constructed themselves. As the Spaniards, perceiving the preparations making for them, and probably intimidated by the remembrance of their former defeats, sheered off, it was not required; but it is still standing, and has ever since been denominated "The Old Women's Battery."—The people of Margarita have been, by some persons, condemned as cruel and dishonest; but, judging by their conduct to myself during my various wanderings among them, I deem most unjustly. I have been in the wildest and most unfrequented parts, where such acts as have been attributed to them might have been committed without the least fear of detection, but I always experienced the utmost good-nature and attention from them; and when fatigued, while on my excursions, their doors were ever open to me, and their simple fare offered, with a cordiality which left no doubt of their hospitable sympathies and generous feelings.

Of these islanders General Arismendez is the chief, and the idol of his countrymen, to whose regard and esteem his great exertions and sacrifices in their defence have deservedly entitled him. He is by birth half Creole and half Indian; his features are those of the former, while his hair closely resembles that of the latter. His person is large,

athletic, and muscular, though spare and thin; and he is capable of enduring almost incredible fatigue and privation. He is about fifty-four years of age, though in appearance older; continued anxiety, his hard mode of living, together with several wounds, having done more than time to increase the deep furrows which mark his weather-beaten countenance. Thus strongly indented, his aspect exhibits a peculiar ferocity of expression, which his smile only increases. His laugh never fails to create a momentary shudder, and the dreadful distortion of the muscles of the face which it produces, can only be compared with that of the hyena when under similar excitement. His displeasure is always signified by this demoniacal grin, accompanied by a low lengthened exclamation resembling the suppressed roar of a tiger, his eyes at the same time flashing vengeance; and should the object of his rage be at these moments within its compass, death inevitably ensues. His general appearance might impress a superficial observer with a belief that he is so accustomed to scenes of horror and bloodshed, they afford him gratification rather than uneasiness. I am, however, strongly of opinion, that the sanguinary measures which he has adopted against the enemies of Colombia have resulted more from the state of a mind goaded and tortured to revenge by the fiend-like barbarities to which so many of his kindred

and countrymen fell a sacrifice, than to any original want of humanity; and that if he had lived in more peaceful times, he would have been an ornament to the society in which he moved.

For many years he followed the occupation of a fisherman, in which he acquired considerable wealth by his industry, and resided in quiet seclusion with his family at his present retreat, a few miles from the town of Juan Griego. (When the Revolution first broke out, his latent energies became apparent, and his martial and enterprising genius quickly displayed itself to the terror of the Spaniards) against whom he laboured indefatigably and incessantly, until the termination of the contest for freedom. Without the least ostentation, and with no views of self-aggrandisement, he has unquestionably effected more real benefit to the Republic of Colombia than almost any other chief, although he would never allow his services to be blazoned forth, like those of many among the leaders, much less distinguished than himself. His love of country is, indeed, proverbial among the Venezuelans; and a single instance will suffice to evince his stern and inflexible patriotism.

While General Morillo and his forces remained at Margarita the last time, Madame Arismendez, a very beautiful and interesting woman, the second wife of the general, then far advanced in pregnancy,

while bathing at night * in the river which runs through La Ciudad, was captured by a detachment of the Spanish army, and carried to head-quarters. Arismendez vowed a ten-fold vengeance when he ascertained his loss; and immediately sallied forth with a numerous body of men, at the head of whom he attacked the enemy, slew a great number of them, and took a colonel and one hundred and sixty soldiers prisoners. This colonel, who was reputed the best officer in Morillo's army, and was that leader's greatest favourite, had proved himself the most merciless destroyer of the Margaritanians, which being known to Arismendez, the latter had been for a long time endeavouring to capture him; and having now succeeded, his doom was instantly fixed. When Morillo received intelligence of this disaster from the few who had escaped (as a Spaniard would have been killed by the piquets before he could have reached the infuriated general), he despatched a little native boy, one of his prisoners, with a note, proposing to restore Madame Arismendez if his officer were sent back unhurt and declaring that she should be put to death if he were not. The soldiers had already been slain when the note arrived; to which General Arismendez composed an answer, conformably to the following translation:

"General Arismendez wars not with women, but

* A prevalent custom among the ladies of South America.

against the Spaniards, the enemies of his country, and the disgrace of human nature. (General Morillo may act as he pleases towards the wife of Arismendez: dear as she is to him, he holds the safety of his country dearer; and before the bearer of this sets out on his return, the monster whose hands have been so often steeped in the blood of its unoffending inhabitants, will be dead."

The above letter having been written, the two sons of Arismendez drew lots to determine which should execute the prisoner. Chance decided for the youngest, who separated the officer's head from his body with a machetti, in the presence of the boy-messenger, who was then sent back to his employer. On receiving the answer of Arismendez, Morillo was on the point of putting his fair captive to death, when some of his officers, moved by her pitiable situation and tears, diverted him from his purpose, and she was sent prisoner to Spain, and confined in the fortress of Cadiz. From this place, after an imprisonment of a few days only, she contrived to escape in the habit of a seaman; and as she spoke the Spanish language equal to a native, she managed to get on board a merchant-vessel in that capacity, which was just about to sail. This vessel was soon after captured by a Venezuelan privateer, off the Western Islands; and in it, as a prize, she now sailed in triumph to her husband. When she landed at

Margarita, all the females of the island assembled on the beach to receive her, and strewed the path from the shore to the general's house, upwards of four miles, with flowers. A car was also constructed, in which she was drawn to her home, within view of the Spaniards, who could witness the procession from their posts.

While I resided with the general, I had great opportunities of observing his character. He was open and sincere, energetic, brave, and generous; and in many instances, and especially in my own, kind and attentive. He is extremely partial to the English, and pays them the most marked respect: every thing which he can command is at their disposal, and few circumstances can give him more pleasure or pain than their acceptance or refusal of his proffered services. He is also very inquisitive as to their government, manners, customs, state of the army and navy, and similar matters; and delights to hear their gallant deeds in action recounted. I have seen his hardy iron visage lighted up with all the enthusiasm and fire of a warrior, and his hand firmly, although perhaps unconsciously, grasp the hilt of his sword, when the feats of the army under the brave Duke of Wellington were related to him; and then, as if aware that he was remarked, turn round and say to me, "You will laugh at such romantic feelings in a man of my years; but my heart is as warm now

as ever it was." To the Irish he is likewise much attached, many of whom were under his command in the war of the Revolution. He denominates them the brave blunderers; and has stored up a variety of anecdotes illustrative of that jostle between conception and utterance, the fruitful result of which, under the name of *bull*, has been recognised as characteristic of the natives of the Emerald Isle throughout the world. The general is also very hospitable, and his house is open to all without invitation, which in South America is seldom given. A stranger may walk in if he pleases without ceremony, and he is sure of being welcome; but his company is not requested, because it is a point in South American good breeding that he shall feel no restraint, but go or stay as inclination may dictate; the natives deeming all customs which impose any restriction on a visitor as the extreme of impoliteness. He is plain in manners and conversation, the latter being generally brief and to the purpose; and he never makes promises, from a conscientious fear that circumstances may not enable him to fulfil them. As, however, he is always willing to serve when he can find an opportunity, and performs a great number of beneficent actions with extreme liberality and consideration, no person possessing the least claim to his good-will can justly complain of neglect, or withhold his surprise at the many

benevolent and excellent qualities which are concealed under an exterior so rough and forbidding. He is also firm and lasting in his friendships, never allowing time or caprice to affect their permanency. He may himself be forgotten, but he never forgets one whom he esteems; and he will often bestow some unexpected favour upon him, however distant he may be. His natural capacity is of a superior order, but it remains in a great measure uncultivated; and he evinces a high sense of honour and independence, which few of the other chiefs can boast, to whose intriguing spirit his ingenuousness and simplicity have more than once rendered him an easy prey. To conclude, he is one of the best of friends and most formidable of enemies, but to those only who are at the same time the enemies of his country. No one had ever occasion to regret the acquaintance of Arismendez but a Spaniard.

Madam Arismendez is very polite, affable, and engaging, possessing much fortitude and firmness, with an ardent zeal for the welfare of the Republic. Indeed (I have often heard her declare, that if her husband had given up the Spanish colonel to save her life, she would never have seen him again.)

Of the sons of Arismendez I can only observe, with regret, that the scenes of massacre and bloodshed which they have been accustomed to behold

from their infancy, seem to have steeled their bosoms, and annihilated the principles of humanity which nature might have originally implanted therein. Hence they have a large proportion of the faults of their father, united with but few of his virtues.

CHAPTER III.

Arrival of Admiral Brion from Angostura with the Venezuelan Fleet—His Prejudices against Foreigners—General Arismendez procures the Author the Command of a Corvette—Takes a rich Prize; seasonable Relief afforded by it—Distress of the Government, and Costume of its Legislators—Author obtains Rank in the Republican Navy—Terms of Service—Rencontre with the first Division of the British Legion—Reception of General English and his Expedition at Trinidad—Naval Skirmish for his Deliverance—Testiness and professional Ill-will of Admiral Brion—Sketch of the public and private Character of that Officer—Account of his Successor.

In the beginning of the month of October Admiral Brion arrived from Angostura, at the head of the entire Venezuelan fleet, consisting of twenty-seven vessels of various rates and denominations. General Arismendez, who had been waiting for this event to procure me a command, immediately went on board the flag-ship, to invite him to his house, to which he came the same day to dinner. This was the point on which all my hopes rested of obtaining a rank in the Republican navy, and I looked forward to my introduction with much anxiety. I had not long to wait, and my hopes were from the first moment completely extinguished. It did not require much penetration to discover his aversion to foreigners of every country; for during two or three hours after dinner, he

chiefly amused himself with uttering the grossest invectives against the British officers then in the service, as well as in disparagement of those about to join; strongly reprobating the practice of giving them commissions, and declaring his intention to rid the navy entirely of them. General Arismendez was not however dismayed at this declaration, and having elicited from the admiral, in the course of conversation, that one of his officers, who had commanded a fine corvette of twenty-two guns, manned by nearly two hundred Englishmen, with a proportion of Sambo-blacks, had died a short time previously of the yellow fever, as also that his ship had not yet been bestowed upon any other person, immediately solicited the command for me. Brion made many excuses to avoid compliance with this request, and several of them not of a very liberal description; but my persevering patron, who was not to be refused, checked him, and the admiral finding that he must either agree or come to an open rupture with the general, which was not desirable, made a virtue of necessity, and presented me with the vessel.)

The next morning I received orders to get my ship ready for sea, which did not require much time, as the senior lieutenant was a remarkably active officer, and had kept her in excellent trim. Accordingly, on the 21st of October, the third day

after I had received the command, I sailed on the look-out for the first division of the British legion, which was to touch at the island of Trinidad for further orders, that were to be forwarded to Mr. Henderson the Venezuelan agent there. General Arismendez had also given me private instructions to convey to General English, if he should accompany the troops; and if not, to the commanding officer. My orders from the admiral were to attack and destroy all vessels bearing Spanish colours; taking care to plunder them of every thing valuable, and either put their crews to immediate death, or reserve them for execution on my return. On the 21st of October I sailed, soon after day-break, and about noon (saw a large schooner) having the appearance of a privateer, a considerable distance to the windward. She proved to be a Bermuda and Clipper built vessel, and a quick sailer, but as the corvette was also a fast sailer, we came up with her about seven p.m. and in a few minutes were in close action. She mounted six twelve-pounders and a long twenty-four on a swivel, which she had used in the chase, but without effect. The contest was short; on boarding the men fled from their quarters, and to my surprise, although they were certain of being all put to death, surrendered at once, and at eight p.m. she was safe in my wake, with a portion of my crew on board her. The corvette received no

injury, and only three of her men were slightly wounded. The next morning (I went on board to examine the prize, and found a large quantity of goods and specie, the plunder of various vessels, together with arms, ammunition, and clothing for one thousand men, which she was carrying to Caraccas for the garrison there. All these I had transferred to the corvette, and removing the prisoners, I sank the schooner at once. It grieved me to take so many poor fellows to certain death, and I would willingly have suffered them to escape could I have found any reasonable pretext for doing so; but my orders were peremptory on that head, and my commission, and in all probability my own life, would have been the sacrifice had I disobeyed them. Indeed, as I have before observed, if I had obeyed them to the letter, I should have caused the unfortunate captives to be massacred at once, before I sank the schooner, for which purpose the Sambos were kept on board the vessels belonging to the Independents; but as that was out of my line altogether, I left it to those most aggrieved, and therefore most inclined to become superintendants of their execution.

After a short cruise off Trinidad, as I could hear no intelligence of the expedition, I returned to Margarita, thinking that the prize which I had captured would be of some little service, as the

treasury there was exhausted before I sailed, while that at Angostura was known to be completely drained. The money, as I had anticipated, proved a seasonable relief; and my patron, the general, was neither slow nor sparing in his praises. He warmly congratulated me on my successful debüt; and expressed his determination to write an account of the affair to the Congress at the capital, and to send them 200,000 dollars as a moiety of the specie. Not so the admiral; the idea of owing any thing to a foreigner was intolerable to him, and he endeavoured to put an effectual stop to my future efforts, by pretending to want the corvette for a particular service; in lieu of which he offered me an old brigantine, totally unfit for any service, and generally used as a receptacle for the sick, being manned only by about forty Indians and Sambos. The general, however, soon silenced him again; and I was permitted, much against his will, to retain the vessel, Arismendez recommending me to go to Angostura with the specie myself, as I could then get my rank confirmed by the Congress. I followed his advice, and was received by the vice-president with great politeness, and as far as his means would allow, with equal hospitality.

The Republic was at this time in a wretched state of insolvency, and the amount sent by Arismendez to the Congress was a sum which it had

not possessed for many months. Its poverty was plainly denoted by the appearance of its members, who more resembled a troop of mendicants than a body of legislators. Most of them were attired in a coarse, striped, cotton shirt, with trousers of the same material, patched in different directions; a straw hat grown old and dirty with constant wear, and a European blanket, with a hole cut in the centre for the head to pass through) thrown over the shoulders as a capote or cloak. Some few were fortunate enough to possess shoes, or boots; others had the remains of them attached to their feet with little ropes made of cow-hide, termed sogos, in humble imitation of the Roman sandal; but by far the greater number had their feet wrapped in a piece of cow-hide, canvas, or blanket, while the whole of them were destitute of stockings. A worn-out half-famished mule, adorned in some instances with a hassar saddle and its trappings, but more commonly with a back galled by a seat somewhat resembling an English pack-saddle, a musket, and a machetti, completed their equipment; and thus attired and mounted, they rode in procession to the Government House on the three days a week appointed for their assembling.)

On the Monday following the day of my arrival, I was desired to appear before the Congress, in order to receive the confirmation of my rank, which

direction I attended to; and certainly, as far as promises and verbal encouragement went, I had reason to be perfectly satisfied. I was established in the rank of a commander of ships of the second class; which is about equal to that of a junior post-captain in the British navy, except in the article of emolument, which, in the Republican service, is one-third more than in the English, amounting to fifteen shillings per day. I also possessed an equivalent rank in the army; in which, if called upon, I was compelled to serve. The distribution of prizes, one-half of which was claimed by government, was not to take place until their independence was established, or the war otherwise terminated; at which period all claims were to be audited, and three months allowed for payment, which was to be made on bills on the government, at six months' date.

Expresses were immediately sent off to the President Bolivar, informing him of the temporary supply received by the Congress, a portion of which was forwarded to aid him in his purposed revolution of the New Grenadians. The despatches having been made up from the vice-president to General Arismendez, I sailed immediately for Margarita, where I landed on the 24th of December. (I was here informed that the admiral and the fleet had sailed no one knew whither, or for what purpose, or when they would return; so that

I was now, at least for a short time, free from the restraint which the admiral's prejudices and insulting manners imposed upon me. Three weeks glided away in this manner, smoothly and happily, when a brig-of-war came in to announce the arrival of the fleet. Having previously received orders from Arismendez to sail on a second cruise, in search of the British legion, and having by his desire only waited for this signal for starting, I hurried on board and got under weigh. I was not, however, in sufficient time to escape the admiral's notice, who made a signal for my return; and on my doing so, ordered me to come back in three days, whether I fell in with the brigade or not; but subsequently he altered his commands, and insisted that I should not return until I had met with them. This, from the length of time I was kept upon the look-out, I thought would never arrive; I however came across three Spanish merchantmen and a small schooner, all of which I fortunately captured, and as usual destroyed, after removing every thing worthy of preservation. This employment served to pass away the time and keep up the spirits of my men, who, although they had been in the Venezuelan service more than twelve months, had never before taken a prize. After a three days cruise to the eastward, from the period of my last capture, I at length fell in with the first division of the legion, under the command of Colonel Bos-

sett; and after delivering my orders to him, that officer judged it more expedient to proceed directly to the depôt, than to go first to Trinidad. The troops were landed at Margarita, in good health and spirits; and after staying there a few days only, I again sailed under orders to cruise off Trinidad, until I should fall in with the second division, under General English.)

Some weeks elapsed before I could hear any tidings of these anxiously expected auxiliaries; but ultimately, on my return to Trinidad, after a temporary absence in chase of a brigantine, I found General English there, and rather in an awkward predicament. On the arrival of the expedition, in accordance with the instructions forwarded to him in England, the general had proceeded to Mr. Henderson, the republican agent at Trinidad, for further orders, when, to his astonishment, he found that an attempt was made to detain both himself and the troops by the local authorities, under the pretence of orders from the governor of the island, Sir Ralph Woodford, whose feelings were *represented* as decidedly hostile to the object of this armament. How far these representations were correct I cannot take upon myself to assert; but certain it is, that all the force that could be mustered was ordered out to oppose the departure of the troops, and of the six ships under the general's orders, who got on board with some difficulty, and

being determined to resist to the utmost of his power, he was preparing for action, when I fortunately returned. Observing what was going forward, I hastened to General English, on board the *Jupiter*, in order to deliver my despatches and inquire into the cause of the interruption. I found him ill, and greatly agitated, and he requested my assistance with extraordinary earnestness to beat back the force of the island. My assurances of aid appeared to lessen his anxiety, which almost entirely subsided when I pointed out to him the feebleness of the hostile squadron. I accordingly returned to my own ship, and made close up to a large schooner, which, being the best of all the opposing force, was bearing down upon the foremost ship of the English's division. A broadside from the corvette, fired with much coolness and precision, sent her foremast over her side, and did considerable injury to her hull, besides killing and wounding many of her hands. A discharge from the ships of the division followed, and so intimidated the Trinidadian fleet, that, like Falstaff, deeming "discretion the better part of valour," they put back, and left us to the prosecution of our voyage in peace. If they had not done so, the whole of them must have been sunk, as every ship of the expedition was exceedingly well armed and manned; and I believe that all their commanders were equally brave and skilful.

We now sailed for Margarita, where we arrived, without further molestation, on the 19th of April. The corvette was so laden with the produce of the last prize I had captured, which consisted of stores sent by Spain for the use of her troops, that I was glad to unload her; and as in the course of the few skirmishes in which she had been engaged, she had received some injury, it was necessary to have her repaired. The trifling service which I had rendered to the expedition at Trinidad, was eulogized far more than it merited by General English, who soon perceived that the subject was displeasing to the admiral, and I have no doubt praised me more to annoy him, than from any conviction that I deserved all this excess of commendation. However this might be, his praises only served to increase the dislike which the admiral felt for me as a foreigner; more especially as English, who was very satirical, amused himself occasionally with national allusions which would certainly have been much better avoided. My staunch friend and supporter, General Arismendez, was not silent on the occasion; and between the two, the gallant admiral found but little peace in their society, and therefore retired to his ship, which he seldom left during his stay at the island. He thence, however, made a report to Congress, in which he blamed General Arismendez for endangering the safety of his country, by procuring a command for me; and

condemned my conduct throughout as boyish rashness, although he admitted that the supplies I had brought in were very opportune. This report, however, failed to do me the injury intended, for the Congress, being in such a needy state, did not care whether "boyish rashness" or the caution of maturity relieved them from it; nor would their necessities allow them to dispense with the chance of further relief, in compliment to national prejudices.

Admiral Brion was a native of the island of Curaçoa, of Dutch extraction, and a man of very large property. When he first entered the service of Venezuela he was nearly forty years of age, and entirely unacquainted with nautical affairs, having never seen service of any kind. His principal inducement was probably that of fame and notoriety, as he agreed to equip a fleet at his own cost, if he were permitted to retain the command of it, and to rank as first admiral of the state. The means he possessed of raising a navy, which the government much needed, having then only a few small schooners in their service, could have been its only inducement to accept his offer. I am indeed persuaded that he had the warmest desire for the good of the Republic, and that he acted in his naval capacity according to the best of his judgment, and with the purest intentions as regarded the sacred cause in which he was en-

gaged; but on the other hand, he was unquestionably weak-minded and entirely destitute of the nerve, talent, and experience, so essential to a commander who had to cope with the well-organized and veteran seamen of Spain.

I am aware, that in this estimate of the character of Admiral Brion, I risk the imputation of the indulgence of a desire to revenge myself for the inimical feelings which he manifested towards myself, by detracting from his general merits. I hope I may be credited in the assurance, that such is in no respect the case. The feelings of irritation, which I confess were at the moment excited by his attempts to crush my youthful hopes of fame, have years since subsided, and the cause of them been nearly forgotten; or if remembered it is only with that spirit of forgiveness, and allowance for the errors of human nature, which, I trust, will be extended to my own failings. Besides, he is in the grave, and all animosity would have been buried with him, had it existed so long. His death was occasioned by a disorder of the mind, which I doubt not influenced most of his actions through life; although it did not, while I was under his command, show itself openly. Some observations upon his conduct as a commander, were indispensable, in allusion to the warfare in which he was called to act so prominent a part, as forming one of the many combined causes for its

unnecessary protraction. It is evident to all persons in the least degree acquainted with the affairs of Colombia, that the struggle might have been terminated in a much shorter time, and with much less effusion of blood, than were actually wasted in it, but for the frivolity and want of consideration which attended the actions of the majority of its chiefs.

To show that I do not mean to impute errors to Admiral Brion, simply on the ground of individual assertion, I will relate a circumstance which must be familiar to all those who have been in the Colombian service, of which there are many now in England, to whose correction of course I am amenable. On one occasion, Admiral Brion, at the head of the entire fleet of the Independents, appeared off Cumana, when the Spanish squadron was lying at anchor in the bay, perfectly assailable and unprepared for an attack. The greater part of the crews were ashore; and those on board very much intoxicated, as was plainly indicated by the loud and reiterated shouts which reached our ears. One of the ships of the Independent fleet was so near to the enemy as to be on the point of boarding a fine frigate, when the admiral, who had cautiously removed from the van to the rear, made a signal for the return of our foremost ship, and for our immediate sailing. Equally surprised and disappointed, we obeyed;

and found that his object in thus sheering off, was an apprehended attack from the batteries, which could not, he said, fail to do a serious injury to the fleet. Captain Chitty, a brave and intelligent English officer, who commanded the ship which then carried the admiral's flag, earnestly begged to be allowed to attack, but to no purpose, Brion insisted upon our leaving the Spaniards as we found them. Consistently with this determination, he contented himself with displaying his force, firing a salute of twenty-one guns, and hoisting a demi-jean of wine, and a living turkey, at each yard-arm of his own vessel, as if to convey to the enemy a due notion of the superiority of living on board his own fleet, rather than of a professional determination to try who were the best men. Preposterous as the deportment recorded in this anecdote may appear, it is well authenticated, and for a long time the admiral was among the sailors in derision termed "The Turkey-cock."

Officers in the Colombian navy are entitled to a comparative rank in the army, by which they may be addressed on all occasions, and to wear its uniform if they please. According to this regulation, Admiral Brion ranked as captain-general; and was usually seen on his quarter-deck, attired in an English hussar jacket and scarlet pantaloons, with a broad stripe of gold lace down each side, a field-marshal's uniform hat, with a very large

Prussian plume, and an enormous pair of dragoon boots, with heavy gold spurs of a most inconvenient length. He always signed himself captain-general, and was so addressed by his officers and men; and if any of them neglected this title, or substituted that of admiral, they seldom regained his favour.

As a private individual there were many excellent traits in his character, but he was deplorably deficient in the qualifications for the important post assigned to him; and to this misfortune only are the numerous escapes of the Royalist squadrons to be attributed. In the one, the particulars of which I have recited, he might have taken or destroyed every vessel in the bay of Cumana, which would, in all human probability, have terminated the war in less than six months; as the military supplies would have been completely cut off, and the army, being reduced to a state of destitution as to ammunition and stores, must have capitulated. Nor is this the only one by many, of similar opportunities that were lost under his command.

To his own countrymen, Admiral Brion was extremely liberal; and even to foreigners he would frequently do all the service in his power, in points not connected with naval advancement. He often made valuable presents to the British officers from his own stores; and if a request of this sort was

preferred, it was seldom refused, but given in a ten-fold degree. At times, however, so much was his disposition affected by his mental malady, he would allow the army to be in a starving state, without giving them any of the immense stock of provisions he always took care to have his ships stored with. He was at all times hospitable and profuse in his entertainments, and at such moments every thing could be obtained from him, except fighting and naval promotion.

Admiral Brion was succeeded by General Padilla, who was appointed commandant of marine. He is a native of Rio de la Hacha, and is a Sambo. As may be expected, he is perfectly illiterate, and cannot even read, but he is very brave, and a good practical seaman. His own merits, and the chances created by the revolutionary war, together with some influence which he has ever possessed with his tribe, have conspired to raise him to the command he now enjoys. He has many good qualities as a private individual, and is generally esteemed for his strict integrity and honour.

CHAPTER IV.

Privations of the British Legion at Margarita, and their Operation upon the Troops—Author proceeds on a Cruise to procure Supplies—Assistance afforded by Admiral Brion—Intrigues of Urdenetta against Arismendez—Arrest of the latter, and its mischievous Results—Characters of Urdenetta, Valdez, and Colonel Montilla—The Expedition sails—Storming of the Moro, and cruel Massacre of the Prisoners—Military Inaptitude of General Urdenetta—Author heads a Body of Seamen attached to the Land Service—Capture of Barcelona—Imprudence of the Commander-in-Chief—Description of Barcelona—Deceptions of the Priesthood, and Simplicity of the Women

As soon as the troops had been landed at Margarita, General English commenced their organisation, in which he succeeded with much difficulty. It was now discovered that a most indispensable article in war was wanting, namely, money. The government had omitted to make any provision for the wants of the legion; a neglect which I believe arose rather from inability than indifference. However caused, all that the generals Urdenetta and Arismendez could command to defray the expenses of organising and victualling the troops during their stay in the island, and their subsequent transportation to the scene of action, was the amount brought in by the naval captures. This could only enable them to exist for a short

time, as General Urdenetta, with a degree of cupidity which signalised the whole of his conduct, had appropriated a considerable portion of it to himself, which he expended either in the inordinate gratification of his personal wants, or squandered away in gambling. The principal support of the men for several days was the sugar-cane produced in the island, which was served out to them three times a week; but it afforded a very inadequate subsistence for Europeans; and as there appeared no prospect of amendment in their situation, they naturally became disheartened. At first their discontent was shown by complaints and murmurings only, but these were speedily followed by a spirit of utter insubordination; and they finally refused to go through the necessary exercises, or to comply with any kind of discipline. At this crisis our admiral not only refused to allow any of his officers to proceed upon a cruise, but denied the famished troops a portion of the provisions with which his ships were literally crammed; and maintained his obstinacy in the face of the most urgent remonstrances of Arismendez and his colleague. The generals then sent for me, and for another officer, an enterprising and gallant young man, named Russel, who commanded a brig-of-war, and urged us to get under weigh, unknown to the admiral, and endeavour to obtain some relief either by capture, or by proceeding to An-

gostura, and representing the case to the Congress, who, it was hoped, might not have expended the whole of their portion of the recent prize-money. As they undertook to be answerable for the consequences of our disobedience, we complied; but were not so fortunate in our exertions as was desirable in the way of capture; while the latter alternative proved a forlorn hope, as we had anticipated. We only succeeded in taking a small schooner laden with provisions, and having about 14,500 dollars on board, belonging to the master, who was bound for Maracaibo, then in possession of the Royalists. On the other hand, our application to the government proved fruitless, as it alleged its own wants to be so pressing as to preclude compliance. With the small relief, therefore, obtained from the captured schooner, we returned to Margarita, and found affairs in a much better state than when we quitted it. The admiral, who had come to his senses, began to see that he might get into some disrepute by his obstinacy; and had advanced a sum of money from his own purse, and supplied the brigade with necessaries, which being now disciplined, marched from Pampatar to Juan Griego, for the purpose of embarkation early in the month of July, and was soon got on board the fleet.

The troops, at length having plenty of every article which they required, were in the highest

state of exhilaration ; eager for the opening of the campaign, and full of confidence in their ultimate success. We now, therefore, only waited for the native forces of Margarita to join, when intrigue and jealousy, the predominant evils of the Venezuelan government, and the general hinderance to its effective operations, occasioned a serious dispute between the generals Arismendez and Urdenetta, which threatened to render nugatory the expense of raising these long-expected and desirable auxiliaries, as well as make useless the strong desire they evinced to signalise themselves in the service in which they had engaged.

When Bolivar gave up the idea of taking the troops raised by General English with him to New Grenada, General Arismendez, being the senior officer by many years, was appointed by the Congress, with the sanction of the president, to the sole and undivided command of them. It now, however, appeared that General Urdenetta, who aspired to this command, had prevailed upon Bolivar to despatch him to Margarita, in opposition to the vote of the Congress, to take the immediate command of the legion, subject to the orders of Arismendez, who was yet acknowledged the superior. The latter, on the other hand, very naturally wished to retain his post, and his unlimited influence with the Margaritanians, who could never be brought to leave the island without

their idolized chief, made it dangerous and impolitic to supersede him. From his extreme popularity he could not only have withdrawn the islanders from the campaign; but as every one of them would have participated in his quarrel, and cheerfully died in his defence, he could have driven the Republicans from the place with ease, had he been so inclined. It was, therefore, of the highest importance to government not to irritate a leader so formidable; but the envy and ambition of Urdenetta would not permit him to remain second in rank. He therefore assumed a positive tone, and asserted his right to the supreme command under the orders of Bolivar, and ordered the veteran Arismendez to get the natives ready for embarkation; but as the latter, either by complying with this or any other order, would have been submitting to the assumption of what he deemed his undoubted right, he did not care to aid the exertions of another. Urdenetta then represented, that Arismendez had harangued his troops to produce a contrary effect; and on this allegation he founded his justification for adopting the strong measure of making the latter a prisoner. Whether this representation was true, or whether the people of Margarita acquired information of the intentions of Urdenetta from other sources, is uncertain, although the latter is most probable; but they certainly flew to arms in

opposition to him, while we were lying at Juan Griego, and speedily took the mountainous pass leading thence to Pampatar; but here the mischief ended.

In the mean time, these demonstrations of attachment only rendered Urdenetta the more determined to gain his point; and he resolved to cause his unsuspecting opponent to be arrested upon charges of treasonable disobedience to the orders of the president, and of endeavouring to excite the native forces to mutiny. In pursuance of these intentions he formed a plan to have him secretly conveyed to Angostura, to take his trial, by which means he calculated upon securing to himself the active command. General Valdez, a creature of Urdenetta's, was accordingly employed to execute this plot, which was communicated to no one but himself; and in pursuance of his instructions he proceeded directly in a man-of-war's boat, with orders from General English to form a strong detachment from a brig-of-war the same evening, and to land them, under the command of a field-officer. These orders, the object of which was not communicated, were implicitly obeyed; and the men being landed, were marched, headed by Major Davy, to the house of Arismendez, which they surrounded long before day-break. The general had but very shortly before retired to rest, having had a party of friends to supper the pre-

ceding evening, when Valdez and some people of his own entered the chamber, and made him prisoner. So little respect was paid to him in the execution of this scheme, that he was actually hurried on board a vessel, in order to be sent to Angostura, three hundred miles up the river Orinoco, without being allowed time to dress himself.)

The result of this bold manœuvre, however, proved as contrary to the expectations of Urdenetta, as injurious to the interests of the country. That leader had indulged the most sanguine hopes that he should at least succeed in destroying the reputation of his rival; but he was severely disappointed. The Congress, after a minute examination of the charges brought against the veteran general, declared their perfect conviction of his innocence, and of the malicious motives which had suggested them. He was not only honourably acquitted, but at the next meeting of the Congress, elected their vice-president) without a single dissentient voice or murmur.

The country suffered a great loss in being deprived of the services of Arismendez as commander of the expedition. The first movements of the campaign showed how much, in every military requisite, Urdenetta was his inferior; to whose want of firmness and decision, together with a total absence of foresight—to use the very mildest terms for his conduct—may justly be

attributed a part of the many circumstances which conspired to prolong the war, and give incalculable advantages to the enemy. The force was also considerably diminished, and subjected to many privations, owing to the removal of Arismendéz; for as soon as it became known to the natives of Margarita that their general was arrested, and forced off to the capital for trial, and that the command had devolved upon Urdenetta, every man who had volunteered to serve with the British, amounting to about 800, deserted, with the exception of not quite 300 inferior troops, and none of the inducements so alluringly held forth could induce a single one of them to return. The immense supplies which Arismendéz could have commanded in that part of the country to which the expedition was destined, were also all lost, and Urdenetta possessed neither the means nor the inclination to make an adequate compensation. However, as the latter had for the present settled affairs to his own satisfaction, immediate orders were given for our sailing. We accordingly got under weigh on the morning of the 14th of July, and proceeded directly for Barcelona, a town of some importance on the Spanish Main, the attack of which was to form the first object of our expedition, after being joined by the native forces of Venezuela. The leading officers of the division were Urdenetta as first in

command, and Brigadier-General Valdez as second; General English retaining the command of his own troops, and Colonel Montilla acting as *jefe de estado* (chief of the staff) to Urdenetta. General Urdenetta and Colonel Montilla are natives of South America. Valdez is a Spaniard.

Urdenetta is the son of a hacienda, or farmer, who lived in what may be termed easy circumstances. When the Revolution was in its infancy, he joined the standard of his country, and soon after being placed under the immediate command of Bolivar, from his complying and intriguing disposition soon became one of his greatest favourites. This station he has ever since maintained, nor is he likely to lose it, as there are few men in the Republic more active in intrigue or dexterous in the excitement of party spirit than himself, or that will so unhesitatingly enter into the views of any person who is, by the fluctuating tide of popularity, temporarily in possession of the pinnacle of eminence. In this facility he perhaps even equals Santander, of whom I shall have occasion to speak hereafter. With much shrewdness and sagacity, and a natural disposition to deal in plots which require art and deception in their execution, and reward for their completion, he is deep in his designs, cunning in their promotion, and remorseless as to their operation. Studiously cautious as to the line of conduct he should seem to

follow, he keeps the high road to himself, and directs his colleagues to the paths of difficulty, disgrace, and danger. Possessing the outward manners and address of a gentleman, but totally devoid of the honourable principles which belong to the character, he assumes the semblance of candour, uprightness, and sincerity, without a spark of any one of those qualities. Concealing the cold-blooded, plotting designer beneath the disguise of frankness and openness of demeanour, he worms himself with inconceivable coolness and address into the confidence of those whose destruction he is all the while meditating. He has an unconquerable dislike to the English, which he has carried so far as to incur the risk of injuring his country and the sacred cause in which they were mutually engaged; and the English, in return, are by no means very partial to him. That he is a brave man cannot be disputed, but his want of experience in military tactics, and other defects, render him unfit for any command beyond that of a band of Guerillas. Bolivar has rewarded him with the distinguished rank of captain-general; how he has earned this distinction by his military services will in the sequel be seen.

General Valdez is a tyrannical, despotic, blood-thirsty monster, whose ferocious deeds have since caused his suspension by Congress. As a com-

mander he is haughty, insolent, over-bearing, and ignorant.

Colonel Montilla is a worthy man, a brave soldier, and an accomplished gentleman. He has made the tour of Europe, is familiarly acquainted with the principal living and dead languages, and possesses considerable theoretical and practical experience as a military officer. He is too reserved to be companionable, and partakes rather largely of the sullen pride of the old Castilian, but has otherwise a world of good qualities. It is hardly reasonable to expect that, surrounded by such men as Urdenetta, Valdez, and Santander, he should escape persecution; his very virtues alone rendered him an object for their malevolent attacks. By the former he was accused of treachery to Bolivar, and in consequence was obliged to quit the country. After remaining for a time in disgrace, the "*Libertador*" being by some chance convinced of his innocence and rectitude, recalled and restored him to his lost rank. He is now a general officer, and much and deservedly respected by all classes, but particularly by the English residents.

General English was an Irishman, as were most of the officers of the brigade. As an officer he was destitute of energy, and experience; as a man he was generous and open-hearted. All that

can be said of him in reference to his conduct as commander of the British legion is, that he mistook his profession, for which indeed he was physically unfitted.

On the 16th of July we arrived off Barcelona, which stands about nine miles up a small river navigable only by small craft, on a plain bearing the same name. At the entrance of this river stands the Moro, a lofty hill in the exact form of a sugar-loaf, extremely well fortified, and mounting very heavy artillery. This fortification commands the mouth of the river, and the whole of the anchorage; and at this time contained a garrison of 1300 men. Four miles to the windward of the fort is a long narrow sand-bank, united to the main land and stretching nearly across the river. It is in many places perfectly dry at ebb-tide; and has seldom more than four or five feet of water on it. The fleet brought up about a quarter of a mile to leeward of the bar; and the troops were landed at an Indian village, named Pozuela, two leagues and a half from Barcelona, where the enemy's piquets had been posted; but had retired on our approach, with all the inhabitants, in the greatest alarm.

At noon on the 17th, the disembarkation was completed, and the native troops having joined us, the division formed in the order of march; the cavalry, which was dismounted, under a very

brave and intelligent officer, Colonel Stopford; the infantry under Colonel Blossett, who was equally brave and skilful; and the artillery under the gallant Colonel Woodberry; the remainder, a mixed force of natives and a German rifle corps which had previously been under his command, were led by Colonel Uslar, a fine old Hanoverian veteran, whose steady courage and military ability could not be exceeded.*

(When the division had all got ashore, the ships sailed directly for the Moro, which had not shown any disposition to oppose our entrance to the river, and after an hour's cannonading, I was ordered by the admiral, who as usual had kept cautiously in the rear, to accompany a body of seamen ashore, as a storming party, under the command of Captain Chitty. The place was carried without the loss of a man; and now followed the horrible necessity of witnessing the general massacre. This was the

* This gallant officer had been taken prisoner in March, 1819; by General Morillo, who had, with his accustomed severity, confined him within the walls of Porto Bello, and compelled him to sweep the streets daily, with chains upon different parts of his body weighing nearly one hundred weight. He was kept in this situation till the armistice completed by Bolívar with the Spanish general in 1820, when it was agreed, as a personal favour to the president, that he should be set at liberty, which was done in the early part of 1821. He was then made colonel of the grenadier guards; which rank, I believe, he still retains, but merely holds it in the hope of getting his claims upon the government discharged, which has not yet been done.

first scene of cool-blooded slaughter that I had ever witnessed) it was equally strange to many others; and a very terrific one it was. The Spaniards, who had behaved with great pusillanimity, had no sooner surrendered, than the natives, who had accompanied us, began their murderous work; and it was continued without intermission, until every individual of the entire 1300 was despatched. Myself and the whole of the British kept aloof from this spectacle as much as possible, and did not interfere after the colours of the fort were struck; but it was impossible to avoid seeing the effects of the butchery, and the sight of so many mutilated creatures, some of whom still writhed in the agonies of death; their groans, the torrents of blood rushing on all sides, the shouts of the murderers, and their demon-like appearance as they slid over the mangled carcasses, covered with human gore, together with the heart-piercing cries for mercy of those who still lived, so shocked and disgusted me, that sickened at the appalling scene I left the place, and went instantly on board; and I believe few of the British who witnessed these horrors, any more than myself, thought of eating for at least two or three days. I received a severe reprimand, as did my brother officers, and the seamen, for not having taken an active part in the slaughter; Admiral Brion, and subsequently General Urde-

netta, both informed us, that as we had entered the service of Venezuela, we were expected to conform to its usages; and in future they insisted on our personal share of putting the prisoners to death. We made no reply; but I believe all inwardly resolved never to obey any such order.

The weakness and military inefficiency of Urdanetta were now first manifested. The Morro being taken, there was nothing to prevent his immediate advance to the attack of the city, whereby he would have captured the whole force then in it, which must have been destroyed; a circumstance of much consequence in a war of extermination. He, however, thought it necessary, in the first instance, to disembark all the six-pounders; and waited at Pozuela, until the fleet could return to him from the fort, in compliance with his request to the admiral for that purpose. After wasting the whole day and night in landing them, as every person but himself had foreseen, it was found that they could not be conveyed across the heavy morasses the army had to march through, into which the soldiers sank knee-deep at every stride. Much time and immense labour were expended in fruitless attempts to forward them, until the men appointed to the task became completely exhausted, and they were ultimately left on the beach, under a subaltern's guard of natives. It had previously been determined,

that a party of seamen should be sent ashore to assist in conveying these guns over the marshes, as also to work them afterwards, and to aid, in any other way which the general might deem necessary. Three hundred men had been despatched from the ships; consisting principally of my own crew; of which body, anxious to get out of the reach of the admiral, I made all the intercession in my power to obtain the command, and much to my satisfaction succeeded. I was induced to court this opportunity, by a conviction that little good could be done by any officer under such a man as Brion, even in active service; while the chance would be still more slender with the fleet in a state of idleness. As already observed, my party was knocked up at the onset, by their laborious endeavours to forward the six-pounders; and some few of them were in consequence obliged to be left behind. Luckily I did not want for volunteers to make up the number; and although, from the causes just assigned, we were no longer required to work the guns, Urdenetta ordered us to accompany the army as a storming party.

(We marched all night across the swamps) which was a work of indescribable labour; and about day-light on the 18th, reached a narrow wood-built bridge, thrown across the river directly in front of the city. We had advanced close along the margin of the river, expecting to encounter some

piquets ; (but we only discovered a small party just as we came in sight of some large and well-constructed barracks on the same side of the river with ourselves, near the bridge. These men had been left behind by the orders of the Spanish commandant, to cut away the arches of the bridge, in order to impede all immediate pursuit of them in their retreat. They had finished their task, and upon seeing us fled across the bridge by the assistance of ropes attached to it for the purpose ; and which they cut upon gaining the other side. We were now at a loss how to proceed ; for we had nothing wherewith to repair the bridge ; and in the course of our march had only seen a few Indian huts, thinly scattered along the river, from which every thing likely to aid us had been removed or burnt. General Urdenetta ordered me to take the seamen forward, and endeavour to make the bridge passable in the best manner we were able, the river being too deep for the army to ford. We accordingly repaired to the spot, and perceiving a very old woman on the opposite side of the river, peeping at us with much curiosity from behind an old boat, I hailed her, and requested that she would procure us some *tabolos*.* She affected not to know where any were to be had ; but upon throwing her over a couple of dollars,

* Strong ropes made of cow-hide, very ingeniously and firmly twisted.

and promising her more if she succeeded, she started off in search; and in about half an hour returned with a young man driving a mule with an abundance of the article required. On perceiving us the young man fled; but the old woman remained to claim her promised reward. By the means of the cabolos we were enabled to strongly secure the partly separated timbers of the bridge; and removing all the doots of the barracks, and every thing we could discover likely to be serviceable, we succeeded in the construction of a platform over the space formed by the entire removal of the centre arch, across which the troops defiled in perfect safety.

Upon entering the city we found it quite deserted; not a single individual was to be seen, save the old woman who had supplied us with the cabolos, who marched triumphantly at our head, stopping at every ten paces to ask for her reward. The Spaniards had fled with the utmost precipitation in the direction of Caraccas, most of the inhabitants following them; while some of the superior families had repaired for temporary shelter to the woods, until the danger should have subsided. From the state in which we found the city, it could not have been left more than three or four hours. Not a single article of property had apparently been removed; every thing remained as if the inhabitants had just gone out for

an airing; the fires were unextinguished, and the lights still burning. In the house in which I took up my quarters, a piano and two guitars were left, with pieces of music strewed around; as if the intelligence of our approach had changed the notes of harmony into the accents of terror and despair. It was therefore sufficiently evident, that if the attack had been made on the preceding evening, the whole of the troops in the town, amounting to upwards of two thousand men, arms, ammunition, baggage, horses, and mules, must inevitably have been captured.

Our possession of the city was followed by another act of imprudence, which would have been unpardonable in the youngest officer of the division. When we entered Barcelona it abounded with wine and spirits, and it did not require even ordinary penetration to be quite certain of the effect the unlimited use of these would have upon men who were flushed with their easy conquest, and elated with the idea they had formed of the dread entertained of them by the enemy. To prevent drunkenness on this occasion would have been easy, for there were excellent barracks, sufficiently commodious to lodge the division comfortably; and as the river, situated between them and the city, was too deep to be forded, a guard placed at the bridge might have kept the whole of them out of the latter. (This was pointed out

to Urdenetta by General English, but he neglected to profit by the remark, and in less than three hours there was not a sober individual in the entire division; so that when the time came for mounting the piquets, a sufficient number of men could not be found who were sufficiently in their senses to comprehend what was required of them. (Here then was a situation for an army) and that army the principal, indeed the sole dependence on which Venezuela could rest her hopes of liberty! Every man in a state of inebriation, incapable of the least defence, (and within a few miles of the enemy, who might have dashed in among us, without the possibility of our gaining information of their approach for want of piquets; and have slaughtered the whole of us,) Moreover, how easy, while thus unprepared, would it have been for the persons left in the woods, close to the city, who now began to creep in a few at a time, to give the Spaniards notice of it. (After three days of uninterrupted riot and debauchery, the general became alarmed for his own safety, and adopted the plan before suggested; but it was then too late to preserve the town, and the health of the division. To intoxication had succeeded plunder, and destruction of property of every kind; the principal houses were shorn of every portable article of the least value; and pits were dug, into which they were indiscriminately thrown, and

left to rot; the parties who had thus concealed them having been too much inebriated to allow them to remember the site of their hoard when sober.)

I exerted myself to the utmost to keep my own little party free from these excesses; and although by no means an easy task with sailors, by remonstrating with them on the danger which they incurred by pursuing an opposite course, I succeeded tolerably well. I was assisted in these remonstrances by General English and his officers; which, however, might not have completely sufficed without the punishment of a few of the more early transgressors, whom I had dipped in the river until they were sobered; and afterwards put into irons, in which they were exposed to the gaze of the rest; an exhibition that operated strongly on the beholder in repression of similar indiscretion. I was now also called upon to enforce the orders of Urdenetta, by arresting the numerous parties of the soldiery who were continually parading the streets, and conveying them over the river to the barracks, from which I prevented their return, by placing a strong guard on the bridge, until they were restored to reason. With the personal aid of General English, and the officers of his legion, all this was happily effected; and in two days the men returned to their duty, although much emaciated, and very ill from their excesses.

Barcelona is a large town, irregularly built, and possessing but few attractions. Its population was very numerous before the war of extermination; and many persons of considerable wealth continued to reside there up to the time of its desertion by the Spaniards; but they then retired to Carraacas, where they have since remained. The cathedral is a very large building, but there is nothing striking in its external appearance except its size. The architecture is rude, and of no particular style; in shape it was originally an oblong square; but two wings having been since added to it, one on each side, it now presents the form of a cross. It is heavy in its construction, and without the least harmony of parts; but the interior, which seems to have been modernized, is very richly and beautifully ornamented, and bears some resemblance to the Minster at York, although more capacious. The decorations were splendid, and the plate, of which there was a vast quantity, of the most massive description. Like the generality of Spanish-built towns there is a *plaza*, or square, in the centre of Barcelona, from which the streets branch at right angles. To many of these there are no thoroughfares; while others lead to the various roads cut through the thick and high brushwood which surrounds the city for many miles.

In the cathedral we found as many females as

could be crammed into it, loudly invoking mercy through the medium of their patron saints, which, it scarcely need be added, are very numerous. Each christian name has its own peculiar object of adoration, represented by a little silver image about ten or twelve inches in length, and to these the women repair to invoke and supplicate. All their thoughts and inclinations are unfolded to them; and on their birth-days they decorate them with silk dresses, ornamented with gold lace, and such precious stones as they can command. These women had been shut up by the orders of the Spanish governor, who would not permit them to follow the army. At first they were so timid as to fly like hares whenever they saw any of the English; but a little time convinced them we were not quite so shocking as we had been represented to them. These women soon found an opportunity to inform all whom they could find in the woods of the fair treatment which they experienced, and numbers came daily flocking in from their sylvan retreats) who were chiefly of the middle classes.

It is astonishing to conceive what an effect had been produced on the minds of these weak deluded people, (by the grossly deceptive descriptions of the priesthood) The preposterous ideas which they had been led to form of the English almost surpass belief. They had been taught to regard us as savages and cannibals, who would roast them

before large fires, and cut the flesh reeking from their bodies, while yet alive, to devour. When we first made efforts to establish a friendly understanding with them, many were observed to walk round the men, and cast very scrutinizing looks at them, as if searching for something which they had been taught to expect to find. On being questioned on the subject, they informed us that their worthy pastors had assured them, that nature had been so bountiful as to furnish us with tails, like monkeys; and they expressed the greatest surprise at their absence. They were also led to believe, that our heads were sunk beneath our shoulders, as low as our bosoms. However, upon being satisfied that we were neither so headed nor so tailed as they had been induced to imagine, a tolerably good understanding subsisted between us during our stay; but it was some days before they were quite sure that we would not fatten upon them, as a portion of customary and favourite food.)

CHAPTER IV.

Cathedral of Barcelona and Discoveries therein—St. Lawrence and his valuable Appendages—Anger of the Inhabitants at his Spoliation—Military Incapacity of General Urdenetta—Critical State of the Spanish Forces under General Morillo—Sufferings of the British Legion, and consequent Mutiny and Desertion—Barcelona surprised by a Spanish Force in the Night-time—Repulse of the same—Injustice of Urdenetta to the Author and another Officer—Re-embarkation of the Division for Cumana—Strange Mismanagement of Admiral Brion—Ceremonious Naval Chace—Murmurs of the Seamen—Ironical Remark by the Author reported to Admiral Brion—Court of Inquiry.

DURING the inebriated state of the soldiery, fears having been entertained that the cathedral might share in the general devastation, a guard composed of the seamen were placed over it, with orders to prevent the entrance of all persons except the generals, the field-officers of the day, and myself. The day after our arrival, Colonel Blossett being field-officer on duty, I accompanied him into the building, that we might pass away the time in an examination of it at leisure. We had no sooner entered, than we discovered General English very busily employed in taking down an ancient painting which was fixed in an iron frame to one of the walls near the altar. It represented a battle between the Moors and the Spaniards,

just at the moment of victory declaring itself in favour of the latter. Its beauties were obscured by the accumulated dirt of ages; but the general, who was a connoisseur, thought that if its colour could be restored it would be worth removing to England, where its antiquity and value might be duly appreciated. It was accordingly washed, and the colours appearing brilliant, and in high preservation, he resolved to ship it off with others to his agent at Margarita.)

The example having been thus set us, it will not be a subject for surprise that we followed it. As soon as the general went out, having obtained the assistance of another officer, we commenced a regular examination. The altar-piece, portraying the Crucifixion, was placed in a carved frame of exquisite workmanship, and covered by a large piece of purple velvet, edged with broad gold lace. On tapping round it, we judged by the hollowness of the sound, that there was a closet behind it; and continuing our search, we found three spring-bolts rather clumsily attached to the frame, upon the touching of which the altar-piece flew open, and disclosed a spacious room, filled with boxes of various dimensions. Colonel Blossett, who thought that this apparent concealment, coupled with other indications, implied the existence of a hidden treasure, immediately jumped into the room with such violence that myriads of spiders and an

enormous cloud of dust came tumbling about his ears. After shaking himself, to get clear of this disagreeable annoyance, he assiduously commenced operations.)

(Some of the boxes were about four feet square, others much larger, and the smallest were so weighty, that he could not remove them unassisted. By our joint efforts, one of them was brought out and opened, the contents of which were golden salvers and knives, and massive goblets of the same metal. Another held a large number of crowns, similar in their general appearance to the crown of England, thickly studded with the topaz, ruby, emerald, and other stones. One of these was particularly handsome, which Blissett caught up and exclaimed: "See, here's a pretty thing! I will send it to my wife. Fine finish to a full dress, by Jove!" Our companion wanted it for the same purpose; but to me, who had no wife to crown, it was of minor importance, and I left them to settle the point between themselves.

We replaced the boxes until night, by which time, our servants having made bags out of the dresses of the saints, we had the contents of five, of them carried to our quarters. General English, when informed of our good fortune, came in for his share; and General Urdenetta took possession of the remainder. In a niche we also found one of

the most valuable relics of the place, at least to the monks. This was the body of a man of gigantic stature, curiously preserved in a case with a glass cover. It wore a loose dress of white satin, in the Roman form, and round its neck was a golden collar of great weight, set with emeralds and pearls, to which was fastened a chain of the same metal, each link being elegantly chased. On its wrists and ancles were bracelets similar to the collar, to each of which the chain was also fixed; and a crown adorned its head, whereon its name was enamelled at full length. This was shown by the priests as the remains of St. Lawrence, the patron saint of the city, to whom the cathedral was dedicated. To him were all miracles ascribed, and for him, and in his name, were all contributions levied; and of the latter, he had by no means a few to account for. It is needless to say that his appendages were removed; but we carefully replaced the carcass, and quitted the cathedral, which was the next morning ransacked by the soldiery, who forced the guards, and despoiled it of every thing worth taking, and among the rest, I believe, of the patron saints of the ladies.)

As might be expected, the natives were much exasperated at the spoliation of their cathedral. One old woman, at the head of about forty of her own sex, assailed me without mercy the day the troops got in, and was particularly loud in her

complaints of the treatment of the patron saint. "Here!" she exclaimed, "they have stripped poor St. Lawrence, and every body knows that he was a good old soldier!" "Very true," replied an officer standing by, "but you know that all soldiers are liable to lose their baggage in time of war." This silenced the ancient dame, although it failed to satisfy her; but a younger female, whose fine dark eyes shot the fiercest flashes of resentment, said, with the most piquant indignation: "All is true that our padres (priests) have told us concerning the English, except that they have no tails!" "Do not offend them," rejoined the officer, "or they may take possession of St. Lawrence, as well as of his accoutrements." This was enough; apologies were immediately offered; the English were declared the best people in the world, and they went away rejoicing that the bones of the saint were still left them to adore.)

The troops having been confined to the barracks, and deprived of the means of getting more spirits than were regularly allowed them, were gradually reduced to order and subordination; but the constant idleness in which they were allowed to remain, and the consequences that followed from it, soon produced another eruption.

The army, after their hasty flight, had halted at Spirita, a town about fifteen leagues distant from Barcelona, where they fell in with a reinforcement

which had been despatched to the relief of Barcelona from Caraccas; so that their force now amounted to about 3000 men. To destroy these troops was not only practicable, but easy; and it is scarcely necessary to say how beneficial such an achievement would have proved to the Republic. Here an opportunity was offered to Urdenetta to make reparation for his blunder, in allowing them to escape before, but he could not be prevailed upon to move, and excused himself by saying, that he expected every day to be joined by General Bermudez and his troops, on whose arrival an attack should be made. Such was the reasoning of this insufficient leader, at a moment when it was not improbable that the enemy might anticipate him in an attack; or if not, be further out of his reach for every moment of delay. By this protraction of his advance, the city of Caraccas was for that time lost to the Republic, the capture of which, had it been effected, would have stricken terror into the Spanish army, and brought the war to a speedy termination. This desirable consummation, by a series of coincident movements among the Independent leaders (at this time an affair of no difficult arrangement), might have been easily effected, and it was quite possible to surround the whole force of the enemy and annihilate it. General Morillo, commanding the Spanish troops, was alarmed in the highest degree. He saw, for the

first time, the whole of the Venezuelan frontier threatened, and found that he had no longer to contend with a body of natives, undisciplined and ignorant of all the rules of regular warfare, but with an army of steady veterans) whose skill and bravery were at least equal to those of his own forces. He perceived that the reports in circulation of increasing numbers, and the anticipation of the arrival of the Irish legion, together with the success of the British at Barcelona, had intimidated his troops, while they increased the confidence of his opponents; all which made him at a great loss how to proceed. His own situation had also become one of peculiar difficulty and danger. He was then falling back on the plains of the Apure, from Achaguas, and endeavouring to concentrate the forces under his own immediate command, about Caloboso. Thus, from his remoteness, he could not have afforded the smallest assistance to those at Caraccas and Spirita; for whose safety, as we afterwards learned from some prisoners, he was in the greatest apprehensions. To advance was impossible, as he had not a week's provisions; to stay where he was, was dangerous; and if he had withdrawn suddenly from the plains he must have been intercepted by General Paez, whose cavalry would soon have disposed of his half-famished infantry. Had Urdenetta therefore marched to Spirita, and destroyed the force there, then pro-

ceeded to Caraccas, which must inevitably have fallen, he might, by despatching couriers to Bermudez, have caused that general to unite his troops with the British legion on the plains of Apure. He would then have been able either to force Morillo to an engagement, in which the odds would have been all against him, or to have driven him back on General Paez, who could have annihilated his whole force; in each of which cases Venezuela would have been free.

Neither probabilities nor possibilities of this kind occupied the mind of General Urdenetta, who, with a degree of nonchalance never exceeded, suffered every chance of serving his country to pass unheeded. The length of our stay at Barcelona and of our mode of living were such as might impress beholders with a belief, that we went thither to amuse ourselves, rather than to prosecute an important campaign. Fighting, military exercises, or useful employment of any kind, was totally out of the question; and, as in consequence of the enemy having driven off the cattle, our provisions were rapidly consumed, the men gradually passed from murmurs to open mutiny. All this would have been avoided, had we followed the enemy on the capture of Barcelona, as we could then have secured both supplies and stores; but neither the omission, nor its consequences, seemed to trouble our commander or his suite, who while

the British officers and their men, and indeed the native troops also, were actually deprived of the necessary means of existence, were wasting their time in the indulgence of that propensity for gaming which so injuriously distinguishes the military officers of South America.* What gave a still darker complexion to this thoughtless dissipation, they had taken care to furnish themselves amply both with necessities and superfluities; and therefore felt as little as they cared for the privations endured by their unfortunates companions. So great was the selfishness of Urdenetta, that he even appropriated to his own gratification and indulgences the money spared by Congress for the use of the division. In vain did General English and the chief officers of his staff represent to him the danger which he incurred by keeping the men in a state so deplorable; in vain were all the endeavours made to impress him with the necessity of employing them in the field, to preserve their zeal and steadiness, and to prevent the decay of the excellent state of discipline into which they had been brought. No remonstrance availed, and

* Their usual game is monte, at which they will sit for whole days and nights, scarcely allowing themselves time for the necessary refreshments; and frequently on the loss of their last dollar, they proceed to stake their horses, equipments, and every article belonging to them, in order to continue their gambling.

with the utmost apathy, he heard the rapidly approaching moment anticipated, in which the troops would be left no alternative except insurrection and plunder, to preserve them from actual starvation.

Mutiny and desertion quickly reached an alarming height; several persons fled from Colonel Blossett's battalion, and from the rifle corps, taking with them their arms, for the avowed purpose of going over to the enemy. Happily in every instance they mistook the roads, which were numerous and intricate, and therefore fell into the hands of Colonel Monte's guerillas, by whom they were brought back again. The officers of the legion now became sorrowfully convinced of the incapacity of Urdenetta for the command of an army, and for the sake of their own honour and credit, were compelled to adopt the severest measures to put an end to desertion. Hitherto the parties brought in by the guerillas had escaped with impunity; the officers being unwilling to punish them, in the hope that the general would remove the cause of their misconduct. When, however, it was perceived that remonstrance proved altogether unavailing, it was determined to proceed with the usual military severity; and out of twelve of the light company who deserted after the adoption of this resolution and were brought back again, as just described, four who appeared

to have been instigators to the desertion, were tried and shot.

While all this was going forward, I had kept my own little party in constant employment, either in having them drilled by a corporal of the grenadiers, or by exciting them to various feats of agility, by promised rewards in the way of prizes ; and thus prevented them from dwelling so much upon their wants. Induced by gentle means daily to fatigue themselves in sport, exercise, and manœuvring, on their return to their quarters, although hungry, they were more disposed to rest than to argue on the subject. Moreover, as they saw that I shared every thing in common with them, I possessed their confidence ; and not a single murmur escaped them during the period of our stay. Their patience and orderly conduct, and the excellent state of discipline to which they had arrived, which nearly equalled that of the oldest company of infantry in the division, were the admiration of all the officers ; and most certainly they deserved it.

At length, on the forty-third day after our occupation of Barcelona, an event occurred which had long been anticipated by the reflective part of the army, to whom it was a subject of surprise that it had not taken place much sooner.

Barcelona, as I have already observed, is surrounded by a thick high brushwood, in which

thousands of men might lie concealed, and their approach to the town be rendered easy by the numerous roads in all directions. The importance of placing piquets in each of these roads, especially at night, to prevent a surprise, must be evident to all persons possessed of the least degree of military aptitude; but Urdenetta, whose mind was occupied with his amusements rather than his duty, just reversed the common-sense proceeding suggested by his situation, and withdrew the parties at retreat-beating, which had been deemed necessary all day. Aware of the probability of a surprise, the English officers had long been in the habit of sleeping clothed and armed, with their horses ready saddled; and by the orders of General English, the sailors were stationed with the main-guard in the Plaza, and were as much on the alert as possible. So much had the event which was now fast approaching been talked of and apprehended, that for twelve nights I had not ventured to take any rest, going to sleep only when the piquets were posted in the morning, and then only for an hour or two, as I regularly went with my men to their drill and exercise. (On the sixth Sunday after our occupation of the city, however, worn out by the want of rest, and proper sustenance, I sank down while smoking a cigar at the head of my party, overpowered by sleep. The main-guard and piquets were at this time on our right, and the remainder

of the division across the river in the barracks. I had been asleep, perhaps, nearly three hours, when about two o'clock a. m. I was awakened by a tremendous rush of cavalry towards the square, accompanied by loud shouts of "*Viva la Patria*," the national Independent cry. My men and the troops were on the alert in a moment, and the soldiers formed in time to receive the strangers, whether friends or enemies, which was yet uncertain, as we were in hourly expectation of the arrival of General Bermúdez and his troops, who, it was known, were all mounted. As it was the custom of the native cavalry to enter a town in this manner in full gallop, uttering the national cry, and as we could distinguish the white plume which was always worn by the Independents, we remained a few seconds in doubt; but it was soon removed when the commanding officer of the main-guard received a pistol-shot in reply to the demand of the watchword, which, as arranged with General Bermúdez, we all knew to be "*Viva la Republica*." The new-comers were, therefore, Spaniards, who had adopted the national cry merely to gain admittance to the city, which they intended to retake.

The enemy had entered on our right, consequently the military had to bear the brunt of the first assault, for which they were much better armed than the seamen; whose short muskets,

without bayonets, could effect little against the long lances of the Spanish cavalry. They stood the charge with undaunted resolution, and a well-directed volley from the seamen, instantly followed by a discharge of their pistols, brought many of the lancers down, and drove those who remained unhurt from the Plaza. They now began to scour the streets adjacent, and lanced all the inhabitants who were roused by the firing, and unlucky enough to fall in their way; but fortunately these were not many. The troops and seamen pursued, and the enemy rallied; but as our brave fellows took their aim with the greatest coolness and deadly certainty, they were again glad to wheel about. The rally was repeated three times, during which the firing was incessant, and General English and his staff being roused, they rapidly crossed the bridge to the barracks, where they found the brigade formed in column, waiting for orders. It was immediately commanded forward in double quick-time, by General English, who remained behind; and they met and engaged a part of the assailants who had again entered the Plaza by another passage. This body, after some minutes' close fighting, were driven out of the town, leaving no small number dead behind them. Meantime two squadrons, who had in the confusion separated from their companions, mistook their way out of the city, and got into a short wide street, which had

no thoroughfare, and all their efforts to escape proved abortive. The main-guard and seamen rushed after them, and disputing every inch of ground, drove them to the further end of the street, and notwithstanding their desperate charges, never yielded a step; so that in ten minutes not a man of them remained alive, every one of them fighting bravely, although rashly, to the last. Having thus contrived to clear the town, we were obliged to rest contented; for having no mounted cavalry, pursuit was impossible.

On mustering my own party, I found that I had lost twelve men, and eighteen or twenty more were wounded; and three of them so severely, as to cause their death in the course of a few days afterwards. I had myself a slight wound from the point of a lance, in my right side, which, however, did not wholly incapacitate me from duty. Of the main-guard, five were killed and several wounded; and the piquet lost seven, making a total loss of twenty-seven, including Captain Barker of the main-guard.

We obtained by this adventure a very seasonable supply of provisions; for, as the enemy's horses were all young, and in fine condition, they made excellent food for us. Hunger sweetened the repast, and it may be questioned, if any of the whole number who partook of it ever relished the best food more than they did the flesh of these animals. Several were roasted and boiled for im-

mediate use, and the remainder made into tassao, by stripping the flesh off into long pieces, about five inches in breadth, and drying it in the sun.*

On the following morning, the commanding officer of the main-guard, who was slightly wounded, and myself were summoned before General Urdenetta, who, in return for our exertions the previous night, gave us a severe reprimand. Nor was this all, for we were placed under arrest, and a court-martial was assembled the following day, to try us for exceeding our duty. I now began to fear that the fates had ordained my actions in this service should all either be misconceived or misconstrued, and that I had little chance of acquiring any thing but ill-will and censure from such officers as those under whom it was my misfortune to be placed. I had not met with the least encouragement from the admiral, and had eagerly joined the present expedition that my exertions might be more candidly appreciated; so little, however, had I changed for the better, that one of the first rewards of my services was the treatment to which I have just alluded.

The grounds of the charge against us originated in the opinion of Urdenetta, that the lancers who had entered the city were not Spaniards, but the

* Tassao is usually prepared from beef by the natives; and during long marches in South America it affords convenient and excellent food. It has a peculiarly grateful flavour.

advantage of General Bermudez: Being asked by General English, who espoused our cause with considerable warmth, how it happened that they attacked the main-guard, and lanced all whom they met in the streets, he accounted for it by insisting that we were the first aggressors, and that the lancers, in consequence, supposing the city had been retaken by the Spaniards, assailed us in return. This was merely assertion at best, and most unreasonably founded, for, had his suspicions been correct, the strangers would scarcely have attacked the inhabitants, who were their own countrymen. A few hours, however, served to convince the general of his error. About fifty of the enemy, after leaving the city, had, in their haste, taken a wrong road, and were captured by Colonel Montes, who sent them in prisoners; when the fact not only turned out that they were Spaniards, but it was farther ascertained that they had been led by the late governor of Barcelona, by whom the assault was planned, and who fell in the attempt. He had brought with him all the cavalry of his division, amounting to 1000 men, of whom at least 400 were slain.

Myself and companion in durance were then set at liberty; and General Urdenetta allowed that he was mistaken, and coolly thanked us. By the advice of General English we demanded a court-martial, consisting of an equal number of British

and native officers, not being willing to owe any thing to a commander who had either so blindly or so wilfully rendered our efforts a subject of accusation. The result was our acquittal; with a declaration, suggested by Colonel Montilla, that we were entitled to the thanks of the country.

At length the remonstrances of General English and his principal officers (although, perhaps, consideration for his own safety was the paramount inducement) roused Urdenetta from his apathy; and he agreed that we should no longer wait for Bermudez, but re-embark with the utmost speed for the city of Cumana, then in possession of the enemy. Whether it was intended to attack it, or merely to look at it, was at this time a matter of speculation; but orders were issued to the division to prepare for embarkation without delay, and notice given to the squadron to be in readiness to receive it.

Admiral Brion had been lying all this time at the Moro, in the same state of listless indolence as the troops in the city. I was ordered to convey to him the orders of the general; and about half an hour after I reached his vessel, he was favoured with an opportunity to do the country considerable service, and that without personal danger. It was, however, altogether lost upon him; and the event will justify me in the assertions which I have already made, that he was deficient in common

sense, to say nothing of the nerve and spirit required for so important a command.

The Spanish governor of Cumana being ignorant of the capture of the Moro and the evacuation of Barcelona, but apprehensive that the former would be attempted, resolved to reinforce this fortification, and with that view despatched 500 men, with a large supply of provisions and ammunition, on board a part of the Spanish fleet, then stationed at Cumana. They sailed, and soon after I had reached the flag ship, brought up at the same place where we had anchored previously to the landing of the troops. Having received intelligence of this movement, General English had sent part of the British brigade the same morning to strengthen the Moro, with orders to hoist the Spanish colours, in order to lull the enemy into a more fatal imaginary security. Brion was completely under the cover of its guns, and these, with his own weight of metal, formed a most formidable battery, and one which was more than sufficient to annihilate a force of three times the strength of that approaching. The deception had all the effect it was intended to have; the Spanish colours still flying, the enemy presumed that all was safe, and took our vessels for their own squadron which had sailed for Porto Bello. In the afternoon they put off their boats, pulling directly for the Moro, and having on board the

troops intended to reinforce it. Had they been permitted to land, they would not have discovered their error until it was too late; but Brion becoming nervous as usual, opened a heavy fire upon them while at least a mile and a half distant, and this informing them how matters stood, they rapidly put back to their ships, which in a few moments after got under weigh for Cumana. The Independent squadron made a show of pursuit, but took great care not to advance a yard upon them, and the two fleets continued about four miles from each other, the distance at which they started, during the whole of the chase. Two days were thus ludicrously occupied in mutual dread and manœuvre, until the Spaniards got under their own batteries in the Bay of Cumana; and our admiral having thus convoyed them into port, returned to the Moro, boasting of the manner in which he had made them flee before him.

The surprise and disappointment created by this circumstance will be easily conceived. I had been regretting my absence from my ship; and fully anticipating the capture of the whole of the Spanish force, with a natural wish to share in the capture, I had made application to the admiral to be allowed to resume the command of my own vessel. He however refused my request, on the pretended ground that my command on shore could not be relinquished until the whole division

had embarked. My ship was therefore left behind, but when I saw him return with no captures in his train, my regret quickly subsided.

At this time Admiral Brion commanded no less than twenty-seven sail of well armed vessels, of different rates, from large corvettes to schooners of war, which were manned by upwards of 2000 British seamen, in addition to the natives. With such a fleet at his disposal he allowed the enemy's force, consisting of only seven schooners, and every way inferior in physical as well as numerical strength, to escape without the exchange of a single shot. It was impossible that conduct of this nature could render him popular with such men as the brave fellows whom he had under his command, who had been led by the gallant commanders of the British navy, and several of whom had fought and bled under the great Nelson. "Curses not loud but deep" were vented most unsparingly on him, and in some instances these execrations were not confined to inaudible murmurs. Lowly as I had ever thought of Brion's capability as a commander, I must confess that I was not a little staggered when I saw him thus return; and a hasty observation, unguardedly uttered while under the influence of this feeling, was the means of gaining me his most serious displeasure, and ultimately prompted him to deprive me of the vessel which I then commanded.

It happened that while we were getting the troops on board, Captain Chitty, who commanded the flag-ship, Mr. Hambledon, one of his junior officers, another named Ayres, and myself, were on shore together, when our conversation turned upon what in derision was usually termed Brion's victory. Hambledon said, that such a man was a curse to the country and its cause, to which all agreed; and I thoughtlessly observed that Captain Chitty ought to lay his ship alongside the first Spanish one that he fell in with, which would either cure the admiral of his cowardice, or frighten him to death. This sally being subsequently repeated to him by Mr. Ayres, I was accused of exciting his officers to mutiny, and to an attempt upon his life. A court of inquiry acquitted me, and the affair remained unnoticed for the present; but, as it will soon be seen, it did not fail to produce the fruits of enmity in due season.

CHAPTER V.

Departure from Barcelona—Landing at Cumana—Description of South American Guerillas—Character of Colonel Montes—Sufferings of the British Legion from the Want of Provisions—Indecision of Urdenetta—Cumana, how defended—Pathetic Anecdote of an English Officer and his Lady—General English allowed to storm Cumana on his own Responsibility—Proceedings of the storming Party—Unnecessary and untimely Retreat—Indignation of the Troops—Sudden Abandonment of the Legion and the Service by General English—Melancholy Fate of a captured Spanish Party and of a young Anglo-Spanish Officer.

WE sailed from Barcelona, and arrived at the Bay of Cumana early in the month of September, where we found the Spanish squadron in great confusion, and wholly unprepared for defence. The crews were for the most part ashore, and those who were left on board intoxicated, yet our admiral would not venture to attack them. He also refused to go in and land the troops, and left the place in the manner I have before described. The Spaniards having the same fear of him which he entertained for them, instantly sailed for one of the Leeward ports, which we afterwards understood to be Puerto Cabello. The coast being thus clear, at the end of three days we again entered the bay, and came to anchor at a favourite spot for landing the troops out of the

range of the batteries. About six p.m. on the 7th of September, all of them were disembarked, and I was again ordered to join them with the same party of seamen whom I had commanded at Barcelona.

We were received by Colonel (now General) Montes and his band of guerillas, in number about six hundred, being the principal Independent force we had hitherto beheld since our arrival in the country. They resembled a horde of Italian banditti, rather than the regular troops of any government; and although hardy athletic fellows, they were evidently strangers to the comforts and conveniences of civilized life. They possessed but few accoutrements, and no regular uniform; and indeed as regards clothing of every description, they might be compared to the ragged regiment of the renowned Falstaff except that bare as were the sack-loving knight's followers, they were much better provided with linen than these guerillas. A shirt and a half far exceeded the quantity Colonel Montes' band ever possessed. Their covering, on what was termed their field-days, chiefly consisted of a very coarse pair of cotton trowsers loosely made; some pieces of bullock's-hide to envelope the feet instead of shoes, and which were fastened round the ankle with sogos. Their bodies, from the waist upwards, were quite naked, except that the head was crowned with a wide-

brimmed straw hat) of firm and durable construction. (In all instances their accoutrements were slung across their bare shoulders). The arms they carried were few, but in good condition; some among them had muskets and bayonets; others bore carbines and long lances; but their favourite weapon was the machetti, which with many constituted their sole essential for military operations. The only system of warfare with which they were acquainted, was of the same marauding description as that pursued by the Margaritanians, united to bush-fighting, which is dreadfully harassing to a marching army. In regular engagements they are never brought into action; it is only when the enemy is in fancied security within their encampments that they are of the least service; or when the opposing army is fatigued with long marches, worn out with hunger, and drenched with continued rains. In such cases they place themselves in the woods, whence they pounce upon their unprepared and exhausted victims, and the slaughter is dreadful. When an enemy is on the retreat, they are also employed in the manner of the Cossacks, to destroy all stragglers and foraging parties, in which species of service they are expert to a degree of horror. Long practice, a great degree of muscular strength, and the excellent temper of their weapons, enable them to strike off the head of an opponent at a single stroke, or to cleave the

most

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head and neck to the shoulders with the greatest ease.

Colonel Montes, the leader of this band, is a native of the plains of the Apure, where, like most of his countrymen, he for many years led the same wandering, unsettled, and plundering kind of life which is pursued by the inhabitants of that part of Venezuela.) His own prowess, rather than any interest, which among such a race is of very secondary consideration, obtained for him the command of the band who now received us, and were to act as our coadjutors. In person he is tall, well-proportioned, and graceful; and he possesses amazing strength and activity. He is at the same time exceedingly brave and humane, never putting any of the prisoners to death, like the other guerilla chiefs, but always leaving them to the disposal of the commandant of the province or district. He is also unremittingly assiduous in his efforts to prevent the horrible massacres to which the troops under him are addicted, even among themselves; and although such occurrences are not very rare with them, he has done much to subdue their ferocious spirit. His disposition is slightly tainted with the national jealousy so prevalent with the South American chiefs; and as a candidate for military fame he is somewhat selfish and illiberal. But these are his only faults; in all other respects he is generous, good natured, and

sincere ; and although he never would allow that the British troops possessed any merit, and was at all times detracting from their exertions for the establishment of the independence of his country, he was ever ready and eager to perform any offices of kindness for them. He would always oblige them as far as his means would allow ; and frequently gave them a proportion of the provisions the necessities of his own famishing band could but very ill afford. He has cultivated literature very successfully ; and is regarded in Congress as a man of considerable talent. He has no guile, and whatever he does is done openly, and without the least disguise. No man may be more safely relied on ; his word was never broken, and his abhorrence of falsehood and duplicity is proverbial.

The division bivouacked for the night on the fine sandy beach which extends round the bay, and at sunrise next morning took up a position in front of the city, but not within reach of its guns by a considerable distance. This position was merely occupied preparatory to our encampment, which was to be formed on the arrival of the general's horses and baggage-mules. They reached us towards the close of the day, having proceeded overland from Barcelona ; and we were ordered to encamp about two miles and a half from the advance battery. Although the climate at Cumana is by no means unhealthy, we found the heat in-

tolerably oppressive, and probably we felt it the more severely, from being reduced by our previous privations to a state of great bodily debility. What was equally untoward, the scarcity of provisions was as prevalent here as on our former station. Colonel Montes had failed in his endeavours to procure some cattle before our arrival, and we were ordered to remain in the same state of idle starvation as before. Nothing further was done for two days, and it really appeared as if Urdenetta wished to give the Spaniards time to prepare themselves for the threatened attack as well as they could; for he still *talked* of fighting. Had we possessed a sufficiency of food, our situation here would have been agreeable rather than otherwise; but our absolute wants were so ill provided for, that many of the men were incapable of standing; and about twenty of them actually died of starvation. Nor by this time could the indecision and weakness of their commander be longer concealed from the troops; and this perception, united to their great personal endurances, naturally tended to damp their energies, and render them indifferent to the fate of the campaign. On the whole, however, considering the many disheartening circumstances which they had encountered, they behaved extremely well.

Cumana is a large, well-built, and populous city, possessing many handsome edifices worthy of

notice. At the time of our approach it was extremely well fortified, and garrisoned by upwards of two thousand good troops, plentifully supplied with every necessary for an army.) In the annals of the revolutionary warfare it has been rendered remarkable by the following event.

When Bolivar) was only a brigadier-general in the Venezuelan service he (once possessed this place, but as he was completely surrounded by the Spanish forces, he did not feel himself secure, and left it for the purpose of obtaining an additional supply of men to defend it. On his departure he appointed his aide-de-camp, Captain Chamberlayne, an Englishman, to the command of the city, and of the few troops which he left behind ; with orders to hold out to the last extremity. Poor Chamberlayne, not having more than two hundred regular troops under his orders, called upon the inhabitants of the town to assist him, and prepared himself for the assault in the best manner he was able. The enemy advanced with overwhelming force ; and after an obstinate struggle of three weeks' continuance, obliged him to enter the casa forte as a dernier resort. Casa forte signifies a strong house ; and every city in the interior of Colombia possesses one, being in such a country an important means of defence ; and when artillery is not at hand, impregnable. The walls of these erections are constructed with tiers of loop-holes,

and answerable gangways, for musketry to fire through; and they are sometimes surrounded by a ditch and ramparts, on which guns may be mounted, if they have any. Should, therefore, an enemy succeed in taking the city, he has still the casa forte to gain; a post so difficult to obtain, that it has in all cases baffled the besiegers, except, as already observed, when possessed of artillery, which is very rarely an appendage to armies in the interior parts of America, owing to the insuperable difficulty of removing it.

When the unfortunate Captain Chamberlayne entered the casa forte of Cumana, the time had passed when, according to his pledge, Bolivar should have returned to his assistance; but he still gallantly held out. For three days and three nights he resisted all the attempts of the enemy, fighting incessantly; and although destitute of provisions, he refused to surrender. At length some guns were brought up, and a bombardment commenced: still he would not yield; and did not despair until one end of the casa forte was beaten down, and the inhabitants who had entered it with him determined to surrender, in the vain expectation of receiving quarter. He addressed himself to them, and pointed out the dreadful fate which awaited them, but they refused to listen. He then turned himself to a lovely young creature who had followed his fortunes from Caraccas,

where they had been united, and to whom he was tenderly attached, and asked her if she would prefer sharing immediate death with him, to a lingering one from the hands of the Spaniards? She at once chose the former; and entreated him to put an end to her life at once; on which he instantly directed one pistol to her head, and another to his own; and the next moment this young, attached, and ill-fated pair had ceased to exist. The Spaniards then entered at the invitation of the survivors, and in conformity with their usual custom put every individual of them to death.

Three days after we had landed, the fleet entered the Gulf of Curiaco, that it might be in closer communication with the division, which by a correspondent movement came nearer its banks. To obtain this position the ships had to pass the city, which opened a heavy cannonading on them; and the fire was returned by Brion, but at so respectful a distance that not a shot fell within half a mile of the object on either side. The gulf is entered by a narrow strait, which runs before the city, and extends many miles through the country, opening to view some of the most enchanting scenery that can be conceived.

Two days more passed away, and nothing was effected, and we had now attained to a worse state than we found ourselves in at Barcelona. Urde-

netta, who had been closely engaged at his favourite game of monte ever since our arrival, now despaired, as usual, because the admiral churlishly refused to spare him any of the immense stock of provisions he had on board the fleet. This refusal, which would have excited a more able and spirited commander to an immediate attack on Cumana, produced in him a determination diametrically opposite. He adopted the resolution of sending back the division to Margarita, and of fleeing himself to Angostura; and was only prevented from the execution of it by the refusal of Brion to convey the troops. At the expiration of two days more he came to another equally wise decision, that of leaving Cumana as he had found it; and as there were no provisions to be had from the fleet, or to be obtained in that vicinity, he gave orders for a march to the town of Maturin, six hundred miles across the worst part of the country. Here was delectable intelligence for a starving army; and the intention, under such circumstances, may afford something like a competent idea of the military genius of our sapient commander. Instead of endeavouring to capture a city, which contained an abundance of every thing that his troops required, he proposed to march them, broken down as they were, through rivers and forests, over mountains and a branch of the Cordillera of the Andes, without a day's food in possession! It is

true, that to the natives it mattered little whether the country afforded rations or not, for with a bundle of sugar-cane they could have marched well for a month. Moreover, the farther they proceeded the fewer would there have been to provide for, as desertion follows a march of Creole troops, as certainly as the report succeeds the flash in the firing off a musket. (But to Europeans, already in a declining and debilitated state, and what was worse, with minds immersed in despondency, such a journey, as was subsequently proved, could not but be in a high degree fatal.

We were impatiently waiting for orders for the assault of Cumana, when Urdenetta made known his intentions to General English. A consultation was immediately held by the principal officers of the brigade, and accompanied by English, they waited upon Urdenetta in a body, and remonstrated with him on the impolicy of his proceedings. They assured him that the men would certainly mutiny, and added, that they would no longer be responsible for the consequences, if he persisted in the intended march. After a lengthened consultation, he most reluctantly consented to an attack upon Cumana; but positively declined giving any directions himself. "If it be done," said he, "it must all rest upon yourself, General English." This was nearly as bad as a direct refusal, as English relished fighting very little, and

felt alarmed at thus having the responsibility thrown upon himself. Under this double impulse, he was on the point of abandoning the attempt, and of yielding to the wishes of Udenetta, when his staff interfered, and urged him to bear the onus for once. At length, with a doleful countenance he agreed; and orders were issued for marching to the advance battery the same night.

This work, which is called Aqua Santa, is built on the summit of a sugar-loaf hill, and commands nearly the whole of the redoubts. The foot of the hill, on the top of which it is erected, is easy of access; but the battery is surrounded by a wide and deep ditch, which is perfectly dry. On the outer ramparts are mounted several heavy pieces of artillery, and within there is another fosse, over which extends a narrow platform, removeable at pleasure; and this, when let down, communicates with a large and lofty casa forte, that was crowded with soldiers when we approached it. There are several other powerful redoubts between Aqua Santa and the town on the opposite side of the former, from which volleys were fired at the storming parties on the hill, the entire slope of which is enfiladed by all the loopholes and gangways of the casa forte. Within the town there is also the Castle of St. Juan, which is strong, but must necessarily quickly follow the

fate of the other fortifications, on which it is dependent.

Three hundred of the British legion, a rifle company of Colonel Usler's regiment, and the seamen, formed the advance, under the command of Major Davy ; while the main body moved to support them as occasion might require. (We marched at the close of day, taking with us two Creoles as guides ; who after conducting us to the bottom of the first hill we had to ascend, either through treachery or cowardice deserted. It was afterwards asserted by one of Urdenetta's own officers, that he was employed by that general to bribe them to leave us, and to go forward to Cumana to give notice of our approach to the Spaniards.) I cannot vouch for the truth of this statement ; but the officer who had openly expressed his intention of proving it to Congress, was found dead the morning after the attack, with his throat cut as if by a machetti.

We now missed our way, and so much time was lost in regaining the right direction, that morning dawned long before our operations could be commenced ; and the Spaniards were in perfect readiness to receive us, which they did very warmly. I had been directed to prepare and fix the scaling ladders, of which there were but few ; and those hastily got up for the purpose, during

our passage from Barcelona. While examining them at the foot of the hills, whither they were brought by a party of Creoles from the ships, an order was brought me from General English to proceed instantly with my men to aid the rifles and advance column, by firing at the enemy on the ramparts, and to leave the ladders to be conveyed by the natives. I obeyed, and joined them just as they reached the brow of the hill; at which moment above a hundred pieces of cannon opened their fire upon us from the various fortifications. The men returned it with interest, and vied with each other in coolness. The sailors, from their practice at Barcelona, had become unerring shots; and in conjunction with the rifles, in less than ten minutes shot every Spaniard from the guns on the ramparts.

The advanced columns of the legion had turned their attention on the casa forte, and were busily engaged with it; while the rifles and seamen were employed against the block-house of Aqua Santa, from which the guns were playing without intermission at not more than forty yards from them. The poor fellows were dropping fast, and this destructive fire must have speedily destroyed the whole of them, unless measures had been adopted to prevent it. I therefore ordered my own party, who had suffered severely, to take post round the

summit of the hill, in such a manner that their heads were scarcely visible above it when they fired, while it wholly covered them when loading. During the time they were attending to this order, a tremendous volley was discharged from the gangways, which killed all the officers of the rifles except one, who was severely wounded in the legs. At his request I took the command of them, and gave the same directions to his men, who were now reduced to half their original number, which I had given my own. They proceeded with the usual German coolness to their stations, and I placed myself between them and my own party. Thus protected they took such certain aim at the enemy, that when the latter appeared at the loopholes, the gangways, or on the ramparts, which they did suddenly to fire and then retreat again, they were picked off in a moment. The advance followed our example, and the whole being now comparatively sheltered, the fire from the enemy soon terminated, and nothing remained but to enter the moat. This was soon effected; but now an unlooked-for difficulty presented itself. While the heavy fire was kept up, the natives, on whom we had depended to bring the scaling ladders, were afraid to venture up the hill; and even when it ceased, they only moved at a creeping pace. From the bottom of the ditch to the top of the

ramparts, it was more than twenty-five feet in perpendicular height, so that without the scaling ladders it was impossible to ascend.

As soon as this fact was discovered, Major Davy ordered me to seek out and expedite the ladders, and accordingly selecting fifty men to accompany me, I leaped out of the ditch. The Spaniards inferring from this proceeding that we were retreating, immediately recommenced their fire from the block-house, but happily without effect. Half way down the hill, I saw the natives with the objects of our search, but they dropped them and scampered off in all directions when they heard the recommencement of the musketry, leaving us to carry them ourselves in the best manner we were able. On nearly gaining the summit, a twenty-four pounder, from the outer ramparts, came directly in the middle of the party, struck one of the ladders, and killed four men, the splinters wounding many more. This was only a prelude to the re-opening of all the artillery, which immediately took place. The remainder of the seamen and the troops being in the moat, could sustain no injury whatever, as they were completely sheltered; so that I was not sorry when I was with them again, the fire now being as heavy as it had ever been) and all directed down the hill.

On getting into the moat again, we commenced fixing the ladders, when we heard the bugles

sound a retreat.) Major Davy was astonished, but thought that it might be intended for the main body, who were probably marching to aid us, and that the general perceiving we were under cover, had deemed their farther advance unnecessary. The firing was now completely silenced; and our commander could have nothing to apprehend for our safety. In five minutes we should have been masters of the place, and consequently) as it did not seem reasonable that our retreat was intended, (we took no notice of the signal. The major now ordered me to mount with my men, and the soldiers were preparing to follow, when again the retreat sounded. Uncertain as to the cause, but still thinking that the signal could have no reference to us, we proceeded. Captain Sadler, of the light company, was the first man who gained the ramparts, and I had reached the last step of the ladder, when again the bugle was blown. Captain Sadler, who was on my right hand, looked round to ascertain the cause, and the same moment was struck with a musket-ball in the head, and fell backwards dead into the moat, as did three or four soldiers at the same time.)

I now stepped on the ramparts myself, followed by Lieutenant Peters of the navy and Lieutenant Lyons of the grenadier company. The Spaniards, after discharging a badly-directed volley at us, approached to attack us with the

bayonet. The conflict was short: they were driven from the ramparts by the brave fellows, who ascended by dozens, and swept all before them. The firing from the loop-holes of the casa forte was now again renewed a little, which we were successfully returning, when a fourth time the bugles were sounded, on which Major Davy, who could doubt no longer, ordered me to descend; but before we could get clear of the ramparts Lieutenant Peters, with ten or twelve men, were killed as they were getting on the ladders. Lieutenant Lyons, who fought most bravely, was also shot by one Spaniard while he was wrenching a musket from the hands of another, just as we had driven them back again.

The command to descend without firing another shot being now reiterated, nothing was left us but to quit the ramparts, and tamely suffer the Spaniards to slaughter as many as they could. I received a blow on the head from the butt of a musket, which, but for some riflemen, would have precipitated me to the bottom of the moat, and in all probability have seriously injured me, but they caught and supported me. I fortunately wore a strong silk hat, covered with oiled silk, to withstand the wet, which saved me, although it was completely crushed. On recovering from the stunning effects of the blow, I left the ditch with inconceivable mortification. I had seen above

three hundred gallant fellows uselessly sacrificed, and among them were several to whom I was attached from the sufferings and privations which we had endured together, and by the little offices of kindness which we had mutually interchanged. With Captain Sadler and Lieutenants Peters and Lyons I had been on terms of great intimacy. The latter had endeared himself to all who were acquainted with him, by his mild and gentlemanly deportment and amiable disposition. After our retreat his body was taken into Cumana, where it was quartered, and exposed to our view on various parts of the casa forte, his watch and clothes being distributed among the barbarians who performed the disgusting office. I some time after saw a woman at Maracaibo, the wife of a Spanish serjeant, who showed me his watch, which had fallen to her husband's share. This I purchased, and on my return to Angostura had it conveyed to his mother in England.

The survivors in this unfortunate affair felt deeply that their brave comrades had been uselessly martyred; and as General English had been allowed the sole command on the occasion, he was naturally, although erroneously, supposed to be the cause of our recal, and as far as ardent wishes went, he was not spared. Upon our evacuating the moat, the soldiers at the block-house again appeared, as did those on the ramparts;

and these, together with the whole of the guns, again poured forth among us, by which firing several more men were destroyed. (On reaching the bottom of the hill, we found the main body formed into close columns of sections, presenting the front only of a section to the works, by which manœuvre few of the balls took effect on them. (They had been moving to our support by the orders of General English, when Urdenetta, who, agreeably to his declaration the previous day, had taken no part in the direction of the assault, rode forward, and ordered them to halt, and commanded the bugles to be sounded for the retreat of the storming party.) This provoking step he justified by saying that he wished to save them from the second fire; but he well knew that they were all under cover at the time, and that on their retreat they must unavoidably be exposed to it. This was duly represented to him; but notwithstanding the arguments and intreaties of the British officers, he persisted in our retreat, and ordered the remnant of the advance to stand on the edge of the plain, which runs from the bottom of the hill, where the enemy's balls could scarcely fail of making some farther havoc. The guerillas, and the whole of the native troops, were not far from us, but these, as usual, dispersed and took shelter behind trees, or under any other temporary refuge. As to Urdenetta, having no disposition to stand the fire himself, he rode off.

the field, leaving orders for the British troops to scatter in the manner of the natives.)

Under these awkward circumstances, Major Davy, anxious to get his men out of the reach of the shot, desired me to go to General English for orders. Unfortunately, the officer in question relished the affair as little as any one there : he was then sitting on his horse near an old uninhabited convent, talking to one of his staff ; and it so happened, that just before I got up to him, a twenty-four pounder passed between us, and struck the wall behind him, raising the dust about his ears, but not doing him the least injury. He had, in fact, never entered into the heat of the action. I requested him to give me orders to convey to Major Davy ; but he was too much agitated to attend to the appeal ; and referring me to Colonel Stopford, galloped to the banks of the gulf, and pretending sickness, went immediately on board one of the ships. As nothing could induce him again to take the field, he was never afterwards seen by the army ; but sailed to Margarita the first opportunity, where he some time after caught the yellow fever and died.

The command was now assumed by Colonel Stopford, who resolutely refused to disperse the legion in the disgraceful manner in which the natives had separated, but removed them with order and regularity. They were countermarched

on their own ground, and led out of the range of the shots; disappointment and contempt being visibly depicted on every countenance. The total loss of the advanced column was eight officers, and one hundred and seventy-five rank and file; and that of the seamen, one hundred and thirty-four men, exclusive of three officers. The former had about eighty wounded, the latter forty-seven.

On the return of the division to its previous encampment we accidentally met two companies of Spanish troops) which had been sent from the town of Curiaco, in the upper part of the gulf, to strengthen the garrisons of Cumana, and (who, from ignorance of our situation, fell directly across our line. Their fate may be easily anticipated: Urdenetta immediately ordered the work of extermination to commence; but the English refused to hurt one of them. The natives were not so scrupulous, and in a quarter of an hour not an individual among them breathed.) Presently after a captain of grenadiers, and three men who had lingered behind owing to illness, came up; and being seized by a party of Creoles, were carried before Urdenetta. The officer was born in Spain of English parents, and had entered the Spanish army at a very early age: from his youth, not being at this time more than nineteen years of age, he excited much pity and commiseration among the officers of the legion, who entreated Urde-

netta to spare his life. He gave his word of honour that he would do so; but in the dead of the night he had him and his men taken from the quarters allotted to them, and privately butchered. I saw them the next morning, about two hundred yards in the rear, all tied together naked, their heads nearly severed from their bodies by the machetti, and several slight wounds inflicted upon them, as if by way of torture, before the finishing stroke was given.

The attack on Oumana took place on the 15th or 16th of September, which is generally after the time of the commencement of the rainy season in that province; but it had not yet begun with much violence, its approach being only marked by a few heavy showers of short continuance. This night, however, it did not cease; and it materially added to our sufferings, as we had no shelter beyond what the brushwood afforded, which was very little indeed: at the same time we were without a single change of clothes, every article of our apparel being aboard the fleet. To add to our sufferings, for ten days, that is up to the time of our departure, we had been subsisted merely by a small portion of sugar-cane per diem each man; to which was sometimes added, but very rarely, a few plantains, when Brion thought proper to spare them from the fleet.

CHAPTER VI.

Periodical Rains in South America—Message from Admiral Brion—Author deprived of his Vessel—Resentment of his Crew on board—Quits the Ship—Anger of the Naval Party ashore—March of the Division for Maturin—Its dreadful sufferings and losses—Majestic Serpents—Unexpected Relief—Cordillera of the Andes—Author's solitary Excursion across them—Danger of Sleep—Sagacity of the Author's Dog—View from the Summit—Author regains the Division—Arrival at Maturin—Illness of the Troops—Cruelty and Cupidity of Urdenetta.

Persons who are unacquainted with the periodical falls of rain in South America, can form but a very inadequate idea of their powerful and devastating effects.) For days, and even weeks, they unceasingly descend in overwhelming torrents, through which objects only thirty yards distant from the eye can scarcely be discovered. The waters rush down from the mountains with terrific force, bearing every thing away with them; and in the narrow passages, between the acclivities, forming multitudes of rivers, which the traveller has continually to ford. These uniting with the Orinoco, overflow its fertile banks, and inundate the country for leagues, destroying every semblance of vegetation, and forcing the cattle to the high lands until the deluge subsides. To the worn-down tra-

veller, who has to penetrate through this part of the country, the astonishing roar of the innumerable falls, dashing downward with majestic violence, united with the yells of myriads of monkeys, which infest the forests, and with the roar of the inferior kind of tigers that also abound in them, conspire in the gloom of night to create an effect on the nerves of a very thrilling description. To add to the real and imaginative horror of the situation, you are aware—for the thing often happens—that yourself, or the companion with whom you are beguiling away the tedious hours in conversation, turned perhaps on the scenes of happier times, may be suddenly borne away by the gushing flood. It may be the lot of either him or you to hear that voice, which but a moment before was cheering and urging to fresh exertions, uttering the agonizing shrieks of death, and imploring that assistance which cannot be afforded; self-preservation, in spite of inclination, leaving no alternative but the abandonment of the luckless individual to his dreadful fate.

The departure of the division from the scene of our thwarted enterprise, was fixed for the second day after its created miscarriage. Early that morning I received a message from Admiral Brion, through the medium of Mr. Ayres, the officer who had reported my observations to him, to the following effect: “If you think proper to

receive an inferior rank on board the *El Oceana*, until Captain Barrinco leaves her, you can take it; but the ship which you now command is wanted for a particular service, and must be given up. If this offer meets not your wishes, Admiral Brion will have to regret the loss of your services."

To the bearer of this complimentary announcement I simply remarked, that I would wait on the admiral. The retention of a vessel, under such a commander, was now become a matter of indifference; as I well knew from experience, that I could never do my duty to Venezuela, or any good for myself, with a man whose jealousy, and want of enterprise, must prove a total bar to my advancement. Besides, my temperament was too ardent for the endurance of so many shackles; and I began to entertain hopes of receiving a vessel from the hands of Congress itself, seeing that my patron, Arismendez, was at the head of the government. I therefore went on board the flag-ship to give my answer, with a degree of unaffected carelessness; and was received by the admiral with correspondent cool politeness. He said he lamented that circumstances obliged him to take the vessel from me, while his looks seemed to indicate that he took much pleasure in doing so. I merely observed, that as I had been introduced and recommended to his notice by General Arismendez, it was necessary that I should have a

certificate of the cause of my removal from my vessel, as also of my conduct while in command of it. This I claimed under his own hand, as I intended to proceed to Angostura, where, as a servant of the Republic, I should have to account for my presence to the vice-president and Congress, by whom my rank had been confirmed. This document he instantly gave me, in terms as satisfactory as I could desire ; and we parted with the same studied politeness on his part, and real nonchalance on mine.

I then went on board my own ship, for the last time, in order to give the effects I had afloat into the charge of my first lieutenant, to convey them to Angostura, as I could procure no mules to carry them by land. It was soon whispered among the crew, that the admiral had deprived me of the command ; and a part of them, deputed by the whole, came to my cabin to inquire if the report were true. I of course answered in the affirmative ; on which they declared their intention of quitting her also ; but, by dint of earnest persuasion and entreaty, I prevailed on them to relinquish such an idea. It could not but occur to me, that Brion might take advantage of such a revolt, to make an unfavourable representation of me to Arismendez, whose good opinion I was anxious to retain ; not to mention my knowledge of what the poor fellows would have to endure in their medi-

tated journey to the capital. Having happily succeeded thus far, I went ashore, taking with me only a favourite dog, and my papers. With those who were left of my party on land, I was not so successful; they were determined to go to Angostura, without returning on board. Urdenetta ordered part of the legion to compel them, but the latter declined. The natives were then called out; but, although nearly a thousand strong, they would as willingly have faced the batteries of Cumana, as have attacked them. They were, therefore, likely to have their own way; but I renewed my efforts, and finally prevailed upon them to return to their duty on board. They, however, all deserted upon their arrival at Margarita, with many more; and the Republic lost, at one time, 800 of the best seamen Colombia ever boasted.

Little time served to prepare us for our march. The encampment was broken up the same day, and we proceeded amidst the pouring rain, which drenched us to the skin, and rendered the plains one vast sheet of water, the sandy bottom of which was so soft, that we sank into it above the knees. The division could take no baggage along with it, government having failed to supply it with a sufficient quantity of horses and mules, although both were so plentiful in the country. The few that were attached to the troops, had been monopolized by General Urdenetta, for his own stores and

baggage. Our orders were, in the first instance, to proceed to the town of Maturin, where we were to halt until instructions should be forwarded by Congress, directing our future disposal. With the vain hope of obtaining supplies, we were to take Cumanacoa, the head-quarters of Colonel Montes, in our way; in reaching which place we spent four days. These formed the most pleasant portion of the march, as regarded the state of the roads; but when we had accomplished the intended stage, nothing could be done for us by Montes, whose men were subsisting in the same manner as ourselves. To our great annoyance, we here learned, that when we were on the point of leaving Barcelona, Urdenetta received an express from General Bermudez, to inform him that he would join him on a certain day, with his cavalry, and a large drove of wild cattle, which he had procured with great exertion for the use of the division. As if our commander were determined to throw every obstacle he could in our way, and wilfully resolved to reduce his troops to appalling privations which they were enduring, he ordered them to re-embark, just two days before the appointed time for the arrival of Bermudez, although, for the six previous weeks, he had stubbornly persisted to remain, when there was no chance of ensuring a day's subsistence.

The consequences of this conduct were ex-

tremely disastrous. Anxious to keep his promise, General Bermudez, by forced marches, reached Barcelona on the day which he had appointed; when he was informed of our expedition against Cumana. He immediately resolved to join us there; but his horses were so fatigued by their great exertions, he was compelled to rest a considerable time at Barcelona; an unavoidable, but fatal delay, as he did not reach Cumana, which he supposed we had taken, until after we had left it. The Spaniards, who had gained some information of his approach, hoisted Independent colours, to confirm his previous delusion; and stationed large parties in the woods through which he had to pass, with orders to let him proceed unmolested until they could completely surround him, and then to commence the work of massacre. These instructions were strictly attended to, and General Bermudez, being taken by surprise, was completely defeated. After gallantly fighting for two days and nights, he however spiritedly dashed through his numerous enemies, and escaped over an immense tract of country to Aragua, where he took up his headquarters, having left 500 lancers dead on the scene of action, and all his supplies of cattle and ammunition in the hands of the enemy.

After halting one night at Cumanacoa, the march was continued onwards, under circumstances of privation and distress which have seldom been

exceeded. All description of the dreadful sufferings endured must fall far short of the reality, which would scarcely gain credence. Our road lay across minor rivers, whose streams were so swollen and currents rendered so strong and rapid by the falls of rain, that in fording them numbers of the men, from their excessive debility, were unable to bear up against their force. The footing once lost, all is over; the rush of waters bears the body down with the rapidity of a shot, dashing it in its course against stumps of trees, jutting rocks, and loose stones, until life is extinct, and the sweeping tide is stained with blood. We had also several mountains to pass; and the waters winding round their diversified forms, produced, according to the number of passages between them, so many different streams for us to wade through; insomuch, that in one day the same piece of water, owing to its various windings, may be crossed more than ten times.

The excessive fatigue of exertions so unremitting, under circumstances which were otherwise very afflictive, soon broke down many of the already reduced troops, and above four hundred of the British perished, besides natives, and even those who escaped the death which lay in wait for them at every step, were so wretchedly enfeebled that even death itself was earnestly wished for. Their shoes, from being constantly saturated with water,

became so enlarged, that they were continually escaping from the feet; and to add to their misery, the surfaces of the mountains were chiefly composed of sharp-pointed stones, resembling in colour broken Scotch granite, but harder, and in some parts approaching to the appearance and quality of white flints. By this latter species of stones, the edges of which are so keen and hard that the poorer Indians use them as knives and hatchets, the feet of the men were so shockingly lacerated, that on the more elevated and dry rocks their course might have been tracked by the bloody marks of their footsteps. The deep gashes thus made were soon filled up by the cutting brittle sand, which is lodged between the acclivities, and which caused an inconceivable degree of torture, again heightened as they approached the plains of Maturin, by the intrusion of myriads of insects named chegoes,* from which their feet had no protection. These tormenting creatures will penetrate the skin, even where it is unbroken, and breed under it to such an extent, that unless they are speedily removed, the swarm become incalculable, and sometimes produces mortification. Their nests are not only distinguishable by the acute pain they cause, which is somewhat similar to the application of caustic, but by the small white pustules in which they are encased. To effectu-

* Commonly termed jeggars by the negroes and Indians.

ally remove them, these pustules must be taken out perfectly unbroken; for if they are opened, they increase quite as mischievously as if they had not been disturbed. This is best effected by making a circular incision with a sharp-pointed knife, or needle, with which the bladder must be lifted up and crushed on a stone, or any other hard substance; after which, to prevent any eggs that may remain from being vivified, the ashes of a cigar ought to be introduced, which I have reason to believe has been found the most effectual remedy.

In the numerous woods through which we passed, our ears were incessantly assailed by the screams of the flying monkeys, who united to express their indignation at our trespass on their peaceful seclusion. Part of these were shot, and eaten, but owing to their extreme sagacity, they were but few, and those of the youngest. Their flesh is like that of the wild rabbit in appearance, but somewhat sweeter to the taste. At night, the different sounds of these and other animals, united with the howlings of the storm, the creepings of the numbers of lizards over the troops as they reposed, and the consciousness of being surrounded not only by snakes in abundance, but by the small kinds of lions and tigers* with which these woods

* These animals are small, and will not attack men; but will steal after marching armies, or droves of mules, for weeks, waiting for the death of any part of them.

are plentifully stocked, all conspired to banish sleep, and to keep the mind completely alive to the horrors of the situation. Nor were these horrors lessened by the melancholy indication which the roars of the last-mentioned carnivorous brood afforded, of the fate of the remains of the poor fellows, who were continually falling martyrs to their sufferings, which for the most part found a grave in the entrails of these savage beasts of prey. The precaution and comfort of having fires round the camp could not be taken, as the descent of the rain, which resembled the burst of a water-spout, extinguished them as soon as kindled. At the same time the ground on which we lay was covered with water to the depth of from six to nine inches, so that we were obliged to prop up our heads with any thing we could procure, to avoid suffocation.)

During our progress we necessarily passed many standing pools of water, which, as we approached the plains of Maturin, where the lands being so much higher were not inundated, became more frequent. At these the soldiers, at first, were in the habit of stooping to assuage their thirst, until several of them were found dead at the margin of these receptacles for small alligators and snakes of the most poisonous description. When it happened that one of these pools, which were sometimes of vast extent, lay directly across our path, so as to render it necessary to

march a long way round, many of the most fatigued and reckless of existence among the troops preferred wading through them. In several of such instances, a species of fish, called the raya, oftentimes seized their thighs and the calves of their legs, and tore large pieces from them, leaving those who survived altogether incapable of further service. Some of the men so bitten were obliged to be left behind, as they could not walk; and the mules, which were engrossed by the general, were not allowed to carry them. These unhappy persons would earnestly implore their comrades to shoot them, instead of abandoning them to starvation; and certainly a speedy death in such dreary instances would have proved a blessing. Many of the troops had ulcers which deprived them of their toes—one of the many disagreeable consequences of low living and unwholesome food; and others were lamed by the thorns of the sensitive plant, which penetrated the soles of their feet. Ulcers were also produced on various parts of the body by the sudden transitions from heat to cold, occasioned by the scorching rays of the sun on the mountains, after being so long saturated in the waters of the lowlands; and upon the whole a more horrible complication of evils has seldom been inflicted by military incapacity than that which in this dreary march was encountered by our ill-fated band.

On two occasions we saw individuals of a large species of serpent, beautifully variegated, lying directly across our path, in the higher parts of a wood, and near its limits. The faint rays of the setting sun playing on its colours added greatly to their brilliancy. As soon as it descried us, it made a majestic bound across the road into the thickest of the brushwood, but without betraying fear, either by look or motion; and apparently only anxious to live unobserved. The leap was very graceful: the head was first raised proudly, and then gently drooped until the neck was curved like that of a swan; the tail was placed in three coils on the ground, into which extremity all its strength seemed gradually to concentrate, when the head was again elevated, and at one spring it cleared the path, cutting the air like a whip. The natives were surprised and alarmed at its appearance, as they believed it to be the boa constrictor, which is very numerous in New Grenada, but had not hitherto been discovered in Venezuela. In length, I should suppose this serpent to be from fourteen to sixteen feet, and about three in circumference at the largest part of the body.

We continued our irksome journey until we came near the branch of the Cordillera of the Andes, which stretches across the route from Cumana to Maturin. Its "cloud-capt" summits towered before us abruptly, just as we had

emerged from an extensive wood, which we had been traversing for three nights and three days. We had previously deemed our progress sufficiently calamitous, and had never contemplated this new and stupendous difficulty, to surmount which the little strength we had left seemed wholly inadequate. The natives were the first to despair; and as those who were inured to such marches, and accustomed to ascend the mountains of the Cordillera in every excursion, gave up the idea of surviving it, a spirit of despondency spread over the whole party, and many, but for the laudable efforts of their officers, would have laid themselves down to perish without another exertion. At this moment, when all our former toils and wants appeared on the point of being exceeded, we were providentially destined to receive an unlooked-for succour, as abundant as it was timely. On a plain (at the top of an eminence we saw a herd of wild cattle and horses, near to, and intermingling with each other; and rendered indifferent by the cravings of nature as to which of them we procured, some of the horses, being the nearest, were first brought down, and a few of the bullocks. My dog, which was partly of the bull-breed, was particularly active, and seized some of the cattle by the nose as they were endeavouring to escape, and held them till the natives had hamstrunged them.)

For the first time since we had partaken of the Spanish lancers' horses at Barcelona, we now enjoyed a sufficient meal. The manna that descended to the relief of the fugitive tribes of Israel in the wilderness, was not more acceptable. Those who have never been reduced to a similar extremity can but faintly conceive the luxury of such a repast, from which at other times we should have turned with loathing and disgust. The flesh was devoured raw, and without any thing else to heighten its relish, yet it still seemed sweeter than the banquet of princes.) The poor fellows ate till their respiration was exhausted, then paused to expatiate on their good fortune, and again ate till satisfied; but many of them paid dearly for their imprudence. It had been the wish of the officers to apportion a certain quantity to each man, but the cravings of hunger having overcome all regard to subordination, their orders were not heeded, and the flesh was devoured reeking from the carcasses while they had power to swallow. They then laid themselves down to sleep; and when the bugles were sounded for our march the next day, it was discovered that several of them had died from excessive repletion. The native troops lost more in comparison with their numbers than the British, and many of them were obliged to be left behind in consequence of being ill, who were never afterwards seen or heard of.

After this repast, I fell into a profound and refreshing sleep, which was the first of more than two hours' duration that any of us had enjoyed since we left Cumanacoa; for, as delay was literally death, we had hurried on while our wearied limbs could sustain us, that we might reach Maturin ere we perished of hunger. The sun had gilded the lofty ascent before us long before the camp was stirring, when, having enjoyed a salutary rest of about fourteen hours, at the base of the lowest mountain of the chain, where we had bivouacked, I arose refreshed, and comparatively strong, and my brother officers were the same. After a substantial breakfast we proceeded upwards, having provided ourselves with a sufficiency of food to last us with moderation several days. That part of the branch of the Cordillera which we had to cross, was, by the computation of the country, about nine thousand feet above the level of the sea, though perhaps not more than eight thousand from the base, as the ground gradually rises at every step from the sea as you proceed inland. There was another link of the same chain a little to the right of our road, which was considered twelve thousand feet high; but as we had no means of correctly ascertaining the height of them ourselves, we could only judge by the reports of the Creole officers, which, I should think, were not very much exaggerated.

I had heard frequently of the grandeur and sub-

limit of the views from less elevated points, and wished, if possible, to gain the extreme height of the loftiest of those before us; and supposing, from the slow progress made by the division, that by a moderate degree of exertion I could accomplish my object without being left far behind, I at once made up my mind to attempt it, if I could get a companion. In this I was disappointed, as no person would venture with me, not even of the natives, who all declared that no Indian or Creole had ever gone so far; and added, that the cold was so intense, that if I even reached the summit a deep sleep would steal over me, from which I should never awaken; it being still more likely that I should lose my footing, and descend headlong before I gained the top. (Colonel Stopford, who wished very much to accompany me, but was prevented by lameness and excessive debility, wagered me a dinner, to be eaten at Maturin, that I dared not go alone. I accepted it, and agreed to plant a flag-staff with the Independent colours fixed on it, as a proof of my success.)

Taking an extra cloak, which had belonged to a man who had died the preceding night, and a broken lance to assist me in climbing, I left the division, having my rifle and the flag-staff slung over my shoulder with my provisions, and accompanied by my dog, which would not stay

behind me. I separated from my companions about noon, and pursuing a nearer direction to the point I was making for, left them to the left, and before it was dark I had nearly lost sight of them. I slept about four hours, after having drawn upon my stock of provisions, and as I had now regularly two meals a day, I was acquiring strength hourly. I travelled all the next day, taking little rest, being apprehensive that if I lost too much time I should not overtake the division; and being without a guide or food in an unknown country, I should have been in an awkward situation. I found the temperature vary considerably as I increased my ascent, and at night it was very warm, but a refreshing breeze passing over the spot where I lay, made it agreeable. At dawn of day I again set forward, and taking advantage of an easier path winding to the left, obtained a view of my military friends, who were still proceeding, though much below me. I was now relieved from all fear of being left behind, as I was certain that I could reach the furthest extremity I wished to arrive at nearly as soon as they could arrive at the top of the part they were crossing. On perceiving them I discharged my rifle, which produced one of the most powerful echoes I ever heard, reverberating from rock to rock for a long time. It was answered by the firing of ten or twelve muskets,

the reports of which were rendered by the echo equal to those of as many twelve-pounders.

I found the air grow colder as I advanced, after ten a.m. of this the third day, and lay down at night amidst large flakes of snow, with which the summits of the Andes are continually covered. There was a slight fall of it, occasioned by the wind driving it from the higher parts; but being under the lee of a crag, it drifted over me, and my couch was free from it. In the morning the sun shone vividly, though the cold increased to severity; but I had the satisfaction of knowing that before another night I should be at the extreme point of elevation, unless accident prevented me. Thinking I had better start early enough to enable me to descend below the place where I then reposed, to sleep the next night, I did not repose more than two hours. On resuming my journey, I found that I had the most laborious part of it to perform, and in spite of my endeavours to conceal it from myself, I felt that my strength was gradually diminishing. The ascent was now, for some distance, almost perpendicular, and the face of the mountain composed of the species of stone I have before spoken of. Its sharp edges soon cut through the flimsy covering I had on my feet, which was merely a piece of cloth, and the half-closed gashes inflicted upon them at the commencement of our march were re-opened. The

blood was frozen before it could well emerge from them, and the pain was then lost in the benumbing sensation created by the cold. My hands were also lacerated by these excrescences, as I was necessarily compelled to catch hold of them at times for support. At six a.m. I found myself on a plain gradually inclining from east to west, and extending about a mile in length, and three-quarters of a mile in breadth. I ran across it to restore myself to a necessary degree of warmth, and came to the foot of another rock, as upright as the last, but more lengthy. This was the worst of all, and must have occupied me at least five hours in the ascent; although I had now no means of ascertaining the time, as my watch had stopped, and upon examination when I reached Maturin, I found the mainspring had flown into several pieces, owing to the cold.

It was while climbing this rock that I first experienced the strong inclination to sleep, which the Creoles had cautioned me against. It was very troublesome, and scarcely resistible, and at times I could not shake it off without inflicting pain on myself, which I did by striking the shaft of the lance against my forehead. The wind was blowing strong from the westward, and I had taken the precaution recommended by the natives, to envelop my head and neck warmly, and keep my face averted from it; but when the tendency

to sleep increased too violently, I turned towards the blast, which caused a sharp pain like that which follows a smart lash of a whip, and banished drowsiness for some minutes. The highly rarefied air operated so powerfully upon my lungs, and caused such an oppression, that I was under the necessity of stopping at every ten or twelve paces to gain breath; but on the slightest cessation of motion a chill, which affected every fibre, came over me, which was succeeded by the desire to repose. To proceed was sometimes impossible, and to stay was dangerous; I therefore hesitated to go farther, but feeling no wish to be laughed at for relinquishing my project, I still went on. On surmounting this steep, which had well-nigh baffled me, I found another plain, where I halted to replace the covering on my feet. About the centre of it was a small crater, which had been evidently formed by one of those volcanic eruptions so common in the Andes. From the appearance of it, it must have been burned but several years, but the streams of lava were still visible in many places, and where the snow had partially melted, several channels could be seen filled with it. The crater exhibited nothing remarkable; except its amazing depth, which was far greater comparatively than that of Mount Vesuvius.

I had now arrived at the foot of the last rock,

which was in a more sloping position than the previous ones, and consequently easier of access. After two hours I attained the height of my aerial trip, but so wearied that I could not resist the temptation of sitting down a few minutes. Here I remarked that the dozing sensation first came upon my canine compaignon de voyage, but either he had more self-command than his master, or it did not assail him so heavily. He seemed to have an instinctive dread of its effects, for the instant he felt his eyelids drooping he jumped up, and shook himself violently, and then sat down, placing his nose between his paws to shelter it from the wind. On one occasion the sagacity of this faithful animal certainly preserved me. I had sunk into the deadly slumber so far as to lose all recollection, when I was startled by his loud bark, accompanied by a rough scratching on my breast. Alarmed at the narrow escape I had, I arose directly, and the affectionate creature expressed the greatest joy when I did so, dancing round me, and licking my hands with amazing fondness as I gratefully patted him. It was now at least ten hours since I had breakfasted, and I partook sparingly of my stock of beef, having little appetite after such excessive exertion; I also gave some to my four-footed friend to amuse himself with while I looked around me.

The region was such, that I am confident no

human being could exist in it more than two or three hours, even with the severest exercise; I was therefore as hasty as possible in my observations. (Looking downwards I could plainly trace the majestic Oronoco through all its serpentine windings and its several branches, the various cities on its banks appearing like dark spots, in which no particular object could be distinguished. Cumana and Barcelona were the most distinct, and Maturin was also discernible, round which the vast plain appeared like a desert in miniature. Beyond the ocean could be seen the islands of Margarita, Trinidad, &c. like specks on an immense white sheet. The view beneath has, however, but few beauties, and soon fatigues the eye. It is on the soul-striking wonders of the Cordillera itself that the observer is induced to dwell, and which I regret my inability to portray.) The most gigantic descriptive powers would be requisite to do justice to the sublimity which assails the eye and fixes the mind in this spirit-stirring situation, even while the body is writhing under the most excruciating agony, and worn down by want and incessant toil;—which can hold the thoughts in silent and reverential contemplation, surrounded by an atmosphere in which, without an almost supernatural excitement, life is not to be maintained. The whiteness which alike overtops the hill and covers the valley, spreads a delusive brilliancy over the whole; and when the fierce rays of the

unclouded sun beam in resplendent brightness upon it, the effect is too dazzling for the sight to endure, and produces a temporary degree of blindness, attended with pain. The extreme cold, nevertheless, imparts a surprising lightness and elasticity to the frame. I felt as if it were easy to mount through the air, and even found it troublesome to keep my feet on the rock. This sensation is probably heightened, if not caused, by the peculiar buoyancy of the mind in such a situation, which seems to ascend with the eye the spiral summits and abrupt terminations of the uplifted crags; to overleap the stupendous barriers and yawning chasms between; and to descend the perpendicular precipices, as it eagerly glances at each. Rocks heaped upon rocks, mountains piled upon mountains, incessantly rise in one huge chain, till the spectator fancies the utmost limits of vision are gained, or that the terminating link is now seen; but just as the speculation is about to close, another more grand, and more terrific, peers through the mantle of light vapouring clouds by which it has been partially enveloped. Above, the sky was of a clear cerulean tint; in some places beautifully streaked, and varied with a bright silvery hue, and a pale delicate straw colour. The medium through which it is seen from this lofty station, is at all times perfectly free from the density of atmosphere which obscures the view from the ordinary level of the earth.

Gazing upon a firmament of endless space, I was imperceptibly led into a feeling of awe and admiration of the magnificent works of the Creator, and into a sentiment of pious melancholy by the loneliness in which I then stood. I have never experienced any solitude at all approaching to this. The silence of scenes more domestic and familiar, but faintly represents its thrilling stillness. The dreary wildness imposes upon the mind a widely different feeling in ease of the weight of thought which involuntarily arises and oppresses it, to that which is entertained when amidst objects less dread-inspiring. Here is a solemn grandeur, which involuntarily exalts the soul into elevated contemplation, totally opposite to the peaceful sensations which the mind enjoys in those calmer scenes of quietude where it is allowed, and tempted to think with composure. I stood high above all created life; the sole human tenant of a region which the soaring pinion of the eagle had never reached; where the footstep of the mountain goat had never been imprinted; and where, in all human probability, man had never before intruded. It was some minutes ere I could quietly contemplate the cloudless face of the heavens, pure as the vast extent of snow around me; but when I was sufficiently collected to do so, I was more than amply repaid for the toil I had undergone to accomplish it. No language can adequately

depict the tumultuous feelings which pervade the breast in such a scene; they may be forcibly felt, but cannot be described. All earthly passions are lost—all temporal considerations vanish—the thoughts are occupied in a more laudable and elevated train of reflection; man forgets the injustice of man, his own vain wants, and still vainer wishes. The soul uplifts itself to heaven, eager to relinquish the world and its miseries; rejoices to find itself so near the abode of innocence and truth, and turns, when the fond illusion is past, to the familiar things of human life—its ambition, its cares, and its fleeting happiness—with sorrow, humiliation, and disgust.

I continued absorbed in meditation till the increase of pain disturbed me from my reverie, when I found my fellow-traveller had been enjoying his bone with as much delight, though of a different nature, as I had the situation and the ideas which it inspired. It was curious to observe how he avoided getting chilled, or overpowered by sleep. Whenever he found himself affected he threw the bone as far away as possible, and ran round it till warm, and then resumed his operations anew. I now planted my flag-staff, and hoisted the Venezuelan flag of liberty upon it, and prepared to rejoin my military friends. Replacing my rifle and knapsack over my shoulder, I commenced my descent, which I found less hazardous than I had expected; for

although it was in some parts nearly perpendicular, the excrescences were so numerous and large that but little danger existed of falling, though my feet again suffered. The labour was trifling, and my breath but little affected. I went down to the foot of the second rock, which had alone cost me five hours to scramble up, in less than two, and slept in the place where I had reposed two nights before.

The seventh morning after my separation from the division I rejoined it safe and well, to the surprise of my friends, as it was slowly plodding its weary way over the plain of Maturin. Our route lay now over the beautiful sandy level which extends above three hundred miles, and we traversed it with comparative ease and celerity. After three days we arrived within sight of the spot where the warlike town of Maturin formerly stood, but which was now only marked by irregular rows of mud-built hovels. The sixth day was far advanced when we entered it, and owing to its insignificant size and poverty, we had a difficult task to procure quarters of any kind.

The ill-fated brigade was labouring under an attack of intermittent fever and ague, the inevitable consequence of being so continually immersed in water; and all the men, with very few exceptions, were affected with it. There was a small hospital here, consisting merely of two

square plots of ground, enclosed with mud walls, as apologies for rooms, without flooring, which from its dampness was ill calculated for their reception. Bad as it was, as many as it could contain huddled into it, by the direction of General Urdenetta, where, being suffered to remain without the least regard to cleanliness or comfort, in a few days they presented a shocking spectacle of human misery. Dirt, disease, and famine were the reward of the services of men who had left their country to embark in the desperate cause of those who now so ill requited them. Many were lodged in the worst hovels of the town, where they were left to perish, unless the poor inhabitants could aid them. Few or none of the cases were dangerous in themselves, had there been a supply of medicines; but the skill of the medical officers, who were numerous and highly talented, was rendered nugatory by a total absence of every necessary article, not only for restoring the health and strength of the men, but for prolonging their existence. The complaints of the British officers to Urdenetta were loud and repeated, but availed them nothing; and, as a last resource, they represented the dreadful situation of their men to General Roxas, who then commanded the cavalry of the plains, and he caused a number of wild mules, horses, and cattle, to be caught, intending some of the latter for our immediate use, and the

others to be sent to Margarita to be bartered for medicine, wine, shoes, and stores for the division. It was now confidently hoped, that their sufferings would be alleviated; but Urdenetta, in whose name the cattle had been sent to Margarita, had the inhumanity to give instructions that the produce should be appropriated to the purchase of *wines, stores, and uniforms, for his own use*, and it was heart-rending to behold so many gallant fellows pining and dying through the selfishness and cupidity of their commander.

I had myself been seized with the fever and ague, and should have been in the same plight as the troops and many of the officers, but that in the little cabin which afforded me shelter, dwelt an old Indian woman, with her son and daughter, who attended me with a degree of kindness and solicitude which would have done honour to any country. They prescribed for me the native remedy, which is simply rubbing a boiled lime, divided in halves, on the back and loins every morning and evening, from which I received wonderful benefit. In a few days, with the help of the bark of the country, which is called there "quin-quina,"* and a good constitution, I was as well as ever. I recommended the same mode of treatment to the consideration of

* Of precisely the same species as the Peruvian bark.

the surgeons, who did not attach any importance to it, but consented to a trial because nothing else was at hand; and to their surprise several of the most obstinate cases were yielding to it, and many of a slighter nature cured, when some stores were sent from Angostura by General Arismendez, and the disease was overcome. Maturin being the intended halting place of the division till orders should be received from the Congress as to its future operations, we had to remain there until these commands should arrive.

CHAPTER VII.

Unhappy Fate of the Town of Maturin—Horrible Cruelties of General Morillo to the Inhabitants—Similar Treatment of Aragne—Barbarities of Monteverde and Boves—General Roxas and his Cavalry—Kindness of General Arismendez to the Author—Vigorous Policy of that General as Vice-president of Venezuela—Want of Discipline and Patriotism of the Lower Classes of Creoles—Popularity of General Paez—Ship-builders, their Cupidity, and how remedied by General Arismendez—General Urdenetta superseded—General Marino—Nefarious Conduct and fraudulent Proceedings of General Devereux—Unhappy Fate of the Troops raised by him—Present Situation of that unprincipled Adventurer.

MATURIN was formerly one of the first cities in Venezuela, and was the favourite resort of the wealthy inhabitants, till the revolutionary war commenced, when this city, which was suspected of containing many persons attached to the cause of independence, was made the first object on which the Spaniards wreaked their vengeance. It was attacked and defended with much obstinacy, but was at length overcome; and the Royalists, immediately after gaining possession, finding that they could not maintain it without a large garrison, which they could not then spare, burned it to the ground, and left not one building standing. Here General Morillo practised some of his demoniacal acts of barbarity upon the inhabitants who fell into

his hands. Many of the principal families had escaped; and as it was known that they were immensely rich, and the amount of property which had fallen into his hands not answering his expectations, he (supposed their wealth had been buried) as it was next to impossible that they could have taken it with them. Under this idea he caused all the domestics that could be found to be collected, and tortured in the most cruel manner, in order to make them confess what they knew of the matter, and among other means employed the following. He had all the soles of their feet literally cut off, and caused large quantities of sand to be procured from the neighbouring plain, which he had heated as hot as it could be made, and forced the wretched creatures to walk over it in their lacerated state. There were many of these victims to his brutality living at Maturin when the division entered it, who bore the indelible marks of these tortures, affording indisputable evidence as to their commission. They were chiefly women, and the kind old dame with whom I lodged, and who had formerly been a servant to the governor of the city, was one of them,

The town was subsequently rebuilt twice, but each time shared the same fate; as did the peaceful town of Aragüe, beautifully situated at the bottom of the last mountain of the branch of the Cordillera, but which, upon its being rebuilt a second

time, was allowed to remain. (In the latter place only a few mutilated persons were left to reveal the dreadful fate of most of their neighbours and kindred, who were put to death in the most barbarous ways that ingenuity could devise. I here also saw several women whose ears and noses had been cut off, their eyes torn from their sockets, their tongues cut out, and the soles of their feet pared by the orders of Monteverde, a Spanish brigadier-general.) This wretch, with the exception of Morillo, was the most sanguinary of the Spanish commanders, and excelled all of them in perfidy. He raised the coloured population against the white, the slaves against their masters, giving them rank and wealth in proportion to the number they killed, and requiring, as proofs of their services, the heads of their victims.) Boves, another of these monsters, who subsequently commanded in this province, vied in savageness with Monteverde; but he met his death before his career was sufficiently extended to equal his predecessor. He headed an unsuccessful attempt to take Matúrin, upon whose plains his army suffered a signal defeat, and he himself was transfixed with a lance by the hand of General Roxas. The cavalry of this extensive plain have always been distinguished for their bravery, when called out under the command of Roxas, who is a negro of the Sambo tribe. He is a brave man, and has fought strenu-

ously for the Independent cause, but is perfectly illiterate, not being able to read or write. He obtained his rank in common with many others, who are indebted to the Revolution for their present enjoyments. He now resides at Maturin, of which he is the military governor. He is generous and hospitable, and partial to the British, to whom he rendered all the service he could when needed. At the east end of the town of Maturin is erected a high and extensive platform, capable of holding 1000 men, on which is mounted a gun of extraordinary length and calibre, which, upon the approach of a hostile force, is generally loaded with old nails, pieces of iron, flint stones, and any other missile at hand, and seldom fails of sweeping the enemy down in great numbers.

I had taken the first opportunity of writing to General Arismendez, to inform him of my removal from the Santa Rosa by the admiral, and had requested his advice as to my future proceedings. The same conveyance had taken a formal statement of the whole conduct of Urdenetta as their commander, addressed by the English officers to the government, and a memorial praying that an efficient officer might be appointed to supersede that general. A few days brought an order for the immediate attendance of Urdenetta and Colonel Montilla (whose name had been injudiciously mentioned in the statement) at Angostura, to ac-

count before the Congress for their behaviour. (At the same time arrived two of General Arismendez's servants, who, with his usual kindness and consideration, had rapidly despatched them with six mules to convey a part of my clothes, which had arrived at the capital in the fleet, and three hundred dollars for my immediate wants. I had also the honour of a letter from him, in which he desired me to proceed without delay to Angostura, as I was wanted on an expedition of moment.)

Little time served for preparation, and I departed from Maturin next morning and reached Angostura in three days, where I met with a most cordial reception from my patron and his lady. He expressed himself much hurt at the behaviour of Admiral Brion towards me; but as the latter had such a profusion of wealth, which was at the command of the government when it pleased him, it was not politic at that moment to agitate the question of his right to take the vessel from me after the Congress had confirmed me in the command of it, as such a proceeding might very likely have occasioned an open rupture.

Arismendez was now at the head of the country, and in the absence of the president held the reins of government completely in his own hands; and fortunate would it have been for the interests of the Republic if he had been allowed to retain

them, but party-spirit and that rancorous jealousy which has ever proved the bane of Colombia occasioned his removal before he had time to complete the well-planned arrangements he had in progress. When he was first elected vice-president, he found the affairs of the state in the most ruinous disorder which can be imagined. There was no regularly organized force in the country except the British legion; and all that the Republic had then to meet the Royalists, who numbered about 6000 good troops, were the straggling bands of guerillas, under Colonel Montes; about 600 of the same description under General Bermudez; 300 inferior cavalry) under General Monargaz; the cavalry of General Roxas, (and a small force under General Marino. To unite these forces, amounting in all to but little more than 3000, was, from their itinerant habits, a matter of impossibility; and to obtain the services of a great portion of them in a case of the most extreme urgency, was almost equally so, unless the enemy chanced to be close at hand. Not being regularly embodied, and seldom receiving pay, they partook more of the nature of irregular militia, who would return to their homes whenever they thought proper, and serve only when it pleased them. Having no pecuniary inducement from their own government, they felt no great desire to fight for its cause. Liberty they cared little about; and I

am convinced if the Spaniards could have tempted them with money, they would as cheerfully have shed the blood of their own countrymen as they would have fought in their defence. They only seemed to entertain one desire, which was that of enriching themselves, and of preserving their booty undisturbed. When the royal army happened to approach their own provinces, they would resist it, but would never, if they could avoid it, serve beyond the precincts of their own home; and whenever they have done so, the officers have been compelled to tie them together, like horses, and literally drag them, or drive them at the point of the lance to the scene of action. I will here relate one or two instances of desertion, which will more fully illustrate the feelings entertained by the lower classes in Venezuela towards the cause of independence than volumes of assertions.

General Marino wished to take part of the guerrillas under Colonel Montes, with his own force, in order to attack the enemy who were approaching Barcelona. For this purpose all the men in Cumanacoa and the parts adjacent were summoned to appear under arms on a certain day, but were kept in ignorance as to the purpose for which they were wanted. When the parade was formed, those who were destined to march were ordered into the casa forte, where they were

locked up till the following day, when they were tied together in files with ropes, of which there not being sufficient at hand, the entrails of bullocks were used as a substitute. In this manner they moved off; but before they reached the head-quarters of Marino, not more than a third of them were left, and those soon after found means to decamp. On such occasions their return to their native province is welcomed with great cordiality, and they are received with more eclat, for their well-timed escape, than would be awarded to them for the greatest act of valour they could display. Arismendez also at one time, after immense labour, got together above 2000 mulattoes, with the intention of organizing them in the manner of the British troops, with whom they were intended to serve, and procured scarlet jackets from the stores to clothe them, thinking such an ornament would be an inducement for them to continue in the service. At night they were surrounded by the British legion, to prevent their escape; but as soon as the troops were asleep in the camp, which was at the top of an eminence, the rush downwards was like the bursting forth of a body of water, and in the morning not one of them was to be found. All were gone, and what was worse, the red jackets along with them.

Such was the force destined to support the glorious cause of liberty in Venezuela. Without dis-

cipline, necessary arms, or clothing; with officers incomparably ignorant of military tactics, and themselves without the least anxiety for the success of their country. Added to these were the troops under General Paez, which were by far the best; yet so low was the ebb of patriotism, that nearly the whole of them had served under the Spanish generals, but the great hospitality of Paez induced them to join the Independent standard. These, which amounted to about 3000, could always when they pleased hold Morillo in check; and their incursive mode of warfare was particularly annoying to him whenever he took up his quarters in their vicinity. They were at this time in New Grenada, with Bolivar.

In order to remedy this deficiency of troops, Arismendez had formed a plan of raising a brigade of 4000 men, consisting of Creoles, Sambos, and Indians, by a sort of conscription, and was succeeding as well as could be desired. Half the brigade was completed, with very few desertions; for having taken every precautionary measure to prevent the final escape of any who were so inclined, those who made the first attempt were retaken and executed in the presence of the remainder, which, together with the promised rewards, retained them in the service. He also found in the stores of the capital vast quantities of ordnance and other stores, which had been purchased in

England and the United States at an immense expense, but which had lain a long time in a confused mass, no person knowing or caring what they were, although they were at this period so extremely requisite. These he had carefully assorted and applied to the purposes for which they were originally intended. At Angostura there was not a single vessel of any description which was capable of service, and the trade of the river Orinoco was entirely without protection. The carpenters taking advantage of the scarcity of hands, and the great want of vessels, one and all struck for an advance of wages, and refused to work till their demand was complied with. Arismendez, who was not to be thwarted, adopted at once the most likely means of furnishing the state with the vessels they needed. He caused four or five galleys of a great length to be erected by his soldiers, and having assembled all the carpenters in the city he told them, that unless six flecheras (gun-boats of a peculiar construction) were ready for launching in fourteen days, he would hang every one of them. It is scarcely necessary to add, that they were finished in the time allotted. These and many other things he was engaged in completing when he was removed from office; and had he but remained in it another year, the Republic would have been in a flourishing state.

Upon the arrival of General Urdenetta at Angos-

tura he was arrested by the orders of Arismendez, together with Colonel Montilla, and kept in confinement till the Congress was prepared to hear his defence. It may be imagined that Arismendez did not forget his arrest at Margarita, and the attempt made to disgrace him; but whether the recollection influenced his conduct on the present occasion I cannot say. Urdenetta, however, by the united voice of the Congress, was instantly removed from the command of the British legion, and certainly not without ample cause. Colonel Montilla was not disgraced in any way, as it was clear that he had merely acted under the orders of his general, who could alone be responsible for the effects of them; but as Urdenetta was removed from the army, Montilla lost his situation as *gefede estado*.

(Urdenetta was superseded by Marino, a captain-general who possessed the most unbounded influence in the eastern district, where the division was then stationed. In this quarter he could always raise an army when no other chief could obtain a man; and he also had the power of obtaining vast supplies of provisions and other necessaries for the troops, through his connexion with the wealthy families. He had been many years in the Venezuelan service, and had rendered himself on all occasions remarkably conspicuous for his talents as a member of the senate during the time he was of the Congress; for his great mili-

tary skill and undoubted bravery, as also for his warm devotion to the liberty of the Republic, and his inflexible integrity. With these qualifications, united to his general interest, he was decidedly the fittest man to be placed at the head of the British legion at a juncture when their confidence was destroyed by the weakness and dishonourable conduct of their late commander. The Congress were very solicitous for his acceptance of the office, as they knew it would give the highest satisfaction to the country at large, who looked up to Marino as the only prop of their falling cause.

General Marino is of Irish extraction, and is allied to the Leinster family. He is said to be the heir to a baronetcy, which is now supposed to be extinct. He has shown me letters and papers in confirmation of this, and has expressed his determination of visiting Ireland to claim it, when the affairs of Colombia were so far settled as to render his absence a matter of no importance. His grandfather emigrated to Venezuela many years since, and resided there with an only daughter, who was united to a Spanish merchant of immense wealth, and from this marriage, I believe, Marino is descended. He is tall and athletic, and has a very open countenance, which is a perfect index to his mind; his manners are elegant, and his education extensive. His steady adherence to the welfare of his country, and his continued opposition to the

measures of those who have their own aggrandisement more at heart than the future interests of the Republic, have entitled him to the esteem and regard of the patriotic portion of his countrymen; while, on the other hand, it has rendered him extremely obnoxious to the party to whom he has been opposed, who have been incessant in their attempts to lower his consequence.

About this time, the expedition which created so much noise, termed the "Irish Legion," was, by advices recently received from General Devereux, the promoter of the scheme, expected to arrive at Margarita. This person is of Irish parentage, and himself a native of Ireland. His father took a very active part in the scenes which characterised the last dreadful rebellion which agitated that country, and finally suffered the extreme penalty of the law as a punishment for his interference. The junior Devereux, of whom I now speak, was during a great part of his life engaged in a petty mercantile way, in various parts of the United States, whither the chief part of his family had fled, in order to save themselves from the powerful arm of the law. During his engagements in trade, he made frequent visits both to England and Ireland, whereby he contrived to get acquainted with some of the most respectable merchants of both countries. In 1815 he went to Carthage, where he saw Bolivar, to whom he represented his ability

to raise a legion, provided securities were given him; but some misunderstanding arose between Bolivar and himself, which delayed any arrangement. Afterwards he was invited to bring a body of men to the country by Bolivar, to which he paid no attention, until he found that General English had completed his contract with the Republic of Venezuela, for the formation of his brigade; and then the fertile imagination of Devereux suggested to him a scheme on the same principle, by which a considerable sum of money might be pocketed.

Having formed his plan, this specious adventurer proceeded to Angostura, and made known to the Congress his intention of forming a legion in Ireland. He assured them that his unlimited influence in that country would enable him to raise a body of troops greater in number than the British legion, and that he could, from his own resources, adequately fit them out, and transport them there to the depôt, provided an ample recompense were guaranteed him. These representations induced the government and the President Bolivar to listen to his proposal; and they agreed, that when the country was in a situation to satisfy the claims of those who assisted it in its arduous struggle, they would not only reimburse him for all the expenses of the levy and outfit, but would make him an allowance for his life, and bestow on him the rank

of general of division, if he fulfilled his proposals; the latter to be assumed when he came out with his troops.

These things being secured to him by the written contract of the Republic, signed by Bolivar, in the name of the Congress, he immediately departed for Ireland; and upon his arrival in Dublin, represented to the mayor, corporation, and principal inhabitants, that he was created a general by the Venezuelan Congress, in consideration of the services he had performed for the Republic; and that he was authorised to raise a body of three thousand men or more (the number to be regulated by his own judgment). He added, that he was further empowered to dispose of commissions in the Independent service, to all who wished to purchase them at the same rate as those of the British service were sold at, the pay in South America being much more; while there was a certain prospect of realizing a handsome fortune in a very short space of time. His countrymen, naturally warm and enthusiastic, unsuspiciously received him with all the marks of attention and respect due to one who had disinterestedly engaged in so noble a cause, and for a long time he shared their greatest hospitality. A public dinner was given soon after his arrival, to which he was invited, and requested to state the nature of the service, how he intended to effect the

completion of the legion, and what assistance he could be rendered in the undertaking.

Devereux, who was eminently endowed with that sort of eloquence which can paint the cause of liberty in glowing colours, and make a powerful appeal to warm feelings, like those of the Irish, in support of it, but too well succeeded in persuading them that he was every thing that he represented himself to be. Many parents were induced to send their children out under his promised protection, as candidates for a portion of the fame and glory he had so warmly anticipated as the future lot of those who embarked with him. Numerous were the applications made by the younger male branches of respectable families, who were fired with the idea of military fame, for commissions; to whom, professing to favour those who came first, he sold them at what he termed a lower price than the injunctions he had received from the Congress had enjoined him to do. By these means he obtained at the onset about sixty thousand pounds, all of which he appropriated to his own use. As there were many young men who had the inclination, though they possessed not the ability to purchase at the price demanded, rather than disappoint their hopes of glory and crush their patriotic feelings, he kindly sold them commissions for any sum they could raise, and actually induced many junior officers, whom

his plausibility had worked upon, to part with those which they then held in the British service, and expend every guinea of the produce in the purchase of his own fabrications, and the necessary equipments for their voyage. Various forms of commissions were printed on parchment, and filled up by the secretary of the general, and signed by the latter as authorised by Bolivar. These were distributed according to the purse of the applicant, his usual practice being, when a young man asked for an ensigncy, to advise him to the purchase of a rank much higher; and in several instances young lads of eighteen and nineteen, just emerged from the hands of their tutors, were induced to buy majorities and colonelcies in regiments which never existed but in the imagination of the *soi-disant* general.

Having thus gained as much money as he possibly could in Ireland, he employed various persons as recruiting serjeants, to raise men for the Venezuelan service, and then proceeded to Liverpool under the pretence of chartering ships to convey them to the scene of action, but in reality to create the same sensation there as he had previously done in Dublin, and to increase the number of his dupes. Here he also was, but too successful. Many young men sacrificed all they could get to his unbounded rapacity, and ultimately their lives, to the hardships and the rigours of the

climate to which they were afterwards exposed. The effect having subsided in a great measure, in order to get rid of his printed forms, he was at length obliged to sell them at reduced prices; and it is a fact established beyond a doubt, that the same empty name which fetched him at the commencement of his undertaking the sum of nearly a thousand pounds, was at the end, under the promise of secrecy, parted with for one and two hundred pounds, and in some instances a majority *in nubibus* was sold for eighty pounds.

Meantime about 2000 men were got together in Dublin, through the medium of glaring hand-bills posted at every convenient spot. Not well-disciplined and seasoned troops, inured to fatigue and danger of every description, like those taken out by General English, but a confused, heterogeneous mass, varying from the peasant fresh from the ploughshare, to the artisan, whose close, sedentary occupation rendered him sickly, and altogether unfit for the active duty of a soldier; while not one of the whole had ever seen a shot fired. These were despatched to Liverpool, where they were idly strolling about the town for some time; and not receiving the pay and rations they had been led to expect, they committed the most daring outrages upon the public buildings, under the impression which was made by an artful colleague of their commander, that the latter had left money for

their maintenance in the hands of the mayor of the town. The corporation, however, in consideration of the cause in which they were to be employed, was induced to look over their delinquencies and to repair the injury done. At length they were embarked in some brigs and small vessels for Margarita, with so small a stock of provisions, that long before they arrived at the destined port they were ordered on short allowance, and by the time they approached the island were nearly famished. They were landed; and here, to complete the misery of these poor misguided beings, they found the yellow fever raging with extraordinary violence. Immense numbers were swept off daily, who, from their previously weakened state, were unable to bear the effects of the powerful remedies employed on such occasions; while a greater scarcity of provisions prevailed than had been felt for years. (Upwards of seven hundred and fifty thus perished, and among them many fine young men who had purchased commissions) as before described. So numerous was this class of deluded sufferers, that had the Republic been obliged, by any previous agreement with Devereux, to find them the degrees of rank they had so incautiously bought, they would more than have sufficed to furnish 50,000 men with officers. There were, as it was reported, one hundred and sixteen colonels alone, and the next inferior grades were nearly as amply

provided. The whole of them, to their astonishment and horror, found that the government had never given any authority to Devereux (or any other individual to dispose of any rank in their service, which, in Colombia, is a practice quite unknown; and many of them having expended their last shilling to embark in the cause, were reduced to the necessity of selling their clothes for present subsistence.) These were sacrificed in such an emergency at less than half their value, and with the proceeds many of them departed for the United States. There they lingered in a dreadful state of wretchedness, until they obtained assistance from their friends to reach their respective homes; no small number of whom died of starvation before the necessary relief arrived.

Devereux had taken care not to go out with them to Margarita, but had remained in Ireland and England, living sumptuously on the money of which he had drained them, until the ebullition had subsided in South America, and the return home of some of the persons he had cheated, placed him in imminent danger of either being arrested or shot. One or two spirited young men challenged him in Dublin, and when he declined to meet them, publicly insulted, and, I believe, castigated him, but without effecting the object they had in view—a meeting. He escaped privately to Liverpool, where he chartered a coal brig to convey

himself and his "staff," as he termed about twenty-five or twenty-six persons who had assisted him in the furtherance of his plans, to Margarita, where, it subsequently appeared, that he fully expected to be put to death, through some information he received while on his passage.

The remainder of the men he had sent out, who escaped the ravages of the yellow-fever, were partly organized at the suggestion of General English, who was then residing at Margarita in inactivity. It proved a work of immense labour, although aided by the superintendence of General Clementi, who had been, in the absence of General Arismendez, appointed governor of the island. It was then in contemplation by Arismendez to unite these men with the British legion at some convenient spot; and had they joined the army then fitting out for another campaign, the whole would have formed a force more than was requisite to drive the entire army of Spain from Colombia. This great national advantage was prevented, and the scheme frustrated by the folly and capricious obstinacy of Admiral Brion, through whose unpardonable misconduct the services of these men were almost wholly lost to the Republic. Nearly every evil, indeed, that befel the country and its cause, during the long and unnecessarily protracted war, may be fairly traced to the inconsistent and unreasonable actions of the chiefs, together with their

insurmountable jealousy of each other. Without the least intention of reducing the credit due to the Spanish officers as generals, to these cruel despoilers of their country's honour, may be justly ascribed the principal advantages gained by the enemy.

Arismendez having resolved to unite the two legions at some place near Cumanacoa, where the necessary arrangements were making for the intended campaign, sent instructions to General Marino to appoint some officer, on whom he could place the utmost reliance, to receive them at Barcelona, and conduct them thither; at the same time he desired Admiral Brion to hold the fleet in readiness to transport them from Margarita. Marino despatched General Bermudez to receive the troops, who was nearly taken by the enemy in passing their posts in the neighbourhood of the Gulf of Curiaco, on his way to the place appointed. Upon his arrival at a wood near the gulf, he was overtaken by a strong foraging party, sent out of the city of Cumana; by whom he was quickly surrounded. He had only a body-guard of fifty lancers with him, and with these he fought, with great determination and good success, on the defensive, his principal object being to cut his way through them, and fly to the banks of the Oronoco. This the Spaniards endeavoured to prevent, and his escape for some time seemed doubtful; but he at

length gained his point by a ruse de guerre. Pretending to make an effort to regain the road by which he had come from Cumanacoa, he thereby drew the main strength of the enemy to that point. He then made a feigned charge, as if attempting desperately to force his way through them, but just before he approached them he wheeled suddenly round, and dashed through those only who were between him and his intended route. Being unprepared to follow, they were soon left far behind; and as they were composed exclusively of infantry, they could not overtake him, and he reached Barcelona in safety. Here he waited upwards of three weeks in daily expectation of receiving the troops, as did General Marino at Cumanacoa; when at length an answer was received by the latter from Brion, in which he refused to allow his fleet to convey them to that neighbourhood, but stated that he should not have any objection to transport them to any other province which the Congress might name. The truth was, that Brion was always averse to Marino, and had predetermined to do all in his power to thwart his views. This circumstance may serve to show the spirit of divided interest which at that critical time agitated the Republic, and destroyed its best means of extrication from the bonds which held it. There were scarcely any two chiefs who were friendly disposed to each other's welfare; indeed, they generally contrived to do all the injury to

their rivals they possibly could, even although they knew it would be at their country's expense. From this selfish disposition proceeded many unfortunate results, of which the one I am about to relate was far from the least.

The Irish troops of Devereux being now ready for embarkation at Margarita, of which they had been in daily expectation for some time, grew rather impatient for the commencement of the contest; and as there was unfortunately no scarcity of spirits at that moment in the island, they got intoxicated in a body, and committed many outrages. General Clementi necessarily became anxious to get rid of them, and to prevent a repetition of these excesses, despatched a flechera to seek Admiral Brion, with a request that he would take the turbulent visitors to the scene of action, where they might be tamed. Brion accordingly arrived, and took them on board, in compliance with the wishes of General Clementi; but instead of proceeding to the port to which the Congress had destined, he sailed for Rio de la Hacha, and finally landed them a little below that town, under the command of the few junior officers who accompanied them; and these, as may be expected, were altogether ignorant of their duty, and of the nature of the war in which they were about to engage. Their first step was to march against Rio de la Hacha, which they did immediately, and either

frightened or beat the Spaniards out of it without any bloodshed on either side. Here they were in good quarters, and they drank and feasted as long as they pleased, refusing all obedience to their officers; and after all the provisions they found in the place were consumed, they plundered the inhabitants, and finally set fire to the city. Thus they left many of the people, for whose defence they had engaged to fight, without a home or shelter; their ignorance, or their continued inebriety, not allowing them to distinguish any difference between the natives and their oppressors, the Spaniards. From Rio de la Hacha they went to Porto Bello, taking in their way one or two inferior towns, which they as speedily vacated, leaving them again in the hands of the Spaniards. At Porto Bello many of them contrived to get on board some small vessels which conveyed them to Kingston, in the island of Jamaica, where they were guilty of the same kind of excesses as they had committed at their previous places of resort. Being destitute of the means of support, they became chargeable to the corporation for their subsistence, who, to save the expense of such a burthen, were obliged to ship them for their homes. By these means about three hundred of them lived to see Ireland again, which, with the exception of about one hundred and fifty who went from Porto Bello to Carthagena, where they joined the patriot army then besieging that town,

were all that escaped death in some shape or other, and that without having struck one blow in the cause for which they were raised. Those who joined the Independents at Carthagena were formed into a battalion with some natives, under Colonel Thomas Ferrier; and the few left alive after the battle of Carabobo, were united with the British legion.

General English, who had retired from the scene of military strife to the island of Margarita, was applied to by many of those who had purchased commissions of Devereux, to aid them in procuring various grades of rank according to their pretensions. Some, who were either personally known to him, or who had friends with whom he was acquainted, he assisted, and these, with several others who had remained on the island for the want of means to transport themselves elsewhere, at the suggestion of General Clementi, joined the battalion under Colonel Ferrier. Hence they had an opportunity of volunteering into the regular service of the Republic, and of rising in rank according to their conduct and services; but not many of them ever attained to any thing beyond their situation in this battalion. Being chiefly young, and inexperienced in military operations, some were so daunted at the severe battle which took place at Carabobo, that they fled from the field, and were publicly disgraced.

To these Bolivar gave passports, and allowing them only a short time to make preparations for quitting the country, obliged them to embark, however unhealthy; (so that most of them died on their passage to England. Others, who were more courageous, were killed either by the enemy or the climate, and but very few reached any high rank in the service of Colombia. Amongst the exceptions is the Baron De Rheinbault, a gallant veteran, a native of Germany, who formerly belonged to the King's German Legion, and whose conduct as an officer cannot be too much praised. He has, I believe, risen to the rank of brigadier-general, and deservedly retains the esteem of his brother officers, and the authorities in Colombia. He originally bought a majority of Devereux in Dublin, which was, as in all other instances, not of the least service to him; but his coolness and skill were such as to excite the admiration of the native chiefs; and General Paez, who never suffered a brave man to pass unrewarded, warmly interceded in his behalf, and obtained him a confirmed rank from the hands of Bolivar. He has been severely wounded in the Republican service, and is partly disabled in consequence.

(Such was the fate of the Irish legion) and such the conduct of the person who formed it, who is now residing at Paris on the fruits of his but too successful labours.

CHAPTER VIII.

Illness of General Bermudez—Effect of Revolutions in the Excitement of Intellect and Capacity—Sketch of the Career of General Bermudez—Author selected to convey confidential Despatches to the President Bolivar, at Bogota—Oaths administered to him on that occasion—Preparations for the Journey—Spanish Conduct on the Interception of Despatches.—Author's Mode of proceeding to his Destination—Voyage on the River Magdalena—Alligators—Advantageous Stations for British Capitalists—Canals—Profitable Export of Nicaragua Wood—Town of Zolidad, and its Trade.—Growth of Cotton—Description of the Bungo and how navigated—Adventures in the Voyage up the Magdalena—Attempt to plunder the Author's Flechera—How resented by the Sambos who attended him.

ON the return of General Bermudez to Cumanacoa, he was immediately ordered to march with the remnant of his troops to Angostura, as he was destined by the Congress to the command of a private expedition towards Puerto Cavello. Unfortunately, upon his arrival at Maturin, he caught the intermittent fever, and before he was perfectly recovered from that infection he was attacked by the yellow-fever, which raged with great fury for some weeks on the plains, and carried off many hundreds of the inhabitants. He finally surmounted both disorders, but the debilitated state in which they left him, occasioned the loss of his services to the government at the period they were required, and for two or three months afterwards.

The life of General Bermudez affords perhaps one of the most striking instances of what may be effected by a noble and aspiring spirit, when called into a kind of new existence by the convulsions which may agitate the land of its nativity; and although his progress is far from singular among the numerous heroes of his long unhappy country, his adventures are still deserving of notice. The following brief sketch of his active career, which will necessarily omit many acts worthy of record, may snatch from undeserved oblivion the enterprises and sufferings of a meritorious officer; and as biography must precede general history, may furnish some far more able pen with materials, which but for this humble attempt might have been lost for ever.

Revolution not merely ruffles the surface of society; it descends into its deepest and most hidden recesses. Every link in the national chain from the noble to the serf, experiences its powerful influence; and the talent and enterprise which but for its operations might have been doomed to yawn over the plough or the anvil, are suddenly called forth, and strangely and irresistibly impelled into a more extended sphere, and a more spirited line of action. The great prizes in the vast lottery of human life are thus brought within the compass of every class. Rank is temporarily stripped of the homage and respect which it exacts

at less turbulent periods, and the native force of individual character and genius rise above the artificial restraints which laws and custom impose. It may, perhaps, with some propriety, be questioned whether, if governments were never chastened by revolutionary tendencies, much of the latent power of countries would not be lost, and the great germs of regeneration be for ever buried in the depths of society. A more forcible illustration of this query can seldom be obtained than that afforded by a reference to the instances of individual genius which the great struggle for freedom in South America has brought forth. During the war of the Revolution, what an array of talent was mustered by classes whose natural rights had previously been trodden and trampled upon, and whose intellects were beclouded by the darkened veil of ignorance which bigotry and superstition had thrown over them. Who could have imagined that men whose fathers had been treated like wild beasts of the field, and driven to their labours by the application of tortures scarcely even inflicted upon brutes, could all at once display that intensity of feeling, and those high and lofty purposes which are only expected from individuals who are nurtured in the bosom of a free and civilized community? Yet that such talents were shown has been proved to the cost of the Spanish enslavers, who have severely felt that the strong impulse

of the times called forth new and unusually bright characters into the arena of active life, who but for their own tyranny would have passed their days in the dull round of a mere animal existence—men who have become the arbiters of their country's fate, the assertors of its rights, and the bold intrepid chastisers of the oppressors who had so long and so cruelly usurped it. Indeed revolution, however great its occasional evils, comes in some instances as a seasonable relief; and in this, at least, it has taught the Spanish and all other governments a memorable and impressive lesson, which it is hoped will operate as a just check upon that ambition which would exalt itself for ever on the necks of an enthralled population.

Bermudez was the son of a humble but industrious couple, who resided in or very near to the city of Caraccas, whose daily occupation was that of conveying provisions to the garrison and the inhabitants, in which the hero of this brief memoir during his boyhood assisted them. His father, though a simple and illiterate man, was warmly inclined towards the patriot interest, and in his humble way used to argue with the younger part of his acquaintance against the despotic principles of the Spanish government, with a view to induce them to join the troops which were then secretly levying for the Independent cause by General Miranda. When the city of Caraccas

was first suspected of an attachment to the insurgents, some expressions incautiously uttered by this staunch old patriot obtained for him the hatred of the Spanish military governor, who shortly after incarcerated, and finally gibbeted him.

Bermudez, who was then but eighteen years old, had applied in vain for mercy towards his aged parent. The entreaties of filial affection, and the venerable gray hairs of the victim, failed to excite pity in the breast of Monteverde, who ordered not only that the son should be confined within the walls of the fortress, but brutally directed that he should be compelled to witness the execution of his father. Feeling all that a son could feel on such a horrible occasion, Bermudez, on his release, immediately left the neighbourhood of Caraccas, with his unhappy mother, for the plains of Maturin, where he had intended to provide a shelter for her few remaining years, while he entered the service of his country to revenge the murder of his father. Her death, which was occasioned by excessive grief while on the painful journey, prevented the necessity of this arrangement for her safety; and he therefore entered without delay among the irregular cavalry of the plains, as a private. The band in which he had enrolled himself, was under the command of an active and brave man named Hirogas, and for two or three years it was unceasingly employed in various acts of annoyance

to the enemy, though its inferior numbers prevented it from coming to any open engagement. Its movements were chiefly directed against the Spanish foraging parties, who seldom escaped its vigilance while in that quarter. In these skirmishes Bermudez always shone conspicuously for his determined bravery and his great personal prowess; and during the first campaign of his party, after he had joined them, he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant of a small troop, at whose head he was constantly hurling destruction on the destroyers of his parents.

Promotion in these bands is generally awarded to the conqueror of the known best men belonging to them in a pitched battle; and the strength with which Bermudez had been endowed by nature, had hitherto enabled him to vanquish all who had competed with him in the gymnastic games which filled up their few leisure hours, and to chastise all who were insolent to him. Owing to this superiority, together with his uniform good conduct and unassuming manners, he was equally loved and dreaded, and the usual trial of prowess was therefore dispensed with. The injury done to the Spaniards by the troops of Bermudez, which only amounted to four hundred men, was incalculable, and naturally begat a desire to punish them. Monteverde sent out a strong detachment, consisting of six hundred cavalry and an equal number of

infantry, to attack Hirogas, who was then stationed on the top of a small hill about fifteen leagues from the Spanish head-quarters. They marched, and arrived at the foot of the hill about midnight; but the cautious measures adopted by the guerilla chief not allowing his troops to be taken by surprise, they were discovered, and saluted with a volley of such small arms as the band possessed. The Spaniards advanced, and a dreadful combat ensued; the little party not receding a step; but the odds being so much against them, they were overpowered, and the brave Hirogas fell into the hands of the enemy. Bermudez, having ascertained this, dashed into the middle of the infantry, and succeeded in rescuing his chief, but not until the latter had received wounds which in a few weeks caused his death. The enemy then retreated, leaving their horses, many of their arms, &c. in the hands of their opponents, and about one-third of their number dead on the field. On this Hirogas ordered his men to march to their native plains, where he intended to recruit, but soon after he had reached them he expired. The command of the band was then, by general consent, given to Bermudez, who lost not a moment in preparing for another expedition against the enemy. His fame was now proclaimed loudly, and he received a vast addition to his force; but as it consisted of men who had not the means of obtaining arms, he was

obliged to wait until fortune favoured him with a successful attack upon the Spaniards before he could avail himself of their services. Horses they seldom wanted long, as the immense herds occupying the mountains and plains of Venezuela afforded a plentiful supply at all times, by merely taking the trouble of lassoing them.*

After completing the necessary arrangements, Bermudez sallied forth to attack the Spanish forces, who were laying siege to the town of Maturin, and he quickly began to display himself in his true colours. Three successive fortunate captures furnished him with arms, ammunition, and every military essential, and his force was regularly enrolled by the Congress as a portion of its troops, and was in appearance and discipline far more respectable than any other of the guerillas. He next united himself to General Roxas, and in conjunction they gallantly defeated the whole army of Boves, the Spanish commander, putting nearly half of his men to death, and capturing every article of baggage he had. Roxas in this action slew Boves and nine others with his own hand; and Bermudez, as it was stated by many of his own men, as well as those belonging to his partner in the affray, killed above

* This operation has been so well described by other travellers in South America, as to render any description here quite superfluous. Captain Hall's narrative affords a well written and minute account of it.

thirty in the action, during which he broke three lances. He was now created a general of division by the government, and offered pay, but the latter he disinterestedly declined, at the same time requesting as a particular mark of favour from the Congress, that it would never bestow a higher rank upon him than that he had just accepted. From this time he continued to fight for his country's liberty without the hope or intention of receiving reward; frequently making vast sacrifices to render pecuniary assistance to the Congress, and at all times raising, free of expense to it, supplies of cattle for the use of the patriot army. The exertions of this brave man are unparalleled, except in the instance of Paez, whom he closely resembles in manners and disposition. Many of the victories which have been gained by the Independent chieftains in that district have been mainly owing to his assistance; and most of the military and political advantages which have been gained over the Spanish armies, have been through his activity and well-timed efforts to cut off their supplies.

After fighting in the various provinces near his own, Bermudez and his band, who were by his example inspired with an ardent desire to free their country, marched to New Grenada, where he shared in the honour of some of the most decisive battles gained by the mutual efforts of the

united vice-royalties. He was ever to be found at his post; unalterably the same firm patriot, the same intrepid soldier, to whom none of the obstacles so frequently thrown in his way and the numerous machinations of the enemies which envy created him, could turn aside or intimidate.

In person Bermudez is very tall, exceeding six feet three inches in height, extremely well proportioned, and possessing great muscular power. He has a fine handsome intelligent countenance, beaming with good-nature and sincerity. As may be imagined from the foregoing recital of his life, he is not much acquainted with literature, his education having been unavoidably limited, but his mind is by nature enlarged, and only needs cultivation to enable him to far outshine most of his rivals in Colombia. He is unacquainted with the polished forms of society, but he exhibits the natural politeness of a generous heart, full of simplicity. He is a plain honest soldier, as brave as his sword, and as sincere as he is brave. He is also perfectly free from that propensity for gambling, which, with few exceptions, characterises the whole of the native military officers of the Republic, being in numerous cases uncontrollable. Neither has he the least portion of the intriguing spirit and jealousy which actuates nearly all the leading men of Colombia. He is remarkably hospitable, frequently sharing his last meal with any

person in want of it; and upon every occasion eager to serve all who merit assistance.

Being conspicuous for his intrepidity and address on all pressing emergencies, and also for his inviolable integrity, he has been always appointed the bearer of despatches by Bolivar, and the Congress, upon matters of moment, whenever he was near at hand. In one instance, which I was a witness to, during the war, he arrived at the banks of the Oronoco opposite to the city of Angostura, where he had to deliver despatches of the greatest importance, from Bolivar to the vice-president, and to return without a moment's delay with replies. He arrived at the river on horseback, and not perceiving any boat at hand in which he could be conveyed across, but still determined to obey his orders, he dismounted; and leading his horse, he swam over by his side, although the river in that part, which is the narrowest, is a mile and a half across, with a rapid current, and infested with swarms of alligators. He returned in the same manner; and this is his usual practice on similar occasions.

During the time of the occupation of the city of Caracas by General Morillo, Bermudez was employed to convey despatches by the Congress at Angostura to Bolivar, whose army was about to attempt to retake the city, and he had occasion to go through a narrow pass in the mountains, at the

mouth of which the Spaniards had posted piquets to prevent any surprise. He had only two persons with him, and to effect his object was seemingly so impossible, that few men besides himself would have attempted it. He would not, however, relinquish the fulfilment of his orders, and determined to effect that by stratagem, which his inferior strength prevented him from achieving openly. Having come to this determination, he concealed himself until night in one of the numerous woods, where he amused himself in the interval by cutting several strong stakes, which he covered thickly with some of the foliage, so as to give them in the gloom something like the appearance of men. These he drove into the ground with a pistol secured to each, with its mouth precisely directed to the spot occupied by the enemy, and to each trigger he fastened a string, which the men who accompanied him had made, during the day, of the bark of the coquita tree.* These strings were united at the extreme end, which was held by Bermudez, who cautiously crept along as close to the mouth of the passage as possible, followed by the men, without being perceived, and so as to avoid incurring the danger of receiving the contents of the fire-arms which he was

* This tree is plentiful in Colombia, and commonly used for the manufacture of ropes, which are very durable, and are sold at a trifling rate. Cables made of it have been found to last longer than those made of hemp.

about to discharge. He then pulled the strings, and instantly the pistols, eight in number, went off, sending their contents among the Spaniards, and killing two of them. The remainder immediately darted towards the place the firing proceeded from, expecting to find a body of assailants, and thus leaving the pass unoccupied, Bermudez and his companions, as they moved forward, slipped in behind them unnoticed, and escaped.

After the battle of Boyaca, in Peru, he was employed in guarding the approach to the city of Santa-Fe de Bogota; and while in the performance of this duty, was ordered to pursue a portion of the enemy's troops, which had in their hasty flight separated from the main body. By some muleteers, who had perceived them as they were conveying their merchandise from Honda over the hills, it was discovered that they had taken refuge in the mountains, about ten leagues from the city. Bermudez marched against them, and was guided by a muleteer to the place of their retreat, which he found they had fixed upon as one of very difficult access. He succeeded in forcing them out of it, and in the obstinate combat which followed nearly the whole of them were slain, and the few survivors made prisoners. When the fight was over, and his men were employed in plundering the dead carcasses of every thing worth the trouble of carrying away, he heard a

sound proceeding from one of the recesses in the rock, as if from a female in the deepest agony. He went to it, and there discovered an unfortunate woman, wife of the Spanish officer who had commanded the troops just defeated. She was lying in the agonies of parturition, excessive terror having caused a premature labour. Her husband had been killed, which circumstance Bermudez concealed from her, and hastened in search of the only woman who, except the object of his solicitude, had belonged to the Spanish force. She was instantly sent to the wretched retreat of the sufferer, who gave birth to two children, a boy and girl, and soon after died. She had requested the attendance of the general a few minutes before her death, and had implored him to preserve the lives of her infants, if it were possible. The entreaty was not lost upon him; he promised faithfully to fulfil it, and when their unhappy parent had ceased to breathe, he caused the woman to convey them to Bogota, where he procured a nurse for them. It was urged by some of those in command, that he ought not to cherish the offspring of the enemies of his country, and that the helpless innocents should be put to death with the prisoners; but Bermudez, with a firmness which does him honour, vowed that he would destroy all who dared to hurt them. Being an officer whose services could not be dispensed with, no further opposition was

offered; and, conformably to the request of their dying mother, he has ever since paid them every attention in his power; and I have heard him express his determination to give them an education superior to that of the generality of the children of Colombia, an idea which seemed to give him much delight. I saw the children at Rosario de Cucuta in 1821, where they were with him. They were then about three years old, and looked remarkably healthy. The girl he had named after his mother, and the boy after himself.

To return to the object for which General Arismendéz had requested my attendance at Angostura, I was informed by him, that the occasion for which he required my services at that moment, was one of vital importance to the interests of the Republic. As the intended employment, however, was out of the routine of my duty altogether, he did not mean to demand my acceptance of it, unless it met my approbation; but would leave me to say freely whether I liked to undertake it or not. The president Bolívar, who had never been in Venezuela since the arrival of the British legion, was still in the vice-royalty of New Grenada, the subjugation of which was not yet completed. His expedition thither, and the object of it, had ever been looked upon as the act of a madman by the bulk of the people in Venezuela, whose minds were too much enveloped in ignorance to take an extended

view of the subject. By all who were not sufficiently acquainted with the motives which led him to embark in such a scheme, he was severely censured, for draining his own country of her few remaining resources, and leaving her in almost a hopeless state, to conduct an expedition, from which there appeared not to them the most slender chance of either himself or his men returning. When, therefore, he had been absent for some months, and no intelligence had reached them of any kind, relating to his movements in his new scene of action, they at once concluded that he, and the whole of the troops he had taken with him, were, according to their previous expectations, lost, and giving up all idea of ever seeing him again, they were all busily forming speculative ideas as to their future president. The truth was, that despatches had been sent by Bolivar to the Congress frequently, but many of them had never been delivered; and those which had reached their destination were of so unsatisfactory a nature, that the vice-president, Arismendez, with the concurrence of his fellow-members of the senate, had thought it better to withhold them from the people altogether. The idle state in which the president had kept his troops, during three or four months after he had joined them, had necessarily not only reduced his finances, but the spirits of his men, which were broken down by their dreadful march to a very

low ebb. The communication of these inauspicious circumstances, and his subsequent disasters, together with their own want of success in Venezuela, would therefore have seriously tended to depress the hopes of the patriots, and to damp their energies, when it was most essential that they should be strenuously exerted to retrieve their affairs.

The people of Venezuela were always either in the extreme of hope or despair, and their weak minds were as easily sunk to the one, as elevated to the other. It was therefore of the greatest consequence that every unfavourable turn of their circumstances should be hidden from them; and situated as the government then was, it was far from an easy matter to act in such a way as to preserve an equilibrium between their hopes and fears. At this time no information had even been received by the Congress from its president for an alarming interval; and as the situation of the Republic was daily growing more and more destitute, owing to the unskilful management of Urdenetta, Arismendez had suggested the expediency of addressing Bolivar upon the state of their affairs. This was agreed to unanimously, but a difficulty arose as to the manner in which these despatches should be conveyed. They feared to trust them to the native couriers usually employed on such occasions, lest the knowledge of their misfortunes should be made public, as the bearer of them must

have to pass through some part of the country occupied by the Spanish forces, whose vigilance it would be difficult to evade. The natives, on these occasions, could never be depended upon, as they made it an invariable rule to deliver up their expresses, and every other information in their power, in the hope of saving their lives, when taken by the enemy.

General Arismendez, to whose management the matter had been committed, had therefore fixed upon me for the bearer of these important communications, although, with his wonted kindness, he left it to my own choice to undertake or decline the mission. I immediately agreed to go, as I imagined an introduction to Bolivar might be of service to me in my career, and Arismendez took upon himself to furnish me with sufficient funds for the defrayment of the expenses incidental to such a journey, and also to supply a guard to accompany me, if I thought it necessary. The latter I declined, thinking it more prudent to proceed with very few attendants, as being less likely to create observation, which such a party must excite, and the numbers that could be spared were by no means capable of contending successfully with any portion of the Spanish army.

At the next meeting of the Congress I consequently attended with the general, who introduced me as the person he had fixed upon to be the bearer

of their despatches, and as was customary on similar occasions, an oath was administered to me, which was to the effect, that I would never part with them, or divulge the nature of their contents to any person. If in danger of being taken by the enemy, I was pledged, on seeing no chance of escape, to take care to effectually destroy the papers entrusted to my charge; and gave assurance that no fear of torture or death should induce me to betray any knowledge I might have of their nature, or of the circumstances of the Republic.

Having been duly sworn, I received an order for three hundred dollars, and a warrant to impress mules and horses in every place I should have to pass through, for any length of time it was necessary to detain them; as is customary with all officers of the government when travelling for the state. The native officers generally compel the unfortunate inhabitants to furnish them with food, and every article they want; but in this respect my warrant differed from those granted to them.) Two days were allowed me to prepare for the journey, at the end of which I was to receive the despatches, sealed, from Arismendez; but the night before I was to have started a courier arrived at the capital, whither he had been sent by Bolivar with letters to the vice-president, which had shared the fate of most of those which were entrusted to natives. He had been captured by a detachment

of Spaniards, to whom he had resigned them to save his life. There was a regular understanding between these people and the Spaniards during the war of extermination, that if they did not destroy the papers in their possession, they should have quarter; and by these means the enemy often became acquainted with the most secret intentions and movements both of the patriot generals and the Congress.

We learned from this courier that Bolivar was then marching towards Santa Fe de Bogota, the capital of New Grenada, where he was expected to remain; and a few other circumstances were gleaned from him by Arismendez, relative to the events of little consequence which had occurred to the Independent army. He was then, by the general's orders, immediately gibbeted, as a punishment for his treachery. This was the constant practice of Arismendez; and I believe, during the short time he was at the head of the Congress, it tended more to shock the perfidy of the couriers than any of the more lenient measures which were adopted by others. However, this information necessarily changed my route. Instead of proceeding overland, and crossing the Cordillera of the Andes, my best course was to go to the city of Cartagena, or some place near it, by water, and thence to ascend the river Magdalena, from the shores of which, at a town named Honda, Bogota is but

about two days' ride. This course would also be better than ascending the river Orinoco, which, owing to the rapid currents produced by the immense falls of rain, was at that time extremely laborious and tedious. The usual method of ascending the Magdalena is in the *bungos* by which it is navigated; which are large flat-bottomed boats used to convey goods and passengers, and accelerated by means of stout poles. For such vessels only the river is calculated, being very shoally, and in very few places having what may be termed deep water, and it then seems to lie in holes or pits of a small size. The officers of the Republic, when sent on any mission for the government, were generally provided with a warrant, to impress one of these boats and a crew into their service, for which the owner and the men never received any pay. A voyage in them, however, is generally a work of considerable time and difficulty, owing to some of the men contriving to escape, others taking it into their heads to feign sickness to get discharged, and to the periods occupied in resting. Arismendez therefore suggested that it would be better to take a *flechera** of the middle size, with a double crew of Indians and Sambos, well armed, who would serve for my defence as occasion might require; and as one crew could paddle while the

* A gun-boat of a peculiar construction, used only in shoal water.

other rested, but little time would be lost. I took his advice, and immediately embarked on board a schooner, furnished by Admiral Brion, which sailed with me for the Cienega river, as the Spaniards were believed to be near Carthagena, and it was necessary to use some caution. I arrived at the Pueblo Viejo, a small but neat town, delightfully situated on the banks of that river, where I disembarked to hire a "patron," or pilot for the Magdalena, and succeeded in engaging an old man who had formerly been owner of a champan, and his son, to act by turns.

There had the flechera disembarked, and launched her in one of the numerous narrow channels which are formed by a cluster of small islands of a most enchanting appearance. After proceeding some little way, I found that I was surrounded by some neighbours of a very unpleasant description. It was early in the morning when I first proceeded on my voyage, and the sun had not yet risen; but when its rays began to beam on these little rivers, shoals of alligators began to show themselves, and to swim about in search of their breakfast, and whichever way the eye turned, it was met by the yawning gulfs formed by their ponderous jaws. They kept at a very respectful distance, and a little time served to dissipate the unpleasant sensations at first excited by seeing one's-self in the midst of such a group of monsters, in a boat whose

gunwale was not more than eighteen inches above the surface of the water. After they had satisfied the cravings of their appetites, they quietly laid themselves on the water to rest, with their mouths opened against the current, which served the double purpose of warming themselves in the sun and of catching any thing which perchance might be drifted into their capacious receivers.

A voyage up the Magdalena is at any time unvaried and irksome, and from the confined situation in which the traveller is obliged to remain for so many days, one of the most unpleasant and fatiguing which can be imagined, especially when prosecuted with so much speed and toil as I was on this occasion compelled to use, in order to reach the end of my journey before Bolivar could leave the capital for any other place. (At the stern of the flechera was a small space of about seven feet long by four wide, partitioned off for my use, and it was also destined to hold our arms, provisions, and my baggage. Over it was a toldo, or canopy, fixed to keep off the rain or the scorching heat of the sun, but so low as to preclude the power of standing up to ease the pain produced in the limbs by their cramped position. Here, during the whole voyage, I was obliged to remain, the other part of the vessel being completely taken up by the two crews who had barely room to move in it. That part who were sleeping were obliged to

lie under the feet of the others, and their weight, with that of our baggage, brought the boat so low in the water, as to render her liable to be filled whenever the wind was rather fresh. This also precluded the use of a sail, as she drew too much water, although not more than three feet, to enable her to escape the shoals which, even in using the paddles, it required the utmost care to avoid. The rate at which we went on, which scarcely allowed us time for meals, afforded very little time for observation, and during the whole voyage I slept but two nights out of my miserable little cabin.

The islands on the Cienega have an extremely beautiful and picturesque appearance, being completely covered with wood, whose foliage is of various tints, which are considerably heightened when the powerful and resplendent sunbeams play upon them. On the right appears a stupendous mountain, called the Nevada of Santa Martha, which lifts its majestic head to the height of above sixteen thousand feet, its hoary summits being lost in the silvery clouds which envelop them. There is a communication with the sea from the Cienega, by means of which the trade of the interior of Santa Martha is carried on, which formerly was very extensive, and lucrative to its possessors, and may in a few years be so again, if properly attended to. This, however, is not

very likely to be effected by the natives, who there, as in all parts of Colombia, are extremely indolent and negligent as to the means of enriching themselves, except by the system of intrigue, which is carried on with wonderful spirit in all classes, from the highest to the lowest; while the more honourable, but the more laborious acquisitions of commerce, are left almost entirely neglected. For this reason, I doubt not, that if Europeans were to go out with capital and industry, and settle themselves in various places along the Magdalena, as well as in other parts of Colombia—which only needs enterprise and assiduity to render it a most profitable country to speculators—they would reap ample rewards in a few years for their first toils and expenditure.

There are two very fine canals at the entrance of the Magdalena, termed the Ondo and Soucio, by which the trade is facilitated. On the banks of the river, for some leagues on each side, are large quantities of Nicaragua wood, which is collected by parties of natives employed solely in that occupation. It is from thence conveyed to the places where it is shipped for Santa Martha, the depôt for the commerce of the river; forming one of the most advantageous of its exports to the European market. This wood alone would enable persons of capital to reap considerable fortunes in a short time, who were disposed to settle near the

Magdalena, and attend personally to the cutting and collecting it; without which little good could be effected, as the natural dishonesty of the natives renders them unfit to be trusted. Indians may be employed here at a cheap rate, and the wood finds a quick ready-money sale at the above-mentioned depôt, to which its conveyance is at once safe, easy, and reasonable. Indeed nearly the whole of the trade in Colombia is carried on with ready money; for the natives, being themselves too poor to give credit, seldom think of asking it; therefore the chances of losing money are very few, if proper care and attention are bestowed upon their concerns by the persons engaged in them.

Proceeding up the river, and not far from its mouth, I came to Zolidad, a pleasant town, conveniently situated on its banks, and enjoying many advantages in the way of commerce. This place would form a pleasant spot for the residence of merchants, while it would enable them to export their goods with ease and celerity, and by attending the sales at Santa Martha, to have at the first hand all the European and American imports, which are generally sold at an enormous profit by those who purchase them and convey them up the river in bungos. A short distance from it is a village, having many neat houses surrounded by gardens, which had been laid out exquisitely. Before the Spaniards took possession of the city of Car-

thagena, during the war, this place was inhabited chiefly by persons who had retired from the more agitated parts of Venezuela, in the hope of living there upon the wreck of their fortunes, in peaceful retirement, but they were soon driven out by the Royalists, or put to death, after being deprived of every thing valuable in their possession. Several of the best houses had been set fire to, and the ruins of them could be seen by persons passing up the river.)

For two days and nights my course was uninterrupted by any occurrence worthy of record. The margin of the Magdalena, on both sides, is merely occupied by some little straggling hamlets, "few and far between," the intermediate spaces being filled up by the forests, which descend to the water's edge, interspersed with many plantations of cotton. These were however much neglected, as their proprietors had either been put to death, or, if left alive, so plundered of their property, and their plantations so injured and destroyed by the Spaniards, that no inclination existed to cultivate them again. Happily the trade, as far as regards the cotton, can easily be restored to its former consequence, and it merely needs a few spirited individuals to render it one of the most profitable in the world. It is not only in the present part of Colombia that this useful article grows, it is to be found in abundance in many others, and a

certain sort of large boats, called champanes, are employed exclusively in transporting it.

On the third day a bongo passed us, coming down the river from New Grenada, with a cargo and passengers to Santa Martha and the parts adjacent. The boat seemed capacious and well adapted for the trade it was employed in, but in a most filthy state, as were the bogos, or crew. On the fore part of the boat was a space left for the men to perform the operation of "poling" in. This is usually done with a degree of quickness varying according to the singing, if such it may be termed, of the "patron," or steersman, who guides the boat in her intricate course with a small, but wide paddle, and keeps making a noise all the while, in which the only articulated sounds are, "Yaw, yaw—yes, yaw," which are incessantly repeated in a sort of under-tone, either *andante* or *allegretto*, as he may wish the progress of the boat to be regulated, and to which the bogos keep exact time in their steps. Having first got the bingos clear of the shoals, they assemble at the head of the boat, being divided into equal numbers on each side. The foremost of each party then sticks his pole into the bottom, and commences his walk aft, or towards the stern, and upon arriving at the extent of the space allotted to him, he stops, lifts his pole out of the water, and, laying it on his shoulder, runs forward again, and when

his turn comes, resumes his operations. These poles are formed at the end like two sides of a triangle, thereby enabling those who use them to push against the branches of trees, or any protruding substance, to propel and turn the boat with greater facility. The stern part of the boat is covered with a toldo, or canopy, for the passengers to repose under, if they can get such an enjoyment. They are here huddled together amidst the accumulated dirt of the indolent bogos, teased by swarms of ants and mosquitoes, and nearly melted with the heat which, on the rivers of South America, is at times intolerable. The crews of these boats are universally a lazy, pilfering, dishonest set, who, as they seldom meet the punishment due to their malpractices, in consequence of the inactivity and apathy of the alcaldes, or magistrates, consider themselves licensed to rob and plunder with impunity all who fall in their way, if they can master them. The patron is generally selected from the mass, for his long services, intimate acquaintance with the intricacies of the river, and a qualification seldom found among them—his superior honesty. They are certainly not so much addicted to plunder as their crews, but bad indeed are the best of them.

I succeeded in buying some very good fish from this boat, through the medium of my patron, who was about two hours concluding the bargain;

and the Sambos, who were both impatient for their supper and indignant at the imposition they perceived the bogos attempting to practise, were very anxious to obtain one at the cheap rate of a few rounds of ball-cartridge. I however restrained them, and at length (sufficient was bought to furnish myself and crew with a supper, for which the moderate sum of fifty dollars was originally demanded, and by degrees reduced to three dollars and a half,) which the old man I had engaged at Viejo (who, to do him justice, was very honest and just) fixed as a fair price.

We now adjourned ashore, for the purpose of preparing our meal, which was done in the following manner. The Indians, who were used to this kind of life up the river Oronoco, collected a quantity of dry sticks and moss for fuel, while two of the Sambos searched for the means of getting a light. These were simply two pieces of wood, one of a very soft nature, termed yesca, of which a tinder is made by the natives of Colombia, and the other a long stake of a harder description. In the yesca they made a circular incision, about an inch in diameter and an inch and a half deep, gradually lessened to the bottom; and having reduced one end of the long piece to a point, they introduced it into the hole in the yesca, and one of them rubbed the other end between his hands, causing it to turn with such velocity, as to produce, by the

friction, an ignition of the softer wood in a few seconds. While this was going on, the other Sambos were getting together some large flat stones from the neighbouring rocks, which they selected for the smoothness of their surfaces; and the fire being kindled, they were made as hot as was deemed necessary, and on these was the fish when cut in slices, fried. When sufficiently done, it was removed to the metal plates with which we were furnished, and seasoned according to the palate. The Indians and Sambos, whose ideas of delicacy do not extend to their eating, reduced the heads and entrails of the fish to an oil by heat, which they poured over their portions of it by way of sauce. Some excellent water from a spring close by, and a dram of the anise made in the country, which is prepared from the aniseed mixed with the juice of the sugar-cane, finished the repast.

While thus agreeably engaged, the party was somewhat disturbed by an attempt of the crew of the Bungo to lighten the fleethers of part of my baggage. Observing, from the spot where they had landed to rest for the night, that we were at supper, while the passengers were preparing a similar meal to that just described, they had gone on board my vessel, and were commencing operations, when one of the Sambos, a lad about eighteen years old, perceived them, and deliber-

ately taking up my rifle, which I had laid down behind me, and exclaiming in a low tone, "Bad man come take massa corn ; Sambo shoot him !" fired, and one of them fell, seriously wounded. My back being towards the flechera, I had seen nothing of this, until the exclamation and the report which followed caused me to turn round to learn the occasion of it. Instantly all the Sambos arose, and would have immediately despatched every one of the unfortunate bogos with their machettis, had I not interposed. I saw that they would not be satisfied without giving them a good beating, which, considering them justly entitled to, I gave them permission to inflict ; and no doubt it was long remembered by those for the improvement of whose morals it was administered.

CHAPTER IX.

Guacheracas, or Pheasants of Colombia—Arrival at Pinto—A Spanish Family and its Hospitality—Arrival at Santa Anna—Playfulness of the Alligators—City of Monpox—General Orichas—A favourite Colombian Dish—Description of Monpox and its Environs; its Trade—Continuation of Voyage—Attempt made to plunder the Boat—Successful Resistance of the Sambos—Arrival at St. Bartholomew—Wearisome Nature of the Voyage—Mosquitoes, Ants, Serpents—Miserable Condition of St. Bartholomew—Entertained by the Padre—Affecting Account of the Aquila Family—Fine Chocolate Plantations—Manufacture of Chocolate—Rapid of Angostura—Arrival at Honda—Description of the Collector of Navigation Duties.

WE now got on board again, to proceed on our voyage, and arrived the next day at Pueblo de Plato, a mean-looking little place, erected as an apology for a town, near which I saw large quantities of birds called guacheracas, commonly termed by the British the pheasants of Colombia. They are larger than the English pheasants, which they resemble in shape, and have a different plumage, in which there is a good deal of yellow intermixed. They are easily shot, as they fly very slowly but just above the ground, and seldom more than fifty yards at a time. When roasted they are delicious eating, but when boiled, with calivansas, as they frequently are by the natives, I cannot say much for them. They are commonly very fat. There

were also thousands of the smaller kind of snipes among the high rushes and flags at the edge of the river, which the noise of the paddles was continually putting up in such numbers, that at a random shot I killed eleven.)

Here the river grew more shoally than ever, and in spite of the constant attention of the steersman and his son we grounded several times in the night, upon which occasions all hands had to jump out of the boat into the water and push her off. Towards the close of the next day we arrived at the village of Pinto, which is agreeably situated on a high rock, commanding some extensive and delightful views. Having been five days in the flechera, I had by this time become heartily tired of my accommodations, and determined to go ashore to sleep that night, as the men were completely fatigued. I entered the village just before it grew dark, and engaged lodgings at the house of an old Spaniard, who was recommended to me by the padre of the place. The latter could not receive me himself, being known to be decidedly in favour of the Independent cause, for which he had been made to suffer severely by his countrymen. My host received me with great cordiality, and had an excellent supper prepared for me, at which he introduced me with great formality to his wife and daughter, the former an active housewife, and the latter a music-mad hoyden. By the one

I was continually desired to note her order and regularity, and by the other my ears were annoyed by the notes of an old cracked guitar, upon which she accompanied her own delightful warblings. On the other side was the worthy old señor plying me with politics and brandy, recounting to me the hair-breadth escapes he had had from the Royalists at Caraccas and other places. To my relief, as I fancied, the time came for retiring, and I was shown to my chamber, which was a long narrow room, formed by two slight partitions being put up at one end of a corridor, which had been subdivided into three or four apartments. This was furnished with a bed, in which I was recommended to sleep in preference to my own hammock, that had been brought from the spherea. Into it I accordingly got, but soon found, to my sorrow, that as it was not supplied with mosquito curtains, it was haunted by ten thousand of these buzzing tormentors. Sleep was here out of the question; and I arose, and carefully fastening the sheets round the bed so as to prevent their re-entry, I attempted to expel them, which I at length effected pretty well by flapping them out with my jacket.

Having slung my hammock in the middle, I now thought I stood some chance of getting a night's rest, but in about two hours after, I had made my arrangements with regard to the visitors just alluded to, I was awoken by the door being softly

opened, and some person entering the room. Afraid to put my head out of my retreat, to see who it was, lest the mosquitoes should enter at the aperture, I laid quite still in the hope that the intruder might retire. But no, my worthy host, for it was himself, was not to be got rid of so easily. After two or three exclamations of surprise at the manner in which I had secured the sheets, he informed me that he had come for the purpose of being informed of the successes of the troops sent out from England in the province of Barcelona, and respecting the affairs of the Congress in general, which he very considerably said, I could relate to him with less fear of interruption from the señoras than at the breakfast-table.

I now found that all hope of rest was vain, and therefore arose to gratify the old Spaniard with an account of the military operations under Urdenetta; but took care to keep the state of the Congress to myself. He was much gratified by the detail, though not at the success of the troops, and we smoked cigars till the ladies had arisen. Breakfast over I took leave of my hospitable entertainer and his family. The former accompanied me to the beach, where the boat lay, to see me on board, and positively refused the least remuneration for his kindness, but, on the contrary, loaded me with many things which he thought would be useful to me on my voyage, and among the rest

twelve bottles of brandy from his favourite hoard. Pressing me to make his casa my home if ever I should visit Pinto again, he shook hands with me, and with grateful thanks for his attention I went on.

I now got to Santa Anna, a neat and clean village, rather large, close to the edge of the Magdalena, where I saw numbers of alligators, and was the whole night much disturbed by their plunging into the river from the banks in search of their prey, or by their gambols. The alligator is usually a playful creature, and it is not uncommon to see ten or twelve of them running on the shore and plunging into the water in chace of each other. (These sports are frequently to be witnessed on moonlight nights, during which they will continue them for hours; the heat of the day being the time of repose.)

Not long after day-break we came in sight of the city of Monpox, built close to the Magdalena. Here I was invited ashore to dine by a superannuated officer of the patriot service, who had fought under General Miranda, and received several wounds which had deprived him of the use of an arm and a leg. He was named Orichas, and held the rank of brigadier-general, but, like most others, had neither pay nor pension for his services. He resided at a neat house, surrounded by beautiful shrubberies, on a small independency, which he had preserved amid the confusion which

prevailed in his unhappy country, and with an only daughter seemed to enjoy as much happiness as he wished for. (He entertained me with great hospitality, and gave me every thing likely to render my tedious voyage comfortable that he could command. The principal dish at dinner, which was altogether of a pretty substantial nature, was about half a dozen fowls and some salt pork stewed with cabbage, and plenty of calivansas. The bones are taken out of the pork and fowls, and the flesh reduced to shreds, a *quantum sufficit* of wine and anise is introduced, and the whole is then highly seasoned, and flour added till thickened to the consistency of paste, and in this manner it is served up. This is a favourite dish in Colombia, and I have in different parts seen it on the tables of the best society there. It was, however, one which I could not do justice to, which, I apprehend, gave the general an inferior opinion of my taste.

After dinner I took a walk round the town, which had previously to the war been one of great wealth and celebrity, but it was then wretchedly impoverished and desolated.) It is about a mile in length, and forms an oblong square, but was formerly much larger, several of the superior streets having been destroyed. The best remaining houses are in the centre of the town, and the ruins of many handsome buildings which have

been destroyed by the Royalists, are still to be seen. There are several churches, which are also in a ruinous state. One of them, which was in better preservation than the rest, was remarkably lofty, and its height was increased in appearance by the slender proportions of its spire. It was upon the whole a fine looking edifice; and the interior, of which I could only spare time to take a cursory view, was very rich, considering the havoc made by the Spaniards. The surrounding country, which is of a nature well adapted for agricultural purposes, was dreadfully neglected; and excepting the garden belonging to General Orichas, I could not perceive the least traces of cultivation.

The trade was here once of great consequence, but the dismantled situation in which the Spaniards left it, had reduced it to nothing. It chiefly consisted of corn, hides, cotton, Nicaragua, and Brazil woods, which were exported in vast quantities, while imports of all kinds were eagerly bought to be retailed. After bidding farewell to my host, who would accept nothing but a bottle of the brandy the old Spaniard had given me at Pinto, which is very scarce, and but little drank in Colombia, I repaired to the beach. Here I found several of the natives vying with my Indians in scaring the alligators, by plunging into the river, at the same time, shouting violently, and accompanying their exclamations by striking the surface

of the water with a kind of bat made by them for the purpose. Their exertions had the effect of dispersing these terrific-looking creatures entirely; and this is a common custom among the poorer classes of natives, both on the Orinoco and Magdalena, who will at any time eagerly do it to amuse strangers for a trifling reward. At Monpox I could only purchase a few oranges and some plantains, which latter are the chief support of the natives.

We had now to keep close along the banks of the river, to take advantage of the line of deep water, which extended for some leagues; but as the banks were covered with trees, the long branches of which hung over the water, and were thickly covered with mosquitoes, we could not avoid sometimes disturbing their slumbers, and they were not slow in avenging this intrusion on their head-quarters. We were much annoyed by them the whole day and night, and did not get rid of them till we could get further into the middle of the river. We now continued our course till we came to a place called San Fernando, where we fell in with a fleet of piraguas and champans, the crews of which collectively seemed determined to appropriate some of my provisions and property, if not the whole, to their own use. With this view they surrounded the flechera, under pretence of showing me some fish and other things which they

had to dispose of; but when they were near enough to step on board, they unanimously desired me to give up many things which lay in their sight, threatening vengeance if their wishes were not complied with. Knowing that I could rely upon the Sambos at least, if not upon the Indians; I judged it best to have a short struggle for it, and the former were at their post in a moment with their long lances and machettis, and soon arranged themselves in a posture of defence. Three of them I armed with muskets, and gave my rifle to the lad who had before made such a good use of it, reserving my fowling-piece and pistols to myself. They now attempted to board, but the blacks with their machettis soon despatched all that came in their way, and in a few minutes made themselves masters in the conflict, and warmly urged me to permit them to rifle the boats of their enemy. Knowing their propensity for plunder, and fearing that they might not defend me so well when again attacked, if utterly disappointed, I consented as far as regarded the provisions the bogos had for sale, leaving the property in their charge belonging to the inhabitants untouched. This produced the Sambos a good feast, who seemed highly delighted with the fruits of the contest.

We passed on without further molestation, until we reached the town of St. Bartholomew,

without experiencing any thing deserving of notice. I arrived here on the twelfth day of my journey, and found myself exceedingly unwell, owing to want of exercise, and to the unvaried posture I was constantly obliged to maintain in the flechera, which had produced pains and soreness in all my limbs. I was therefore apprehensive that unless I took some rest I should be unable in a day or two to proceed, and in consequence went on shore for the night. The dull monotonous life the traveller leads in passing up the rivers of Colombia is almost insupportable, and this is of course increased ten-fold when going alone, and without books, or any agreeable source of amusement. The scenery is for days unchanged, nearly every person he meets with is rude and uncivilized, and all that he can find to pass away the time are annoyances and bodily pain. If he is so fortunate as to escape the mosquitoes for a while he is sure to be besieged by equal numbers of ants, who seldom live in the spots inhabited by the former, and thus he is certain to be attacked by one or the other in succession, and in a few instances by both at once. In two or three places I found that the ants had taken up their abode in the lower limbs and trunks of the trees, while the mosquitoes sojourned in the foliage of the extended branches, on the overhanging extremities of which snakes were very often seen

coiled up, either asleep, or insidiously waiting for an opportunity to satisfy their hunger or their malevolence. Some of the largest would frequently dart from their hiding-places into the flechera; but not many, and they did no injury, as they were rapidly killed by the Indians.

At the place I have dignified with the name of the city of St. Bartholomew, I found great difficulty in procuring a room unoccupied, such as I could venture into. The place was miserably dirty, and most of the apartments I looked at were infested with swarms of intruders with which I could not agreeably come in contact. There was only one family of respectability there, and they were reduced to such a state of poverty, that they inhabited part of a building which was almost in ruins, and afforded barely shelter enough for themselves. At length I met a chubby-looking personage; having the same appearance of rotundity as a barrel) and whose breadth was nearly equivalent to his length. Seeing me a stranger, and evidently in search of something, he civilly requested to know what I was looking for. I informed him; and he then turned his inquiries as to my country and occupation; for, said he, "if you are a Spaniard, you will not get into quarters of my recommendation." Satisfied on this point, he at once agreed to accommodate me for the night with a share of his habitation; which con-

sisted of two rooms, tenanted by himself, a dog, a cat, a pig, and a parrot. I found that he was the worthy pastor of the place, and like many others of his fraternity, had no objection to a little brandy. A couple of bottles of my stock soon gained me his good opinion, and the best entertainment he could afford was given me. In a little time a room was cleared out for my use, by an old woman, who attended the padre in the capacity of housemaid, and here I slung my hammock, leaving the priest and his family to enjoy the other.)

After a good night's rest, I awoke much refreshed and benefited by it; and arose expecting to find my host waiting for me; but he was gone round to his parishioners, who, it seemed, paid him in kind, to provide me, as I afterwards found, with the means of a breakfast. He came in soon after, with his old domestic laden with the fruits of his applications to his flock, and a comfortable meal was soon prepared. Some cocoa and chocolate, fried plantains, fish, and pork, cut into slices and broiled, and some cassava bread, aided by a reinforcement from my own stock, furnished the table pretty well. I found him a well-educated man, and possessed of general information, though his faculties seemed beclouded by his Bacchanalian sacrifices. He had a warm desire to see the liberty of the country restored to the inhabitants, and spoke very feelingly upon the subject of their

sufferings. I requested him to inform me who the unfortunate family were that I had heard spoken of the day before, and he gave me the following affecting account of them.

They were named D'Aquila, and were natives of the city of Merida, where they resided before the revolutionary war broke out under General Miranda, upon an ample estate which they cultivated in the style of a superior hacienda. When the general call to arms was made by Miranda, Señor D'Aquila, then only a few years married, joined the army, and having very gallantly signalled himself in several actions, was promoted to the rank of colonel. Some time after the war of extermination had been proclaimed, and during his absence, the Spaniards approached the city, and endeavoured to take all persons, of whatever age or sex, prisoners, who were inimical to their cause, that they might put them to death. In this emergency Madame D'Aquila took refuge in a cave, not far distant from the city, with a son, three daughters, and her father, who was very aged, leaving another son and a daughter, twins, only a few weeks old, a little way behind her, in the arms of a servant. Unhappily the latter fell into the hands of the Royalists, and was, with the helpless infants, massacred by the orders of the monster Monteverde, the Spanish general, who conceived he had killed their mother.

Deprived of every article they possessed, and afraid to venture from their wretched retreat until the Spaniards had retired from the neighbourhood, the family remained, suffering the most dreadful privations, and Madame D'Aquila's father was actually starved to death in the presence of his agonized daughter and her children. When this happened, the son, an intelligent youth of twelve years of age, who had ventured out to reconnoitre, and to endeavour to find some person who would give him food for his family, did not return till the aged man had expired. An old friend of the D'Aquilas, who had, like them, been deprived of all his property, contrived to send them provisions during the remainder of their stay; and when the Spanish troops left the city they returned to it again, in the hope of hearing from the colonel, who was then in the province of Santa Martha. Shortly after intelligence reached them that the colonel was killed in an action fought in the province of Barcelona, under (I think) General Barino, and within a few months after this event, in 1812, the city was visited by a dreadful earthquake, which entirely destroyed it, and one of the daughters was crushed to death in a part of the ruins. The distressed widow now went to Monporo, whence she dated a memorial to the president Bolivar, entreating that some provision might be made for herself and children; but whether this

document miscarried, or that the treasury was too poor to comply with the request contained in it, I know not, but not a dollar was ever awarded to these unhappy sufferers. To add to their disasters, the approach of the Spaniards to Maracaibo, who were continually sending out foraging parties in the vicinity of Monporo, compelled them once more to seek a new asylum, and they escaped miraculously across the country to Monpox, with the view of getting a conveyance down the Magdalena to the capital of Venezuela. Here they were met by the good old padre of St. Bartholomew, who took them to his home, and subsequently gave them all the assistance he could, and supported them until I arrived there.

Interested by the detail given me by the priest, I requested him to introduce me to them, and he accompanied me to their retreat, where I saw a dreadful proof of the miseries of civil war. Madame D'Aquila, bent with grief and suffering more than age, seemed fast verging to the grave, to which she appeared to look forward with perfect resignation, though agitated by the fears she entertained for her children. Her daughters were handsome young women, but their faces plainly indicated the share they took in the mental anguish of their parent, and her son was a fine young man, eager to do any thing to serve his family, but ignorant of the means. I requested the padre to

persuade them to write another memorial immediately, and allow me to convey it to Bolivar, and also to permit the son to accompany me to Bogota, where something might be done for him. They agreed to both, and I departed with my companion, who seemed delighted with the idea of entering the service of his country.

I now took leave of the priest, who parted with the young man with tears in his eyes, and showered blessings upon him as he entered the flechera; and we left St. Bartholomew. That town is but a small place, having only a few narrow streets, and the ruins of an old church, divine service being performed by my friend, the padre, in the open air in fine weather, and during the wet season in any old hovel into which he can get his congregation. There was a sort of market held here, at which the produce of the small haciendas was sold, and also a little fish. My course now lay through some of the finest plantations of chocolate in the world, which were arranged on each side of the Magdalena for miles; and although the state of the country at that period prevented the proprietors from cultivating them with that attention and spirit which they had received in more peaceable times, they were still yielding a fine produce, which not unfrequently perished for want of persons to take proper care of it.

The chocolate which is grown on the Magdalena

is universally esteemed for its peculiarly fine flavour, and is allowed to be inferior to none in the world. Speculators might employ their capital in extending the growth of this article near the banks of the river, with inconceivable advantage. It is not only in constant requisition throughout Colombia, but in most parts of North and South America, and would soon become an object of desire in every place to which it was exported. If indeed the supply were rendered equal to the demand, it would speedily form a staple commodity of the country; but this has hitherto been prevented by the long war, and the indolence of the natives, which causes will doubtless still operate to render it scarce. If a tract of land were purchased or hired of the government, or of any of the officers of the Republic who have had grants located to them near the river as a reward for their services (which might be easily done at a very cheap rate), and if the management and growth of this article were superintended with a due proportion of care and assiduity, the returns would, in a short time, be immense. But from the causes which I have before mentioned—the dishonesty and cupidity of the natives—nothing short of personal toil, and unwearied caution, would have a chance of success, in this or indeed in any other speculation in Colombia.

For two days after I left St. Bartholomew, I

remained in the flechera, without seeing any thing but a few villages on the banks, inhabited by the poorest of the natives; but the vivacity of my companion, whose spirits were strongly excited by the change which he anticipated in his affairs, served to pass away the time very agreeably, and almost unnoticed. On the third day I went ashore, to a small town, to purchase some provisions, and got some fresh beef, which I was assured would prove the best I had ever eaten; but I was egregiously deceived, for it was tougher than leather. The Sambos, who have a remedy for all the mishaps that befall them, went into a wood to get some papa apples, which have the quality ascribed to them of making tough meat tender, if rubbed upon it while they are green. In some instances, I believe, they have this effect, but in vain were they applied to the stuff I had bought. It remained still as bad as ever; and the blacks finding that one remedy failed, begged leave to try another, that of returning it to the persons who had sold it, and either compelling them to refund the money, or exchange it for something better. Permission obtained, away they went, and soon returned with some fine gallipavos,* which proved a treat. The water we obtained for two or three days was very thick, and contained a quantity of sandy particles, and to alter it a branch of the alumbre tree was

* Turkeys.

dipped into it, which precipitated all the dirt, leaving the liquid as clear as if filtered.*

We now went on without further stoppage, till we (arrived at the rapid) of Angostura, more commonly termed the Chorro. This rapid is, according to the account of it given me by the patron, very dangerous, and many of the vessels used on the river have been sunk in it. He also told me, that in the rainy season it forms numerous eddies, which turn a boat round with such rapidity as to render the crews incapable of managing it, and sometimes the whole are sunk together. Luckily we (passed it without sustaining any injury or inconvenience, save a little wetting, and the labour and time it took to work the flechera through it.)

Without further accident or adventure, we went on to Honda, where my instructions were to land and procure mules to ride forward to Bogota. Here I arrived completely jaded, and so cramped as to be scarcely able to walk, and very unwell. I succeeded in getting a very comfortable lodging for myself and companion for the night, at the house of the person who was appointed to receive the duties upon imports, and the rate of tonnage levied on all vessels coming up the river, which had been imposed by the president Bolivar, in order

* This is a method resorted to on all similar occasions by the natives, and an excellent one it is, as the water is often so full of mud and animalculæ as to render it dangerous to drink.

to defray the expenses of the war. He was originally an officer in the New Grenadian service, in which he had lost an arm, and his father was then in Bolivar's suite. His situation seemed nearly a sinecure, as he performed all the duties of it but that of receiving the money, by deputy, and for this part of it he appointed one hour in each day, for which the boats were obliged to wait. He then transmitted what portion of it he pleased to the head-quarters of Bolivar. He resided at the custom-house, if such it might be called, which consisted of two long rooms, irregularly built with piles of wood, and with a roof which was neither wind nor water tight. The portion of it which he occupied was, however, well secured, and furnished with every convenience and necessary; and he had taken care to supply himself with an abundance of provisions from the boats, which he exacted as fees, and some good wines and spirits from the stocks which had been at various times left in his charge by the owners. This he avowed to me, and seemed to pride himself upon his dexterity. For five dollars he agreed to provide myself and companion for the night and the next morning with all we should require.

CHAPTER X.

Description of Honda—Waterfall in the Vicinity—Difficulty of getting Mules—A Mule dashed to pieces—Arrival at Santa-Fe de Bogota—Meets with Captain Mardyn—Introduction to the President Bolivar—Singularity of his Reception—Department of the President—His Anxiety respecting the Government of General Arismendez—Dinner Party—Fate of Major Beamish's Levy—Author presented with the "Order of the Libertador"—Conversation at the Dinner Party—Description of the Person of the President Bolivar—Author's Disappointment.

IN the morning my host requested me to take a walk round the place, to which I agreed. On the spot which is now occupied by the petty town of Honda, once stood a large and opulent city of the same name, which, from its convenient situation with regard to the capital of New Grenada, and its being (at the head of the Magdalena) where their goods were exported, and all imports from Santa Martha landed, was then inhabited by merchants, who were very wealthy. It was unfortunately destroyed by an earthquake many years since, which scarcely left a vestige of it remaining. This convulsion of nature was represented by the priestcraft to be ordained by offended Heaven as a just punishment for the wickedness of the people, who had impiously refused to submit to

some heavy contributions which their worthy pastors and masters wished to extort from them, under the pretext of gaining the patronage of St. Jerome for the city) who, they said, had agreed to grant it to them, and also to protect its trade and inhabitants, in consideration of the erection of a handsome monastery on a certain spot to be dedicated entirely to him. There are now only a few houses, and these are built chiefly of wood, and irregularly strewed on a plain, situated on a little eminence which commands some majestic and romantic views. The ruins of some convents and churches are to be seen, but not one of them fit for use. Near it is a tremendous fall of water, which presents a most imposing spectacle. It is seen to the best advantage from a small bridge erected on the tops of two rocks, through which the waters rush with wonderful force, at a great depth below it, creating a noise which is astonishing to a stranger. The fall is caused by the descent of the waters from the Maraquitán hills, down which they are seen rolling a considerable distance in one huge tide, sometimes varied by the foam which is produced by their dashing against some projection in their progress, and which is thrown for several yards in different directions.

The collector informed me that there were many extremely valuable mines near the town, none of which were then at work, and many of

them had scarcely been attempted. The Maraquitan mines are only about four miles from Honda, over the hills, where he informed me there were great quantities of both gold and silver ore.

While we were at breakfast, I despatched my servant to endeavour to ascertain if there were any mules expected to approach the town; for there were none in it; and my host told me for my comfort, that I had no chance of getting away for several days, when a champan would arrive, and the merchants at Bogota would send their mules to take away the cargo. He advised me, therefore, to rest contented where I then was till they should reach Honda; but judging that this was only a manoeuvre to detain me in his house for the sake of the money I paid him, I desired my servant to make further inquiries, and he learned that at a town named Guadiz there were some to be had which were kept there by muleteers, who were chiefly employed between Honda and the capital. I determined at once to go there, but in what manner was the next point. I, however, found out that the collector had a horse kept for his own use, which circumstance he had cautiously concealed from me, and I therefore impressed it for the journey. He did not much like this step, but as he could not resist the order of the government he yielded his Rosinante to me :

but such an animal was scarcely ever before seen; no broken down post-horse ever deserved more commiseration than did this unfortunate creature. I went along at a pace which could not much distress him, for about two miles, when I fortunately fell in with a drove of mules which was going to Honda, to take away goods from the custom-house. I made use of the warrant to take as many as I wanted, and having selected six, left the muleteer to go on with the remainder, and the horse which had carried me. I now returned to my young companion with the mules tied together behind me after the fashion of an English horse-dealer.

Having despatched the flechera down the river again (as I intended returning to Angostura by the river Oronoco) I got the mules loaded, and proceeded over one of the worst roads in the world to a pretty village called Guadinas. This, I was informed, had in happier times been resorted to by the inhabitants of Santa-Fe as a watering-place, where they found a pleasant retreat from their mercantile or other occupations, and the powerful heat of the city. Here I stopped to take some refreshment, and to get a fresh supply of mules, of which there were plenty. I then hastened on to another town, the name of which has escaped my recollection, taking with me a peon, or guide, to conduct me by the safest track over the stu-

pendous ridge of mountains. In crossing these, I found the narrow zigzag paths so slippery, that the poor mules, though proverbially sure-footed, could hardly retain their standing, and every step they took threatened to precipitate them and their burthens down the perpendicular precipice, on the edge of which they were pacing. At length one of the baggage mules, in consequence of being very injudiciously beaten by the peon to accelerate her pace, fell over, and the poor animal was, with the load she carried, literally dashed in pieces.

This accident made us more cautious, and we slackened our pace, by which we arrived in safety at a small village where fresh mules were obtained, and then went on to the capital, distant about eight leagues, over a fine smooth sandy plain, although so covered with the waters, which had not yet subsided, as to form one entire expansive blue sheet. Arriving within sight of the city, I saw a part of the Independent army marching, or rather wading, towards it by another direction on which I rode forward to inquire if his excellency Bolivar was there, and was told that he had been in the city about ten hours. I therefore spurred on, anxious to complete the object of my fatiguing expedition.

The city of Santa-Fe de Bogota, when approached from the plains, presents a very splendid and ro-

...mantic sight. It is built on the top of a table-land, at the height of about nine thousand feet above the level of the sea, and beyond it are several mountains rising in a semicircular form, at least one thousand feet higher, on which several convents are seen to raise their aspiring heads. It apparently occupies a large extent of ground, and this circumstance tends to render it healthier than the more confined cities of New Grenada. Its extreme height, and the natural beauties by which it is surrounded, conspire to form a scene but seldom equalled in landscape. On dismounting from my mule to find out the abode in which Bolivar had taken up his quarters, I found that a little exertion almost impeded my breathing, and I was obliged suddenly to stop several times. This proceeded from the rarefaction of the atmosphere, produced by the height at which the city is erected, and which causes the same sensation to persons unaccustomed to it, as that which I had experienced on crossing the branch of the Cordillera. Here are two winters and two summers, each lasting three months, and thus the year is regularly divided: March, April, and May, compose the first winter; September, October, and November, the second. The bells at the different cathedrals were ringing a merry peal to the welcome of the "Libertador," accompanied by occasional discharges of musketry and artillery. Having reached the door of

the government house, as it was termed, I saw about a dozen native soldiers, half covered with rags, sitting down, playing a game called golpet, which is decided by the tossing up of three flat stones, differently marked, on each side; and a party being formed, the antagonists have to name the side which will fall uppermost. If they are right, they inflict a certain number of raps upon the knuckles of the losers with a small stick cut for the purpose; and if they happen to be wrong, they endure a similar infliction from the other side. Through this gang I waded up the steps, where I saw a priest, who superciliously demanded my business, which I declined telling him, and then went on to a long gallery appropriated as a mess-room to the use of the officers composing Bolivar's staff. Here were several officers parading up and down in conversation, and among them, to my delight and surprise, I saw my old companion in difficulty, Captain Mardya. We were mutually pleased; and after our congratulations were over, at thus meeting safe and well, I requested him to inform me how I could get to the president; when he conducted me to the room where he was.

At the door of the apartment, which stood partly open, were two English soldiers, who were fixed there as sentinels, to prevent any unseasonable interruption upon his excellency; and Captain Mardya having retired, I desired one of them to

announces to Bolivar the arrival of a British officer with despatches from the Venezuelan Congress. He did so, and returned with an order for my immediate entrance. I went into the room, which was large, but dirty, and scantily provided with furniture. At the further end sat Colonel O'Leary, then one of his excellency's secretaries, on the ground, with a small writing-desk in his lap, writing despatches of a military nature, at the dictation of Bolivar, who, at the other end of the room, was sitting on the edge of a large South American cot slung from the ceiling. To avoid the inconvenience of the heat, he was quite unencumbered with apparel or covering of any description, and was swinging himself violently by means of a coquita rope, attached to a hook driven into the opposite wall for the purpose. Thus curiously situated, he alternately dictated to O'Leary and whistled a French republican tune, to which he beat time by knocking his feet laterally. Seeing him so circumstanced and employed, I was about to retire, imagining that the soldier had mistaken the order given him; when his excellency called to me in very good English to enter, and desired me to be seated if I could find any thing to sit upon, which was not an easy matter; but looking round the room, I espied an old portmanteau, upon which I sat till he was disengaged. He immediately desired one of the soldiers to procure me some coffee and cigars; and

while he was gone for them, asked my name, country, and rank in the patriot service. I stated them to him, and he desired to know if I was not the person he had heard Captain Mardyn speak of as commander of the vessel in which the latter had arrived at Margarita. I replied in the affirmative, when he instantly sprang from the cot and proceeded to embrace me, according to the custom of the country, by enclosing me in his arms and kissing my cheek. Such a proof of regard not being very congenial with my feelings, more particularly when offered by a person in a total state of nudity, I declined it in no very gentle manner; upon which he looked as if somewhat displeased, and turned towards his secretary with evident marks of astonishment. The colonel, who entered into my feelings at once, represented to him that such a custom was foreign to his countrymen, and hoped, therefore, that he would pardon the ungentle repulse I had given him. His excellency smiled, and extended to me his hand with an air of the warmest cordiality, which mark of condescension I respectfully acknowledged, and he returned to his cot to finish the despatches, while I smoked a cigar.

When they were completed he signified to the colonel his wish to be left alone with me, and upon his exit, requested me to hand my papers to him. He politely apologised for reading them in my

présence, and having perused them, observed; "From the nature of these despatches I find that I am given up for lost by the people of Venezuela; but I have effectually completed the conquest of every province of New Grenada, and this is mainly to be attributed to the brave British troops furnished by Major Beamish, who, if he had lived, should have been my dearest friend, and also to those who were under my command previously; all of whom, led by my gallant friend Colonel Rooke, now unfortunately deceased, and since by my valued friend Colonel Mackintosh, have performed prodigies of valour."

His excellency then put numerous questions to me concerning the government of General Arismendez, and the first campaign of the British legion. I gave all the information I could on the latter subject, but said little on the former, as the short time I had been at Angostura during the vice-presidency of the general, had not enabled me to acquire the intelligence his excellency needed. He then did me the honour to turn his inquiries towards myself, and the manner in which I had been employed since I entered the Republican service. I informed him; and he expressed himself much hurt at the treatment I had experienced from Admiral Brion, and alarmed lest it should disgust the British officers collectively. He then said, "I dine in an hour hence, and shall ex-

pect you and your friend Colonel Mardyn." I then retired to prepare myself, and passed the interval in a stroll with the colonel, who gave me sanguine hopes of rising high in the service.

At the appointed time we repaired to the banquet chamber, which was a long corridor in the government house, in the centre of which stood a large oblong table, composed of some fresh hewn planks rudely put together, supported by tressels, and without any covering. Round it were arranged benches of the same construction and materials. The dishes were more substantial than delicate, and not the worse on that account, and the welcome given us by his excellency was certainly of the most flattering and cordial nature. He did me the honour of placing me near him, and frequently addressed himself to me during the repast. He was unremitting in his efforts to evince his gratitude to all those who had volunteered in the cause of his country. The dishes removed, a general briezo* was ordered by his excellency to the united kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland; another to its army, and one to its navy. I ventured to inquire how many of the poor fellows taken out by Beaumish were then living; and he informed

* A bumper drunk by every person at the table to any thing proposed by the founder of the feast, who in Colombia has the privilege of ordering as many of them, and in as rapid succession, as he pleases.

me that of the three hundred not more than twenty were remaining, and some of these were disabled, either by wounds, or by the ravages made upon their constitutions by the severity of the climate and their sufferings while on their long marches, which on most occasions did more towards thinning the British ranks than the swords of the Spaniards. He mentioned his intention of pensioning the survivors, with some other Englishmen who had served in the same campaign, as soon as the funds of the Republic would permit such a reward. He then, with his usual flowing eloquence, rose and complimented Colonel Mardyn and myself on the conduct we had pursued during the meeting, and ended by expressing himself highly gratified by having the opportunity of personally giving me his thanks. (He also presented me with the "Order of Libertador," the highest military order of the country,) which had been previously given to my friend Mardyn, with the rank of colonel. As an earnest (as his excellency expressed it) of more substantial rewards, and as a testimony of his own esteem, he likewise begged to invest me with the "Order of Bolivar," which was originally created by himself, and usually bestowed upon those who had distinguished themselves under his own immediate command. To conclude, he promised, at my request, a commission for young D'Aquila, and an asylum for his unhappy family.

The wine now flew rapidly round in breezes to many Republican toasts, and after several had been drunk, his excellency rose to propose the "Memory of his beloved Rooke," which was drunk with every possible mark of respect that could be shown, each person present standing, and preserving the strictest silence. The "Memory of Major Beaumish" followed, with the same observance. After some time the party, which was numerous, grew rather noisy and elated, and the conversation turned generally to the subject of gallantry, which in Colombia is but too much encouraged, and, excepting intrigues of other kinds, holds the most undisturbed place in the thoughts of both sexes. Every individual who was a native, from the president and his bosom friend and adviser General Santander to the youngest officer in their staffs, vied with each other in displaying their various and respective achievements in this way; and if their assertions could be credited, there could have been few ladies of note in either viceroyalty who had not yielded to the fascinating powers of these veterans in the service of Cupid. Bolivar, who had become affected by his copious libations, launched out in a strain of conversation only remarkable for its obscenity; his manners now became coarse and poisonous, and when the time arrived for the breaking up of the party, which was about twelve o'clock,

he arose to give "the union of the two vice-royalties of Spain, Venezuela and New Grenada, under one government;" and then dashed his glass on the table with all the violence he was capable of, and his example being followed by all the native members of the party, the fragments were flying in all directions about the room as thick as hail.*

This ceremony performed, each person repaired to his quarters; and being still suffering under the effects of my late journey, I eagerly returned to mine, knowing how soon I must proceed back; as I had received orders to attend the president on the following morning early for his replies. I retired, certainly not without some feelings of disappointment, as regarded his excellency, which were no doubt occasioned by the glowing representations I had been accustomed to hear made respecting him by his friends in Venezuela. By them every action of his life, however trivial—his manners, person, conversation, and all that he ever did or said, were so highly coloured, that I naturally expected to meet with something very far above mediocrity. Assurances had indeed been given me by Arismendez, that I should find them too power-

* This is a common custom in Colombia, and it is preserved even in the presence of ladies, who do not retire from the table as in England, and it not unfrequently happens that their fair faces are grazed by the shattered pieces of flint hurled by the maddened head of intoxication.

fully depicted when I saw him, but these I had ascribed to the prejudices which a man accustomed to a life of hardship and privation from his infancy is apt to imbibe against the elegancies of easy times. In person the president is about five feet seven inches in height; but his body and its appendages are so disproportioned, that instead of commanding respect, he would perhaps, if seen in the common sphere of domestic life, more naturally excite risibility. His head is exceedingly large, with a profusion of coarse curling very dark hair; and his features, which are rough and manly, were then greatly obscured by a superabundance of whiskers. His eyes are full and dark, and when directed straight forward piercing; but they are more frequently employed in sidelong glances at the persons he is conversing with, or those he is surrounded by, and he seldom looks directly at even inanimate objects, turning his head on one side like a hare. From his shoulders to his waist his frame is in good proportion to his height, but his legs are excessively thin, and shapeless, and his hips narrow; and the inequality of the former to the support of his body is upon most occasions made the more conspicuous by his wearing very tight scarlet pantaloons, profusely decorated with gold lace, and large dragoon boots, which are scarcely half filled. His conversation too was not equal to what I had been prepared to

expect; and his condescension in rendering himself the promoter and applauder of obscene jests, was inconsistent with the idea I had formed of his character. Upon the whole, therefore, the impression made upon me by my first introduction to this distinguished individual was attended with very considerable feelings of disappointment.

END OF VOL. I.

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

The history of the United States is a story of growth and change. It begins with the first settlers, who came to the Americas in search of a new life. They found a land of opportunity, but also a land of challenge. The early years were marked by struggle and hardship, but the spirit of the pioneers was unyielding. They built a nation from scratch, one that was based on the principles of freedom and democracy. Over time, the United States grew in size and power, becoming a global superpower. It has faced many challenges, from war to economic crisis, but it has always emerged stronger and more united. The history of the United States is a testament to the power of the human spirit and the ability of a nation to overcome adversity.

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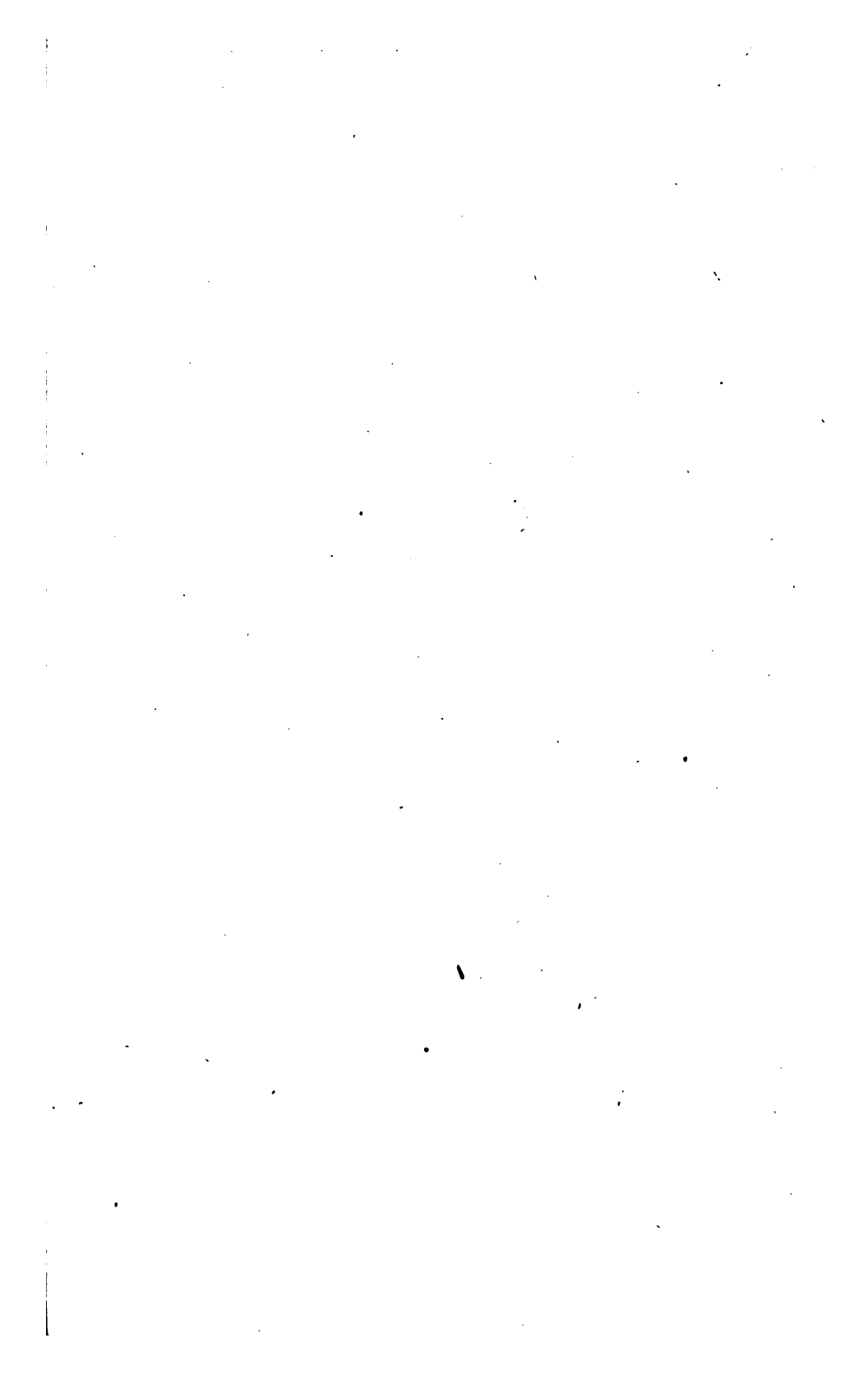
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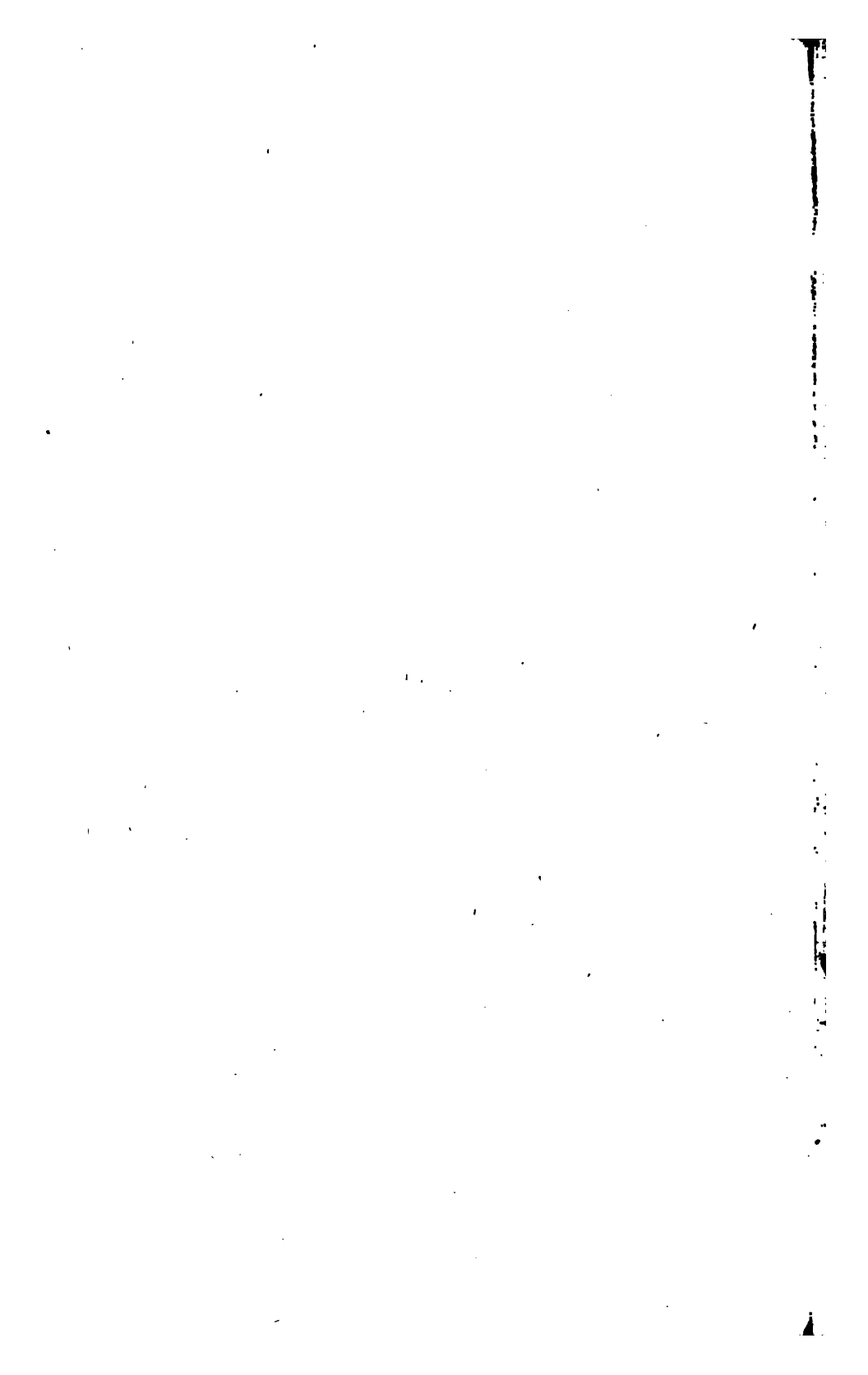
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