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Bolivar

*"The word Liberty has so fine a sound, we would
not do without it even if it were an error."*

GOETHE

BY EMIL LUDWIG

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THE NILE
THE GERMANS



Simon Bolivar

BOLIVAR

THE LIFE OF AN IDEALIST

BY EMIL LUDWIG



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To
FRITZ VON UNRUH

Foreword

To its heroes a nation erects statues of bronze; if the hero is a great soldier he rides on a high pedestal above the public square. But the nation wants to know also the psychology of its hero, which of course no monument can represent; everyone will take him as an example and will compare himself to the hero. After a century, when the echo of his deeds begin to fade, when the liberty he has conquered for the nation is safe from all danger, when the enemy of old times has become an old friend, then the human motives which guided the hero appear much stronger behind the battles and the constitutions. For human characters always renew themselves; and their passions, their joys and griefs bring stronger enlightening to posterity than the tale of events gone long since.

Several times Bolivar has been so imperiously represented by his compatriots and scholars that his country expects nothing new from a foreigner. But, like the stranger who, for the first time, enters the family circle, he can perhaps examine this figure with a new and unprejudiced glance, and because of the fact that he is not interested in political peculiarities he may produce the very essence of the human being. This is what moves the writer and foreign nations more deeply than campaigns and congresses the names of which are nearly unknown outside of South America.

How little known seems to be this tragic character!— That is the reason why this book tells little about battles, just as the book about Napoleon by the same author does not. Youth which grows up amongst tanks and murderous weapons can consider

the astonishing passage of the Andes on the back of a mule only as a romantic engraving!

What then is it that attaches our time to the radiant profile of Bolivar? This lightminded son of a millionaire whose eyes were opened by a stranger to the beauty of his country; this young enthusiastic adherent of dance and of game in whom the aspect of Napoleon evokes the love for glory; this skeptic who transforms himself into an idealist after an inner struggle which makes him lose his best friend; this ardent diletante, this theorist in revolution who over night finds himself a great captain and deliverer . . . then, like the condor, he spreads his enormous wings, glides over the mountains which form the borders of his country, and plunging into the neighboring countries he proclaims and spreads liberty everywhere, to turn homeward only after having chased the last of his enemies. But, during this time, behind his back, envy, discord and jealousy have grown in the heart of his people; before the eyes of the hero who grows old prematurely they destroy his work. The victorious rise of a man between his thirtieth and fortieth year is followed, as in Antiquity, by the tragedy that pursues him to the day of his death. When before our eyes the tragic fate of this real romantic hero who loved glory more than anything else has unfolded, our hearts are touched, our minds excited.

But such a work as his could not spare his compatriots any more than his own weaknesses, especially since by triumphing over these weaknesses he rose to his great destiny. In his meetings with Napoleon, Miranda, San Martin and Manuela, his mistress we observe the decisive turning points of his life.

Proceeding from there, certain problems which are now existing have been treated: the antagonism between dictatorship and democracy which left him no peace during his whole life; the moral force with which he always pursued the praise of posterity more than the easy triumph of the dictator; the discernment of his idea of a League of Nations; his struggle for unity and against the discord of political parties. All these subjects belong in our time and to which Bolivar can serve as an example.

But as I see it the principal point of Bolivar's story is the struggle of an heroic soul. It is the struggle of the idealist brought up with the heroes of Antiquity against the temptation of power, the struggle of the born dictator against his own moral principles, the struggle of a man who, during ten years, rejects the dictatorship which he could have seized because he believes it dangerous and who, nevertheless, finally takes it.

After having seen my portraits of Napoleon and of Lincoln favorably accepted by some French and American schools, I felt honored to be asked by the government of a foreign nation to paint that of its hero. It may be the first time that a government asked an artist for a written portrait of its hero, instead of a marble statue.

The large and excellent three thousand page, ten volume edition of Bolivar's letters, edited by Lecuna, which represents a kind of diary has been my principal source. The excellent work of Mancini was not published at the time of my writing because the second volume of his manuscript was lost after the death of the author. The work of Mitre and many others have been of invaluable assistance; the advise of some outstanding scholars has prevented me from making many errors.

I owe special gratitude to M. M. Luis Correa, a great soul who has passed on, to Cristobal Mendoza, President of the Academy of Caracas, to Luis Col Pacheco, to F. Planchard, and to Parra-Perez, all descendants of those who were actors in the life of the great Bolivar and to many other members of the "Academia di Historia" of Caracas who very kindly offered their consistently good advise.

The book was finished in Europe and was presented to the government of Venezuela in 1938, but publication was postponed because of the death of the first translator and because of some technical circumstances.

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CHAPTER ONE

The Dandy

*"Our wishes are presentiments of abilities lying
within us, heralds of things we shall be able to do."*

GOETHE

I

A BRILLIANT gathering thronged the great house, which for the most part stood closed and shuttered. All the society of the capital was there to celebrate the birthday of Charles IV, the All-Catholic King of Spain, the sun of whose grace shone from far across the Atlantic to the shores of his oldest and most loyal colonies where, three centuries before, Columbus had hoisted the Spanish flag.

The place was Caracas, the year 1790, and the manor belonged to the widow of one of those great nobles who, at the extreme end of the Spanish world, determined to preserve a reflection of the splendors of the court of Madrid when they came riding into town from their seats on their huge estates. The Señor de Bolivar, whose portrait, in uniform and decorations, hung in the red drawing room above the candles, had died a few years before, but as he had been a friend of the Captain-General, like his brother playing *tresillo* at the green card table, the traditions of this loyal house had been maintained. Some of the guests had walked over from the Residence, for the mansions of the great stood at no great distance from each other in the little town; the whole place was again re-echoing to the marching of troops, the heat of the day was over, the wide streets were full of life, and all had put on their best finery, for an invitation to these receptions was an honor to be paraded in the eyes of others.

Under the old pomegranate tree in the patio, a boy of eight, sitting half perched on his chair, with his feet in his buckled shoes drawn up under him, watched with a cool and rather tired expression the comings and goings of the ladies and gentlemen between the long curtains, among the ivory cabinets, and even under the

trees in the patio, their jewels, uniforms, lace and flowers and daggers flickering and flashing in the candlelight.

From time to time, through the moving crowd, the boy caught sight of a figure in black silk—his beautiful, ailing mother, who sat bolt upright in her carved chair, her straight back scorning its support, as stiff and proud as a Spanish queen. That very morning, after Mass, he and his three brothers and sisters had walked behind her gilded sedan chair, just behind four mulatto women who, almost black in their white clothes, moved through the harsh sunshine with acquired dignity, holding their mistress' rug, cloak, sunshade, and prayer book, while the four Negroes who carried the sedan chair trotted dully forward on silent feet.

To Simon, the youngest son, as he sat looking on under the pomegranate tree, the whole scene seemed tiresome; he could find no interest in the bowings of the cavaliers, and he wondered to see his elder brother, fair-haired Juan Vicente, busy among it all, while his two sisters, in their stiff brocades, returned the prescribed answers to the questions of the grownups, anxious and intent. All moved in procession before his mother, the Palacicos, the Sojos, the Andrades, the Pontes, each with his lady, each name solemnly announced by the Negro servant standing under the great carved coat of arms of the house, the blue band with the three hearts on the silver field, and placed with such precision that the lions' tails just touched his head.

Not until the strains of Haydn's minuet rose in the green hall, and the couples took up their stand to weave its intricate figures, was Simon's curiosity moved. But the dance moved too slowly for him. The other day, in the market place, he had seen the couples whirling round in swift circles. The sight had exhilarated him, but his mother told him that it was a newfangled and godless step which no Spanish gentleman would ever dance.

Why mustn't people dance quickly, the boy wondered. Why all this ceremony? After all, his mother never slept in the great carved and gilded bed standing swathed in laces and draperies behind the card table. When his grandfather was still alive, al-

though he had nothing to do, the great clock always had to be exactly right.

Doña Maria began to sing to the guitar.

Life was happier in the country, at San Mateo, where he could hunt and fish all day long with his brother and the steward. The valley of Aragua, one of the most beautiful in the country, shone like the blue ribbon of the Nile among the cacti, and there the white house stood, with its cool courtyards, its spacious halls and colonnaded porch. It was halfway up the hill, so that the boy could survey the whole road and, like a robber knight of old, annoy man and beast from above. In the evening, the slaves would gather round the gate of the courtyard, his mother would beckon to them, they would first kiss her dress, then bring forward their petitions, and she would give them permission to marry or a bottle of medicine. Then the children would feel both pity and fear, but they soon forgot both. They only knew that all the indigo and cocoa picked up by their thousand slaves was loaded on to great ox wagons and taken to the port of La Guaira, to be carried away on sailing ships and sold in the Antilles. That is how their forefathers had lived for a couple of centuries, that is how they would live in their turn, and so it would go on forever, and no shadow would ever fall on the brows of the masters of life.

There was many a hiding place in the old country house. He could feed the poultry and pigs there; there were dogs and horses—above all, horses! Simon was just eight when they gave him his first horse; till then he had had to ride a donkey. And when his riding master yelled that he would never learn to ride, he yelled back in a rage: "How can I learn if you always put me on this donkey? It's only fit to haul wood!" Then they gave him his first horse and marveled to see how the lad rode it. For forty years, until his death, horses shared Bolivar's life. If he had not been a great horseman, he would never have reached his goal, would never have held his own in battle, on mountain paths and mountain passes, and, in spite of all the noble feelings which later moved him to ever-greater deeds of daring, would never have

become a man of action. A horseman, and only a horseman, could become the liberator of the plains and mountains of South America.

Suddenly, fate struck the first promise of joy from his hands. When he was barely nine, his mother, then in her middle thirties, died. At fifteen she had married a man thirty years older than herself and, at his death, had been left a young widow with four children. Bolivar's father was fifty-six at the birth of his youngest son who was destined to make the world ring for the first time with the name of his ancient line. It was his father's fine, noble, and reserved face which looked out of the frame of an old painting.

At this juncture, Uncle Palacios took the boy into town and handed him over to the priests to be educated. Although the town stood like a garden city in a beautiful valley, it seemed to the lad both dirty and noisy, and the gloomy old mansion meant the end of his freedom as a country gentleman. Meanwhile his brother and sisters had gone to other relatives. For nearly two years this youngest of the family, whom they called Simoncito, till then the spoiled darling, had to live a monkish, city life.

He saw the men, clad by day only in white trousers and a white shirt, strolling about shaded by their wide straw hats, often humming to themselves and still more often spitting. If he had been able to read the Comte de Ségur's account, published two years before, he might have agreed with what he had said: "If the valleys of Caracas were freed of snuffing monks, tigers, and the officials of a greedy government, it would be a corner of an earthly paradise."

And yet at that time, practically all education was in the hands of the monks. One Capuchin taught the ten-year-old Bolivar the rudiments of mathematics, another botany, the study of which had been recently introduced to those parts by a Spanish physician, a friend of Linnaeus'. The main thing, however, was to go regularly to Mass, to kiss the bishop's hand, and to steer clear of all the dangerous, newfangled notions with which the air was rife. For until shortly before Bolivar's birth, nobody in the Span-

ish Empire was allowed to teach that the earth revolved round the sun; that departure had been first announced at Santa Fé in 1762 by a devil-ridden doctor from Cadiz.

There existed, it is true, a small group of men and women of culture, but it was dangerous to listen to them, and in any case the children were shut out. It was just in these wealthy Creole families, descended from Spanish parents and grandparents, that the Inquisition was showing its head, though more gracefully than in earlier times. The poor did not need to have their reading poisoned by the fear of hell, for they could not read. These Spanish priests, virtually independent of the Pope, wielded still-greater power in the colonies than at home. The monks and their orders proved indispensable to the royal house, for it was from the soil of faith that the sovereignty of the king by the grace of God drew its mystical force. Thus the privileges both of authority and wealth were safe under the protection of God.

Not only the monks but the boy's uncle too—a friend of the supreme Spanish official—taught the boy to reverence in the person of the Captain-General the distant ruler across the ocean who had been appointed by God. When Simoncito's guardian showed him the portraits of his ancestors, he would, we may be sure, pause in front of the first Simon Bolivar who had, just two hundred years before, accompanied his relative, the Governor, overseas, provided with special privileges by the great King Philip II, and would tell how he was given the title of Procurator and how he founded cities and villages in Venezuela. And there were others who looked down from their gilt frames on the little scion of their house, great planters, who took high-sounding titles, Visconde or Marqués, from their plantations. One had discovered, or at any rate exploited, copper mines and had amassed great wealth by shrewd dealings and slavery; another had planted the first fruit trees from Spain in these lands; another, with his own money, had built La Guaira, the port of Caracas, away over the mountains.

The boy took little pleasure in it all. He listened, learned, and repeated, and recited history and geology just as he recited his

prayers. But he was far happier when, stealing into the courtyard of an evening, he could listen to the old Negro telling for the hundredth time the story of the tyrant Aguirre, whose soul was doomed to wander forever, and could be seen flitting about like a will-o'-the-wisp. The uncle seems to have recognized the imaginative trend of the boy's nature, or at any rate to have understood his romantic bent, for he took him away from the monks and set about finding a proper teacher for him.

II

SINCE the time of Alexander, the decisive influence exercised by their teachers on youths who were to become great statesmen or soldiers has rarely become known; genius generally rebels against the education forced upon it and grows in opposition. What Bolivar, between the ages of nine and fifteen, learned from his new tutor, however, stood in sharp contrast to everything he had seen in the loyally monarchist home of his parents. Yet while it delivered the boy from the lethargic traditions of an heir to feudal wealth, it could not, at one stroke, bring him into open revolt against the circles and ideas in which he had been bred; not until, at twenty-eight, he had passed through many an inward transformation did Bolivar set about putting into practice in his own world the new ideals of his teacher. Yet another ten years, and he was living in perpetual conflict with them; indeed, the whole tragedy of Bolivar as the founder of a state grows out of the discord into which he was thrown by those very ideas of freedom and equality in the midst of an unteachable and apathetic mass of humanity. This disquieting tutor was destined to reappear at the very summit of Bolivar's power, not unlike the warning fool the Caesars glimpsed from their chariot, but by then the dream was long since over and the warner was little more than a fool.

For what other values could stand for a youth at the end of the eighteenth century if not freedom and equality, against which the great Catholic and feudal power of Spain stood arrayed, and, above all, in the overseas dominions, whose gold and crops could

only continue to stream into the mother country if, for yet a space, fifteen millions of native Americans were held in complete subjection?

When Rodriguez was born at Caracas, twelve years before Bolivar, there were no Marqués or grandes to stand round his cradle; his straitened, commonplace childhood opened his eyes very early to the inequality of classes and races in his country. Early orphaned, like his future pupil, he ran away at fourteen, embarked on a ship bound for Europe, and tramped through Spain, France, and Germany, "For," he said, "I will not be like the trees, always rooted to one spot, but like the wind and water, constant in change."

At his return from Europe, the adventurer was twenty-two, and when his strongly built figure, his long, bony nose, his firm chin and keen eyes first appeared in the millionaire's doorway, he already bore his second name; he had repudiated his own name of Carreño to avoid confusion with his hated brother. For that matter, while he had never seen his father, he had often seen a monk to whom his mother seemed deeply attached. Thus even as a boy, he juggled with his ancestry and even with his name. Yet though in everything he differed from his pupil, he bore the same Christian name, and the new Simon could not fail to attract the impressionable lad just as much by his name as by his youth, for he was hardly out of the age to play with him. The decisive thing, however, was the firmness with which the tutor removed his pupil from the gloomy rooms and Latin books and took him back to nature, from which he had been parted at his mother's death.

On his wanderings through revolutionary France, Rodriguez had become both a disciple and a prophet of Rousseau, and if we anticipate his pupil's later development, he must be recognized as the most productive of all the devotees of that reformer. No maker of history learned so much from Rousseau as Bolivar. The *Contrat social* had revealed to Rodriguez not only the top-heavy structure of society, but also the formulas by which it could be restored to balance, while *Émile* showed him the way to put his own passion for teaching into practice. Rodriguez knew himself

to be neither a lawgiver nor a liberator; he therefore hoped to become the teacher of one, and resolved to seek an *Émile*, who could grow, under his hands, into both Rousseau's natural man and a natural leader of newly awakened men.

Was that romanticism? In 1793 nothing seemed impossible, especially on this virgin soil, when the Old World seemed to be awakening from long sleep. The tutor was as young and sensitive-minded as Rousseau could have desired; he had, too, seen foreign countries. He lacked nothing to make him the ideal teacher. And now he saw before him the ideal pupil, an orphan as young, healthy, and rich as Rousseau could have desired. When, on his return home, the idealist had set out on his search for an adequate object on which to work, we may be sure that his thoughts had turned toward the young *Marqués* and that he had seen in him the new *Émile*. But that the child should actually be placed in his hands, as if he were living a romance, can only be attributed to a lack of penetration or sympathy on the part of the royalist uncle who, by all his traditions, should have strictly avoided a revolutionary of *Rodriguez*' stamp.

For *Rodriguez* was in every sense a revolutionary. He was an avowed anticlerical. Something of the peculiar private life of the new tutor must have come to the ears of his distinguished employer, even though he probably did not know that *Rodriguez* once wrote to a friend: "Please send my wife back soon. I need her for the same purpose as you." The choice may, of course, be called chance, but it might be more appropriate to call it fate.

One thing is certain: for the very lonely boy of ten, a new life began that day. His new teacher and friend took him straight back to nature, sent the "accursed servants," whom Rousseau hated so roundly, about their business, set to work without books, turning to the life of animals and plants for his comparisons, and taught him as he played, swam, and drilled. The boy must have been happy, and the more so by contrast with the gloom of his monkish lessons. No less happy was the enthusiastic teacher who, in his free adaptation of the maxims of *Émile*, was trying to breed

in Bolivar the wisdom of a sage and the strength of an athlete and, as he said, solve the difficult problem of teaching his pupil nothing.

In those four years, of which we have no actual record, young Bolivar learned to cast doubt on everything he had been trained to, and to see his goal in the great and stirring ideas then pouring through the world. "Of the lessons he gave me," Bolivar declared later, "not a comma has vanished. They have always been present to my mind. I followed them as trustworthy guides."

It was not difficult for the teacher to begin his work at the point where he found the docile boy. All he had to do was to show him, one evening, the earliest arms of the family, the mill wheel from which they actually took their name Bolivar, which means roughly "the meadow by the mill." They were of Basque origin, belonging to the "giant of the mountains." The first Bolivar to come to America, two hundred years before, was neither conqueror nor oppressor; on the contrary, he had run away from his Spanish father's house very much as Rodriguez himself had done a few years back, and had first found a livelihood in the colony as a public scribe—a scholar therefore, who pleaded the cause of the Indios with the Procurator, supported their complaints, and declaimed against the taxes until he found himself in prison for not having paid his own.

The boy listened, wondering; that was a story his mother and his uncle had never told him. Nor had they told him that another of his ancestors had come into conflict with a bishop and had for that reason lost his estates in France and gone into exile. Why had it all happened? And why had his own teacher run away?

That was a long story, to be told after swimming, as they sunned themselves brown, their heads in the shade of the banana trees and further protected by huge straw hats. At the time when Rodriguez ran away, two schoolmasters had just been charged by the authorities with being in possession of forbidden books. What were forbidden books? Rodriguez was delighted; possessed

of truth, feeling himself the guardian of the sacred flame, he could at last make a young and innocent soul glow with it. He sat up and began to talk.

For the first time, the little, dreamy Marqués heard things which had till then been kept from him—that the good King far across the ocean was anything but a good king, that, like his fathers for three hundred years before him, he was suppressing every intellectual advance, every desire for liberty, here and all over America. A dozen years ago, a descendant of the old Inca kings had risen in Peru with reasonable demands and had sent some of his family to the King in Madrid to obtain the abolition of the old slave customs, but the King had had them all poisoned. Under the outrage, the descendant of the Incas had stirred up a revolt; for thousands of miles the natives had rallied round him, and he would perhaps have liberated the country if he had not been betrayed by his own men. But the royalists won and, having taken him prisoner, first killed his wife and friends before his eyes in the market place, then laid him on the ground, bound a horse to each limb, whipped them up, and tore him to pieces alive.

The boy had listened with wide-open eyes. Torn in pieces by four horses for having risen against the King? And he was nearly successful? Why did his own men betray him?

The teacher smiled at him with deep affection and sympathy. Here was Émile in flesh and blood, and Rousseau himself would have rejoiced in such a prey! Then he told him that the Creoles would not suffer an Indian to be their leader and had betrayed him rather than drive out their common oppressors by his side.

The Creoles, thought the boy. But that is what we are. So there were pure Spaniards like his father, grandfather, and uncle who revolted against the King! He burned to hear more and yet more from his half-naked teacher with the glowing eyes, the angry look, and the loud laugh, there in the shade of the banana trees.

He learned that the Creoles had headed the risings because they, just they, were cleverer and richer. It had been so in New Granada, the neighboring territory. A revolt had broken out

there in 1781, the same year as in Peru, set going by a woman of the people who tore a royal tax decree from the wall and trampled it underfoot. At that time the flame had spread through the whole country, as far as Panama. The highborn Creoles had led the indignant people, twenty thousand strong, to the capital; all wore on their breasts, as a talisman, a hymn to freedom and the fatherland. Singing the hymn, they marched to the Captain-General's palace and forced him to capitulate. But when he had received enough reinforcements from Spain, he tore up the capitulation treaty and had the leaders executed.

The same thing had happened everywhere to the Americans, at Quito on the equator, at La Plata, down in the south, in Mexico. At first the revolutionists had carried the day, for the Spanish troops were of no great service and their officers, who were often Creoles, went over to the rebels. But the Spaniards were cunning; they had sent for men from Havana and crowded the unreliable Creoles out of the army.

Still wondering, the highborn lad heard from his fiery teacher the secrets of his own descent. So his forefathers, in spite of their nobility and wealth, were all the same not regarded as well-born? Had they not been pure Spaniards, like the Viceroy himself? Their only blemish was to have remained here for two centuries, developing agriculture and gradually discarding the mines, while the governors and corregidors came to the colony for a few years as to a kind of exile, filled their pockets, and returned to enjoy their spoils in the brilliant life of Madrid. Young Bolivar, from his earliest days, had known that his people were masters, for he had seen the obsequiousness with which both the Indians and the Negroes approached his mother. Now, for the first time, he was told that in Spain they were regarded not quite as equals and seldom received state appointments, that a veiled taint, or at any rate weakness, seemed to attach to them. He heard how the real Spaniards would raise their eyebrows at each other when his grandfather sat at the Captain-General's table and how, when he had left, those in power would say, with a slight shrug of the shoulders—Creoles! Thus they were only

there on sufferance, and an attempt was made to discriminate or even to separate them from their own brothers.

It was a frightful discovery for the proud soul of a growing boy. There were men who despised his race! Perhaps the Indios were right in bearing a bitter grudge against the Creoles for their contempt, seeing that they themselves boasted of their proud descent from the Incas and Aztecs. And they felt themselves high above the mulattoes who partly betrayed, partly tried to conceal, their admixture of black blood in an infinite gamut of color; while the mulattoes in their turn looked down on the Negroes who had been brought from West Africa. For the first time, young Bolivar realized that in spite of his race and all his connections, in spite of all their gilded mirrors and silver dishes, their thousand Negroes and Negresses crouching in the sun by the coffee bushes, in spite of the mountains in whose veins they mined the red copper which was loaded on to the broad-hulled sailing ships and sent to Europe—that in spite of it all, his uncle on his splendid bay was not counted among the first nobles of the land, nor could he ever become Viceroy.

The boy listened while Rodriguez, aflame with hatred and the love of liberty, explained everything that he saw about him in the country. Heavy taxes and little prestige—that was the policy of the Spaniards toward these rich Creoles, whose noblest families the governors might invite to their table now and then, but very seldom took into the administration. In their turn, these high officials, coming over for a few years with the pride and greed of Spanish courtiers, were despised by the old-established Creoles, who regarded themselves as the true pioneers. For three hundred years, the Spanish government had skillfully played off the color ambitions of all these races against each other, had nursed the pride and ambition of all, and yet subjected them all equally, as natives and inferiors, as Americans.

Bolivar's inbred faith in the Spanish court, the sun of the world, suffered shock after shock as he heard of the weakness of King Charles and the escapades of the Queen, while at that very time, his elder brother, at the University of Caracas, was learning

that the authority of the King came next to God's. For at that university, knowledge stopped with Aristotle and the schoolmen, nor did the doctors learn anatomy. Woe to the students discovered in possession of the new French books! Hence the representatives of the King regarded themselves as demigods and nicknamed the noble Creoles "Cocoa Grandees" because their ancestors had paid for their high-sounding titles with shiploads of free cocoa. There was even a saying current in Spain—and if there were but a single donkey driver left in the Mancha, none but he and his donkey would have the right to rule America.

The boy may have learned, too, what a pair of his horse's hoofs cost—four pesos—while an ordinary horse cost only two. That was owing to the Spanish embargo on all forms of industry; everything had to be bought in the mother country, and even trade among the colonials themselves was subject to restrictions at every turn. The commission in Seville watched every movement: goods could only be exported from two ports and imported at two, while anyone buying from foreign caravans or from foreign ships at American ports was liable to the death penalty.

And yet the indignant teacher loudly praised all these restrictions, for they alone bred the urge to revolt, and that was his dearest wish. He desired it not so much from a feeling of personal humiliation, for the world lay before him, and on his travels in Europe he had seen all these bars to progress melting in the flames of the great revolution. The revolutionary impulse of this disciple of Rousseau was clearly born of his own romanticism. Notions of liberty transplanted from classical literature to a new, still-sleeping continent, the desire to see himself a maker of history, the will of the inspired creator of new worlds, would seem to have fired Rodriguez more than his hatred of the Spaniards. The Mephistophelean strain in him turned his vindictive wit against those in power, but the idealist strain was far stronger, and since his first flight the two had combined to bear him forward into the thrilling twilight of a future whose thunder could already be heard. Too much of a writer to be a soldier, but adventurer enough always to look at things with his own eyes, this

fantastic teacher not only wished but felt the impressionable boy to be the appointed fulfiller of his own dreams. That it all came true later proves the boldness of the young master's vision.

III

FROM the world of ideas with which Rodriguez was filling the awakening soul of his pupil, the problem soon issued into reality before their very eyes. One day the teacher, greatly agitated, brought the boy news of a revolt which had broken out in the neighboring colony of New Granada. Its romantic origin lay in prohibited books which the Spaniards had themselves entrusted to a man of learning. Narino, an official in the Spanish administration, already famous at thirty as a thinker and a doctor, a theologian and an orator, had received an addition to his famous library in the shape of a new history of the Revolution—presented by the Viceroy who had received it from Paris—with the warning, of course, to keep it well hidden from the eyes of the Inquisition. In it the solitary thinker found printed “the rights of man,” of which he had until then heard only rumors. Fascinated by this manifesto of a new faith, he set to work and translated the seventeen articles, printed them secretly, and had them distributed on a broadsheet. Printing after printing of the sheet fluttered through the continent to north and south, from Mexico to Tierra del Fuego. He was discovered, imprisoned, and deported. “The seventeen articles of liberty,” he said later, “cost me as many years of my own,” for he actually spent the next twenty-five years of his life in an alternation of prison, flight, chains, flight, and yet again prison, until in the end he actually became Vice-President of his liberated country.

It was a stirring moment for Simon the elder when he read, with passion, the rights of man in Spanish and heard at the same time of the retribution exacted by the Spanish authorities from the man responsible for the spread of those great emotions and ideas. One thing is certain—that in the course of this affair, Rodriguez himself started a conspiracy with his friends at Cara-

cas; it is uncertain whether he let his pupil into the secret. It is, however, probable, for, as he said himself, he could never hold his tongue. For the first time, emigrants, terrorists, and deportees from the islands off the coast dawned on the horizon of Simon the younger who had, till then, never seen anything but a world of loyal monarchists. The neighborhood of the English Antilles, the prohibited books of a diaspora of Frenchmen, and the prisoners who were even said to have made an attempt on the King's life in Madrid—all came together in a popular rising which first broke out at Coro. How large the passionate young man must have painted it all in the eyes of his pupil as he explained to him the new flags in four colors which suddenly appeared, symbolizing the equal rights of the four races!

The new Émile, now some fourteen or fifteen years old, became an accomplice in thought of things which would have horrified his house. Suddenly, one morning, his teacher failed to appear; rumor had it that he had been taken prisoner. The bridge to that world of adventure was broken. The plot had actually been discovered; forty-five men, most of them young, and many of them Creole nobles and friends of the family, were tried and sentenced, some to imprisonment and some to death. Rodriguez, who had managed to destroy his papers, was acquitted for lack of proof, but realizing in whose hands the power in that country lay, he fled, and for the time being saw his pupil no more.

To the boy, Bolivar's family described the whole affair as high treason. After the abortive rising, he saw the young Creoles crowding round the Captain-General and his court, vying with each other in loyalty and even volunteering to reinforce the palace guard. All he had learned these four years past from his enthusiastic friend and teacher might have been a dream. Did that vivid world of freedom, mystery, and rebellion only exist in books? Perhaps the ancient world knew it, and perhaps Paris. But not America!

And so the fifteen-year-old boy submitted, served in the militia, which he had entered at the wish of his family shortly before Rodriguez disappeared, wore the uniform of his King and his

ancestors, and even advanced to the rank of ensign. He must have taken pleasure in his uniform, for in those years he seems to have been as heedless as he was dreamy, as vain as he was passionate.

A successor to Rodriguez was soon found. Bello, later a great poet and champion of liberty, a man only a few years older than his pupil, now became his teacher. He seems, however, to have gained no great ascendancy over him and stayed only a year. The star of childhood had set. From that time on, Bolivar's life as a little soldier was embittered, like all life in that city, of whose inner movement he had heard too much ever to be able to forget it, but from which his rank cut him off. So restless a frame of mind could not long remain hidden from the eyes of the uncle and guardian under whose orders he stood. His uncle realized that what this high-strung boy needed was a change, that he must be sent to his loyalist relatives in Madrid if he were ever going to become what his fathers had been before him. Bolivar was fifteen when, well provided with money and letters, he left home to be turned into a real nobleman across the ocean in Spain.

IV

THE palace which was his first home in Madrid, far more brilliant and gay than the one he had left, was inhabited by a bachelor, his mother's brother, whose brothers and friends brought life into it. They were almost all idle dandies who occupied themselves either in squandering their inherited fortunes at court or in increasing them by clever investment or lucky speculation. Madrid, in 1800, could still regard itself as the hub of the world, for London had lost its biggest colony ten years before and Paris, which had been a republic for the same length of time, had no longer, or not yet, any standing in a nobleman's eyes. Madrid, ruler of the greatest overseas dominions, overflowing with wealth and still greedy for more, was, at that time, just dreaming its brilliant dream to a close, but only a few of the

ruling class felt the approach of decline, and still fewer wanted to feel it, as Goya has cruelly immortalized it.

The prepossessing youth with his slim and rather small horseman's figure, with dark eyes glowing in his pale olive face, now entered a circle which showed him, in its heedless zest, the delights of power and love. It was the kind of company best calculated to ruin for life a young millionaire and man of fashion between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. The example of a court unrivaled in debauchery gave all who belonged to it by virtue of wealth or family a welcome pretext for vying with His All-Catholic Majesty. No historical novel could find a more thrilling theme than the court of the weak King Charles IV and his unseemly wife, who, startled by subterranean shocks, seized the brilliant days still granted to them, their eyes tensely fixed on their neighbor country, which had just executed the royal couple, their own relatives, under their very eyes, and expelled, dispossessed, or killed the aristocrats who, connected by blood or a common breeding with the Spanish grandees, had but yesterday lived in splendor and were today sending their fugitive and impoverished sons to find refuge in feudal Madrid.

Young Bolivar turned over in his mind the revelations of his revolutionary teacher. He heard how, beyond the Pyrenees, ten years of anarchy seemed to be settling down into a steady rhythm, and could not but wonder which of the two worlds would come off victorious, and whether he himself would perhaps see the decision. Everything presented to his inquiring mind, his impassioned imagination, in those decisive years of his development must have filled him with skepticism with regard to a social order which the spiritual lords of Caracas had described as divinely inspired, but his teacher Rodriguez as rotten. Now he saw it; he could choose.

He liked well enough the man who, in his eyes, incorporated that order. This was Mallo, one of Queen Maria Luisa's two lovers; the other was Godoy, the omnipotent Prime Minister. How could a strikingly handsome and very sensual youth, with

neither religion nor philosophy to steady him, abhor a queen whom he had seen more than once drive up to his noble patron's palace unannounced, sweep past him in her rustling silks, powdered and perfumed, and muster his budding charms with swift and expert eyes? But how could he not conceive a distaste for that same Christian sovereign when a royal footman appeared at dinner in Mallo's palace, bringing delicacies from the royal table? At sixteen, he was far too immature to take sides.

The unrest of the Creole, moreover, was working in his young, proud mind. His uncles who, like himself, had been born in Venezuela, partly tried to conceal the blemish and partly flaunted it with a kind of reckless pride. Descended from generations of aristocratic Spaniards, they felt themselves no whit inferior to their friends in Madrid; there were records and coats of arms to prove the purity of their blood. And yet at every turn they met looks which seemed to question what color of blood had entered their line by the extraconjugal adventures of some woman of their house. The peculiar haughtiness of the rulers of empire toward the pioneer awakened in him the same feeling of suspicion as the airplane designer in the pilot who exploits his inventions for money. For it was the pioneer who had risked his life and now heard the calculating and commanding gentlemen in the capital speak in a tone of superiority in no way justified.

Bolívar himself was merely the powerless heir of those pioneers, yet we can well imagine the defiant pride which rose in his heart when he thought of the two centuries of work his fathers had done, often in dangerous climates, threatened by fever and slave revolts. Their immediate aim may have been their own aggrandizement, yet they had succeeded in enriching both king and country. And now he saw this horde of aristocrats, many active in high administrative posts, but many spending idle lives in the pursuit of vain frivolities, and at times his rancor would rise high against an injustice he had suffered at nobody's hands.

For he had been taken to court and even drawn into the circle of the Príncipe. Once, when they were playing battledore and shuttlecock in the park of Aranjuez, Bolívar, then fifteen, let

his ball fly at the Príncipe's head with such violence that the latter flew into a rage and it was all the Queen could do to prevent a duel. Many of the onlookers declared that Bolivar had done it on purpose. In view of everything the renegade Creole did to Ferdinand twenty years later, after he ascended the throne, the incident took on a certain symbolic meaning and provoked great laughter among the young men of South America.

In all this court life, the young man never forgot the teaching of Rodriguez. Later on, he moved to the palace of another relative, the Marqués Ustaritz, an old gentleman, a philosopher, and the center of the loyalist intellectual circle of Madrid, who realized both the lad's great gifts and the huge gaps in his education. Of his own accord he taught the youth a great deal which the disciple of Rousseau had considered beneath his notice. The writing and spelling of Bolivar's first (preserved) letter home show that he had been better trained in riding and fencing than in grammar and writing. The vast sums of money he spent even on the voyage to Spain, to the horror of his uncle, were a foretaste of how easily he was to squander his wealth later on.

This new, distinguished teacher, who was perfectly familiar with the revolutionary ideas seething in his interesting nephew's head, tried to show him how to steer a diplomatic course between all his conflicting interests. Among other things, the old gentleman and his chaotically minded young nephew, sitting in the cold hall of the stately palace, discussed the work of the Abbé Raynal, the great Encyclopedist, who, from the heights of his tolerance and learning, had moved the Spanish minister, twenty years before, to grant far-reaching liberties, and had brought about attempts at a limited freedom of trade in the colonies, the very name of which, "enlightened despotism," predicted their own frustration.

Then again, the young man who, having no settled occupation, fed his hunger for knowledge chiefly on conversations heard at random would hear the officers in the salons discussing the plots perpetually coming to light in those accursed colonies, or exchanging scandal about the Queen's confessor, who was trying

to support the Jesuits expelled from America. In another corner he would see the Ambassador from Naples whispering to the Ambassador from London, and try to deduce the differences between their respective nations from the rare movements of the Englishman's hand and the lively gesticulations of the Italian. And while, as a noble and wealthy young man, he was plunging into all the seductions of court life, and spending 8000 duros in one year for clothes and shoes, he would from time to time spend whole nights poring over the books of the new philosophy, the titles of which echoed in his mind from the lessons of Rodriguez. But he worked without system or perseverance, magnifying everything and hence dropping the work as suddenly as he had begun.

V

AT seventeen, Bolivar fell ardently in love for the first time. Maria Theresa was, of course, older than he by three or four years. She belonged, like himself, to a noble Venezuelan family, that of the del Toros. She herself, however, had been born in Madrid, though her family had made its fortune at Caracas. For the first time in Bolivar's life, happiness took on a tangible form, and he threw himself into it without restraint. He would have been best pleased to carry off his beloved there and then and enter on a romantic idyl with her on his father's estates. "May God grant me a son to help my brothers and be of use to my uncles." Such was the comically dramatic phrase in which the boy lover laid the desires of his heart before her father.

Theresa is said to have been delicate, pale, and beautiful, with the expression of early maturity given to those who seem to predict in the melancholy of their eyes the shortness of their span of life. On a miniature which is probably lost, but has been described by a friend, she wears long corkscrew curls, and stands tall and slim against a background of Basque mountains. The choice of this girl, whatever part family and rank may have played in it,

was one dictated by deep feeling, and all that followed it reinforces the impression Bolivar's portrait gives us of him as a man whose passions were dark, violent, and entire, but liable to sudden checks—signs of a nature capable of devotion but prone to quick discouragement, withdrawing in desperate renunciation only to be seized by impulse again, starting forward only to be beaten back. History has seldom seen so dazzlingly successful a man, a man of such fabulous achievements as Bolivar, with a mind so given to abrupt alternations of joy and despair, so skeptical of all it had done, so uncertain in its affections yet so bold in its constant attempts to conquer fate.

For the moment, what had to be won was a game, for his beloved's father imposed a delay on account of his youth, while months must pass before he could receive an answer to the request for permission to marry which the young man had written to his guardian at Caracas. He had no wish to follow the advice given him, to go to Paris, there to test his heart in the society of women of the world. Thus he idled away yet another year in Madrid, while his betrothed, with the greater patience of young women, spent the waiting time with her family on their estate at Bilbao. Bolivar might never have left Spain had he not been dealt a blow. There are three or four instances of these symbolic sequences of events in his life.

One day in October, 1801, on one of his daily rides, he was galloping along the road outside of the Toledo gate when he noticed that he was being followed by a troop of horsemen—a police guard. Taken by surprise, he was surrounded, and the leader tried to lay hands on him. The young nobleman protested furiously. The leader of the guard pointed to the diamond links in his lace cuffs and declared to his face that he had more jewels concealed about him, which was prohibited to strangers from overseas. Bolivar, beside himself, drew his sword, abused the man, and, as he was the better horseman, easily repulsed him for the moment. He might nevertheless have been overpowered if passers-by had not intervened. He was soon able to prove his iden-

tity as a friend of the great Mallo, who explained the whole affair. Nothing happened to him, but he was advised to leave the capital for a time.

It was a terrible experience. The young Marqués, who had never known what it was to have a hand laid upon him, had been branded as a foreigner and insulted in the midst of the highest society in Madrid, whose doors stood open to him. Yet as he considered the why and wherefore of the affair, he could not avoid the suspicion that the guard had been sent out by Minister Godoy, who believed Bolivar to be a secret go-between from his rival, Mallo, to the Queen and only hoped to secure a letter by arresting him. The young nobleman could not but feel himself doubly exposed, and realize that he was not regarded, in the full sense of the word, as a Spaniard, however pure his Spanish blood might be. He belonged to a privileged class, yet to an inferior race. Till then, his tutor's revolutionary teachings had strummed a romantic chord in him, but had never really struck home, because by his birth he was raised above any kind of class struggle. Now, for the first time in his life of luxury, the Marqués, a descendant of an ancient line, felt what it was like not to see society spread at his feet.

His first action was naturally to go straight to his betrothed at her country house. But the affair had not in any way softened her father's feelings toward him. On the contrary, what he wanted was to see Bolivar out of the country for a time. Bolivar embarked for Marseilles and went on to Paris.

VI

NAPOLEON was still called Bonaparte. He was still First Consul. In the months the young Creole spent getting to know the notorious city of Paris, he could not fail to be fascinated by all Napoleon did. The Code was published, and it contained many of the ideas and doctrines of the great revolution. Everything Rodriguez had told his pupil about the new rights of man seemed realized in it—at least in principle. Disillusioned by the Spanish

court, the young man must have felt his mind revive when he realized that what counted was merit, not rank or wealth, or saw a competent commoner rise to power and an idle marqués go into exile. Here marriage was no longer an appendage of devoutness, nor love of a creed; and the priest, for whom Rodriguez had implanted in him both distrust and contempt, had lost all power in the land. This was in truth the country and the city which had given birth to a new form of freedom ten years before.

And above the busy throng there towered one single little officer, who had hammered so long at the ideas of Rousseau and Montesquieu that they enclosed him like a breastplate of iron. This was Napoleon at his height, greater than he had ever been or was to be, save in the tragic last act. The young man watching him was himself more impressionable, more capable of hero worship, than at any other time in his life. As young Bolivar, at eighteen, watched Napoleon, at thirty-two, the community of ideas between them must have been closer than it ever was later. In the eyes of the idle enthusiast, Napoleon must have seemed a true son of the Revolution, and he could still regard him as a distant example, although for the moment it all remained at the stage of a romantic hero worship.

We have no documents to show the first impression Napoleon produced on Bolivar, yet all that followed, and all that the dictator of America later said about the dictator of Europe, reveal the importance of the encounter. The mingled admiration and criticism which his great prototype stirred in Bolivar all his life is proof of how deep that impression was. Yet at this time there was a gulf between them, for the younger was as yet fired by no desire to do. He had but one desire—to dream his life away with his young beloved wife under the palms of home.

And yet his rancor against the Spanish rulers could not but revive when, returning after these months in Paris, he had as an officer to petition for the King's permission to marry, and obtain the blessing of the Church by prayer. Why, the bridegroom wondered, as he helped in the wedding preparations. What necessity is there for all this when a man can be surrounded and insulted

on his morning ride by a mounted guard, like any undesirable foreigner? The contrast between the Archbishop and Rousseau, between King Charles and the Consul Bonaparte, came home to him more directly in these symbols than in the teachings of Rodriguez, and as he clasped the diamonds on Theresa's wedding dress, he thought with silent rage of those which men had tried to tear from his lace cuffs.

But all such thoughts vanished when he had her safe in the cabin of the sailing ship, at whose door fathers and kings, guards and ministers, would have knocked in vain. Life lay before the two young creatures as serene as the sunny days on the ocean on which their ship was riding, for no passion, not even a plan, can trouble the world of fantasy built up by two handsome, healthy, and rich young beings, deeply in love and neither yet twenty, when their ship seems to be bearing them to the land of their dreams. For a few months it was granted to them to live in pure, unearthly tenderness, in the purposelessness of young love. At the country home of his ancestors in the forests of Aragua, under the protection of highborn and influential relatives, entertained by everything luxury and love could devise for their pleasure, the two lived on from day to day without even the signs of a future heir coming to disquiet their idyl.

Suddenly the young wife died of a violent fever. She is said to have tripped over the train of her dressing gown in her bedroom, to have lain for a time unconscious, and to have succumbed to the fever in consequence. The doctors seemed not to have recognized what kind of fever it was. She died after five days' illness. For Bolivar it was a shattering awakening; in the first violence of despair, his life seems to have been saved only by his brother. After nine months of marriage he found himself a widower, and as he had long been an orphan, he, who but yesterday had been a child of fortune, now stood in every sense of the word alone in the world. He made up his mind to live a life dedicated to the memory of his beloved in the halls and forests which had seen his dream come true, and, as he said later, "to die a simple country gentleman."

But the cup the world had set to his lips was too sweet, the dream had been too fleeting, and the soul of this sensual dreamer was too hungry. In the long, lonely evenings, with the slender dream figure of his beloved for sole company, there rose behind her in the shadows an intoxicating vision of all the women and highborn men he had met at the court of Madrid, of all the bold young thinkers and soldiers he had seen in Paris. At such moments the solitude in the home of his fathers began to weigh heavy on him, the talk of his friends sounded monotonous. What drew him back was the thrill of an excited Europe. Had Rodriguez not promised to visit Greece and Rome with him? There was so much to see, so much to learn, in the capital of the world.

When Bolivar, at twenty, handed over the management of his estates to his brother, and again embarked, this time alone, he was moved by mingled feelings of disillusion and expectancy. Early mature, cast at one blow from joy to renunciation, there was nothing steady in his heart but a single resolve. He had sworn to keep faith with the memory of his beloved by never marrying again.

VII

THE idle bucks of Paris lounged under the arcades of the Palais Royal. Since the world was growing bigger, since the new Mars, with his feats of arms, was bringing ever new lands and new wealth into the orbit of the capital, there was money and amusement in plenty for the youth of Paris. All the foreigners in search of amusement flocked there, while the men who had distinguished themselves in the field squandered their money and their strength on the women in the few months of respite they had. Never had Paris been gayer than in the year 1804, and only a few peevish poets and philosophers raised warning voices, though softly enough to escape reprisals from above.

Among the gayest there stood out a group of young men, chiefly because they wore, slightly tilted, a peculiar kind of broad-brimmed hat of fine gray felt. It later on was called "Cha-

peau Bolivar"; it was admired and apostrophized, and everybody knew that it had been favored by a wealthy Creole, who was better dressed than Beauharnais, who rode superb horses and could dance for two hours on end without flagging. He was even known as Prince Bolivar, and believed to be the heir of some Spanish grandee, who mined copper overseas by the sweat of his slaves. People exaggerated his wealth and nobility and were startled when he manipulated his foil, his queue, or his razor as dexterously with his left hand as with his right.

At the soirees he gave in his fine apartments, exuberant, formless, and fantastic gatherings which lasted till the light of the hundred candles paled in the morning sunshine, beautiful women would laugh and drink with the young men against a background of draperies, weapons, and fine engravings, while the millionaire prince, who was neither one nor the other, if he were not playing the mandolin, would dance until all the ladies lay exhausted in their armchairs, refreshing themselves with his champagne. Or he would stand behind the green table in the gaming room. He gambled, lost, and regained a loss. His reputation as a grand seigneur grew, while in society his income from his unknown country was magnified to fantastic dimensions. Then he would sit in the café of the gaming club with a swarm of men who called themselves his friends, telling them about the beautiful valleys and forests of Venezuela, about the good hearts and musical ears of the Negroes, about the stiff Spanish generals and stranded corsairs, or about some trader who had smuggled forbidden cargoes through the Antilles.

As a dandy and leader of fashion, an indefatigable dancer and rider, the bearer of a foreign name and a slightly self-complacent melancholy, "Prince Bolivar," by his exotic beauty, his legendary home, and, above all, his inexhaustible wealth, had such an effect on women that it seems a wonder he issued from this period with unimpaired vigor. Nor did it, in the long run, remain unimpaired.

He was not, however, always surrounded by noisy guests. His delicate breeding, well suited to the taste of the day, attracted

finer minds. The blow fate had dealt him had, even in the lonely months at home, matured and deepened the serious strain in his nature, so that even on the long sea voyage, he had read more than before, in particular the stars in his early teacher's particular heaven—Rousseau and Voltaire, with Montesquieu and Plutarch. When he opened the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, his wounded heart found itself again; in Voltaire, his troubled mind met understanding.

Even these arabesques of an idle dandy's fancy found every kind of stimulus in Paris. Suddenly, in a scattered hunting party, he would encounter an expert on the *Encyclopedia*, a connoisseur of prehistoric stones, or some graceful horsewoman who studied the paintings on Greek vases. Natures of such kind, whose outlook on life was enriched by some special knowledge, attracted Bolivar both in youth and age, and when such knowledge in the minds of delicately nurtured women turned to feeling, he was quickly captivated. The literary mode, which at that time set the fashion in feeling among rich noblemen, cast a cloak of fantasy about him, as about many another. While tasting all the pleasures life had to offer, Bolivar could regard himself either as one who had renounced all the joys of the world or as a romantic enemy of his kind.

In those years the return to Greece, like the previous return to nature, was not merely a matter of women's dress, and if, like Bolivar, a man had not the least desire to become a new Caesar, he could at least imagine himself a budding Alcibiades, especially at a moment when the new Athens was wondering whether its democratic trappings were not a little insecure. A cultured dandy could desire no more fascinating background than the Paris of 1804.

In Spain, Bolivar had just suffered a second humiliation; a royal decree ordered all colonials to leave Madrid, the pretext being the fear of famine. Thus the half-courtier, on his return, found himself expelled from the capital like any second-rate bourgeois, and was therefore doubly ready to enjoy the liberty of France with the defiance of the *émigré*. After two years of ab-

sence, however, he found a politically new and rapidly changing Paris. For it was precisely the circle surrounding the man of power, with which Bolivar was in touch, who were aware of the Caesarean resolves forming in his mind. The points of conflict were not yet defined, for the crown had not yet been formally bestowed. Yet the fact that it had been offered, that lines of bowing backs stood out against the silken tapestries of the Louvre when the little Consul appeared, that police, espionage, and censorship were stretching out their tentacles, was enough to estrange the intellectual leaders and other free minds from the man beyond authority, the man of battles and the man of laws. It became the fashion to speak against Napoleon.

The handsome Creole, athirst for new sensations to hold his ever-threatening ennui at bay, could hardly conceive a more subtle situation. The ideal figure which had provoked his hero worship at eighteen, and whose genius had checked the springs of action in his own mind, began, a few years later, to darken in his eyes. Measured by Rodriguez' standards of liberty and equality, Napoleon could only emerge from Bolivar's growing bewilderment as a traitor to the Revolution to which he owed his rise. If the Petit Corporal could hit on no better idea than to make himself Emperor, where was his greatness? And yet that greatness was so patent, his genius so dazzling, that no mere crown, nor even the blow it meant to the liberty bought at such a cost, could cast any doubt upon it.

For the first time in his twenty-one years of life, Bolivar was faced with a vital question. At what point should the hero, or man of action, set a limit to his ambition for the sake of the happiness of the many? At what point does the ruler of the masses become their tyrant? At what point do freedom and dictatorship clash? For the moment, the problem lay like a featherweight on the mind of this prince of libertarian leanings, this spectator of his times, this amateur of analysis, this dilettante philosopher.

He could not know that it was to become the central problem of his life.

VIII

A ROMANTIC mistress was soon found. Fanny de Villars, a heroine à la Rousseau, both cousin and protector and his elder by a few years, was not quite happy with her aging husband, but rich and distinguished enough to indulge in the luxury of love and woe. Thus she lacked no colored strand to weave her tapestry of love with romantic yearnings and thoughts of chivalry.

This young woman, who occupied Bolivar for about two years, in spite of a host of other adventures, was clearly the only one to gain any ascendancy over him between the ages of twenty and forty, and that in the sense of an experienced, understanding friend whose aim it was to make something out of the nihilist and to bring the dreamer to some great resolve. With her full young bosom and white skin, with the subtle simplicity of her dress, with her mouth and eyes expressive both of feigned innocence and profound womanly wisdom, she was of the type to carry a young, poetic lover off his feet. He called her Theresa, as if to propitiate the memory of his lost wife. Actually speaking, the only interesting thing about her is that she bore her second son about this time. This raises the question of whether Bolivar had a son at all, for he certainly had no other children. We know very little about this son of Fanny's except that, at twenty, he was "robust and of manly appearance." Both soaked their feelings in literature until they had taken on its prevailing color, namely that of the romantic heroes in vogue at the time. That meant, first and foremost, René de Chateaubriand, and Fanny's lover met the writer in her salon. Another to be seen there was Talma, with a stock of indiscreet stories about Napoleon, which he probably invented. And when Bolivar heard Madame Récamier talking to Madame de Staël, he could hear all that was to be said for and against the Emperor-to-be and compare it with what Oudinot thought.

Bolivar never made the Emperor's personal acquaintance, a

fact which he regretted later. His first friction with the dynasty arose as the result of a joke. Fanny asked General Eugène Beauharnais what animal the young Creole resembled, and the General replied—a sparrow. But as, in French, it sounded like monkey in Spanish, the younger man took umbrage and Bolivar very nearly found himself engaged in a duel with Napoleon's stepson. The intervention of Madame de Villars deprived posterity of that symbolic scene.

His restless idleness, characteristic of a richly endowed but permanently unoccupied mind, comes out in Fanny's memoirs, where she describes his pacing up and down the garden, idly plucking twigs, or biting into a piece of fruit and throwing it away again. When she begged him not to do so, he would promise, only to begin again immediately afterwards. He would pull the fringes off the curtains, gnaw books halfway through, "in short, he could not sit still for ten minutes without ruining something; it was sheer destructive activity, a mania of movement." In a life so unsteady, whose easy conquests he was, in the long run, too intelligent to enjoy, he had bouts of extravagance and would lose so much at play in a single night that he would have to turn to his mistress for help. But then he promised her never to play again, and kept his promise so resolutely that when, at the age of forty-three, he found himself playing with his officers, he realized that he had broken his promise for the first time. He also moved to smaller apartments, buried himself in books, and for a time despised his loose-living companions. In this mood he would write his mistress long letters, in spite of the fact that he was seeing her daily. They read like the pages of a diary, but they bear the marks of literary effort, as if written by a poetically minded amateur taking refuge in the letter form for lack of skill.

"Do you remember Bolivar in the Rue Vivienne, discontented, idle, and extravagant? . . . For me there is no present. There is an utter void within me, and no desire, no settled purpose rises from it. Ah! Theresa, what a desert my life is! Hardly do I feel a whim when I hasten to satisfy it. But as soon as I have

what I desired, I hate it. Could I be satisfied by any new events chance might bring into my life? I cannot tell. Besides, even then I would again relapse into this discouragement. . . . We are the playthings of fortune. That great goddess who rules the world, the only one I own, is the cause of all our virtues and vices. If she had not laid a sack of gold in my path, I would have made glory my cult, the one goal of my life, whether as a man of learning or as a friend of freedom. Pleasure held me prisoner, but not for long. The madness was short, it brought disgust in its train. They say I am more inclined to pleasure than to luxury. Quite true. But does not luxury create a false illusion of glory? And yet, Theresa, I know I am not a man like all the rest, and Paris is not the place where I can put my qualms to rest."

Here, through the fashionable lamentations of the dandy, there sounds the first note of seriousness. This heir to wealth realizes the danger of his millions, but seems disposed to accept them as a comfortable fate, as a preconceived hindrance to action: the whole would be a mere literary game if the word "glory" did not twice occur in it. It is as if the dandy, whose heart was unmoved by love, learning, or liberty, had caught sight, above the gaudy fireworks of his nights, of the star shimmering in the darkness of an unknown sky; it was a vague premonition that there are things that make life worth living because they have to be won, yet can never be attained. After the untimely end of a great love, which memory made immortal, after the disillusionments he had suffered as a lion of the salons, after the humiliations inflicted on his race and his honor, nothing was left to this young and restless soul but glory. Beside the idea of glory, the luxury he lived in seemed a sham, and in that phrase he touched the point at which the heir to millions could find the strength to pull himself out of his vapid existence and play a part in history.

The new star was far away, but bright enough to outshine the light glowing here below. Bolivar turned with passion against the Emperor he had till then idolized. He sought the most plausible way of casting a moral veil over his burning envy of Napoleon's

glory and found it in tyranny, like so many others who would gladly have been in Napoleon's place. This child of fortune was as far from fighting for freedom as he was ready to preach it over his wine in the candlelight; the formulas were provided by the ideals of his teacher.

"One day," Fanny wrote later, "at a banquet to which Bolivar had invited senators, generals, and great churchmen, politics was once more the sole topic of conversation, but all present expressed their opinions without warmth and Bonaparte's officers said very little, believing they saw the crown already on his head. Bolivar, whose education and natural independence, ideas and enthusiasms, could not fail to make him hostile to that turn of affairs, forgot, over his wine, his own position as a foreigner and the rank of his guests. He spoke with passion of his disappointment with his great idol; he forgot the danger; his fire carried him away. Soon all good manners had been cast aside, the debate degenerated into tumult, all spoke at once, but Bolivar's harmonious voice rose above all the noise. He accused the First Consul of having been a traitor to liberty, of aiming at tyranny, of destroying the rights of the people and the sacred power of order. He blamed the officers for having abetted him and made no effort to conceal his contempt for the clerics. They were in the tyrant's pay, he cried, they had put religion under the shadow of bayonets. The guests, completely scandalized, ceased to reply. Nearly all felt personally affronted. They believed the scene had been prepared beforehand, looked to their weapons, and left the house as if an attempt had been made on their lives."

That very night, Fanny's brother-in-law, who had been present and, as a Frenchman, was concerned for the safety of his Creole relative, wrote to him that he should leave Paris. Bolivar replied: "I have known you now for six years, and always admired the nobility of your character, and I deeply regret that you should have been witness of the disgraceful scene which was caused yesterday by the fanaticism of a few effete clerics. . . . They adore Bonaparte. Like you, my dear Colonel, I ad-

mire his gifts as a soldier. But cannot you see that he is simply aiming at personal power? The man is growing into a despot." He goes on to speak of espionage and the police. "And that is what you call freedom! A man would have to be a genius of virtue not to abuse power like this. No people should ever entrust its fate to a single man. A short space, and Bonaparte's rule will be harsher than that of the little tyrants he has destroyed. . . . So far as I am concerned, I am simply a rich man, an excrescence on society, a stone in the hilt of Bonaparte's dagger, the toga of the orator. I am no politician, no man of meetings, inspire no confidence in any soldier, nor am I a man of learning, patiently demonstrating truth to his audience. All I am good for is to open my house to men of some standing. A pitiable situation! O Colonel! If you only knew how I am suffering, you would have more feeling for me! This time—forgive me—I cannot take your advice, and will only leave Paris if compelled. I want to know whether a stranger in a strange land can express his opinion of its government, or whether he is thrown out for doing so."

This letter, which, considering how few of Bolivar's early letters we possess, is especially valuable, shows even in its metaphors how the figure of Napoleon set this ambitious young man trembling. The freedom of the people, which had not cost him a thought during his years in Paris, was by no means the cause of his agitation of the day before and of his present resolve to stay. The real cause was the apparition of the young general who darkened the sun for him and everybody else, and on whose dagger hilt he was but a stone. Why did he not enter his army, where so many foreigners were rising to high places, and where his countryman Miranda had won great distinction? Why does he complain of the misery of his position, which was due simply and solely to his millions? Because he felt a gnawing ambition within him which made it impossible for him to take second place, and left him readier to cut himself off altogether rather than serve another. He merely laughed at his own role of dandy, because in these long years of inactivity, he secretly felt himself

fated to greatness. His object in staying in Paris was to compel the genius moving before his eyes to outrage the laws of freedom and hospitality just because, feeling in his heart his kinship with it, he idolized that genius far more than the old Colonel.

Soon after, Napoleon was crowned in Notre Dame. Bolivar is said to have refused the invitation to look on from the Spanish Ambassador's box. He shares that distinction with Napoleon's mother and Beethoven, who at this time destroyed the dedication of the *Eroica*. The refusal meant that a young man of fashion, in the midst of Parisian society, was to miss one of the strangest spectacles in history, that on the great day he heard the bands, the shouts, and the marching of troops outside his windows, and yet remained unseen, though he was too obscure for his refusal to have any effect as a demonstration. A resolve of this kind is always the result of an interplay of motives. He certainly believed in liberty, yet at the same time he hated the other's glory, seeing no way by which he could himself emerge from the shade. By refusing to witness the greatest moment the western world could bestow on a little corporal, a lawyer's son, he hardened his heart against his own despair as an ambitious youth without inward resources, whether of philosophy, love, or religion, so that he might have the strength to live through the unparalleled triumph of another.

Bolivar, in later years, never succeeded in quite clearing up this confusion of admiration and hate. Twenty years later, he declared to his adjutant O'Leary: "I idolized Napoleon as the hero of the Republic, as the genius of freedom. In my eyes he had no peer. But after he had made himself Emperor, I saw in him a tyrant, a bar to progress. I saw him breaking down the pillars on which liberty was to be set up. . . . After that I could never be reconciled to him again. Even his glory seemed to me infernal, the flames of a volcano rising destructively over a world in chains. I saw with astonishment how the Republic exchanged its trophies and monuments for a crown." Not long afterwards, however, Bolivar said to a friend, just before his death: "The great act filled me with enthusiasm. It was less the splendor than

the joy and love a great people showed its hero. That exaltation of all hearts, that spontaneous movement of millions of people offering him the laurel, seemed to me the supreme goal of human ambition, the ultimate desire and aspiration of a man. The crown he pressed on his temples was but a relic of a dark past. The great thing to my mind was the general applause, the interest he won from all."

Such was the confusion of feelings, reflected even twenty years later in the contradictions of memory, with which Bolivar then regarded his great exemplar. For the first time, glory stood before him as the goal of life. From then on, it remained his lodestar until his death.

IX

BUT the way to glory was obscure, for the young man saw no worlds to conquer. Instinctively he turned toward that teacher who, in his romantic bewilderment, had after all been the first to show him where real worth lay. His teacher had been a prisoner and a fugitive in the cause of liberty. He had contemned all earthly goods, to live for his ideal. The insecurity of the man of single mind again attracted the youth who felt himself only too secure. When he heard that Rodriguez was in Vienna, he suddenly abandoned the pleasures of Paris and set off in search of him. But he found him changed; under the name of Robinson, he was absorbed in carrying on chemical research in the laboratory of an Austrian nobleman.

For his part, Robinson found his Émile pale and overwrought, lacking energy and purpose; he seemed, however, disinclined to spend any more energy on him. It may be that at this time he gave up hope for him. As he was himself in the service not of liberty but of nature, he merely gave Bolivar the casual advice to enjoy himself with people of his own age, to go to the opera, to seek amusement—it was the only way to recover. "I quickly fell," Bolivar wrote to Fanny, "into a kind of decline; the doctors did not give me long to live." After further confessions by his ailing

and hopeless pupil, the teacher told him that: "There were other things than love in a man's life and that I might count myself happy in dedicating myself to knowledge or ambition. I know this man's powers of persuasion: he uses the wildest sophisms in place of reasons. And so he was able to persuade me too. The next night my imagination was fired by the idea of dedicating my life to science or the liberation of peoples. It was certain, I told him, that a brilliant future awaited me, but for that, money was indispensable. What rights has a man without money? I am poor, ill, defeated. No, I would rather die. I pressed his hand and told him to let me die in peace.

"Suddenly his face expressed resolve. For a moment he seemed to hesitate. Then, his eyes raised to heaven, he cried: 'He is saved!' He took my hand and said with emotion: 'And so, my friend, if you were rich, you would wish to live? For this time we are saved. Money can yet serve a good end. Simon Bolivar, you are rich. You possess four millions.' "

Today, we should thoroughly enjoy this scene on the stage as a detail in the comedy of a millionaire's son. It reveals the whole literary masquerade in which the spiritual dandy and follower of Rousseau was still living. For Bolivar had not only known for years how rich he was, he had, at the time of his betrothal, negotiated for his share of the family fortune; he had, on his second departure from home, come to a settlement with his brother; he knew, moreover, that his mistress was aware of all this. Yet he chose the style of the *Nouvelle Héloïse* to cast a romantic light in the eyes of his beloved, over his return to life out of depression and perplexity. There is not a genuine note in the whole of the letter, and it would not be worth quoting if it did not twice express his resolve to dedicate himself to knowledge or the liberation of peoples. This naïve "or" betrays, in addition to the young man's complete freedom of choice, his utter irresolution and, from our standpoint, illuminates the way which, in the next few years, was to lead him to the fulfillment of one of the two missions. At the same time it is the urge to glory born of the *tedium vitae* of the man to whom life has given too much.

It was in no sense a heartfelt desire for justice and freedom which urged Bolivar, at twenty-one, to undertake something in life.

Glory as a spring of action stands out more clearly here than in the life stories of most great men, whose ambition is, after all, spurred too by their desire to rise to a more brilliant way of life, to overcome the wretchedness of their youth, the humiliations they have endured as poor or despised upstarts. Here, for once, we find a youth not striving after glitter and gold but rather struggling to get away from it, and yet, in the conventional idiom of his age, convinced that money is necessary to achievement. He has cast himself so completely into the role of the heir to wealth that, with the example of Napoleon before his eyes, he cannot realize his own mistake in believing that a scholar or a liberator must first of all be rich. Even while admiring the feats and the careers of obscure sons of the people who turned the ideas of the epoch into reality, he clings to his descent as a wealthy nobleman at the very moment at which he gathers up his strength to turn his heritage into glory, no matter how. Where does the laurel grow, the young man of fashion wonders at this moment of awakening. In learning or in liberation? Fate seemed to understand the grotesque question, for it sent him a man of learning to inspire him as a liberator.

The man who crossed Bolivar's path at decisive moments after his return to Paris was not a revolutionary, nor a Frenchman, nor a Spaniard. He was a great scholar, though one who had won his learning and his system less from books than from his own observations on arduous travels, a German who came to the Creole like a messenger from home.

After five years' exploration, Humboldt had returned to Europe with his friend and pupil Bonpland. In the middle thirties, like Napoleon, he was, like him, a conqueror, moving, like him, the world to wonder, but without guns and without human sacrifice. He had been given a triumphal reception by the intellectuals of Paris as though, in the midst of the adoration of force, they wished to re-establish its reputation as the world's academy. They were, moreover, nothing loath to steal from Prussia, then in

a state of collapse in many respects, a hero who only half belonged to it, for on his mother's side Humboldt came of French *émigré* stock. Before people even knew what they had discovered, the travelers were feted for the sake of the dangers they had braved, of which only a few private letters had brought news. It was but a few weeks after the coronation that Paris crowned the explorer who had been born at the same time as Napoleon.

It was Humboldt who first threw light on Bolivar's own country. He had, at the age of thirty, landed in Venezuela just as Bolivar, then sixteen, had left it. If Humboldt had arrived a few months earlier, he might have helped to form Bolivar's youth, for he would, even then, have understood the impressionable and imaginative boy. He traveled and tramped through the valleys round Caracas and the north of Venezuela, then along the west coast of the Antilles as far as the equator; they sailed up the Guaviare, the Orinoco, and the Rio Negro, later turned toward the north coast, traveled from Cartagena to Santa Fé, then the capital of New Granada, spent two months there, and finally returned through Mexico and Havana to Washington—nine thousand miles. What they brought with them and first exhibited in Paris was chiefly the results of botanical and geographical research, with discoveries in geology, zoology, climatology, and ethnography, a mass of collections and data which it took Humboldt nearly thirty years to classify and publish.

When Bolivar was introduced to Humboldt at this exhibition, it transpired within the first few minutes that Humboldt had met with the most cordial reception at the home of Bolivar's relatives. Humboldt had set out with letters of introduction from Spain, and owed to the court of Madrid the vital recommendations without which he could not have carried on his work in the colonies; nor had he ever been heard to say a word against Spain. But his insight was sufficient to make him grasp, in what he saw, the decadent condition of the colonial government. A humanist of the best school, a man of the world, and, above all, a man of independent mind, he took advantage of this first opportunity to tell the young Creole the best he could find to say

about his people. From certain descriptions, he said, he had been led to imagine that the colonies suffered from a notable lack of culture. Instead, as he wrote later, and as he doubtless said to Bolivar: "I seemed to be living in a fairy palace. The beautiful, spreading grounds, the fountains and shrubberies, the statues and picturesque ruins, provided the setting for a brilliant festival on Twelfth Night, where, on the eve of our departure for the jungles of the Orinoco, the guests vied with each other in courtesy and surrounded us with every refinement."

Humboldt knew too much about the Spanish prejudices against the Creoles, and had too soon been enlightened about Bolivar's position, not to meet him, here in his own continent, with praise of the Creole men of learning, as their grateful guests, telling him how Mútis, the great explorer at Santa Fé, had helped him and Bonpland for months on end, had placed all his collections at their disposal, and had then sent with them his best pupil, the only man in America who could make and repair any instrument. Finally, it turned out that a priest who had long been their traveling companion had been Bolivar's tutor.

All this could not fail to rouse Bolivar from his depression, to warm a heart torn between ambition and purposelessness, here in Paris, which his friends were advising him to leave on account of his candor, and next door to Madrid, from which he had been more or less expelled. For the first time in his life, Bolivar heard high praise of his homeland, and that from a scientist who had rediscovered it. The rich youth who lacked the aim in life to vie with Napoleon, the form and temperament to vie with Byron, suddenly saw all the light turned on the land of his birth.

He went to visit the two men daily, either at the exhibition or at their lodging. Humboldt, with five years of hardship behind him, with the fresh color and bright eyes he preserved into old age, would sit facing the young man with the burning eyes who had dissipated his youth. When he showed him a piece of copper ore he had chipped off in an abandoned mine, told him of the rocks which he, the first man to climb Chimborazo, had found on its summit, of the sweltering heat down on the boundless

llanos, of all the unused wealth on and under the earth, tangible things and human beings moved for the first time before the eyes of the aimless dreamer. Indeed, Bolivar forthwith offered Bonpland half his income if he would go back with him and found an institute for the exploration of South America.

One day the conversation turned to the political situation in those countries, and Humboldt, whose confidence had by this time been awakened, expressed his feeling that the greatest hopes might be realized if the continent were opened up, but only if it had first been freed from the Spanish yoke. "What a splendid enterprise! The people are ready. But where is the man strong enough to carry it through?"

That day, Bolivar told much later, he left Baron von Humboldt's study "very thoughtful." The idle young man felt for the first time something like a purpose dawn in his harassed mind. While the two strangers had restored to him his fatherland, so that he saw it anew, and actually for the first time, while they had strengthened his pride as an American, he carried away with him, as the opinion of a great mind, the finest expert then living, the conviction that those countries must and could be liberated.

Bolivar, the friend of society and fashionable women, had neither on this nor on his former stay in Paris approached the secret circles of his conspiring countrymen who had been endeavoring for years to organize a revolution from the European side, and thus renew the attempt which had formerly come to grief for lack of an intellectual background and organized resistance. He was too much the man of fashion to betake himself to the little rooms of a suburban house where revolutions were already being hatched in the fumes of coffee and tobacco. Now, however, speaking to a man of the world who could not fail to fascinate him by his arduously won knowledge, by the charm of his foreign speech and alien occupation, and not least by his fame, the romantic youth for the first time became aware of a purpose in life. This might be his mission.

Rodriguez, the disciple of Rousseau, had inspired him with

the ideals of freedom, yet that had been a general appeal, a non-committal challenge to mankind. Nor had the imprisonment and flight of the teacher aroused any indignation in the pupil's mind. Humboldt, less passionate, a pure scientist and observer, had considered the existing state of the country and its people and drawn a conclusion which implied a challenge to his hearer. To carry the new ideas to America, to put the precepts of Rousseau and Washington into practice where despotism had lost practically nothing of its rigidity, had, since he had heard the thought expressed as a desire by the keenest minds over there, become a moral and political necessity for Humboldt, and he gave it the more decisive utterance since it touched him neither as a party in the dispute nor as a man of action, but merely as an ethnographer and a humanist.

Thus it came about that Bolivar, at the age of twenty-three, set out to create for himself, out of the doctrines and doings of Rousseau, Humboldt, and Napoleon, a goal on which the laurel grew.

X

YOUTHFUL hearts, groping their way toward great decisions, uncertain whether to stay where they are or dare the bound, urged by no necessity but their inward voice, are prone to put their trust in a change of scene, and to seek chance guidance in the sight of strange countries and peoples and the vicissitudes of travel.

Thus we find Bolivar and Robinson, as he was henceforth called, on the roads of northern Italy, carrying their own packs, riding from time to time on farm wagons or sleeping in the hay. The teacher was following rapturously in the steps of the old Romans, reading Tacitus aloud in the shade of the olive trees and investigating new plants under his magnifying glass. They had adopted a stray mongrel and grown fond of it, and it was a heart-rending moment when the dog ran away. Robinson chaffed his pupil for his grief over the dog, which he had named Carlos and

which came back to him in dreams for weeks afterwards, but Bolivar, who had been living for so long without any genuine affection, must have suffered deeply and in silence.

This tramp on the highroads, which seems to have lasted for months, was never repeated; after his princely upbringing and life of fashion, Bolivar here came for the first time into close contact with the people, with whom he had later to live and reckon.

On this tour, too, the three heroes of his youth either accompanied him or were followed by him; he saw the places where Rousseau's youth had been spent, he met Humboldt's brother in Rome, and between the two came Napoleon. Bolivar was present at his second coronation, when he placed the iron crown of the Lombards on his head, and saw the huge military display, having come from Milan for the purpose. "I fixed my eyes on him," he once said later, "and in the crowd saw only him. How simply he stood there, surrounded by his glittering staff! Everybody near him was covered with gold and lace; he wore only epaulets, a hat, and a suit without ornament. I was delighted."

In the Manzoni circle in Milan and in the salons of Florence and Rome, Bolivar is also said to have met Madame de Staël and Lamartine, Rauch and Thorvaldsen, Chateaubriand, and even perhaps Lord Byron. It is notable that none of these great minds should have later recalled the world-famous man in youth, although Byron, twenty years later, even named his yacht after him. He must have simply appeared there as a distinguished foreigner. In the whole of Europe, Humboldt was the only man to distinguish him in the crowd of young bucks. He clearly affected in society a bearing dictated by his own inward uncertainty, while in close talk with a scientist whom he regarded as a master he could unfold his natural gifts with ease. Humboldt's profound influence on his intellectual life and the readiness with which he listened to and learned from Robinson on these travels are proof of the loneliness and ennui in which he had spent the last few years. He also read and thought a great deal, at that time largely under the influence of Spinoza, while decidedly hostile to Machiavelli. This conflict between power and ethics was an-

other of the things which were later to bewilder the mind of the practical idealist.

It crops up everywhere. In a general way, but most of all in the shadow of his revolutionary teacher, the young Marqués was at this time striving to shake off inherited traditions, without much success. As a member of a Spanish lodge, and even, in Paris, raised to the chair of master, why did he seek an audience of the Pope? And when he went to it, accompanied by the Spanish Ambassador, why did he suddenly refuse to kiss the Pope's slipper? When Pius VII saw the Ambassador give the sign, and the young man shake his head, he merely smiled and said: "Let the young Indian do as he pleases." But when Bolivar left the Vatican, he said: "The Pope seems to hold the cross in slight esteem, for he wears it on his foot, while the proudest kings set it on their heads." The story went the rounds of Rome, very much in the Pope's favor, for he had carried off the victory in the little encounter by the mere appellation of Indian.

It was the same confusion of curiosity and admiration, of defiance and hostility, which moved Bolivar in presence of the Emperor and the Pope. Power attracted him irresistibly, even where its source conflicted utterly with his own liberal and humanitarian ideas. "Our desires," said Goethe, "are presentiments of the qualities that dwell in us, heralds of our later actions." Not until Bolivar was near death did he admit the attraction, which would of itself suffice to betray the set of his own desires toward glory. At the same time, both Robinson's penetrating teaching and Humboldt's weighty hints were urging him into a course which combined power and glory with an ideal aim. In Rome, buildings and inscriptions, columns and tombs, conjured up before his eyes a warning vision of life in ancient times, and of the struggles between tyrants and people. In its hostility to the great men of his age, his romantic mind could not but be fired to emulate the ideals of the past.

One afternoon, Robinson relates, when they had climbed the Aventino in the sweltering heat of August, he became aware that his silent companion was struggling with some great emotion,

"Suddenly Bolivar rose from the base of a column and, as if he were alone, gazed rapturously toward the horizon through the rays of the setting sun. 'So this is the city of Romulus and Sulla, of the Gracchae, of Augustus and Nero, of Caesar and Brutus!' he cried. 'Here they walked, the empresses and courtesans, the martyrs and apostles, criminals and heroes, and yet they accomplished almost nothing for humanity. What but their names did they leave behind them? On my life and honor, I swear not to rest until I have liberated America from her tyrants!'"

The style of this grandiloquent outburst—it is three times as long in Robinson's memoirs—reminiscent of the literature of the day, is as easy to understand as the letter from Vienna in which Bolivar describes to his mistress the crisis in which he hung between life and death. Besides, the account comes from his teacher, who dictated it fifty years later in extreme old age.

And yet this scene, and the vow, actually took place, for Bolivar recalled it to his teacher of his own accord in a letter written twenty years later. That moment on the sacred hill was subsequently tricked out by the imagination of the aged teacher of a great man and made the subject of countless stories and pictures. In spite of that, however, the first resolve taken by an aimless youth of twenty remains significant, since it represents, as it were, the sudden appearance, in a vacuum, of a plan of action which the same man was actually to carry through. The origin of his self-appointed mission is seen to be not illusion, nor oppression, but simply and solely the idealist's resolve to do something for humanity. Such a point of departure, which we occasionally find in the youth of a poet, is perhaps unique in the history of men of action, and, looking back on it in the light of great deeds accomplished, it takes on a profound meaning. For it was precisely the purely dramatic nature of the motives urging Bolivar to action which later caused him all his sufferings.

No wonder that he who had bound himself by oath to South America did not embark on the next ship to plunge into a struggle still veiled in obscurity. Between his vow and his departure

for the land of its fulfillment, more than another idle year was to pass.

The child of fortune, who called no one to his aid and knew no one to whom he could turn, the enthusiast who had taken his resolve without any recourse to like-minded companions in the struggle, was far too accustomed to self-indulgence to be able to renounce all at once his life of fashion and the pleasures of Europe. Naples was there, with its court and society, Paris was there. Robinson, radiant at the progress his *Émile* was making in his hands, embraced him when Bolivar at last set out, and himself departed, in search of new adventures, this time for Constantinople. There was also a romantic scene of renunciation between the lovers. Fanny, feeling herself a heroine sending forth her knight on deeds of valor, gave him her miniature to wear round his neck as a talisman. A year after that solemn moment, his courage had again abandoned him:

"Since I left Paris," he wrote to her before embarking, "I have not written to you. Life goes on unchanged, weary as ever. I am seeking a new way of life. I am tired of Europe and its old society, that is why I am returning to America. What shall I find there? I cannot tell. You know how I do everything on impulse. I make no plans. The life of savages has great charm for me. Most likely I shall build a hut for myself in the forests of Venezuela. I shall pull off as many twigs there as I like without offending anyone by it, as I unluckily offended you more than once. Ah! Theresa, how happy are those who can believe in a better world. I find it hard to do so. I should have liked to bid the Colonel good-by. I shall not write to him. What could I tell him that he does not know already, since he has not even time to watch the clouds sailing over his head, the leaves quivering in the wind, the water of the brooks, the plants on the banks. I could only tell him that life is sad, and then he would think me mad. Happy mortal! He has no need to participate in the dramas of the human heart in order to feel himself alive.

"I am going now to observe other men and other destinies.

My childhood's memories mean a happiness to me which I shall certainly lose as soon as I revisit the scenes in which my childhood was passed. But the great conqueror has just begun his invasion of Spain, and I should like to be witness of how America regards the great event."

It is not difficult to hear the nihilistic tone in this letter, which is certainly genuine. What can a man, exhausted at twenty-three, desire? He lacks everything, even that exaltation which fired him on the Aventino. What has become of Robinson's persuasions, of Humboldt's weighty hints? As he sets foot on board to sail home, there remains in his mind only one vision, which Europe had, in these three years, implanted there for weal or woe. The great conqueror was just invading his fatherland, the country which had twice repudiated him and his diamonds, the country whose tottering structure he had seen with his own eyes, the country which had bestowed on him, for a few short months, a great love. It was that very Spain he was leaving behind him at the moment when it was coalescing into a chaotic unity with his half-hated idol.

All the impulses of his youth seemed to fade as Bolivar was borne away from the land of his fathers to the land of the future, from the Spaniards back to the Creoles, not knowing what the deeds of the foreign conqueror held in store for him—whether they would summon him to the defense of Spain or to the liberation of the daughter country from an aging and embittered mother.

CHAPTER TWO

Ordeal

"Nature has given us no fault which could not become a virtue, no virtue that could not become a fault. And really the virtues are far the most dangerous."

GOETHE

I

FOR three hundred years, Spain ruled a great part of the world, and more than any other country. Her soldiers and conquerors, adventurers and world traders, and above all her navigators, had conquered the Turks, subjugated Italy and Portugal, taken a Pope prisoner, set a king on the French throne, beaten the English and the German corsairs. The word conquistador has remained untranslatable, like gentleman and *grand seigneur*, because, like them, it denotes an idea. Every Spaniard is descended from Columbus, some from Pizarro and Don Juan too, but Don Quixote also figures in their family tree.

The example those men gave as conquerors, however, which has been impressed on the memory of posterity in plays, songs, and pictures, that steeling of defiance and daring in the countless struggles in which nature and man endeavored to overcome them, had been given only by a class of nobles, who untiringly sought new paths across the ocean in search of new lands and their subterranean treasures, their dearest the silver and their loveliest the gold. These few hundred men, recruited almost entirely from the same families, formed the small, ruling class of active soldiers and navigators who carried the power of Spain over the world and her glory into history. The blaze of their armor, the glitter of their swords, overshadows the hordes of men—a huge gray train—who followed the great nobles into all their battles, into the fortresses and palaces of the conquerors, who appear in the prohibitions and regulations of sea-borne trade, gathering gold for their masters by the sweat of their brows.

The artistic beauty of this despotic world, where only the man in the cowl might tread softly in the wake of power and even share

it, has, in legends and poems, held listeners spellbound through the centuries, and still does so today. But beyond it we have learned to understand what great benefits the Spaniards took to South America in return for the freedom they did not give the natives. When such a period of power is past, when those who were once conquered have regained their liberty, they begin to inquire with calm and steady detachment how much good remains and what can be placed on the right side of the balance.

For the last generation, historical science in South America has set to work to investigate this point with admirable lack of bias. If Marshal Lyautey, as a very old man, declared that the one thing which excused the colonization of foreign countries was the doctor, we must say of the Spanish conquest that what it left behind was the teacher, the priest, and the doctor. It cannot be the purpose of this book to enumerate all the positive achievements of the Spanish conquest, since it is solely occupied with the man who put an end to that conquest and at last brought liberty to his people. But what we may anticipate at this point is the insight of the liberator himself, although he only achieved it much later. For it was an older Bolivar who declared, with a strange resignation: "We have given all we had in exchange for one thing—our independence." And again: "We have had to destroy three centuries of culture and industry."

Here, as in the cases of Washington and Mirabeau, it was again a man of high birth who placed himself at the head of the oppressed people. But all he met with from below was hostility.

The oppressed millions of South American natives distrusted their liberator, and remained loyal to the Spanish crown. A few thousand Creoles, aristocrats and intellectuals who had enjoyed every freedom, were, on the other hand, urging a revolution—a thing we have witnessed more than once in our own day.

Here, too, the way was long which took the aristocrat from his attitude of facile demands and half confessions and brought him face to face with the great issues of life and death. When Bolivar returned to America, he was twenty-three. Seven more years were to pass before he became the liberator of his country.

In what sense was it his homeland? He had, it is true, been born there, like four generations of his fathers before him, but the first of them had come over, a pure-blooded Spaniard, to seek wealth, just like the other conquistadors. In 1499, on his second voyage, Columbus discovered in the present Bay of Maracaibo a wretched village on piles, which was later called Venezuela, "poor little Venice." Since then a host of adventurers had landed there, seeking El Dorado. Soon after, in 1567, they founded, as one of their first settlements, the city that was to become Caracas. Bolivar's ancestors had come over from the Basque country. When the young man was enjoying the pleasures of Paris, or residing on his estates as a great landed gentleman, he knew that he owed it all to bold and enterprising forebears who had enslaved the native peoples. The phrase in which Pope Alexander bestowed on "the Crown of Castile full possession of the lands inhabited by the heathens of the East" may have sufficed for Renaissance politics, but as the establishment of a right, it was made all the more ludicrous by the fact that it was not the East at all. The chain with which Columbus had been rewarded for his incomparable gift did not lie in gold round his neck; it was riveted in iron round his feet; it was only the first of those with which the All-Catholic King gave thanks to God for the continent which was henceforth to do him service.

Through his revolutionary teacher, Bolivar had first become acquainted with the fine-mesh net which Catholic statesmanship had cast over all these millions of Americans. When the boy's eyes were first opened, he could not but look beyond the frontiers of his own country over the whole continent, where conditions were much the same everywhere. The imagination of every awakening mind in those countries was filled with fabulous tales of the empires of the Aztecs and Incas, which the Spaniards had annihilated, and in every tale there ran like a golden thread the wealth of Mexico and Peru. In Spain they said of rich men: "He owns a Peru." It is an historical probability that all this wealth would have remained forever under the earth unless a civilized people had come from the east to bring it to light. Boli-

var, an enlightened youth, felt that he was descended from one of those great families which had opened up the land, while depriving its inhabitants of their freedom.

What was he, then, in this country? The rich heir of those men who had made the crown of Spain rich, yet he was no longer fully recognized by that crown, although his ancestors on both sides had been of pure Spanish blood. This discrimination had, years before his birth, caused a resentment among some of the most distinguished Creoles which made them turn away from their mother country and regard their new home with more warmth than before—a transition not unlike that by which a woman, after marriage, leaves her own family and goes over to her husband's.

After his return, Bolivar considered the question more urgently. His intellectual preparation he owed to Rousseau and his disciple Rodriguez, to the reading of Montesquieu and Voltaire, his political to his experience of the United States and the republic of France; for on his way back he had spent a few weeks looking about the United States. It was above all the insight he had gained into the decline of a kingdom at the decadent court of Madrid that had sharpened his critical eye. Since then, he had felt an inward challenge to take stock of his inherited position as a landowner and an aristocrat. There were plenty of examples at hand.

There was no doubt that for three centuries all these generations of men had learned in schools what the Spanish priests taught them, that hundreds and thousands had been trained to a craft, and that countless human beings had been healed by Spanish doctors and scientists. But other tribes, even half peoples, refused to learn anything and took refuge in forests and savannas, there to live, as their fathers had lived before them, as *llaneros*, lawless tribes who continued a half-nomad existence with their animals, hunting the tiger with lances and living on horseback, veritable centaurs.

When clashes occurred, the freedom of these semisavages had expressed itself in unparalleled cruelties, which, the most reli-

able explorers assert, went as far as cannibalism. On both sides leaders had been murdered, and, just as Pizarro had once fallen at the hands of his own men, there were repeated assassinations in Chile and in Mexico. Paraguay, as early as 1720, had succeeded, during an uprising, in deposing the Spanish governor and ruling itself for four years, till the Spanish army regained the upper hand. Even in 1782, a descendant of the Incas had attempted a revolt in Peru and paid for it with his life. Everyone realized that native risings were foredoomed to failure unless the Creoles with their culture and order were there to support these wild horsemen. The law of colonial liberation demanded a civil war between white men.

That was why the Captains-General dreaded nothing so much as the spirit of enlightenment; that was why they imprisoned Narino, in whose hands they had themselves placed the rights of man; why they prohibited nearly all books which were not works of piety, and curtailed the privileges of the *cabildo*, a kind of municipal self-governing council to which the crown had formerly granted special liberties. These cultivated citizens, whose wealth and honor were prejudiced by the stricter regulations, prepared themselves in the world of French theories for possible liberation. Montesquieu was idolized and discussed. Many educated Creoles spoke French, and Corneille was recited in literary clubs with topical reference. A Chilean nobleman sent a chest of books to his mistress at Santiago containing fifty-six folio volumes of the *Encyclopedia*, "which is held to be more dangerous than the yellow fever," further the works "of an old abbé who lives in Geneva and is called by some an apostle, by others Antichrist," then Buffon's *Histoire naturelle* and other, more dangerous books. It was not much good for one of the governors to declare in public: "An American does not need to read. It is enough for him to worship God and His representative on earth, the King of Spain."

The pioneers among the enlightened townsmen, who began resolutely to call themselves Americans, were assisted in the most astonishing way by their greatest opponents. The Jesuits, who

had, in 1767, been expelled both from Spain and the colonies because they had enriched themselves at the expense of the Spanish crown and, through the missions, worked silver mines, sugar refineries, and huge livestock farms with unpaid labor, had left a gaping void behind them, since they had also done excellent work in training artisans and farmers. The lower orders of the clergy, natives who saw themselves suddenly deprived of their incomes, became the natural enemies of the central power in Spain, and from that time on stirred up sedition among the savage tribes. The more learned, who had fled to Europe, distributed pamphlets, declared themselves Americans, and called on England to help them in the work of liberation.

For England was Spain's most formidable competitor, perhaps her heir, and generally her avowed enemy, and England, in all revolutionary minds, stood for the born accomplice in revolution as the only country to have enough strength and enough interest to detach South America from Spain. As the biggest guarantor, moreover, Spain had just helped the young United States to steal America. Since the middle of the eighteenth century, when she occupied Jamaica, England had promoted native contraband trade in the Spanish colonies, and later sent out her men with certain trade privileges. Later on, a year after Bolivar's birth, three mysterious commissioners had arrived in London, sent there by rich Creoles who wished to persuade the British Minister to help a revolution with money and arms, at the end of which they would gladly become British subjects.

The business spirit of the English was, however, once again stronger than their greed. They imagined they were acting more wisely in avoiding a colonial war with Spain, and thereby committed one of the gravest mistakes in their history. Yet they tried in every way, without loss of blood or money, to strengthen the desire for revolution in all parts of South America. Since England had taken Trinidad in 1797, and was thus established only a few miles from Venezuela, she had never ceased her provocative activity, printing prohibited manifestoes and exporting contraband goods. In fact she did everything she could to in-

spire the leaders aiming at revolution with the hope of help for which they waited thirty years in vain. And yet it was the best thing that could have happened to the continent that it liberated itself without foreign help. The example in the North seemed to point the way.

For without the liberation of the North, that of the South could never have come about. What happened at Philadelphia in 1776 was to be imitated a generation later at Caracas, even to the wording of the manifesto. Thus we may regard it as historically symbolic that both the recognition of the freedom of North America by the Treaty of Versailles and the birth of the liberator of South America fell in the summer weeks of 1783. And again it was a single statesman who, with the foresight of genius, urged his king to have the wisdom to yield, rather than maintain an untenable situation by force. This was the Spanish grandee, Count Aranda, who ventured to advise his king to agree to the liberation of the whole of South America immediately after the recognition of the United States. A few weeks after Bolivar's birth, this Spanish minister wrote a report to his sovereign which might be a lesson to all those ruling by force to-day.

"Great possessions cannot be held forever. The present situation is rendered more difficult by the enormous distances, which hampers the dispatch of help, by the slowness of the authorities and the selfishness of the government." After referring to the recently founded United States, he gives this prophetic picture of that country:

"That pygmy republic, which needs France and Spain to exist at all, will one day grow into a colossus, will forget all the benefits it has received at the hands of both powers, and only dream of might. The freedom of conscience, the growth of a huge population in that vast territory, the advantages of the new government, will draw workmen and peasants from all countries, for men pursue success, and the time will come when we shall painfully feel the tyranny of the giant. It will then attempt to get Florida and the Gulf of Mexico into its power, will hamper our trade with

New Spain and endeavor to conquer it, since the two countries are strong and adjacent, while we shall hardly be able to defend it. These apprehensions, Sire, are only too well founded, unless their realization is forestalled by other, yet graver changes in our parts of America. Everything will combine to urge our subjects to fight for their independence at the earliest opportunity.

“We should therefore give up all our possessions in both Americas, retaining only Cuba and Puerto Rico in the north and a small part of the south to provide us with ports for our trade. To realize this great idea in a way worthy of Spain, three Infantes should be made kings of Mexico, Peru, and the Costa Ferma, Your Majesty receiving the title of Emperor. Trade should be built up on terms of perfect equality. The four nations must feel themselves bound by an alliance, offensive and defensive, for their common welfare. Since our industry is unable to provide America with all necessities, France must send them; England, on the other hand, must be rigorously excluded. The three kings would at once conclude commercial treaties with Spain and France to the exclusion of England.”

If a wise king had put this plan of action into practice out of hand, history would have needed no Bolivar, and we should never have heard of him. But Charles III refused and dismissed his minister. It is to his folly that posterity owed its good fortune in possessing Bolivar.

II

THE most famous man in South America, and one of the most famous in the world at the time, was Miranda. Soldierly in his bearing, an athlete in physique, with broad shoulders, a massive gait and heavy footfall, weather-beaten, short of nose and broad of chin, direct and even abrupt in speech, with a clear, deep voice—this soldier, at sixty, was in every way the opposite of young Bolivar, whose rather small, slim, horseman’s figure with its graceful, agile movements, whose long, olive-skinned face and musical voice, seemed to reveal a totally different being. In-

finitely superior to the young Marqués not only in knowledge of the world and real education, but also in shrewdness and inborn power of command, Miranda resembled him only in one thing—in pride.

For Francisco Miranda, born, like Bolivar, at Caracas, more than twenty years before him, descended from pure Spanish stock and was also of Basque origin. As a young man, however, he and his rich middle-class father had, with indignation, felt themselves slighted by the aristocracy; Miranda later conferred upon himself every imaginable title. When he went to Spain at seventeen to join the army, he was at once introduced, in Paris, to the circles of the new thought, but as there was no revolution pending then, he enrolled in the American War of Independence, fought on the Mississippi, and won so much distinction as a kind of espionage officer in the English Antilles that at twenty-six he was already a lieutenant colonel. It was then that the Spanish Ambassador at Philadelphia introduced him to General Washington—a great moment for the young officer and revolutionary. From that time on, he strove to emulate that great example, and sought to seize the moment to become the liberator of the South.

In his case, too, the quest of glory played its part, though not, as with Bolivar, a decisive one. For in this case, the troubled times had turned the soldier into an adventurer who interfered in the doings of a dozen countries, but, since the thought of his own country gave him no rest, always turned back to it. The desire to see their country free was fired, both in Bolivar and in Miranda, by their contact with the new ideas in France and reinforced by the example of the United States. Since the underlying motive in their minds was different, however, their plan of action differed also.

For while Bolivar, at twenty, weary of his millions, was wondering whether to dedicate his life to freedom or knowledge, Miranda at that age, full of zest, was rolling about the world with foreign soldiery and among foreign peoples. The one sought a way to action out of his native thought, the other ennobled by thought his inborn activity. The one was hampered by inherited

wealth, the other was compelled by necessity to fend for himself. At nineteen, the nobleman married, to found a family and bury himself in luxury, the other was driven out into the world by his own hot blood. The one danced and rode, the other, when little more than a boy, already fought.

Luck and genius, however, bore the adventurer more quickly to the summits of life. When barely thirty, he was already being received by the Emperor Joseph in Vienna, by the old Prince at Potsdam, and by the Empress Catherine at St. Petersburg, where he made his appearance with the title of Count. In the course of their first conversation, the Empress offered him the rank of colonel in the Russian army; after the third, she is said to have already chosen him as her lover. Wherever he was, he tried to obtain royal help for the revolution in South America. Everywhere his plans were listened to with interest, but they never matured, for this was still the epoch of the Bourbons, and Spain was in full power. Thus Miranda was driven to the Turks and the Egyptians, until at last he burst into the great revolution and fought under Dumouriez as a French general. When the latter went over to the enemy and Miranda parted from him in the middle of a battle, he was accused of high treason but brilliantly acquitted after a monster trial. He was in his middle thirties when the mob carried him home on their shoulders. General Miranda, the soldier-hero of two continents, the lover of the absolute Empress of Russia and of freedom at one and the same time, became world-famous.

From that time on, his unsteady existence found its deeper purpose and meaning in the fight for the independence of his country. The fall of the Bourbons in Paris had impaired the prestige of their cousins in Madrid. Suddenly everything seemed possible; Narino and other pioneers came over to seek the help of France, like Lafayette before them. They gathered round Miranda. Even the expelled Jesuits associated with this freethinker, and he published the Jesuits' letter, "To the Spanish Americans," which later became famous. While Paris was groaning under the Terror, the hospitable Miranda, now a rich man, was giving bril-

liant banquets at his country house, surrounded by books, pictures, and weapons, until he again fell under suspicion, was again arrested and kept a prisoner for a year and a half by the terrorists. He bore his imprisonment with *sang-froid*, was released at Robespierre's death, and, fresh as ever, resumed his brilliant life in Paris.

One day, at the house of Talma's mistress, he made the acquaintance of General Bonaparte, who was fifteen years his junior; the latter at once took him aside and asked him countless questions about South America. Miranda invited him to his house; Bonaparte gazed in wonder at the luxury surrounding his host. "Among my guests," Miranda thus described him, "Bonaparte sat, absent and ill-humored, shrugging his shoulders at the vigor of the table talk." Bonaparte, on the other hand, said: "General Miranda? A Don Quixote! Only that he isn't mad. The fellow has the sacred fire in his heart."

In these reciprocal opinions, it is Bonaparte alone who stands out as the judge of men, and it is the more astonishing that this should be the case, seeing that Bonaparte, in his self-esteem, was less disposed than Miranda to brook praise of another. At the same time we can recognize here the man of radiant health at the summit of his glory beside the younger, devoured by inward fire, whose glory had not yet begun.

For the moment the meeting led to nothing. Miranda, however, again fell under suspicion owing to the doubtful company he kept, while in 1796, he spoke as violently against the Directoire, which had concluded a treaty with Spain, as Bolivar later spoke against Napoleon. He was, however, far more dangerous than the younger man, for he was famous for his deeds and connections; the other was only famous for his hat. Miranda was not advised to leave; he was imprisoned for being implicated in a plot against the Directoire. On the point of being sent to Cayenne, he escaped to London.

He had already made two attempts to win the English over to his cause. His magnificent mind, his conspicuous and noisy appearance, however, had alarmed the Spaniards too soon. Pitt,

who was at the time on bad terms with Spain, had, in 1790, received from Miranda's own hands a scheme, bound in green morocco, the contents of which were as significant as the plan proposed by Count Aranda. It proposed the establishment of an empire from the Mississippi to Tierra del Fuego (with the sole exception of Guiana), having a constitution mainly on English lines, but with censors and aediles in the old Roman style, and whose rulers were called Incas. When Pitt closed the green morocco covers, however, he is said merely to have smiled.

Pitt was Prime Minister of one of the mightiest empires, Miranda no more than the messenger of an unborn revolution. Yet the time was seething with astonishing schemes and still more astonishing realizations, and thus the hero of freedom could now, eight years after his first attempt, present Pitt with another and equally daring project. He now aimed at uniting the Anglo-Saxon world, once split in enmity but now on terms of friendship, in the effort to tear South America away from Spain. The white Americans were to help in liberating the colored ones, and gain considerable advantages in doing so.

Miranda was not the man to beg; a solitary and powerless general without a position, he negotiated on equal terms with both powers.

Pitt, no less shrewd than Miranda, was playing a double game. He told Miranda to conceal himself under a false name in London, since he, Pitt, had to listen to the Spanish Ambassador's protests against the dangerous agitator. At the same time, he feared a French invasion and an Irish revolt. Yet he received Miranda in secret and gave support to the preparations for revolution in Trinidad. Suddenly England's whole situation was changed by Napoleon's victory at Abukir Bay, and soon afterwards the United States was reconciled to France.

At this point it became clear for the first time how far the men who were fighting for the freedom of America were dependent on the quarrels, the interests, the alliances, which were strengthening or shaking the European powers thousands of miles away. It will be seen later that this dependence on utterly

alien interests recurred for the next thirty years until the liberation of America was an accomplished fact. The men who had, in addition to all the rest, to master these quite incalculable reactions had to preserve not only their iron nerves, but also a highly elastic power of decision. The kaleidoscope of the European situation is reflected more sharply in Miranda's personal history than in that of Bolivar. While Miranda was receiving money from the Foreign Office in London, he lost his property in Venezuela and Paris. One day he was trying to win over the First Consul, the next he was arrested in Paris at the instance of Spain, then dismissed to London, and all the time a passionate love affair with a half-English woman was turning his life into chaos and delight. Indestructible health and zest in life raised him, at fifty, out of every depth.

After his fifth or sixth scheme had come to grief, Miranda left England for North America, equipped with very little money for the rising, and won the sympathy of Jefferson, who closed his eyes to his activities. He acquired a single ship, which was foredoomed to be beaten back by Spanish gunfire at the first attempt to land in Venezuela, forcing him even to throw his guns overboard.

Then came a fresh expedition with some English help, and a better landing. Yet there a fearful blow fell on him. When he landed at Coro in August, 1806, after twenty years of preparation, to liberate his country, when he posted his proclamations and rallied his countrymen, he realized that the Venezuelans either through apathy or hostility had no desire to be liberated. They are Jacobins and revolutionaries, the native leaders cried warningly to the inhabitants. He has been bought with English money and is going to sell us to England. No one went to the help of the naval officers and men who had been captured by the Spaniards from a number of capsized vessels and publicly hanged.

One can well imagine Miranda's feelings when he saw his lifelong dream, at the moment of fulfillment, fade away to nothing in the hearts and minds of the men he had come to set free. He may have heard how Jefferson, whom he admired so deeply, had

said about this time that South America, with its ignorant and fantastic people, could only win its freedom step by step. Now he realized to the full what he had never wanted to believe, that there in the North an almost completely white population had reached a stage of maturity and toleration which enabled them to shake off the power of their white rulers, but that here in the South, where of a hundred inhabitants at most twenty-five, and here and there only six, were white, another world could not be built up on the same basis and with the same ideas.

Weighed down by this realization, driven from the homeland he had come to set free, defeated by his own countrymen, Miranda returned to England, his heart deeply wounded.

III

BOLIVAR had had no share in these doings. Returning home shortly after Miranda's abortive rising, he lived for a year not far from him, in the neighboring country if not in the same, without ever coming into contact with him. The consequences of the attempt, which he saw all around him, did not encourage him to fulfill the sacred vow he had taken on the Holy Hill in Rome. Miranda had been executed in effigy in the market place of Caracas, his proclamations burned by the executioner. All revolutionary impulse was stifled; it seemed impossible to revive it.

Bolivar, whose return from the interesting countries of Europe was something like an event for Caracas, was much sought after for his tales and fashionable conversation, and as he had also brought with him the latest fashions, songs, and dances, and had many a curious anecdote to tell of Paris, he soon became the *magister elegantiae* and was, of course, besieged by lovely Creoles. Every one of them was convinced she could bring him to the altar in spite of his vow; in reality everyone who struck his fancy surrendered without a ring. What other distraction was there in this little community of 10,000 white people? When men in shirt sleeves came spitting along the crooked, ill-paved streets,

or argued in the cafés, the returned dandy could not but think with homesickness of the brilliant shops of the Palais Royal.

Part of his time he spent with his brother in the management of the family estates, a day's ride from the town. The young man who had thrown his money about him in Paris was most economical at home, and once when his right of passage was protested by the tenant of his indigo plantation, he wrote in this tone: "The incredible patience with which I treated your ruffianly letter has encouraged you to insult me further." For the rest, he tried to introduce new methods of agriculture on his estates, to follow Humboldt's advice, to drain his indigo plantations by means of canals, all in the amateur fashion a princely landowner can afford.

He was on good terms with the Spanish authorities. If the Governor gave a ball, Bolivar was there, being one of the few Creoles to be admitted to court circles. On one occasion, however, he rose at the table which represented the authority of the King and startled all present by toasting the independence of America. The Governor then requested him to remain a few days on his estates. It was a politely worded command.

The incident, and the sudden whim which made him betray them in the wrong place, shows the direction which Bolivar's secret thoughts were taking; on the other hand, the mildness of the so-called punishment is a proof of the respect he enjoyed as a man of rank and reputation and a loyal citizen. The Governor, with his spies everywhere, knew that Bolivar and his friends were theorizing about the liberation of the country. For when, after a dinner in true Parisian style on Bolivar's estate, the literary-minded Bello recited passages from Corneille and Tacitus which were open to an interpretation bearing on current events, everyone present knew that the same humanist earned his living as a secretary in the Spanish government.

The Governor, however, may not have learned that, late at night, when the slaves had been dismissed, the same circle of intellectuals would enjoy themselves at the expense of Spanish

society there and in Madrid, that Ribas, a young journalist, would quote the wicked Voltaire, while Montillo, a superior officer, although a Creole, or the Marqués del Toro would call upon their host for some of his Castilian adventures. As they sat there, working each other up, monarchist Ayalas or Roscios, heirs to wealth whose fathers had always been loyal, their host would make them tell and retell him all the details of Miranda's coup and all the reasons for its failure. And so each egged the other on to defiance against those in power.

All the same, one day the Governor dispatched his son to Bolivar's country house with a polite warning; to his mind there were too many visitors to that house.

And what of Europe?

Napoleon's star was nearing its zenith; he had subjugated Prussia, expelled the King of Naples, deposed the Pope, and driven the Braganzas out of Lisbon. He was just approaching Spain. Bolivar's feelings were tossed in wild confusion between hope and fear. An enemy of the Spanish power, Napoleon could not but inspire every American with hope; his tyranny, his oppression of freedom, aroused Bolivar's dread, his genius, his envy. Napoleon's first efforts in those parts of the world had come to grief; part of his army had perished in the islands owing to fever and bad luck, his envoy to La Plata had failed. But now, when he had perhaps already set his invincible foot in Spain, what could not be expected from him? As King of Spain, would his attitude to the colonies be any less overbearing than it was in Europe? Had his Frenchmen really any more rights of self-determination than the oppressed peoples of America? Once more, Bolivar, in his mind's eye, saw the Emperor as he pressed the crown on his own head. Just because he had not seen it in reality, the scene was indelibly imprinted on his mind.

One day in July, 1808, the Governor sent for the learned Bello; a packet of English papers had just come in from Trinidad; he could not read them. Bello left them lying for two more days, then opened the packet and read that he, the Governor, and all the rest were no longer officials and subjects of King Charles.

For, three months before, Crown Prince Ferdinand had deposed his father, then Napoleon had deposed both. The Queen and her minister-lover had fled, Joseph Bonaparte was King of Spain and India. After a hurried conference with the Governor, Bello and he decided to regard it all as a hoax and, of course, keep it secret from the people.

A few days later, however, a vessel landed at La Guaira, the tri-color showing its country of origin; two French officers rode up to the town and solemnly announced to the Governor, Bello interpreting, that America belonged no longer to the Bourbon dynasty but to the Bonaparte dynasty. The Governor collapsed, then struggled to gain a few hours' time. Meanwhile it was an easy matter for him to announce the news to the people, putting his own interpretation on it, for he knew that they were, in their heart of hearts, loyal. Soon the market place and the whole town were ringing with the shout: "Down with the tyrant, long live King Ferdinand." Not that they knew King Ferdinand, but as he had been Crown Prince, they loved him without further ado. Images, flags, a great procession to the Cathedral—everything was for King Ferdinand and against King Joseph. Sudden departure was in store for the mortified Frenchmen who just managed to reach their ship in time.

An English ship, which shortly after demonstrated against the Bonapartes, brought fresh news: in all the as yet unoccupied parts of Spain, juntas had been formed against Napoleon and for England, but even then, no junta was formed at Caracas, for all the liberals in the town, or nearly all, were loyal and, even now, their sole aim was a more liberal constitution and by no means a republic. The whole of America became suddenly intoxicated with its own feelings for the Spanish dynasty. The liberal city councils in the Argentine and Montevideo, which, till then, had been more or less openly disaffected, became completely loyal on promise of certain liberties, and the wisest behaved as if they were. Everywhere Masses were said for Our Catholic King, millions of money were collected and sent to Seville, women sacrificed their jewelry, everybody wore the Spanish rosette on the

red ribbon bearing the words: "I will conquer or die for King Ferdinand." Only a few cities, more especially in Chile and Mexico, had Napoleonic leanings. Even in Caracas, resolute men were well aware of the moment. Imploring letters arrived from Miranda in London: since France and England were squabbling and there was no government in Spain, they should make haste to form sovereign juntas everywhere and send their proceedings to him in London. "But," Miranda concluded his exhortation, "no foolhardiness, which might complicate everything. Unity! Disunion and strife would mean the end of our schemes."

Bolivar read the letters, listened to the reports, and was one of the first to grasp the implications of the great moment. And as generally happens with men who have held themselves in check too long, he suddenly became the most radical of all. When the friends and pioneers of revolution openly met at his house to discuss a petition to the Governor still in office for permission to form a junta of their own, Bolivar seems at first to have refused to admit any motion in favor of the Spanish crown. He did not sign the provisional statement "till King Ferdinand again ascends the throne." When the petitioners were later arrested and exiled to various parts of the country, the brothers Bolivar remained unmolested, since their names did not appear on the document; the Governor imprisoned the lukewarm and left the really dangerous at liberty. Yet on Bolivar's part it was no ruse, but the action of an unconditional radical.

In contrast to most of his friends, he refused to recognize any order issued from the still-independent parts of Spain. The descendant of vigorous colonists, Bolivar could not endure the insolence of the rich sugar merchants and cocoa barons who were even now lording it over the Spanish junta and trying to curtail the trade privileges of the colonies—they who had never done anything! If they declared the colonies to be part of the monarchy, why did they suddenly refuse them permission to form their own juntas? And if the colonies were to be allowed to send deputies to the Spanish junta, why were they restricted to one man per million Americans, while in Spain there was one per

fifty thousand Spaniards? Bolivar, who till then had made no public demands for his country, now wanted everything, demanded complete freedom, and was the less disposed to accept a beloved King Ferdinand since he had, as a boy, thrown a shuttlecock at that same monarch's head. Soon, however, the news arrived of Napoleon's complete victory and the dissolution of the last Spanish junta. Napoleon, it was said, was fitting out a huge army which was first to take Jamaica from the English and then the east coast of America from the Spaniards. He was determined to beat England on the other side of the Atlantic. England, therefore, now seemed inclined, in exchange for far-reaching trade guarantees, to give the coastal towns the help for which Miranda had been appealing in vain for twenty years.

The less educated sections of the people knew nothing about all this for certain, and even the great events only became known to them later. The masses were kept in a state of apathy even by many liberal leaders. For since the traditional *cabildos*, a kind of communal council, were formed only of aristocrats, lawyers, or local notables, to the exclusion of any colored representatives, it was easy for them to hoodwink the masses into believing that King Ferdinand was lying in prison at Napoleon's command; as soon as he returned to power, he would certainly grant rights and liberties to the colonies. The few who were fully informed did not betray the fact that King Ferdinand was leading a gay life on his revenues, was congratulating Napoleon on his victories, and asking for the Grand Cordon of the new Spanish order founded by King Joseph.

What hampered the whole movement from the very outset, however, was the conservatism of the colored population, who, like all slaves and semislaves, preferred their old masters as safeguards of their security to the insecurity of freedom. While in North America freedom had been demanded with passion, and hence quickly won, by a majority of white settlers, here in South America the millions of colored men hung like a dead weight on the small white minority and dragged them down again and again into the apathy of the past. What could stir an Indio, bap-

tized by some Capuchin in the jungles of the Orinoco, to ride to the coast and fight for unknown rights of man? What could move the *pardos*, the herdsmen of the prairies, to revolt against a government which had made their cousins sergeants and, if they had acquired or stolen enough livestock and could pay a few thousand reales, would even confer on them the title of Don?

Other tribes, in particular the mounted ones known in those parts as *llaneros*, living a nomadic life in the hot regions, were too accustomed to fighting among themselves not to be ready to follow the giver of a coat with fine buttons and a new lance. It was they who actually decided the issue of later battles. But at this time, when they came into the towns, they were ill-received by their renegade brothers. The crowd of mulattoes, zambos, and other grades of Indian and Negro half-castes, the pure Negro slaves jostling their way through the streets of those towns, were seldom inclined to win by effort a great and brilliant liberty, namely a vote, which meant nothing to them, since they were well able to make good use of the obscurity in which they lived.

Thus the men who aimed to turn the anarchy in the mother country into a revolution in South America were very few in number. If it had not been for the women, America would never have been liberated, for not a few of the conspiracies, clubs, and circles which were founded throughout South America in these years came into being under pressure from a few impassioned and heroic women. They were the first to run rioting through the streets, wearing revolutionary scarfs and singing revolutionary songs; later they followed their lovers and husbands into battle, as secure on horseback as on foot, with a child at the breast or in soldier's trousers, as we can see them on old pictures.

Bolivar, spending his life among women, may have received fresh impetus from their suggestions, while later, as a Don Juan, he drew them more and more passionately into the struggle. However much his unfettered youth and great wealth had accustomed him to yield to his impulses, as a young philosopher and disciple of Rousseau he could not but ask himself what he should do and leave undone in such a situation. Since he was by

nature averse to violence in any form—he had to be taught later by his own history the necessity of force—he tried to act as a social moralist and was hence opposed to slavery and all pride of race. In his eyes, the land did not belong to the Spaniards, but it did not belong to the Creoles either; he held that, strictly speaking, all the white men ought to return to Europe, indeed that, according to Rousseau, the natives had every right to murder him as an interloper. In order to remain master in his own country, he turned back to the classical world, to Euripides, who acknowledged the right of the Greeks to rule over the barbarians. Up to that point, as a born aristocrat with a good training in philosophy, he decided for the primacy of culture.

At the same time, however, he resolved to refrain from all aristocratic methods, to be as wise and as temperate as Solon, should matters ever depend on him. This conflict of principles was to throw his life into confusion sooner than he thought.

IV

THE very appearance of the new Captain-General whom the Spanish Junta sent over in 1809 was enough to bring the discord to light. Emparan, a Spanish general and aristocrat, was familiar with, and well-disposed to, Bolivar's circle from his former period of office in one of the provinces. The Junta had sent over with him, as commander of the militia, one Colonel del Toro, who was related to Bolivar through his wife; all three had been friends in Madrid. But as the young nobles of Caracas were aiming at liberty for their country, and the government only at liberty for itself, the conflict soon came to a head. When the Governor gave a kind of trial banquet, to which he invited his former, now liberal, friends, there was a great deal of politeness and irony on both sides, at the end of which Bolivar proposed an ambiguous toast to the freedom of the new world. Soon afterwards, Emparan rejected all petitions for the summoning of a local junta, and put a number of the leaders in prison.

That was in March, 1810. The liberal leaders were meeting at

Bolivar's country house, a conspiracy was planned, a famous preacher joined them, and arms were collected, the object being to attack the Governor by surprise on the night of the first of April and then summon the first junta. The plot was betrayed. The Governor had the ringleaders imprisoned and ordered Bolivar and some of his friends to remain on their estates outside of the town. A few days later they showed themselves in the streets, attracting as little attention as possible.

Again news from Europe brought this crisis to an end. Two Spanish officers, well known to Bolivar and his friends, brought the news with them; Andalusia, and with it Cadiz, the last stronghold, had fallen into the hands of the French, the Spanish Junta had been dissolved, so that America was either in Napoleon's possession or free. Both town and country soon heard the great news. Most of the leaders, in all about a hundred men, spent the night in conference, for the next day was Holy Thursday, the most solemn festival of the year.

The day dawned—processions, crowds, a meeting of the City Council, all in the place where the Governor had his residence. He was compelled to attend the council meeting, where he was called upon to summon a junta and gave the reply: "After Mass." With his troops and bodyguard, the Governor could arrest them all, for the men, though not the officers, were still obeying his orders. The mob yelled, he had to turn round and go, not to the Cathedral, but back to his residence. In the City Hall there were provocative speeches. "The Spanish government has come to an end! No half measures! Our government should consist only of Americans! Our first duty is to depose the Governor!" By noon the forced abdication had taken place, the Governor was conducted to the harbor by a bodyguard and allowed to embark for Spain on a safe ship.

"The Junta for the safeguarding of the rights of Ferdinand VII" was the title of the first assembly to declare itself constituted in America, five weeks before Buenos Aires and several months before the other Spanish colonies, with the exception of Peru, followed suit. The moment the Spanish dominion of three

centuries was suspended, it was disposed of with the utmost ease and without bloodshed. That was why the first oath taken by the South American revolutionaries was thus paradoxically worded: "I swear to the sovereign people to shed my blood to the last drop for our Holy Catholic religion, for our beloved King, Don Ferdinand VII, and for the freedom of the fatherland." The Junta was addressed as "Highness," or even "Majesty," the deputies decreed themselves costly uniforms. Everything that happened, in its suddenness and lack of preparation, as well as the resistance which soon made itself felt in the country, showed that no fetters had been burst asunder, but that a rusty chain had snapped of itself, and that it would take a long time for those from whom it fell to learn to do without it.

Bolivar was not in town that day, so that he cannot have been present at the nocturnal conference. Possibly his former friendship with the Governor made him wish to have no hand in deposing him. The next night, he rode into town from his estate, accompanied by Bello, who had gone to fetch him. To obtain admission to the Junta, he produced his papers as a thirteen-year-old militiaman; they abounded in good reports of the little ensign. The only blank stood beside the entry: "Active Service." Further down, his whole history had been added in a single word—"Widower." Soon afterwards, the Junta gave him the rank of colonel, as one of the intellectual pioneers of the revolution. As he entered, seeing his friends laughing at the crowds who had forced their way in, he reproved them and welcomed this first sign of democracy.

He was not, however, appointed one of the four secretaries of state whom the young republic chose from Bolivar's circle. We do not know whether he refused, or whether the appointment was not offered. What we do know is that he neither took part in the rising nor helped to take over the government. What was offered to him, and what he gladly accepted, was an office for which he seemed in every way born. He was made the most important diplomatic representative of the new republic. He was sent as ambassador to London.

V

IN those years, the whole of England's foreign policy was determined by her conflict with Napoleon. In this game, she could only handle Spain as one pawn, the Spanish colonies as another. The collapse of Spain as the strongest colonial power would have been regarded by England as a happy chance if only Napoleon had not been the victor. But even as things were, the breakdown of her greatest imperial rival could not be checked, and if we assume that Spain would not have lost her colonies under the Bourbons, England owes her enemy Napoleon the greatest relief she experienced in the nineteenth century and indeed her rise to first place in world power. Hence, during the interregnum under King Joseph Bonaparte, England could only proceed with caution, drawing for the moment such advantages from the situation as did not bind her for the future.

It is true that England, in 1809, had promised help to the deposed King Ferdinand, but at the same time she was trying to frighten the Spaniards with the revolutionaries of Caracas and Buenos Aires. Under the Napoleonic blockade, she had to get goods where she could, which meant increasing her trade with South America. If the latter should separate from Spain, England would lose natural friends, namely the vigorously active sons of the distressed king she had supported. The Spaniards bore a grudge against those sons for their desire for independence, and were endeavoring to prevent England from going to their help. But it was easy for England to point to the loyalty of the colonies toward King Ferdinand, and to promise the revolutionaries troops and ships from the Antilles, which belonged to her. This promise by England, who, in spite of her power, given the dubious situation she was then in, had to reckon with the powerless and untried republics of South America, was a great stand-by for young states not yet quite strong enough to stand on their own feet and neither able to present a united front to the outside world nor to set up any authority at home.

Thus any concessions an envoy could obtain from England, and whether the man chosen could win the confidence of the English government, were matters of prime importance. The man who formally represented the little state of Venezuela was actually the first ambassador sent by South America, which had till then had no representative in Europe. Actually he represented not one state, but fifteen million men on the point of liberation. What was in Bolivar's favor in the part he had to play was his knowledge of several countries and their languages, his social experience, and last but not least his wealth, for he undertook the journey at his own expense. It would have ill-suited his lordly nature to account for every pound he spent, for he was accustomed to a style of life which verged on extravagance. Against him was his radical program, his challenging, unrestrained manner, which gave no promise that he would be content with anything less than all he demanded. At twenty-seven, he had never had to obey. Supported outwardly by his inherited millions and inwardly by an unbounded confidence in himself, disinclined to brook any authority over him, he would have been useless as a diplomat had not his long youth in the great world imparted to him that polish in which the great world loves to see its own reflection, without remarking that its shine is metallic.

For those who had sent him he had no shadow of respect. What could have possessed Roscio, the Minister, to furnish Bolivar, formally his inferior, with a set of questions and answers as if they were back at school? Again, in his instructions, he found the answer to the question: "How do the people of Caracas feel toward Madrid?" An attitude of moderation and dignity was also prescribed if he should meet the Spanish Ambassador.

Bolivar could, of course, pursue a more radical line of action since his real aims were not set forth in his letters. The two friends he took with him, Bello the poet and young Lopez Mendez, who themselves accompanied him as official envoys, were, he knew, completely devoted to him; they were practically the only friends to remain faithful to him all his life. He may possibly have confided to them even on the voyage that he in-

tended to go far beyond his instructions; that what he wanted was not beloved King Ferdinand, but a republic in every sense of the term, everybody at home knew.

Thus Bolivar's first political action took a dramatic turn, as befits genius. Instead of merely handing over his credentials and presenting his friends to the Foreign Secretary in London, Bolivar left his instructions behind him by mistake and proceeded to harangue the minister with true Spanish eloquence, demanding complete independence for his country and thus abandoning beloved King Ferdinand, England's protégé. He spoke with fiery hatred of Spanish slavery.

The minister, who was in any case renowned for his hauteur, seized the occasion to shield his double game and at the same time to parade his experienced statesmanship in the eyes of the tyro. He replied that he could not listen patiently to such talk; it was utterly at variance with the opening sentences of the letter just handed to him. He read aloud: "In the name of Don Ferdinand VII, King of Spain and India, the Supreme Junta has accredited Chevalier Simon Bolivar with His Britannic Majesty's Government for the safeguarding of the rights of Venezuela." He then added politely that he would advise Bolivar and his government to maintain perfect loyalty toward the King. Bolivar would be good enough to define his wishes on that basis. The government would only grant him an official reception in the presence of the Spanish Ambassador.

Thus Bolivar's career began with a *faux pas* and a snub. Similar incidents can be observed at the first appearance of other great men, who present themselves as they are, without constraint and against all the rules, and hence come into immediate collision with the society they encounter. At the next meeting, Bolivar's manner had already gained urbanity, and in his written proposal he merely asked for help against France, the common enemy of Spain and England, promising England, however, to be treated as the most favored nation if she would deliver arms from the Antilles and buy goods. In his answer, the Foreign Secretary promised protection against France, should it be necessary, but

advised a reconciliation with the Spanish government: all the same, he placed a man-of-war at the disposal of Bolivar's government, and promised friendly treatment from the Antilles. This consumptive answer put an end to the twenty-five years of attempts to win England's help which had been going on since the time of the earliest revolutionaries.

Bolivar's success in society was the more dazzling by contrast. One of the King's sons introduced him into the highest circles in London. It was summer; he had the manners of a lord and was dressed like a Parisian; the olive-brown oval of his face and his glowing eyes delighted the ladies, and to crown it all, he was a marvelous fencer and horseman. Thus the interesting foreigner, who was soon called the South American Ambassador by everybody, attracted all London's curiosity and not a little of its friendship. In Hyde Park, at the races, or at fashionable garden parties, he and his friends were much in evidence, and when he appeared in a box at the opera, it was reported in the papers. He sat for Gill, Reynolds' best-known pupil and a fashionable portrait painter, at his studio in Chandler Street, where gilded youths sat drinking their morning port and watching the boxing and fencing. He took good care that, in this portrait, a gold medal on a tricolor ribbon, which he must have conferred on himself, should clearly display its motto: "No fatherland without freedom."

The South American Ambassador seems to have enjoyed himself hugely during these weeks, not only in the society of duchesses, but in that of other ladies too, for twenty years later he would regale his listeners with a story about a girl in a certain house who set on him in a fury because "she thought I wanted something else from her."

Not only did the Spanish Ambassador have him jealously watched by spies; the so-called Spanish Régence, the central Junta, worked against him and wrote to London that this self-styled Ambassador had no mandate; unless the Foreign Office refused to recognize him, they would sign no more treaties with England. Bolivar learned that this rump of the Spanish government was threatening to blockade the coasts of its old colonies.

Forthwith he wrote anonymous articles, declaring that England must intervene. At his instigation, an article on Pan-America was published in the leading review, containing an appeal to the King of England.

In the midst of all these amusements and activities for his country, Bolivar, during his stay of barely three months in London, acquired knowledge that was to stand him in good stead all his life. He saw and heard the English constitution at work, and since his poetic and imaginative mind learned more from the living present than from books, the impression remained with him and furnished him with a model for his social ideas. This government whose King and his peers were under constant control by the people, this people whose votes were, in the long run, decisive, yet which admitted the leadership of the ruling class, remolded Bolivar's revolutionary notions, an operation not unnecessary to his aristocratic mind. His three constitutions were to show English influence. Moreover, for the first and only time, he saw modern schools, he came into touch with the Quakers and their silent depths, he made the acquaintance of Wilberforce, the champion of the slaves and the apostle of their liberation, and all this in the surroundings of refinement which suited him far better than those of the Jacobins.

He met the Jacobins too in London, in the person of their most brilliant representative. Miranda had been living in London for some years, had formed wide and well-knit circles, and was a thorn in the flesh of his newly liberated state. Was he not a red radical? Had he not merely done harm by his premature proposals five years before and been obliged to beat a rather ignominious retreat? Bolivar had received express instructions to keep away from Miranda.

He did the opposite and showed himself with Miranda whenever he could. For in Miranda he admired a strong, versatile, and courageous man who owed nothing to anybody and who was at the same time the only one of Bolivar's compatriots to know the world better than himself. Bolivar, the heir to wealth, revered in Miranda the self-made man, the patrician's son, to whom in-

security was unknown, the adventurer, the romanticist, the friend of kings and lover of crowned women, the worshiper of glory, the general whose fame had spread over two continents. Yet a little envy there must have been, and we may wonder whether he could quite suppress it. Discovering in Miranda experience and qualities he himself lacked, he could restore his self-esteem with the realization of qualities he possessed which were lacking in the other. But that realization was a private matter; it was not patent to the eyes of the world. He was impatient to display to his contemporaries the gifts he felt he had, that difference and superiority of which he had spoken years before to his mistress Fanny. The meeting with Miranda could not but deeply disquiet the restless heart of this unsatisfied young man.

The more so since, for the first time in his life, he met at Miranda's lodgings in Piccadilly a group of men who had been fighting for the liberation for years, while it had fallen into Bolivar's hands without effort on his part. He met there neither dukes nor lords, but highly independent men, men of active and astute mind, who knew political prisons from the inside, who carried forged passports and other illegitimate papers, men utterly impervious to Bolivar's money and title, to his elegance and horsemanship, who, at their first meeting, looked at him with narrowed eyes and a frown, wondering if the young buck were to be trusted.

That Miranda was hated by the Spanish Embassy in London and pursued by the Spanish secret police only made him more interesting in Bolivar's eyes. There were thirty thousand dollars on his dangerous head, but Miranda would exclaim with a laugh: "Not enough to pay my debts." And while the officials of Spain were demanding Miranda's arrest by the English Foreign Office, the Foreign Secretary was receiving his friends in secret and letting the secret leak out to frighten the Spaniards. He knew more about Bolivar's instructions than the latter liked, and was calculating the advantages that would accrue to England from a three-card game.

Bolivar's association with Miranda, which had, within a few

weeks, become very close, and was destined to become a decisive factor in the fate of both, was actually an impossibility for the Venezuelan envoy, for it was stated in his instructions: "Miranda, the former French general, must be left out of account in any action against King Ferdinand: our envoys must bear this constantly in mind should they meet him, without, however, completely distrusting the intentions of their compatriot." Thus Bolivar was forced into playing a double part, not unlike that of the English Foreign Secretary.

Miranda himself, however, was also committed in two directions. As the oldest and best-known champion of American freedom, he now passionately desired to return home in order to reap the fruits of twenty-five years' labor; on the other hand, he was, to a certain extent, pledged to the English, who were protecting him from Spanish persecution.

Nobody, however, summoned him home; thus everything depended on Bolivar's personal attitude. The latter, fascinated by his compatriot's genius, took it upon himself to force him onto an apathetic country and a lukewarm government. Material reasons reinforced the personal, for in Miranda he saw not only the experienced general his country needed for its fight with Spain, but also the most powerful protagonist of his own radical plan of action, which aimed at complete independence and a genuine republic and opposed all those at home who wished to concede any rights whatever to the Spanish Junta. Miranda was indeed the man they needed, the man of great historical vision who stirred Bolivar's imagination, the man who spoke to him of a great new empire comprising all the old colonies, with a descendant of the Incas at its head and with Roman aediles and quaestors. Bolivar on his own responsibility made up his mind to take Miranda back home.

All this could not fail to awaken the elder's liking for the younger man. Miranda actually did everything in his power to sway Bolivar to the cause of South American liberation. He pledged the younger man to himself for the task before them by an oath which removed Bolivar's vow on the sacred hill in Rome

from the sphere of pure dramatics into the world of reality. Both decided not to return home together, but to follow hard on each other's heels.

In spite of this active co-operation, however, Miranda's friendship for Bolivar does not seem to have gone very deep. Given his great past, how could he avoid a certain skepticism of a young nobleman and millionaire who, as official envoy, confronted him with a new and utterly untried government which had, into the bargain, warned that envoy against himself? Tension could hardly fail to arise between their two so different natures, seeing that chance had given the younger what the elder had spent twenty-five years fighting for at the risk of his life, in exile and in prison. A situation of the kind can only be mastered by supreme toleration of mind, and even though both stood the test in London, so rare a personal detachment could not be expected to last forever.

When Bolivar embarked, waving good-by to a few hundred people who had come to see him off, the English flag fluttered over his head, for it was only under its protection that he could venture to get through the blockade of Venezuela actually being carried out by the Spanish Régence. He left his collaborators, Lopez Mendez and Bello, behind him at Miranda's lodgings as provisional secretaries, a further symbol of their common activity. Miranda followed him a fortnight later, soon enough, that is, not to be detained by counterorders from the government. All he brought with him was a few verbal assurances from the English government that it would support his country from the Antilles. Neither could foresee the tragic development to which their swiftly following ships were bearing them.

VI

ON his return home, the ambassador was met with critical coolness. What he should have brought, namely arms, money, and treaties from England, he did not bring, and the man whose arrival he announced was precisely what he should not have brought. In any case, the home-comer's radical plan of action

must have looked doubly paradoxical to his fellow countrymen at a moment when the country was intimidated by the Spanish blockade and had just been shaken to its foundations by a great defeat.

Immediately after the rising on Holy Thursday, which became known in Cadiz four weeks later—it was a fairly quick voyage in good weather conditions, and even today the liners take half that time—the Spaniards had dispatched a “Royal Commission,” during Bolivar’s absence, and which, staying in Puerto Rico, worked against the patriots. At the same time a number of provinces and separate towns had issued proclamations against “the infamies at Caracas,” while the Governor had also set the counter-revolution going on the islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico.

In Caracas itself, the enthusiasm had soon died down. The quiet citizens, who had done no more than just not keep out of the affair on Maundy Thursday, were now accusing the leaders of having lost, through their act of violence, the new schools and privileges planned by the government at Cadiz. Everybody was jeering at the new universal suffrage, which had been given even to wild Indians who could not so much as write and had no desire for freedom. In view of such resistance, it was little wonder that the small army of four thousand men, some armed only with pikes, was annihilated by the Spaniards, more especially as it was commanded by a man of no experience whatever, namely Colonel del Toro, a friend of Bolivar’s, who rode through the prairies with a musical-comedy bodyguard, followed by a train of huge trunks. Bolivar landed immediately after the defeat.

He was met by the news of his brother’s death. Returning from Washington, to which he had been sent as ambassador, his sailing ship loaded not with the arms he should have brought but with machines, he had gone down with the whole cargo. Thus Bolivar, who now returned to America never to leave it again, was doubly alone; at twenty-seven he had lost his father and mother, his wife and brother; the letters he later exchanged with his sisters are in no way intimate. But the fact that he henceforth stood alone,

without family ties, merely lent new strength to his determination to satisfy his longing for great deeds.

The state did nothing to encourage him. On the contrary, his first report to his superiors, announcing the early arrival of Miranda, met with hostility and reproof. After all, the City Council, a kind of precursor of the Junta, had confirmed Miranda's death sentence four years before. Bolivar replied that the country clearly needed an experienced general. That the government understood and, at Bolivar's urgent instigation, posted proclamations that the great hero of freedom, who had already reached Curaçao, was about to land, to become the true savior of the country. A few days later, Bolivar withdrew resentfully to his country house, there, as O'Leary, his later adjutant, writes, to hide his bitterness and rebellion. For although he had given proof of his superior powers and energy which were destined to be disastrous to the Spanish government, his fellow countrymen feared the recklessness of his character and, as he said himself, "regarded his plans as the fictions of a brain in delirium."

So there he was, with time enough on his hands to reflect on English democracy and American freedom. In these three months, his swiftly moving mind had learned more than in three years in Paris. And yet what he had brought back with him and what he advised seemed unwelcome to his superiors and friends. What was the inward reason for it? They were mere bourgeois, without spirit and mostly without culture, trembling before one empire because they had not seen its hollowness with their own eyes, demanding everything from another because they did not know its complications and its commitments. What they had set up in the meantime was nothing but a copy of the young United States of the North. They seemed unable to realize that the federative system could not simply be transplanted to the South. Where they should have worked as practical politicians, they thought as doctrinaires; where they should have pursued an ideal aim, they acted like greengrocers. It might be that the new world was not yet ready for the ideals of the old. When Bolivar,

homeward-bound, had presented his two colored servants with their freedom, it seemed hardly to stir them out of their apathy.

Miranda's arrival in January, 1811, aroused Bolivar, still brooding in solitude, from his pessimism. The citizens, and most members of the government, watched suspiciously as the English brig landed, for the return of the old Jacobin meant for them not salvation, but simply war with Spain and hence, most likely, their annihilation. Above all, the churchmen pulled wry faces when obliged to give a ceremonial welcome to the excommunicated Freemason. All the same, there was a solemn reception with artillery salutes in the harbor, and delegates in fancy uniforms went on board to greet the heroic son of the fatherland.

Miranda, now more than fifty, stood massively in the prow of the ship. But what was he wearing?—his old uniform of 1793, with appliqué gold leaves, a stiff hat on his repowdered hair, and a single gold earring; he wore a curved saber, gold spurs on his high boots. In this fashion he approached his friend Bolivar on landing and embraced a slim youth, elegantly dressed in blue and gray, who held his fine hat in his hand and smiled.

This time it was Miranda who was disappointed. At the very first banquet Bolivar gave for him at his home, at the first replies to his first questions, the General realized that on what all the rest depended, namely an army, was completely lacking. He found nothing but a motley crowd of defeated troops, many without arms and without boots, and all apparently without training or discipline. He had seen the armies of Frederick the Great and Napoleon, and just as he wished to imbue the new order of things here at home with the spirit of Jacobinism, he would also be satisfied with nothing but the style of the great armies of Europe for his own. But here in his home city men seemed ignorant of such things. What about the officers?

The first he saw was Bolivar. When Bolivar presented himself as a colonel, Miranda regarded the young man with irony and chaffed him for having attained his elevated rank without knowledge or experience, while he had won his in battle at the risk of his life. Bolivar was hurt. Was this his reward for having brought

the old man back? However, he replied that he was ready to serve in the ranks, and according to some authorities actually did so for a time. Soon, however, they clashed more violently.

Miranda, who set to work a little later to drill his troops in the style of the new Europe, had either forgotten, or was no longer ready to take account of, the mentality, the special faculties, and the customs of his people. He hounded them from drill to drill, would take a light breakfast standing on the parade ground, allowed rest or recreation to nobody, and alienated the men by foreign forms and commands. One day, during a great military display, he saw a rider performing feats of horsemanship in the distance, while the men applauded him as if they were in a circus. Outraged by this breach of discipline, he sent for the horseman; it was Bolivar. He reprimanded him sharply for his theatrical interlude. Bolivar made no reply. He was offended. As a horseman, he knew the passion of the centaurs of the plains, who had been turned into cavalrymen, and was able to command respect by his feats, for they showed him to be not only their equal, but their better. Miranda, who had become a son of Europe, could not realize what he was after and regarded the whole as a piece of folly.

The clash was symbolic. The two men, who regarded each other as a mutual political necessity and had become friends only on that basis, were estranged in the domain of war, which the one commanded completely, the other not at all, but which the expert seemed to be preparing in a way alien to the country, while the amateur instinctively did the right thing.

In politics, however, the two were in full agreement. Both scorned the pitiful Congress of all the juntas in the country, in which Miranda had at first no seat at all, and Bolivar kept silence. Two months before Miranda's arrival, about thirty patricians, churchmen, and officers, with a few leaders of the people, had come together in a monastery, surrounded by images of piety and faced with disused altars, and founded with an oath on Holy Scripture, their "Union for the Maintenance of the Power of the American Confederation of Venezuela and its Overlord,

Don Ferdinand VII." The separate juntas had addressed each other as "Highness," discussed in long debates the form of their own honors, and sedulously avoided the words "people" and "republic."

Miranda, who wished for a Committee of Public Welfare on the classical model, was obliged to withdraw, with the radicals, to a "Patristic Society," whose nocturnal sittings he presided over in Dantesque style, and where the only celebration of the first anniversary of the first rising was ventured. In these days Bolivar made a fiery speech, the following passage of which has been preserved:

"The Congress is still debating what it should long since have decided. What are the intentions of Spain, it asks. What does it matter to us whether she means to keep her slaves or sell them to Bonaparte? For our part, we mean to be free. Plans of such a magnitude, it says, require mature consideration. Were three centuries not enough? We respect the Congress, but it must listen to what we have to say. Let us fearlessly lay the foundations of South America's independence. To hesitate longer means to lose the great game."

The allusion to the three centuries in this, the first example of Bolivar's oratory to have been handed down to us, caused such excitement in the club that the Congress was startled and began to move. Miranda's election to the Congress, at last accomplished, and a betrayal of military plans to Spain soon brought feeling to such a pitch that a deputy actually dared to raise his voice against the King appointed by the grace of God, and the ever-ready mob besieging the monastery applauded him. Three months after its formation, the Congress was summoned to a great meeting in a church where, in the torrid heat of July, one speaker after another demanded independence for South America. When Miranda announced a great victory by Massena over the Spaniards, and pointed out how soon the united French and Spanish forces would appear on the American coast, forty-one deputies resolved to sign the Act of Venezuelan Independence on July 5, 1811. The yellow, blue, and red colors chosen by

Miranda were given national status and have retained it till today. On the great market place outside, where one of the first champions of freedom had been hanged, his sons now hoisted the flag of freedom, and the troops took the oath to the national assembly.

Yet a people in such a state of immaturity could not be turned into a modern republic at one stroke, as the French had been. Concessions were imperative. Thus these soldiers of freedom, taking the oath in Rousseauesque style, had also to propitiate the priests by swearing to "defend the mystery of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary." Fear, or toleration, went so far that no effort was made to compel a radically minded state to join forces with them. If they abolished the aristocracy, noble Creoles who lacked Bolivar's spirit were offended, and the more so when the race barriers were removed. Instead of a universal suffrage, a franchise with an income qualification was introduced, and the word republic was suppressed as delicately as if it had been obscene.

From this development of things, Bolivar learned important lessons for the future. He saw for the first time that Rousseau and Montesquieu, as presented to him by his teacher, could not be turned from theory into practice without further ado, that Caracas was not Paris, that a million herdsmen, prairie riders, and livestock breeders, most of them illiterate, could not be equated with the French peasantry, nor the slaves and workmen of a little colonial city with the proletariat on the Seine. In a country blockaded from without and in a state of anarchy within, he began to realize the necessity of setting limits to general toleration, and of compelling the irresolute to recognize a new constitution under threat of rifle or gunfire. In short, he began to foresee the limitations of democracy in America; indeed, to put it in general terms, the conflict between reality and the ideal.

While the people had no real share in the creation of the republic, neither had the only two men who knew its models from actual travels in France and the United States. Those who copied

the Constitution of Philadelphia almost word for word, on the basis of the *Contrat social* and the *Esprit des lois*, were the doctrinaires of the clubs, a handful of lawyers. Bolivar and Miranda, with a few friends, were the only men to grasp the problem from the outset. They sought in vain to centralize what afterwards fell apart into a federation of seven states. They pointed in vain to the utter inequality of the races in the country, the lowest of which had kissed the feet of the Creoles and bowed to the dust before the priests, and were now to be granted liberties as if their fathers had sung the *Marseillaise*.

Opposition of this kind cost Miranda as many enemies in the Congress as his perpetual jeering at the youth and inexperience of the troops cost him in the army. The Congress only gave him the supreme command under the fear of possibly permanent victories by the Spaniards, who were advancing to the east on the Orinoco, and to the north on the Valencian coast; but even then, neither the whole country nor the whole exiguous army obeyed him. When he had taken Valencia, which had not committed itself, by hard fighting against the Spaniards which he commanded in person, he was very nearly impeached by his enemies in the Congress. Against his will, whole detachments were disbanded, for the party of General del Toro, Bolivar's kinsman, who had suffered the previous defeat, rose against them.

At that time, in 1811, the war of liberation had actually begun to turn into a war between Americans, for no party was prepared to see the other taking the lead in the vacuum, and all were more disposed to admit the Spaniards than to see their fellow citizens in power. This civil war lasted for thirteen years and cast a shadow over Bolivar's life and work.

A shadow, however, lay over the very beginning of his career, cast by his differences with the friend and hero whom he had himself brought in to save the country. Miranda took over the supreme command only on condition that Bolivar should not be at his side; Bolivar, for his part, demanded the right to fight. The difference was settled in the only possible, namely the heroic, way. In the fight for Valencia, Bolivar won the spurs he had

worn from childhood by brilliantly standing the test in a fight around a monastery, in which he clearly played a decisive part, and was one of the few to survive. The dandy horseman had become a serious fighting officer; he had ridden out of his life of refinement and security straight into the face of death. We cannot tell at such a moment whether he was fighting for an idea or for glory. One thing is certain—he won Miranda's approval. For the first time, Miranda saw the young Marqués, whose rank of colonel had moved him to laughter, fighting in person, and he restored him his rank.

That was Bolivar's baptism as Miranda's officer.

VII

His second baptism as a fighter was given by nature. On the second anniversary of that first, almost silent, revolution, which fell on Holy Thursday, 1812, in the fairest weather, a sudden earthquake spread over half Venezuela. Ten thousand people, a quarter of the population of the capital, were engulfed, with their dwellings, within a few minutes. The first story of Bolivar's ancestral mansion collapsed. He did not hesitate a moment, gave not so much as a look at his property, but hurried through the town with a few friends, helping, fighting against despair and horror, and organizing relief funds, himself taking the lead. Standing in the great market square among the screaming people, he saw a monk who had climbed on to the pedestal of a statue and was crying: "Sodom and Gomorrha! To your knees! The hour of vengeance has come. You have insulted the majesty of our virtuous King. God's arm has fallen on your heads in punishment!" In a moment, Bolivar, grasping the double danger, had drawn his sword, pushed the monk aside, and was crying to the mob: "Nature has joined forces with tyranny! She is trying to stand in our way. Forward! We will force her to obey us!"

. With this magnificent cry, issuing suddenly from a situation of horror, in a tone both titanic and politic, Simon Bolivar enters

history. It shows him at the height of his presence of mind, his courage and defiance; it is at once dramatic and practical, as befits a genius of action.

Within the next few weeks, the effects of the earthquake actually became a deciding factor in the war. The north coast, from which the Spaniards were advancing, happened to be spared, rebellious Valencia remained conquered, and even the Spanish troops in the earthquake zone were able to rescue themselves; on the other hand, the guns, men, and depots of the republicans were buried in heaps. A childish and superstitious people, under the exhortations of fanatical or cunning priests, could not but believe in the intervention of God. Thousands of soldiers deserted to the Spaniards, Valencia fell again into Spanish hands, the Congress and government, which had withdrawn there, returned to the ruins of Caracas, and feeling was as ravaged as the earth's surface.

In this state of chaos, the government decided to submit to a single man; Miranda, as the one general of experience, was appointed dictator and generalissimo of the land and sea forces of Venezuela, a high-sounding title with but scanty means and troops to support it. We may well wonder what he thought of his three or four thousand men in the spring of 1812 when he heard of the army of a quarter of a million which Napoleon was fitting out for the expedition to Russia. He was glad of the further thousand which Bolivar managed to scrape together at the time.

Miranda does not seem to have been fortunate in the establishment of his little army. By giving preference to foreign, and especially to French, officers, he antagonized the native officers, particularly as the wish for visible honors is said to be a main characteristic of this proud people. By giving slaves their freedom if they pledged themselves to ten years' service in the army, he antagonized the rich landowners who were beginning to arm their Negroes against the republic. The very blacks who were said to have been in possession of the rights of man since the day before yesterday now had to kill their own brothers. If he

gave a mestizo a commission, the Creoles were outraged. For the first time, there now appeared the name of a young lieutenant who was to play an important part later; Sucre was nineteen, beautiful as Saint John, of Flemish origin and cast of features—the most lovable figure of the wars of liberation.

With this very mixed little army, which he drilled relentlessly on the model of Frederick the Great's, Miranda set out to retake Valencia, hoping by that to force the whole coast into obedience. To Bolivar he handed over the fort of Puerto Cabello in the west, his most important base for this action. He may have wished to entrust this critical point to one of his best officers; he may, on the other hand, have wished to remove him from the scene of action and thus, in the old Prussian sense, train him by an interesting mission. In any case, Bolivar regarded the mission as a disgrace. The fort was, in point of fact, badly manned and supplied, but had to guard several hundred Spanish royal officers, prisoners of war. As his adjutant tells us, Bolivar left for the fort with "a feeling of resentment and offended dignity." Meanwhile Miranda beat the Spaniards but soon withdrew to the defensive.

On the arid coast, where a few sparse cacti struggled to live, Bolivar, as a kind of prison warder, found time to think about his friend the dictator. He could place implicit confidence in the two officers guarding the citadel, and so lodged in the City Hall when not on duty, passing the summer weeks with books and music, keeping a lookout for pretty girls in the public parks, and probably always coming back to the question of how to get away from this tedious garrison and hurry back to active service.

Suddenly, one afternoon, the sound of gunfire reached him in his room. He rushed out; it came from the citadel. Through his field glass he saw, to his horror, that his officers were commanding the guns, while the Spanish prisoners were moving about freely, some of them manning the guns. It was treachery on the part of his own officers. What was to be done? He considered, rallied the few troops down in the town, and reckoned up what means of defense he had. It was no good: a sweltering July day, very little water, and no ammunition. All the guns were up in the citadel.

In the distance, troops appeared with the Spanish flag; the plot stood revealed. He sent the following report to Miranda at headquarters:

"July 1, 1812. General. An officer, unworthy of the name of Venezuelan, has taken the fort of San Felipe with the help of the prisoners and is bombarding the town like a madman. If Your Excellency does not attack at once, the place is lost. I will hold it with all my strength till you come."

Four days later, Miranda opened the letter in the company of a few friends, realized what it meant, and exclaimed: "Struck in the heart." That very day, the Spanish army advanced on the fort. Bolivar, who had collected a troop of 250 cavalry, sent 200 against the Spaniards. Seven came back. On the sixth day he fled with five officers and three men on a small brig in the direction of La Guaira. They reached Caracas, where he wrote to Miranda:

"General. I have done my duty. If a single man had remained capable of standing by me in a fight with the Spaniards, I would have fought. It is not my fault that they all abandoned me. I wish I had not saved my own life, but had buried it in the ruins of a city which would then have stood as the last symbol of glory and freedom. . . . It is with a kind of shame that I send the enclosed report. It is but a shadow of what really happened. My head and heart are empty. I beg of you to grant me a respite of a few days so that I may put my thoughts in order. Since I have lost the last and best fort in the country, it is no wonder that my peace of mind has gone too. Please do not send for me. I am not guilty, but I am unhappy, and that is enough. With profoundest respect, your passionately devoted servant and friend—Bolivar."

This moving letter which, if only for its signature, is unique in the history of war, conceals more than it says. As an officer, Bolivar was right in feeling innocent, but as a man he felt guilty just because he was no professional officer, and because his commander was his friend and critic. It was intolerable to his native pride not to have stood the test in Miranda's eyes. At the same time, he makes no reproach against his general for not coming to relieve the fort. His mind, all those days, must have been as

full of doubts of Miranda as Miranda's of him. The younger felt himself innocent, overpowered by treachery, yet not rehabilitated in the eyes of his superior officer, who had repeatedly distrusted him; the elder felt cheated of his victory by the loss of the fort which, he assumed, could have been saved from treachery by greater vigilance on the part of his officer.

The situation, however, was still further complicated by the political friendship and the natural jealousy between the two men, and if the Colonel did not wish to see the General, he knew very well why. One look into each other's eyes would have turned their old affection into hate and set each on the other with drawn swords, in the conviction that the other had robbed him of his glory. Nor could any third party intervene as peacemaker. On the other hand, if they did not meet, the inward tension between the two men could not but grow.

The stage seemed set for an inevitable explosion.

VIII

MIRANDA gave himself up for lost. News from New Granada in the west, from the Orinoco in the east, told of the Spanish advance. From the plantations, reports were coming in of risings by slaves and massacres by masters. The enemy held three quarters of the country and was threatening the capital. And now the Spanish general, Monteverde, had fallen heir to all the wealth of war material in the lost fortress! Yet we may ask why Miranda, with his five thousand men, could not carry on the fight against the Spanish army, which, though it was in a better position, was hardly bigger than his own. Why did this famous warrior lay down his arms without a struggle?

He was a disappointed man. After years of passionate efforts, he had at last seen the hour of liberation, at last his suspicious country had, if not called, at least welcomed him and, in the hour of need, made him dictator. At over fifty, he had ended his life as a politician, to begin it as a soldier. Yet all these past months, he had been met with sullenness and apathy and a resistance

impossible to break, since it appeared, not in the form of a powerful rival, but in the shadowy figures of self-seeking adjutants. It was not the enemy, but the civil war, and rather the latent than the open one, which checkmated this undefeated soldier.

And now the only man whose brain he trusted had failed him as a soldier. If he could no longer rely on Bolivar, on whom was he to rely? An officer made an attempt on his life at this time, as he marched into Caracas; he had him imprisoned, but never so much as thought of an exemplary punishment. He merely shut himself up in his house alone. Miranda was a broken man when, twelve days after the fall of Puerto Cabello, he decided, with the consent of a military and civil council, to surrender the country to the Spaniards in return for Monteverde's solemn promise to declare an amnesty for all the republican leaders, to allow free emigration to all, and to leave all property unmolested. The armistice was, by chance, concluded in Bolivar's abandoned country house; there, at a moment of utter panic, it was resolved, without Miranda's consent, to surrender all the strongholds in the country to the victor.

The next day, Miranda rode to La Guaira to supervise the departure of the patriots and to arrange for his own. The port was roaring with the noise of the refugees; officers, women, and horses were wandering about the beach in the torrid heat trying to find ships, and yet again ships. The English vessel which had brought Bolivar home from London two years before was also lying at anchor. Miranda lodged at the house of the Commandant, Casas, who had had the harbor closed, since he could for the moment trust the armistice with Spain, and wished to prevent a mass flight of people in a state of panic. The captain of the English vessel went to see Miranda in order to get the harbor opened; he probably offered him a passage too. In any case, at the same time a merchant came to see Miranda, asking him to take charge of his money, 20,000 dollars in cash, and bring it into safety. The English captain, moreover, seems to have offered him permission to embark that night. These facts have

never been quite cleared up. One thing is certain, that the small brig which had, a short time before, brought the fugitive Bolivar to the port took three trunks of Miranda's on board, or at any rate held them at his disposal, whence it has been presumed that Miranda meant to sail west to New Granada, where the revolution was still strong. Since no wind could be expected before ten in the morning, Miranda who was worn out went to bed, obviously leaving the decision till morning.

Meanwhile Bolivar had spent three desperate weeks between Caracas and the port. Before the armistice, he had to remain in hiding, since the Spaniards were searching for him. It was impossible for him to take any part in the negotiations, if only because he wished to avoid a meeting with Miranda. The news of the surrender must have been a terrible blow to him. He was fully convinced that it was unnecessary, that he himself would never have surrendered the country; and his feeling was all the stronger since he regarded himself as the innocent cause of the debacle. Given Bolivar's character, we can confidently say that, in his frame of mind at the time, he would never have laid down his arms. The few friends he spoke to shared that feeling. He saw how the hostility to Miranda was, at this moment of utter defeat, turning into hate, for many people at the time regarded Miranda as a traitor and declared that he was in the enemy's pay. Bolivar by no means shared these extreme and baseless views, but he regarded Miranda the officer as a traitor for having surrendered the country without necessity. He saw the inspirations of his youth, his deepest desires—glory, freedom, honor—destroyed, or at least clouded. Bolivar's resentment against Miranda, made up half of patriotism and half of remorse, could not but flame up into hate.

In such a state of mind, a desperate man soon becomes a reckless one. The Commandant confided to him and a few friends that Miranda was sailing the next day on the English ship; he had a great deal of money; the story about the English merchant was clearly a ruse, and the money was obviously the thirty pieces of

silver he had taken from Spain, exchanging the slavery of his country for his own freedom. During these last days, a plot seems to have been made under the Commandant's lead.

There they sat, eight officers, forming a kind of court-martial in the Commandant's house, while two rooms away the man upon whom they considered they had the right to pass judgment lay asleep. It was a time of revolution; anarchy reigned; there was no law. No one was there to pronounce sentence on the departing dictator. The officers must do so themselves, and at once, for by next morning the traitor would have fled. If Miranda believed—this was their main argument—that the Spaniard would abide by his treaty, he had no need to prepare his flight; if not, how could he surrender the army and the country on such terms? To complete the tragedy, of the eight men it was Bolivar who was most rigorous in demanding that sentence should be passed on his friend. As the best witness wrote: "He took credit to himself all his life for Miranda's arrest as exclusively his own doing." Another even asserts that Bolivar told him that he wished to kill Miranda, and was only prevented by the others. Both were intimate friends of Bolivar's, and no doubt has ever been cast on their memoirs.

The order for the arrest was given by Bolivar and two others. At three in the morning they entered Miranda's room, from which the Commandant had had the bolt removed during the day. "Is it time already?" asked Miranda, drunk with sleep. In the light of a candle, Bolivar stepped forward and demanded his sword. Miranda took the lantern hanging on Soublette's arm, lit it, and looked in the faces of the men surrounding him. "A disgrace!" he said. "Is this all such men are fit for?" The General then handed his sword to a soldier at the door and allowed himself to be led away. How often he had escaped his enemies! Now it was his friends who were leading him to his death. He said nothing. On the way to the prison, nobody spoke. Miranda only stopped once to ask for a cigar.

The next day, the Spanish general ordered the harbor to be closed. He had all the prominent revolutionaries arrested, in

the port and all over the country. He had Miranda taken first to Puerto Cabello, the fort Bolivar had lost, then to Puerto Rico, and two years later to the ill-famed dungeon of Cadiz. Here he died, chained to the wall, two years after. In all those four years, Miranda is said to have protested, but never complained. He even succeeded in sending out a manifesto against the Spaniards. Once, however, when a fellow prisoner asked him whether his chains were not heavy, he replied: "Not so heavy as the ones they put on me in the night of La Guaira."

Miranda's name has its place among the three hundred inscribed on the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. His tomb is at Caracas, but his body is not there—it was given prison burial by the Spaniards. His monument today stands beside Bolivar's; it shows a half-open coffin awaiting the hero's remains. But his glory is great; a province is called Miranda.

Bolivar managed to make his way back to Caracas, where a friend hid him in his house, for his name headed the list of proscriptions. All that has remained of those days is a note to an unknown mistress, sending her money. It runs: "In haste, I may not be able to see you again. Honor and the fatherland call me." He heard in his hiding place how eight of his friends and officers had been sent to Spain in chains. That would be his fate too if he were found. And yet he could not remain in hiding forever. He therefore looked about for some influential man to stand surety for him, and found one in an old friend of his family who was also a friend of his host's; Iturbe, a distinguished Spaniard, was let into the secret and set about obtaining an official passport for Bolivar.

But what was this Spaniard to say to General Monteverde? What reason could he suggest for setting Marqués Bolivar, of all men, free? In taking the General into his confidence, he must have alluded to the service Bolivar had rendered Spain in at last delivering up the rebel Spain had been seeking for twenty years, the most famous of all her enemies.

And so it happened. Three weeks after Miranda was taken prisoner, Iturbe, the Spaniard, presented Bolivar to the General

in the Governor's palace. According to the practically identical accounts of Iturbe and Bolivar, the following conversation took place:

"This is Don Simon de Bolivar. I will take upon myself any punishment due to him. I stake my life for my friend."

"As you wish," replied Monteverde, courteously. "I promise safe conduct to Don Simon de Bolivar as a mark of gratitude for the service he rendered to His Majesty in capturing the traitor."

A terrible moment for Bolivar. If he protested, he risked his life; if he was silent, he sacrificed his honor. Without a moment's hesitation, he replied: "It was not at all in the service of the King that I took part in General Miranda's arrest. I did so because I regarded him as a traitor to my country."

It was said: in the room of the General who represented the King in that colony, one of the rebel leaders had openly declared himself and his action to be antiroyalist. In the very hands of his executioner, who had put so many of his comrades to death, his revolutionary defiance found its extreme expression. His intermediary had made no provision for such a development. The General was free to take back his word. And in actual fact he made a sign to prevent his secretary from sealing the passport which lay ready.

But Iturbe intervened, to save his friend once more. "Forward, Your Excellency! Let us waste no time with a madman! Give me the papers and away with him!"

"Do as you like. I have nothing more to say."

Shortly afterwards, the General wrote to the Secretary of State in Madrid that he had sent over to the King a number of the monsters who were responsible for all the misery of South America. "I could not, however, leave out of account the services we owe to Casas, Ferrá, and Bolivar. Their persons must be respected. I have, however, issued a passport only to the last-named, since his influence and connections might prove dangerous in the present situation."

We can see here that Bolivar owes his rescue from the two most dangerous situations in which he ever found himself not

merely to a remarkable action, but to his life of fashion in Europe, to his descent, his wealth, in short to all that nature and character, heritage, breeding, and passion had made of him.

The next day, accompanied by a few friends, he embarked on a Spanish ship, under Spanish protection, to reach as soon as possible the neighboring island of Curaçao, which now belonged to England. It was Bolivar's first banishment from home. The history of the next eighteen years was to be darkened by three further banishments, but this was the only time that the Spaniards banished him. Later, it was his own people.

IX

A YOUNG man, dressed in white and gray, is riding along the deserted shore, in the infernal heat of a rocky coast; he rides slowly, as if he had nowhere to ride to, but, deep in thought, is yielding himself up to the steady rhythm of the ride. Bolivar repeatedly said that dancing and riding stimulated him, and everybody who knew him later agreed that he could never really stand or sit still. Later on in life, he used to dictate swinging in a hammock.

But now he has nothing to dictate. His thoughts roam over the past two months, reviewing them in order, and now, in exile, turning over in his mind the dreadful happenings in which the past few weeks had involved him. For now it is the beginning of September, two months to the day since he lost the fort.

When that happened, Bolivar was a rich, distinguished gentleman who, at the age of thirty, had never known a reverse. The death of his young wife, after a few romantic months, was the blow that had broken the idyl of his life. But at that time, Bolivar was nineteen, and it was only later that the world had shown him its delights, so quickly followed by its tedium. For a moment, something like a great resolve had risen in him, when he swore to his teacher on the ruins of ancient Rome to dedicate himself to the liberation of his country. It was like an idea in a vacuum, unsupported by knowledge, friends, a plan, or necessity. Later,

when things began to happen practically without his co-operation, he gained experience and took pleasure in events, began a political career in an important position in London, and discovered there, in a foreign country, the first of his fellow countrymen to command his respect. Then disappointments had come to him, his pride had been wounded by the same far more experienced man, and when the trumpet of decision sounded, he had to pass wearisome days in the streets of a dreary fortress, where a prison warder could not hope to win distinction.

If the man riding slowly along the coast of the foreign island asked where his guilt lay, he could acquit himself, for what commander is quite safe from treachery? But Bolivar was too philosophically minded, too good an historian, to mistake the symbolic significance of events. While he was the innocent cause of the debacle, since the fort had been lost under his command, he must at least find half an excuse for his general and friend if, in his distress, he had lost the strength to fight on and had surrendered to the enemy. If Bolivar had had a seat on the war council which took the decision, his fire, his desire to rehabilitate himself in the service of his country, might yet have carried the day. But when the surrender of the country was decided, he was in hiding from the enemy, ostracized by his superior officer, and even ostracizing himself; he had had to submit to the decision like a common citizen. At the really dramatic moment when matters had come to a head, he got the upper hand of the friend he had first revered, then envied, then suspected, and at moments certainly hated, and he got it at the moment when the other had to swallow the deepest humiliation of his military career and agree to an armistice which would most likely be used by the perfidious Spaniard for a savage revenge of which there was no word in its terms.

Bolivar, suddenly cast into the silence of a lonely exile, could not but realize that if he had not lost the fort, he would certainly have been summoned to the council of war by his friend, that he would have seen him in his exhaustion and defeat, and would never have had the courage, or taken upon himself the right, to judge him. Probably they would both have hurried on

to a brig, escaped the furious enemy surrounding them, and would now be together on this island or on the coast of Cartagena.

In a tragic confusion of such kind, where guilt and chance, passion and fate, are inextricably entangled, the man responsible goes under unless he has the strength to rise to complete self-renewal. This time everything combined to make Bolivar grow mature in ordeal.

Suddenly he found himself poor. Indulged from childhood with every pleasure money could buy, he had always been surrounded by slaves, horses, and carriages and served by Negroes; his purse was always full, and he enjoyed squandering its contents in London and Paris, for it refilled of itself; he was a prince, a millionaire, accustomed to the deference which attached to his rank. Now he awakened on a strange shore to find himself a pauper, as princes do in old tales. The horse he was riding had been lent to him by his kindly host, the saddle was primitive, the purse in his pocket was empty. Where were his servants, his adjutants? Where were the noisy friends who had spent whole nights at his table discussing politics over their wine? Where was the table, the house, the land of his fathers, the palace in the capital? The enemy had confiscated everything, and even though they had helped him to flee with their passport, they would never give him back his land.

Twelve thousand dollars which Bolivar had taken with him had been confiscated on shipboard or by the authorities on his arrival—a lucky chance, for otherwise he might have gone to England, and who knows whether he would ever have returned to South America? The loss of his whole fortune was a lucky chance. Standing on his own feet for the first time Bolivar, at thirty, who had been rich too long and now had to create his career, his glory, his very life himself, began to pass in review the powers and talents he had till then only played with.

Given his imaginative yet fatalistic nature, he could hardly do otherwise than regard the latest tragic turn of his destiny as a challenge to fulfill a great mission which had till then merely

flickered vaguely in front of his eyes. He could not fail to recognize, step by step, the logic of what had happened to him, and how, in his quest for glory, he had been hampered by his inheritance. It was his rank, and his rank alone, which had created his friendly contact with the Governor he ought to have hated as an official of the King. His rank and wealth alone had prejudiced his friend Miranda against him and made him suspect that Bolivar was merely a rich amateur seeking public notice. Not until he was thrown back on his own resources as a man and a human being could Bolivar enter upon the path of greatness to which his dreams drew him.

His financial insecurity aggravated the disquiet of his conscience; both impelled him to prove himself in the world's eyes from that time on. When to both was added the horror of the moment at which the King of Spain, through his Governor, had thanked him for delivering up his friend, every impulse in him which moved him to restore his honor, his glory, and his position awoke to new life. The moment for action had come.

And Bolivar acted. He began his work on the island of banishment; he prepared it, there in his poverty and solitude, so clearly that the first steps he took, the first decisions he arrived at, all go back to this time.

He was almost alone. His uncle, Rivas, and his lieutenant, Soubllette, were both younger and far less independent; the few other exiles were even less able than they to do anything for him. To rebuild his inner life was his own task; the only man who could rehabilitate his outward life was a friend in Caracas. The painful ironies of those weeks were crowned by the last, that the only man on whom he could count at home was a Spaniard, namely Iturbe, who had obtained his freedom.

"It is extremely painful to me," he wrote to him, "to find myself quite without means. The only people who still treat me with courtesy are a few friends. But if I begin to borrow money from them I shall lose their friendship, for there are no two friends like you in the world." Farther on he begs him "to obtain some money for me in one way or another and send it to me

with all possible precautions. Although I have nothing to do with Miranda and the old government, I shall pay their debts. . . . Let me know everything that happens, good or bad. If you should hear blame of my political activity, refute it, for it is false. I say that because there are a number of ill-disposed people here from Caracas who resort to calumny in order to ingratiate themselves with the government." Iturbe, he goes on, might also be good enough to do what he can for the estates he inherited from his dead brother. "I know you will do for my property as much as you have done for my life. You will defend it as you would not defend your own, because you love your friends more than yourself. I am armed with courage, and take the blows of fate with contempt. For I owe no obedience save to my conscience, and it is at rest. What does my property matter! A man never lacks the ultimate necessities of life; nobody dies of want. We never lack a sympathetic friend whose help we can accept without shame. Remember that times change, and that we can be bidden tomorrow the good morning we bade today. For God rewards virtue here in this world."

This is the first time we hear Bolivar sounding a practical note. He thanks his friend, but points to the vicissitudes of fortune, which were later to reverse the roles of the two men. With a chivalrous gesture he offers his estates, yet is cunning enough, knowing that the Spanish censor will in all probability read his letter, to dissociate himself from the government of his former friends. Poverty had been too long unknown to those among whom he lived for him to realize that thousands die of want, finding no friend and no food. He is, it is true, strong enough to contemn money, yet he is hurt when anyone fails to show him due courtesy in his poverty. In this letter he shows the nobleman in him.

And the politician too. As such he seeks an issue from his situation, and that issue can only be the way back into the struggle. While his feelings were moving him to restore to fresh brilliance his honor and his glory, which had suffered badly among his compatriots, his intelligence found the way by which the power-

ful enemy could be brought low. The thing he had never undertaken in the days of his good fortune came to him now in his misfortune. On that alien shore he drew up the plan of liberation. He wrote a manifesto to the people of New Granada, the Spanish colony to the west of Venezuela, whose port, Cartagena, was then under republican government. He made up his mind to escape and publish his manifesto there. This document, which runs to twelve printed pages, contains his plan for the liberation of his homeland through the territory and with the means of the neighboring state, a perfectly new idea which must be regarded as one of genius in that it suggested a warlike campaign to a country which, at the time, did not stand at all in need of it.

“The double object of this proclamation is to preserve New Granada from the fate of Venezuela, and to rescue Venezuela from that fate. I am a son of unhappy Caracas. It is by a miracle that I escaped from its ruins. Faithful to the free and just cause which my fatherland has proclaimed, I have come here, following the flag of independence which waves so gloriously over this country.”

After this rhetorical prologue, he proceeds to set forth the reasons for the collapse of Venezuela. Firstly, the disastrous principle of toleration, which revealed itself as weakness. Instead of subduing the rebel cities by force, the council of ministers left them complete freedom, “for it takes its stand on a false conception of humanity which ostensibly gives governments no right to liberate stupid peoples, who could not grasp the value of their rights. In doing so, our leaders studied, not the practical science of government, but certain books by good men who built their republics in the air. Thus instead of leaders we had philosophers, instead of soldiers, sophists, instead of laws, philanthropy, instead of tactics, dialectics. . . . These doctrines derive from certain humanitarian thinkers who forbid anyone, even a traitor, to be put to death. In accordance with this pious doctrine, there was for every plot a pardon, while every pardon was followed by a

plot, which was pardoned in its turn, for leniency is the hallmark of tolerant governments."

That was why raw recruits were sent out instead of experienced troops. Because Rome and Athens, Venice, Switzerland, Holland, and, of recent times, North America had conquered their enemies without the help of mercenaries, it was declared that none were needed in the fight for Venezuelan freedom. But what was needed was a disciplined army, experienced in war, which the country was far from possessing.

The second ground Bolivar advances for the defeat is federalism, a system which abuses all the formulas of the rights of man and allows every member of the federation to rule itself. But that requires political maturity, which cannot develop under the rule of force, and even in a highly developed people, the strife of parties cannot be tolerated at so grave a crisis. "At a time of disaster, when all lose their heads, we must inspire terror and, in full composure, arm ourselves against dangers without troubling about laws and constitutions until freedom and well-being have been restored. . . . The general elections carried through by boors in the country and plotters in the towns prevent the establishment of federalism among us, for some, out of pure ignorance, vote mechanically, the others, out of pure ambition, turn everything into party questions. The government fell into the hands of immoral politicians. . . . It was not the Spanish soldiery which thrust us back into slavery, but our own party squabbling."

After having condemned the misuse to which the church had put the earthquake, Bolivar passes from negative criticism to constructive proposals:

"New Granada looked on while Venezuela submitted anew. May she avoid the pitfalls into which her neighbor fell! With that aim in view, I propose that Caracas should be retaken. This is indispensable to the safety of New Granada. At first sight the plan looks impracticable, costly, and unprofitable." New Granada, he explains, stands in danger of being subjugated, like

her neighbor. "Soon hundreds of great nobles and churchmen will be coming from Spain to lord it over the colonies. Spain will dispatch fifteen to twenty thousand men to subject the whole continent again, and this time thoroughly. But for the moment the enemy is still weak, their garrisons are situated in rebellious fortresses and cities. Today it would be possible to advance to Caracas without so much as a battle. Thousands of patriots from Venezuela will rally round us. Now is the moment to scotch the danger and to forestall a new invasion by an attack." A rhetorical epilogue, similar to the introduction, concludes this appeal for the reliberation of Venezuela.

The astonishing thing about it is its perfect candor. As he was not a member of the government, Bolivar was in a position to expose its errors; so, of course, was Miranda, who had joined with him in bringing the same complaints against the government. With magnificent frankness Bolivar reveals to a foreign state the mistakes committed by his own, by way of warning: he knew that party politics and demagogy were equally prevalent in both. A defeated colonel, of whom his country only knew that he had lost the fort committed to his charge, a revolutionary who was only enabled to flee by the mercy of his enemies, here in exile accuses his country and combines the summons to its rescue from mortal danger with a scheme by which the other can avoid a like fate. He even names the roads by which the troops can advance to this invasion, which means salvation, with the openness of the amateur who, unschooled in command and in precision, intuitively recognizes the right way.

But what had become of the ideals of his youth, of the teachings of Robinson? Had he not read in times past what Rousseau required of the statesman? "The man who takes it upon himself to teach a people must feel himself strong enough to transform and strengthen human nature in every individual." After only two years' experience, Bolivar was not disposed to transform anybody; on the contrary, he was ready to put laws and the constitution out of action, and to compel individuals, men or cities, to obey. It is true that his ideal derived from Rousseau,

but the method is Spanish since, actually speaking, it sets up one dictatorship in opposition to another. How are we to explain this swift and intransigent adherence to the principle of force?

Bolivar had discovered the soldier in himself. Calling on New Granada to liberate his country, he saw himself at the head of the campaign. As long as Miranda was there, it would never have occurred to him to act the part of military commander. But since he had seen Miranda come to grief through fatigue, with no general of experience to succeed him, since, by his own short period of active service, he had realized what was to be done, he felt himself capable of doing it. He had seen that, given a small army, in a country of prairies, forests, and mountains, the science of command could not be learned from books, that it was not a science at all, but an art, combining boldness with foresight, neither of which can be learned.

The man who emerges from this plan is in every sense a second Napoleon. The fact that he, too, like Napoleon, had to cross the Alps to conquer his neighbor's country may have been a special inspiration to him. He too was not yet thirty. And in that month of November, 1812, he had already heard the legend of the fatal retreat from Russia forced on the greatest soldier in the world. Can we not imagine that in the romantic visions of the Creole, whose mind had been agitated for ten years past by the figure of the Corsican, there arose something like the idea of a replacement of one by the other, of a second performance on American soil? His plan was only to be realized by a march of heroic daring, and not by carefully planned armies and battles, and it was precisely that which stirred Bolivar's imagination. To become a kind of brigand leader seemed, to the exiled and plundered nobleman, the fantastic road to glory.

All the traits of his character, all the impulses of his wounded heart, awakened to joyous life through this plan. He now sold the last of the diamonds which had, ten years before, cost him outrage and very nearly imprisonment at the hands of a troop of royal cavalry.

Three months after his arrival, Bolivar left the English island

and, accompanied by his lieutenant, embarked on a sailing ship for Cartagena on the coast of New Granada. He carried in his pockets nothing but the sheets of a manifesto which, in its turn, was supported by nothing but his own resolve. The last of his possessions which he sold before his departure was the gold medal which he had had painted on his breast in the portrait for which he had sat two years before in the stream of London's fashionable life.

Yes, Bolivar sold the golden device: "No fatherland without freedom," in order to give freedom to his fatherland.

CHAPTER THREE

The Liberator

"Genius always seems to me like a calculating machine: it is started off and the result comes right but the thing itself doesn't know why or how."

GOETHE

I

A HUNDRED years ago, travelers in the northwest corner of South America wishing to reach the Atlantic from the Pacific by land had to cross the passes of the Andes on horseback. There snow-capped volcanoes rose to eighteen thousand feet, and the journey from the fertile coast over the icy heights and down into the luxuriant valleys of the River Magdalena meant wonder and delight only to the explorer or naturalist like Humboldt traveling in the New World; to the pioneer setting out to seize its treasures, the journey brought only terror. One man, however, had never traversed these regions, namely the army commander, whose aim is neither exploration nor robbery, but the conquest of the land his horse's hoofs are treading, for when the Spaniards came three centuries before, the country had fallen out of the hands of the Incas into their own with very little fighting and no serious campaigns.

Thus the Andes, which, a century ago, were believed to be the highest mountains in the world, had never been really forced by real troops, and the first battles on their slopes had been fought only in the two years of revolution. The Vice-Kingdom of New Granada, which comprised almost the whole of the Colombia of today, and was about as large as its neighbor Venezuela, though twice as densely populated, had attracted foreigners by the abundance of gold and other metal in its mountains. It had then, however, been conquered by its own mountains. For in the midst of the struggle with the Spaniards, the army of liberation had believed the cracking of the glaciers in the morning sun to be the artillery of the advancing royalists. The general and all his staff had fled in panic, abandoning all their muni-

tions to the enemy. By this act of delusion and fear the south, the Ecuador of today, became royalist and remained so for ten years. This fantastic incident took place in 1812, and now that all the events of those years have faded, and none of those who took part in them is alive, General Arredona stands alone in history for having run away from the morning roar of his own glaciers.

In New Granada, where party strife was particularly violent, the struggle for freedom was jeopardized by jealousy among the towns, in particular between two. When the proud city of Santa Fé (Bogotá), lying at the foot of the mountains, convened a Congress in 1810, Cartagena rose against it, as seaboard cities at all times rebel against inland cities, and the adventurers on the stormy coast against the men sitting secure behind it. Cartagena solemnly declared itself "independent of every nation in the world." A third city turned on both, created itself an independent state, and discovered a perfect solution to the whole conflict by promising to recognize beloved King Ferdinand provided he took up residence in the city. At the same time the author of this new constitution appointed himself President.

While the country fell a prey to anarchy, with the two provinces bombarding each other, it was easy for malcontents to inspire the mob with a fanatical hatred of all freedom, and to burn down villages in the name of the King. Spanish vessels, landing on the north coast common to both states, dispatched troops simultaneously against Caracas and Cartagena while Miranda's army surrendered in the east. Cartagena was cut off in the west, and was under perpetual menace on two sides, to the east from royalist Santa Marta, to the north from Panama. In that situation it had to open its doors to hundreds of refugees from Venezuela, having become a last asylum. Bolivar was not the only man to take refuge there.

He was, however, the only man to arrive with a plan. The astonishing thing about this plan is not the idea it is based on, not the way it is set forth, nor even the courage it presupposes, but all three together. At this, the first step in his real career, his

achievement was greater than Bonaparte's at the same moment, for Bonaparte had been sent out on an expedition planned by others, and probably to perish. When Bonaparte started out on his first march over the Alps to Milan, he was a general in the regular army; Bolivar was an adventurer. To conceive this plan, to lay it before the public, and to set about putting it into practice without resources was Bolivar's first feat, and it may be his greatest.

His official position was negligible. The only man on whom he could count in this foreign country was the equally youthful President Torices at Cartagena. He grasped the scheme Bolivar had sketched on the island of Curaçao, and helped him to print and distribute it under the title of "The Manifesto of Cartagena"; he also gave him, or rather restored him to, the rank of colonel. On the other hand, Commandant Labatut, a Frenchman by birth, seems to have trusted him as little as Miranda, for he put him in charge of a small place, far enough away to be cut off from any share in decision, but near enough to be kept under watch. There he was to sit and wait. On leaving Cartagena, he may have already come to a secret understanding with the President, who was in favor of his mad scheme.

For hardly had he reached his destination, a wretched little collection of bamboo huts on the Magdalena called Barracas, "where sun and earth lie in a slimy embrace," as Humboldt said, when he decided to begin his march of liberation there and then with his troop of two hundred half-caste Negroes and Indios, whose dress and equipment made Napoleon's first troops look like an imperial army. Without any certainty of reinforcements, without guns, and finally without orders, Bolivar, a foreigner, an adventurer, and a beaten man, set out at Christmas, 1812, to liberate his fatherland. An utterly romantic enterprise, spurred only by the spirit of a man thirsting for glory, a man who, in his thirtieth year, had lost by blows from within and without everything which had till then supported him on his canter through an all-too-easy life.

A debacle, first personal, then involving the whole army, had

put an end to his military career four months before; he resumed it now with an act of rebellion, for the fact that he asked and received permission to act from the President of the city-state of Cartagena does not alter his insubordination in marching against the orders of his superior officer instead of staying where he was. "My career," he said later, "began with disobedience. I had no money either. But I sought out the hand-somest of the mulattoes. They had to cut a figure. Most of them possessed nothing but courage."

That the Spaniards were not strong on the Magdalena, Bolivar knew. On the other hand, his own men knew the river and could punt their boats, called bongos, upstream by running up and down the outer planks so cleverly that they escaped notice until they made a moonlight landing at the first Spanish place, Renerriffa, and surprised the enemy, who fled, leaving behind what they most needed and what nobody could give them—arms. The swiftness and surprise, the irregular, improvised suddenness of their action in these first days put the little troop into immediate possession of a second key to success—the terror of the invisible and wonderful. Who could be the moving spirit, the leader, of these naked river men, these conquerors who came so stealthily by night? When Bolivar landed at Mompós a few days later, three hundred volunteers and twenty young men of good families hurried to join him.

Now there were five hundred of them. Now they could send out armed dispatch riders. Now they were already in a position to make some kind of plan of campaign, for when the Spaniards fled from El Banco, Bolivar pursued them inland and began the year 1813, a fateful year for Europe too, with a victory on the great but only half-explored river of South America. By January 8, a fortnight after their departure, they had already reached Ocaña; they had taken less time than a courier. But rumor, the legend of an unknown army, had outsped them, and nobody would believe how small that army was. Suddenly a new power had arisen to beat the enemy; three thousand Spaniards

had fled, and the little town set to work to prepare its welcome to the unknown liberator.

Up on the coast, General Labatut had summoned Bolivar—one foreigner another—before a court-martial for marching without orders. It was too late. Insubordination had been crowned by success. But another crossed Bolivar's path. The Spanish general, Correa, was on the way with five thousand well-armed troops, and was just advancing on Cúcuta, where there were only a few hundred men to make a stand against him. And since Bolivar felt himself a young Napoleon, he now ventured his first political act. He sent messengers to the two hostile governments of New Granada, between which he stood with his advancing troops, informing Cartagena in the north and Santa Fé in the south that he was there to defend the country against the Spanish advance. Once more he asked for freedom to act. An hour after it had arrived from the President at Cartagena, he gave marching orders to his long-prepared troop of five hundred men. He left the river, soon to leave the country.

II

BETWEEN him and his country, however, the mountains rose. After twelve miles of arid steppe, the Andes began. It was February, the guns were packed on mules, and the troop of adventurers were for the most part men of the hot plains. There were patches of jungle, deep, unbridged chasms, drought and storms, and a few wretched huts as the sole sign of human habitation.

Up above, however, at the summit of the pass, the view opens on to deep valleys and rich plains. There he stood, the young man who, with a gang of desperadoes, without orders, without support, without knowledge of the technique of battle, had done the act of daring. What lay at his feet was really his own country—the country in which he had tried to establish freedom a few years before, only to meet with immediate failure, the country from which he had fled with a Spanish passport barely six

months ago. Nobody down there had any inkling of a man crossing the frontier, climbing the legendary mountains like a thief in the night, and if they heard his name, they merely thought—another of the traitors.

Yet the tidings of these strange soldiers spread more quickly in the western valleys of Venezuela than their leader had hoped. Up to that point, as he had anticipated in the plan of action he had drawn up on the island, he had rushed forward with hardly a fight. But now, after his descent from the mountains, he came into collision with a compact Spanish army near Cúcuta, and though he beat it into flight, it was dash and passion rather than strategy which brought him the victory. Quantities of guns and carbines, abandoned by the fleeing enemy, fell into his hands, while in the town there was money. Bolivar issued his first proclamation in Napoleonic style, and with the flourish of a youthful victor communicated his doings to the Congress of Southern Granada, only to provoke confusion. The President of the Congress of Tunja was for him, that of Santa Fé seemed at first taken by surprise, but soon confidence was restored, and even the luke-warm hastened to join the victor.

At that moment the first enemy rose within the gates. The Spaniard in his way had succumbed and fled, but the enemy at his side, the rival, now crossed his path. For the second time, and this time in more terrible fashion, since he was in the first bright morning hour of his career, Bolivar knew what it was to gain an illicit, improvised victory, to which he had no legal right and which he had achieved not step by step but at a bound. It was doubly hard for a foreigner, since the powers in Granada would never accept the fact that a Venezuelan had taken up their defense. Another commander appeared and seemed determined to crowd him out of the sunshine of glory.

Colonel Castillo, a member of an old Cartagena family, who had been active since the beginning of the revolution, had advanced to the southwest at the same time as Bolivar and, on other paths, had come into contact with the Spanish army which was then moving to the conquest of his country. For Castillo, as a

born Granadan, was more on the defensive than the offensive; his desires were quite naturally bounded by his own frontiers. A foreign soldier who had appeared and beaten the Spaniards could not but rouse him to opposition the moment he crossed the mountains, which roughly formed the frontier, and began to carry off Granadan troops to liberate his own country, Venezuela.

A natural jealousy, moreover, awoke in Castillo—it may have been his main motive. In times past he had been on good terms with Bolivar. But within two months, this foreigner, without an army, authority, or even orders, had caused valleys and plains, cottages and cities, to ring with his praise, like some magician who owes part of his power over the public to the very fact that he is a foreigner. The legitimate and native general could hardly fail to feel the other as an interloper. And he could use no better argument than to say that the defeated Venezuelans should be freed when their stronger neighbors should come to their help. That was as far as Castillo would go. But no one could expect a Granadan general to leave Granadan troops under the orders of a man whose country was calling those troops to its help.

Political intrigue began. As there were in any case three governments fighting for supremacy, each put forward its own candidate. The three presidents, it is true, were soon all on the young victor's side, but the deputies, with their paltry interests, hemmed in by party, national and personal cares, fell to squabbling and held up the advance by making it the peg on which to hang the question of who was to have supreme power in the country. In Castillo's warnings, they read that Bolivar's troops were wretchedly equipped, that entire regions were roadless and impassable, and that the armed forces of the country must not be sacrificed to the "extravagant ambition of a madman."

Meanwhile the President of Cartagena intervened to help; he gave Bolivar New Granadan nationality out of hand and made him Brigadier General of the Granadan army. Bolivar took the news at its political worth and, being of a poetic turn of mind,

symbolically too. By receiving the nationality of a second country which had risen against the Spaniards at the same time as his own, he had seen the problem of liberation grow into an American one; he had already foreseen it as such from far away in London. At the moment when, literally standing on the boundaries of the two countries, he received his nationalization papers together with the rank of army commander, he already saw the inner unity of both. He had already established in his mind the union of the two states—Colombia. In the style of the young Bonaparte, though with a dash of Spanish rhetoric, he issued a communiqué:

“Soldiers! You have carried your arms of liberation on to Venezuelan soil. In barely two months, you have completed two campaigns and begun a third, which will end in the country to which I owe my life. Republicans! You will liberate the cradle of Colombian independence, as the Crusaders, long ago, liberated Jerusalem. Hearing the clatter of your weapons, the Spanish legions will vanish from the latitudes of Venezuela as night yields to day. To you, heroes of Cartagena, all America looks for its salvation and its liberation. Hasten to crown your glory, to merit the great name of liberators of Venezuela!”

Yet Bolivar the poet remained a complete realist and politician. From the wretched little place which formed his headquarters he sent his envoys out in all directions, not only dispatching Rivas to the rival presidents, but sending personal letters to the deputies in order to flatter them into giving their consent to the advance. Some of the deputies wished to detain both generals. There were attempts at mediation. Bolivar stood in the middle, quivering like a fiery horse, ready saddled in its stable, straining at its chain, and eager to gallop off. What men were these, to keep him chained? What could they know of the world schemes rising from long sleep in the mind of a hero? For on this very first campaign, Bolivar was inspired by none but the most glorious feelings. To his inexperienced eye, everything seemed possible. Since the first, apparently impossible move had succeeded, he began to realize clearly what he had been wont to de-

clare in the vacant tedium of his Paris days—that he was a man apart.

Worse news, however, came in from Cartagena. A conspiracy among a few young men had put the last touch to the anger of the victorious Spaniards. Nobody now felt safe among them. Bolivar, anxious to move, found himself checked. He made his decision. He wrote to his rival Castillo, then in the field, the origin of all the hindrance: he was ready to hand over the supreme command and fight under him if only Castillo would continue the march into Venezuela, "because it seems to me just and right. . . . Please answer in writing or by word of mouth. I will make no formal reply to your accusation because the Major told me you were ready to wipe it out. Your sincere friend and comrade—Bolivar."

More than once Bolivar repeated this strange gesture, so utterly alien to other generals, such as Napoleon. What was the meaning of it? It was both chivalrous and astute. This way of renouncing his power and forgiving his enemy shows him not only as the *grand seigneur* he was, but as the man inspired with the ideals of the classical world. In later cases, it is to be interpreted, now as weariness, now as philosophy, according to Bolivar's frame of mind. In this first case, we can see in it only the decision of a man straining toward a goal and resolved to reach it at all costs. Nor could he conceive that his glory would elude him. He was too shrewd not to calculate the effect of so noble an offer on men of Spanish breeding, always provided that it was accepted. He knew too how he stood in the eyes of his men, and that, if the worst should come, the countries before him were spacious enough for each to fight his own battles.

The situation was involved enough to justify such an offer. The sole condition was clear—it was Venezuela. Castillo too knew how to give a personal dispute the show of a difference of principle. He took his stand on news from Venezuela that the people there did not want to be liberated. He demanded that the enterprise should be stopped and, as regards the supreme command, the choice between him and Bolivar. Bolivar, harassed by

fever and desertions, could not venture now to act against orders, as he had done three months before when he merely seemed to be setting out on an adventure. A gloom fell on everything, for the Spaniards had retaken a strip of the New Granadan coast, and hence could cut off the advancing troops. Then even the President at Cartagena called upon him to send back his five hundred men. Bolivar seemed under the necessity of turning back to force plenipotentiary powers from the capital, losing thereby the dash on which the whole enterprise depended.

The final struggle between the rivals came the more quickly to a head. One of Castillo's officers refused to march at Bolivar's command. Then Bolivar shouted: "Unless you march at once, one of two things will happen—either you will shoot me or, what is more likely, I will shoot you." The man who obeyed at that was Santander. For fifteen years he shared Bolivar's life, vacillating between friendship, rivalry, and hostility, and was in the end to wound him to the death in a far more dangerous, invisible duel.

For the moment, in his impatience, Bolivar made almost daily appeals to the two governments. "The fate of Granada," he writes, "is closely bound up with that of Venezuela. If the one is not liberated, the other will be subjected; all enslavement is like an ulcer; if it is not cauterized in time, it soon eats away the whole body. I cannot believe that the Congress, as the sovereign power of Venezuela, could look on our destruction and dishonor unmoved."

At last, after two lost months, at the beginning of May Bolivar received the saving order from the third of the quarreling governments. Castillo had been coolly received by it, but it is impossible to say whether Bolivar's triumph was due to his own idea or to some shift of parties. The man among the politicians who at last liberated the liberator was at any rate a character; Torrez, one of the few idealists of the wars of liberation, unchained the fiery horse, imagining that limits could be set to its course. Bolivar was told only to advance a short distance into Venezuela, pledging himself, should he take the country, to establish it on a

federalistic basis; he was, moreover, to recover the expenses of the expedition.

Bolivar laughed, promised everything, and galloped off.

III

NUMBERS do not make history; greatness does. The army of the liberators now setting out upon the liberation of America, to complete it in ten years, comprised at its beginning 500 men, 1400 rifles, and 4 guns with a total of 5 shells. But its leader sensed the historical moment and the importance of his mission. He concluded his report of the occupation of the next town with the Napoleonic sentence: "I shall expect Your Excellency's answer at Trujillo," another town half a province away to the northeast.

On his forced march there, which still lay through the mountains, the small towns and villages fell into his hands. His corps reinforced by 600 volunteers and 200 horses, nearly everywhere he found the Spaniards already gone, while the people greeted him and his army with rejoicings, now that they actually saw the troop riding up. What was the secret? Rumors of the approaching army, countless stories of the quarrels between the generals and the government, had swelled the band of 500 adventurers into a great army. Things had turned out as Bolivar had anticipated in his manifesto. He had advanced without fighting, and that was his strength and his good fortune. For when he began, he had only his genius to guide him. A few years before, on his way home from Europe, he had asked the commander of his ship to explain the working of the guns: for the first time he had seen at close quarters the mechanism of firing, with the astonishment of the layman in his face.

In the first year of war, Miranda had shut him out of the conduct of the campaign. When he set out, Bolivar's entire military equipment consisted of the courage of a horseman and fencer who, familiar with the mock dangers of smart society, needed only to develop them, as an officer, into the real dangers

of war. What he did not possess was Bonaparte's expert knowledge as an artillery officer and a military cadet—the knowledge of the art of warfare. He was to learn it only as he went on. In setting out on his enterprise, his ready imagination had reckoned, at first at any rate, on the lessons of his early months of command, and with the impression his undertaking and the breakdown of the Spaniards would make on the people. When the first battle took place, he had already learned what he needed.

The thing he learned as quickly as the youthful Bonaparte was political initiative. When he actually entered Trujillo four weeks after his letter, the President of the Congress just had time to catch up with him with permission for further victories. Bolivar, sitting on his horse in the market place, read aloud a proclamation which contained the challenge: "Venezuelans! Rally to the banners of New Granada, which are already waving over your country, and from which the enemy is already fleeing! Rise against your oppressors! Men, women, and children, unite in righteous anger against the tyrants! Hasten to join us! Show yourselves worthy of the liberators of your fatherland!"

This was the first popular call to arms in America. Since the monks were preaching the same thing on the side of Spain wherever they could, God and the fatherland were separated for the first time. Bolivar, who had realized the value of words and learned the art of oratory earlier than the value and the art of arms, from his first day of command knew how to make use of them as a weapon. At his entry into every town he made provocative speeches and distributed manifestoes. In this point he closely resembles Napoleon, whose army orders are to this very day a school for demagogues, even though they could never fight his battles.

He had by now advanced too far into the country and into success for Cartagena, faced with fresh dangers, to hope to get him back. In reply to an order to stop his advance, he merely reported uninterrupted progress: "All the Granadan troops under Granadan generals have suffered defeat, and only the army I have the honor to command has been steadily victorious."

That is the tone of a leader carried forward by success and glory, and already beyond the reach of authority. How far he felt himself a Napoleon is clear from a remark he made soon afterwards to a French officer: "We had our Novi on our last campaign. In the next we shall have our Marengo." With such a frame of mind he recrossed the passes of the Andes and beat the Spaniards in a two days' battle. By now he had men and experience enough to divide his troops into three corps.

The men who flocked to join him on his victorious advance, of all sorts and conditions, were a source of anxiety too. For meanwhile other groups had formed in both camps which were out to take advantage of the prevailing anarchy and fight the Spaniards on their own account. They had suffered from or seen too much of the conqueror's cruelty not to retaliate with a savage, lawless kind of warfare, alien to Bolivar's character, which he had till then never practiced.

Thus there arrived at Bolivar's headquarters one day a letter written in blood, together with a chest containing two Spanish heads. A popular leader, a man of great gifts, no older than his own men, had offered rewards for Spanish heads: for 20 the rank of ensign, for 30 that of lieutenant, and for 50 that of captain. As he now carried on his career of murder and rapine under Bolivar's command, the latter intervened, until the young savage was captured and executed by the Spaniards. Soon Bolivar received news of another corps of freebooters, led by the Italian adventurer Bianchi, which was blocking the northern coast at Cumaná and had thrown Monteverde himself back on the capital. Mingled feelings of joy and fear preyed on Bolivar's mind; though sending his fellow combatants messages of encouragement, he wrote to his friend at Cartagena: "I am afraid that our comrades are advancing from Cumaná and Barcelona to liberate our capital. We should then arrive too late to share the glory. But we are marching like lightning. I trust that no liberator will enter Caracas before us!" That is the old Simon Bolivar who set out to win the laurel.

There were, however, others who did not join him, but set

out from their own corners to liberate their country—forty-five youths, armed with daggers, pikes, and rifles, all brilliant young Creoles who had, a year before, like Bolivar himself, fled to the islands off the coast and now, having elected the twenty-five-year-old Marino as their chief, had solemnly pledged themselves to him and freedom. Later, Bolivar found some of them—such as Bermudez and Valdes—where we shall find them also, as generals of the revolution.

In later history, Bolivar was as often blamed for the massacre of prisoners at his orders as Bonaparte for that of the plague victims at Accra. The accusation is unjust; one must know all the circumstances. The man who begins a new method of warfare, from schoolboy scuffles to the last world war, is always seen in two lights. The question here is soon settled because, looking at the matter as a whole, the Spaniards and the Spaniards alone were the aggressors, seeing that they alone had been in power for centuries. The tradition, which survived from the days of Pizarro, who had massacred thousands, ran: "It is not killing which is cruel, but letting men live." It is certain that the half-savage Indios would have shown themselves no whit more humane than the troops of the All-Catholic King; in former times they had simply had less opportunity for giving rein to their instincts.

The leaders of the revolution were decidedly superior to both; for the most part Creoles and disciples of Rousseau, they showed toward their defeated enemy at that time a humaneness which they had bitterly to repent of later. There is no documentary evidence of atrocities in the first year of the Republic, but all authors agree on the atrocities of the Spaniards on their speedy return to power. We need not repeat them, for names and places have long been forgotten. All accounts, even those adopted by unbiased Spaniards, are full of the tongues, ears, and noses cut off the inhabitants of whole villages, of men who, with flayed feet, were forced to walk over broken glass, of chests from which royalist generals distributed ears for the men to wear on their hats. There was another general who took his

pleasure in raising pyramids of bones, sewing prisoners together, and slitting up pregnant women; there were some priests who called for the death of every child over seven, others who branded prisoners on the forehead with their initials and numbers before killing them. While these atrocities were mostly due to Canarian officers, who were noted for their cruelty, and not to Monteverde, he at any rate knew about them. Moreover, he read without issuing counterorders a report which has been preserved in which a Spanish commander writes: "All the Creoles and other ruffians must be killed. We have nothing to do with the Régence, the Cortes, or the constitution; we are here for our own safety and the destruction of the blackguards."

At the beginning, Bolivar had put a stop to the doings of those savage freebooters and had lodged a protest with the President of New Granada against such "satanic acts of madness." He would not suffer, he said, as much as a barn to be burned. Till that time, he had only been in the company of men who were trying to strengthen by patience and thought what they had first founded without force. In the meantime the errors of the first revolution, described in his manifesto, had sufficiently hardened him to be prepared to return like for like. In the summer of 1813, in the middle of the campaign, he cast all his principles overboard and, in view of the Spanish atrocities, which had been repeated for three centuries past and had now been going on uninterruptedly for a year, he declared a "war to the death," stating: "Any inhabitant of the country taking up arms for the enemy or helping him in any way will be put to death. Spaniards and Canarians, death awaits you unless you take up the cause of the liberation of America with all your might! Americans, guilty or innocent, your lives are secure!"

Bolivar, still imbued with the sense of his historical role implanted in him both by his education and his desire for glory, realized the importance of this question and addressed to the nations of the world, by which he also meant history, an account of the moderation of his plan of campaign. "When we heard, however, that the enemy was killing our prisoners under the

pretext that they were rebels, but actually with the sole object of depriving the cause of freedom of more defenders, we resolved that it should be war to the death, only sparing Americans. It was the last means by which we could counterbalance advantages which otherwise the enemy would have alone enjoyed. To Negroes we could show tolerance. For Spaniards, after all our patience, there was nothing but retribution."

His native officers did not need to be told twice. One had abandoned everything merely "to kill as many Spaniards as possible," another waited for a duel with the most famous fighter on the other side, then wiped out a whole village because it had gone with the adversary. Another general, who had deserted the Spaniards to join Bolivar, said: "When I have killed all the Spaniards, I will kill myself, so that there shall not be a single Spaniard left in the world." With feeling rising to such grotesque heights of madness, who could have checked or moderated it, seeing that the freebooting character of the campaign, the savagery of revenge, was intensified by the landscape and the climate?

IV

AT the beginning of August, Bolivar stood before the goal. His native city lay at his feet. Exactly a year before he had fled from it with a passport he owed to the mercy of his enemies. He had reached it again by a fantastic detour. By his appeal, by his heroic disobedience, and by moves in the political game, he had persuaded a foreign people to give him men and money for the liberation of his own country. The two countries were separated by high mountains; he had to march through the parched savannas, to cross half the continent at its widest point, first with 200, then with 600, and finally with 2000 men, and he had dispersed or captured 6000 Spaniards. Seven months had passed since he left Cartagena, a foreign colonel; at the end of his advance he turned thirty. Could he fail to think of Alexander and Napoleon when, after retaking Valencia, which he had first

taken under Miranda, he received news that two envoys from General Monteverde had returned to Puerto Cabello and did not acknowledge the capitulation? Who was it now who crossed Bolivar's threshold as the envoy of his enemy?

It was no other than the Marqués de Casa León y Iturbe, the man who had, a year ago, received Bolivar in secret and had obtained from the almighty Monteverde the passport on which his life depended. It was a scene made for a display of chivalry. The classical virtues, utterly outraged by the Spaniards, were shown to the full by their victorious opponent, who clearly meant that his rival, and above all his benefactor, should see how a Creole nobleman could express his gratitude. He promised to leave all the Spanish officers in possession of their swords, to spare the lives of all the Spaniards in the country, not to touch their property or to give them a month to leave the country. "I shall prove," wrote Bolivar, "that the chivalrous Americans know how to pardon those they have conquered, and show the greatest moderation toward an enemy who has outraged the rights of man and trampled his most sacred duty under-foot."

When Bolivar rode into Caracas a few days later, he is said to have wept, an amazing touch, more especially as we shall see the same man enter enough cities in the next fifteen years and remain quite unmoved. It was, of course, his native city and his first triumph. On that day of August, the poet, then aged thirty, whose youth had been inspired by visions of classical heroes and scenes, saw himself riding into the city to the pealing of bells, under flowers and triumphal arches; he was surprised by a bevy of twelve young girls, who forced him to dismount and enter a Roman chariot, which they themselves drew into the city. Suddenly he stopped; in the front line he had seen his old nurse Hippolita; he embraced her, calling her "father and mother." He paraded his ragged troops before the people, but received the laurel wreath at the hands of a beautiful young girl. Half Caesar, half Don Juan, he felt a little out of place in the gay, half-improvised scene. Having witnessed Napoleon's coronation

at Milan, and so often fired his imagination with the scenes of history, he must have felt, as the symbol of glory was offered to him, how cramped were the circumstances before him.

For Venezuela was a country without any great tradition, in which, for centuries, the tyrants had suffered little progress and no heroes. The fatherland had actually only come into being with Bolivar and his friends. Since language and religion alone held the country together, both of which it owed the same hated Spaniards, Bolivar, at his first attempt, was compelled to create his own history, having neither an example in the past nor a poet or thinker in the present who could provide a framework for his glory. He was at the time perhaps the most poetically minded man in the country.

What stood him in good stead was his brilliant command of language, the fire of his eloquence, and his fine education. All helped him to consolidate his victories with speeches and proclamations, just as Napoleon had done. No, he would never become Emperor, like Napoleon. He retained, however, the title of Liberator first conferred on him by the people of Mérida, which he had already begun to use before taking Caracas; it was not solemnly bestowed on him for some time to come. *El Libertador*; it seemed to him a nobler claim to glory than a crown or a title of nobility. By discovering the name during his first victories and retaining it until his death, he proved that his knowledge of men was as keen as his sense of history and glory.

And just as he had known better than Miranda how to impress the *llaneros* in the army by his feats of horsemanship—his troops were mixed, white and black—he surrounded himself with all the symbols of power capable of impressing a Spanish-bred people. The uniform of his staff, designed by himself, was dazzling; the "Order of the Liberators of Venezuela," a new Legion of Honor which he founded, comprised the best men without distinction of race. When the leader of the New Granadans under his command fell in battle not long after, Bolivar, in true French fashion, had his heart buried in a silver casket after a magnificent procession. In his proclamation, he enumer-

ated liberated cities and rivers, called himself the defender of the maternal soil, and wrote proudly to the President of New Granada, with whom he had so often been at loggerheads, "I was far from being an adventurer. No campaign could have been brought to a more successful conclusion. I did not lose a battle. I turned everything to the best possible account. I acted with speed and energy in order to drive the enemy out."

V

BUT the enemy still remained in the land. In actual fact, the capitulation was more like a favorable armistice. For meanwhile the royalist *llaneros* were advancing to the north from the Orinoco, and at Puerto Cabello, for which Bolivar left a few days after his entry into Caracas, Monteverde, who was shut up there, was able to bombard him into a retreat. It was a strange moment when Bolivar found himself thwarted for the second time by the fort.

Meanwhile, on his return to Caracas, there was enough to do for the budding statesman, even though his progress as a general was checked. In the freshness of his idealism, the young victor cuts an even more brilliant figure, because what he now did and left undone is much rarer in history. His eyes always fixed on the star of glory, Bolivar, in this first period of power, arrived at decisions and discovered ways of expressing them which would alone be enough to make him immortal.

"Fellow citizens," he cried at the first assembly of notables and churchmen summoned to consider a new constitution, "I have not come to oppress you with a victorious army. The victories of a happy warrior give him no kind of right to rule his country. Spare my strength so heavy a burden. Choose your deputies, and have confidence that the arms which have saved the republic will always defend the freedom and glory of our country." Urged to act as interim dictator, he began an organization on a federalistic basis, which he regarded as unsuitable but had promised to the Congress; he also appointed three min-

isters at once, and even put forward his rival as a candidate for the dictatorship. "There are great fellow citizens," he cried in the assembly, "who are more worthy of your votes than I. General Marino, the liberator of the east, seems to me to be the man worthy to take the rudder into his hands."

In spite of his triumph, Bolivar the Liberator was by no means accepted unconditionally at this time. What had happened a few months before with Castillo in New Granada, where he was a foreigner, now happened in aggravated form among his own countrymen. During his march from the west, other and younger revolutionaries had been victorious in the east. Marino had taken the fort of Cumaná, and with it the whole province, before Bolivar even reached Caracas; he had there been proclaimed dictator and generalissimo of the east. If Bolivar was to maintain his position without civil war, and to keep the upper hand of these young men whom he hardly knew, he had to press them into his service. But Marino resisted the lure of the new Order of Liberty and continued to govern on his own account, independent of the central government then in formation.

The first war tax Bolivar imposed made him as unpopular as his levy of troops. He owed most of his enemies, however, to the fact that he had come with foreign help and under foreign orders, for the Venezuelans, once liberated, showed no more gratitude than other peoples. In these storms which gathered in the wake of his flower-decked chariot, Bolivar displayed a superiority his rivals lacked; toward them as toward the enemy he was the dispassionate statesman, and, though thwarted by the cunning of his adversaries, his schemes were in the grand style. Union instead of parties, that was his aim when, harassed by the enemy troops slowly advancing from the south, he wrote to Marino: "I have no ambition save to fight in the field against the enemies of my country. The last thing I would wish to be is head of the state. As a reward for your sacrifices and your victories, I should wish to see you President of Venezuela, for no one is better fitted than yourself."

Marino, however, lacked the necessary spirit; his obstinacy may have been the cause of the second debacle. What good was it for Bolivar, placed as he was, to put under arms every male between the ages of twelve and sixty in the little town of Caracas and its environs? The total yield was a few thousand men. He was, moreover, hampered by many hundreds of prisoners and stood in dread of another outbreak, such as had already happened in that ill-starred fortress. Seven times he offered Monteverde an exchange of prisoners, but in vain. When at last the commandant of the port of La Guaira wrote to him that he could no longer be sure of his prisoners, Bolivar replied: "You have too few men and too many prisoners. I therefore command you to have all the Spaniards now in the fortress or in hospital killed." Thus 870 human beings were put to death—not the first and not the biggest massacre in South America, other parts of which had witnessed similar occurrences.

In Bolivar's case, it was the result of a frightful necessity; with the enemy now advancing it was a gloating passion. "There is nothing either good or bad," said Hamlet, "but thinking makes it so."

General Boves, quondam cattle dealer, had smuggled Spanish arms and had been imprisoned by the Republic and later set free by the Spaniards for that very reason. His vindictiveness against those who had humiliated him knew no bounds. Squat and massive as a boxer, low-browed, with a face like a vulture and little deep-set gray eyes, for his bodily strength and his contempt of death he was idolized by the *llaneros*, the centaurs of the plains, who lived on barebacked horses and who, cut off for months by floods in the rainy months, loved nothing better than a fight, where they could gallop, cast spears, and finally behead their prisoners. They rode singing:

*On the plain the palm tree,
Over the palm the sky,
And I astride my horse,
And on my head my sombrero.*

Whether they fought for the Republic or for Spain depended on the hazard of personal insult and revenge, on the influence of a woman or on the pay; many of them changed sides two or three times during the wars of liberation. Now and then Bolivar's fate hung on the effect of a speech on a mutinous squad of men. The *llaneros*, however, would long remain faithful to a real leader such as Boves, who boasted of having killed three hundred men in one day. There was, for instance, Morales, his lieutenant, a Canarian who had first fought on the side of the Republic; he found fire more thrilling than blood, but he never failed to appear attended by a gigantic executioner, and seemed to revenge himself on his own name by becoming the fiercest incendiary of his time. The two had collected some 3000 *llaneros* and, swarming northwards from the Orinoco by guerrilla warfare, recovered the land lost by the Spaniards' savagery and panic.

VI

At thirty, Bolivar had liberated his country in a march of victory with hardly a battle. If we compare the rapidity of his success with the short life of the first Republic, which itself lasted only two years, such brittle and disjointed achievements would seem to point to some peculiarity of the time, of the locality, of the character of the people or their leader. In the unhappy year which the Liberator now had to live through, all four factors of failure seemed to combine. That is the interesting point to follow, not an enumeration of battles lost or won.

For now Bolivar was to go through all the bitter experiences which had brought Miranda low. The enemy, who, in spite of great superiority of numbers and equipment, had lacked an inspiration and had therefore yielded so quickly to the onrush of the liberators, soon recovered when he saw the heroes of the people weakened by internal jealousy and party strife. The vicissitudes of the European nations, who, like the gods in Homer, were invisible protagonists in the struggle, caused a completely

undeserved and unmerited shift of power. The vast area of a country with few roads and no news service hampered any unity of action. And finally, there were hindering factors in Bolivar's own nature.

At the beginning of the year, Bolivar was fighting for his own patrimony in fighting for his native valley; for a few weeks, he actually established his headquarters at San Mateo, in the very country house which had seen his first steps in writing and riding, in thinking and dreaming. In a big skirmish which took place at the time on his own land, he led his little troop, sword in hand, and seems to have carried his men to victory at the critical moment by his own attachment to the place. Here, in his romantic mind, he was defending his childhood and his happy love, and that with his own hand. For we must remember that here, and in many other places, there was hand-to-hand fighting of a primitive kind, with lances, bayonets, and even fists, and though there is little documentary evidence of Bolivar's own action in fighting, the nature both of that fighting and of the man himself would be enough to refute the assertion of one of his officers that he hardly fought at all.

If Marino had brought his 4000 men from Barcelona in time, if the dictator of the east had mastered himself sooner than April, when he at last did so, Boves would not have been able to threaten Caracas with his savage horsemen, the beautiful valley of Aragua would not have become the theater of war, and the war as a whole would not have been lost. It is true that Bolivar won yet another victory, but as it was now summer, sickness broke out, many deserted, the peasantry was, in part, recalcitrant, and finally a battle was lost at San Carlos owing to the mistaken tactics of Marino, while Bolivar was involved in the defeat.

The situation was desperate; there was a flight to the capital, an appeal to the citizens, the church treasury had to yield up its gold and silver. Boves was advancing on Valencia. He had sworn to kill Bolivar with his own hands, but then he would swear anything. While the royal chaplain was reading Mass on

the walls of the beleaguered city, Boves swore, loud enough for the besieged to hear him, that he would spare all their lives, signed a declaration to that effect, gave a ball of reconciliation at night in the town, which had surrendered, and had all his guests killed, as Mehemet Ali did in the citadel of Cairo. The only men whom Boves spared in his fury that night were the musicians, for he loved music, and proved thereby that music does not always soothe the savage breast. Soon after he fell in battle by the hand of an unknown enemy.

Bolivar gave Caracas up for lost, as Miranda had done before him. When he marched toward Barcelona with his 2000 men, 30,000 refugees are said to have followed him. That exodus of 1814 through the savannas parched by the August sun, with thousands falling by the wayside, became as tragically famous as the day of the earthquake; it must have resembled the Armenian exodus over the desert of Asia Minor during the First World War. All who remained in the capital were a few hundred monks and old people who preferred to die in their houses rather than on the high road.

Bolivar, Marino, and other leaders, who were advancing to the northeast cape by different ways, met in a council of war and transported part of their men to the islands off the coast. A quarrel arose over what was to be done, and of course there were accusations against those who were thought responsible. Rivas was there, still in his Phrygian cap, little dreaming that that cap, with his head in it, was soon to be exposed in an iron cage, by way of warning, on the road to the port. Marino proposed to withdraw to the rocky peninsula of Guaira. Yet even as they were speaking, Bianchi absconded with the gold from the church treasury, and when they pursued and captured him, he declared that they owed him 40,000 piasters anyway. He finally accepted a third.

Even the gold from the church, which the others declared to have been stolen, crops up again in their accusations, as if the spirit of Miranda were taking its revenge exactly two years after that fateful night. If the Italian freebooter, Bianchi, had not

come sailing up with threatening guns to take away the two leaders, who knows whether Miranda, in his remote dungeon, would not have at last triumphed over Bolivar?

Strange thoughts and feelings must have assailed Bolivar as he sat beside his comrade Marino on the foreign sailing ship; again defeated, but this time on his own responsibility, again in flight, and again to the island of Curaçao, but this time to leave it again at once. And for what destination? Once more along the northeast coast, once more for Cartagena.

For Cartagena, on the neighboring coast, was the only stronghold from which Bolivar, though a foreigner there, could again conquer his fatherland.

VII

AND what of Europe?

Napoleon's fall in April, 1814, was a blow to Bolivar's hopes. The Emperor's interest, during the many years since the establishment of the Republic, had waxed and waned; he had been unreliable and inactive; all the same, he had spoken on behalf of Venezuela, encouraged and protected it with his authority. His terms—complete break with England—had never changed. Even the attitude of the United States, which had at first attached far more importance to their alliance with Spain than to the liberation of those vague states in the South, was influenced by Napoleon's sympathy. Under pressure from France, which was then ready to hand over Florida, and in the growing tension with England during Madison's administration, North America declared itself ready to recognize South America and to instruct its ambassadors in Europe in that sense. The name of Miranda was popular in Washington.

Miranda's fall and imprisonment, and later, above all, Napoleon's fall and imprisonment, revolutionized the feelings and sympathies of the United States and France. When King Ferdinand the Beloved was restored in Madrid, all the Creoles overseas were dismayed and discouraged. They had too long adorned

their endeavors with that symbol; now that it had become power again, thousands deserted the fight for liberty and declared a few promised reforms preferable to a new war. Ravaged, burned, literally depopulated by the last atrocities as Venezuela is described even by the Spanish court historians, how could it rise again, materially or spiritually?

The whole continent was quivering from Napoleon's fall. The restored Ferdinand, a mere cipher beside a genius, was victorious simply and solely because of the VII appended to his name and the tradition of a house which had, for centuries, sowed hate instead of love in its colonies, and reaped it also, at any rate among the white colonials. But the dread felt by the big landowners from Mexico to Tierra del Fuego for anything which smacked of adventure, equality, and the liberation of the slaves exceeded their love of freedom. From the Argentine, courageous Belgrano, indefatigable O'Higgins, and, above all, that great man, San Martín, had attempted to win Chile and Peru over to freedom, while Bolivar conquered Venezuela and lost it again. Yet King Ferdinand the Beloved was the stronger, and nothing seemed able to resist him in the long run.

The only country in which islands of freedom still rose above the royalist flood was New Granada, where that Narino, who had long before discovered the rights of man, had victoriously led the Congress and even the army. For nobody in those days inquired about a man's military college, but only about his bravery, intuition, and self-confidence, so that a scholar was allowed to do heroic service in the middle of the jungle at the head of a few thousand men. In the end Narino was overcome too and expiated his heroism for four years in the dungeon at Cadiz where Miranda perished at the same time.

Nor could Bolivar do anything of lasting consequence in the six winter months he again spent in New Granada. This time he did not need to create his own authority and army as he had done two years before when still an unknown soldier. The glory of his march of liberation outshone the story of his defeat, so that he was shortly put in command of the last troops in Carta-

gena, which had always remained republican. For a moment he even succeeded in uniting the majority of the Granadans in the establishment or reinforcement of the central government at Santa Fé, and in rising above his old rivals, first and foremost Castillo. The ephemeral nature of all these doings would deprive the actual events of any interest if we did not possess strange documents reflecting Bolivar's inward disquiet at this time. Here, too, a few private letters mean more than the to and fro of fighting and negotiation.

For Bolivar, once more a foreigner, was obliged to take up his own moral defense against his rivals; he defended his honor and glory as passionately as he had before fought for freedom. Castillo, even less able than the last time to suffer the exiled Venezuelan in his own country, was to bring him men and munitions. Instead, he incited the people and the press of Cartagena against him. He published a pamphlet slandering Bolivar, saying that he had sacrificed thousands of Granadans to save his own property and had, at the end, when he was beaten, fled with the bandit Bianchi. In return for this, Bolivar put forward a proposal that his enemy Castillo should be given the rank of brigadier general.

The blow, however, had gone home. Though he was virtual dictator, and hence in a position to forbid or punish, he wrote letter after letter of self-justification to generals he knew. The letters, however, were private, and hence were clearly not due to motives of political astuteness.

"Try to convince the generals," he writes, "of the integrity of my intentions. I have no wish to claim anything for myself or to rob them of anything. I am resolved to withdraw, to serve as a soldier as long as I am told, and to obey the man placed above me." Soon after, he writes in reference to the shooting of the prisoners for which he had been blamed. "What was I to do at La Guaira without a garrison and with a few hundred Spanish prisoners? The same thing would have happened as at Puerto Cabello. I would have sacrificed my country and my honor with it. People who call me cruel misunderstand me. . . . I have not

changed. Since I love freedom, my thoughts are good and free. I am only rigorous toward the enemies of my country." The next day to the same correspondent: "The fanatics are calling me a Nero. I shall become their Nero, since they force me to, with a ravaged heart that once loved all men, Americans, the playmates of my childhood, the companions of my happiness. My one dread is the destruction of a sister of Caracas, and mother of certain liberators of Venezuela. Adieu—till you see me again as your liberator or your judge!"

To the civil government of Cartagena: "Before revolutions and those who make them can be judged, they must be seen at close quarters, but judged from a distance. . . . Can I yield to revenge and flout reason? And can I see the laurels wither which fortune bestowed on me in battle, to let myself become the slave of passion, like a woman? . . . My one goal was to command the respect of my fellow men. Do not allow posterity to accuse me of such crimes. They were misfortunes, and their first victim is myself. Those men wish to see my army collapse. But the army has no intention of collapsing! It means to maintain its glory, either in battle against the enemy, if I get help, or against the traitors, if help is refused."

It is the tone, or rather the variety of tones, which is so moving, even today. Here is a man restlessly circling round fame and glory, and even though he means to get something by his threat, we can hear the voice of a deeply wounded man who, in the intervals between days of activity, seems to wonder whether this struggle was worth staking his life for, since it brings nothing but calumny and hate. We seem to hear the dull beating of a sick heart perpetually justifying itself to its own conscience for things which would not cost a born soldier an hour's sleep.

We must not compare Bolivar, in this state of unrest, weighed down by his own sense of responsibility, with a savage creature like Boves, but with his cultured Spanish enemy Monteverde or with comrades from both countries, if we are going to appreciate the constant self-examination he exercises. This is no ordinary general, battling through as best he can. The man who had

hundreds of prisoners shot had lived too long, if not with God, at least with Plutarch and the heroes of olden times, with Rousseau and the rights of man, he had too long and too passionately followed Napoleon in light and shade, not to put his motives to the test in ceaseless monologues which fill hundreds of journal letters from this time on.

Hence his farewell to the Granadans was almost poetic. For when he saw everything collapse anew, when he saw the Spaniards again approaching Caracas and realized that there was no help to be got where he was, he raised, in May, a siege not far from Cartagena. He had the alternative of taking the place by storm, and hence plunging the country into civil war, or again going into exile. In this dilemma, Bolivar resigned his office and in a last official proclamation poured out his resentment against his enemies and the truth, as he saw it, about the party quarrel.

"No tyrant has been destroyed by your arms. They have been stained with the blood of your brothers in two campaigns. Happy you are who can sacrifice your days in the struggle for freedom. Unhappy that I am, sailing for an alien shore to die in exile, because your welfare demands it! The duty of saving the army has brought me to this resolve. I did not take it of my own free will. I am going away from you to live in idleness, without the hope of sacrificing my life for my country."

VIII

WHEN Bolivar again left the coast, for the third time, no enemy vessel lay at anchor, no one was driving him forth, and he carried no false passport. He went, a victim of jealousy, chiefly because he had remained a stranger in a strange land.

Three years before, he had landed on the coast of Curaçao. At that time his face had mirrored his ravaged mind. When he arrived in Jamaica on his second exile, he seemed nothing but a ravaged body. "This man," writes a witness, "who was then in the flower of his youth, seemed to have nothing left but his

eyes. The flame had burned the oil to the last drop." The first time he had come as a foreign adventurer who had swindled his way out of the great debacle by the mercy of his enemies. Now he was a famous dictator, not deposed, like Napoleon, because he had lost the war, but abdicating of his own free will.

The Spaniards, it is true, were advancing again. They arrived after Bolivar's departure from Cartagena, but took it only after a long siege lasting a hundred and six days. Bolivar would, if anything, have outdone others in the courage of the defense. That he fled before the ordeal is the invention of slanderers who knew nothing of his character. He was neither a disheartened general, like Miranda, surrendering himself and his army, nor a capricious nobleman, suddenly finding the situation beyond his strength. He was a first-class political thinker, whose aim it was to see on a great background the immediate problem of his country, to extend it to a whole continent, and to see it in line with the great world powers, instead of continuing to squabble with a few dozen lawyers and officers who, twisting round in a narrow circle, dragged him with them.

To realize this, it was only necessary to see the veranda in the house which a wealthy Jamaican had placed at the disposal of the famous fugitive. It was hung with maps, local and general, while his table in the room within was piled with books full of figures and descriptions, statistics and histories, of both Americas, and anything he could lay hands on about world trade. His removal from the scene of his deeds, the quiet after the turmoil, the solitude of a foreign island in the ocean, restored to Bolivar the leisure to think. The very fact that news of what his enemies, Spaniards and Americans, were doing did not come daily, but was brought at rare intervals by some vessel, and then only in the form of rumors, made it possible for him to reflect at leisure on the wider issues in which he could refashion the enterprise he had never abandoned.

In point of fact, during those winter months of 1815 which he spent on the English island of Jamaica, we can see him grasping

America was to be established. The documents preserved from this period, comprising many private letters and one open one, show us not only Bolivar's splendid command of the world situation, but the plan he had in mind. He looks far beyond the immediate question of Venezuela to a league of nations, anticipating a century. Exactly a hundred years after that letter, Woodrow Wilson set about putting it into practice.

Since in the meantime he had matured into a practical statesman, he attached the captive balloon of his great vision to the anchor nearest him on the coast, thus keeping touch with earth while he surveyed the world and the century from his lofty lookout. The anchor was England, to which the island belonged; surrounded by Spanish possessions, she was Spain's natural rival there. Bolivar, who had so long endeavored to win England over to his cause, now tried to suggest to her the idea of occupying Panama and Nicaragua, supporting in return the Spanish colonies with money and arms in their fight for freedom. For now that France was overthrown, he saw that England was no longer pledged to Spanish interests, which she had only supported in the common struggle against Napoleon.

There the lonely exile sat considering Europe, his head seething with world plans, dependent, as he was his life long, on the forces working in a continent thousands of miles away. On an island between the two Americas, so poor that he had to ask several friends for money, later abused by the landlady of his lodgings who was disappointed in the great gentleman "who hadn't so much as a maravedi in his pocket," he was setting out in his mind his great game of chess, putting himself in the place of both sides and wondering: Where do the Czar's interests lie? Will he continue to support King Ferdinand in order to weaken England's trade with us? Have the years of the Napoleonic blockade cost the city of London so much that it cannot risk any more overseas ventures? Whom could we send over to persuade the great merchants that New Granada has gold and Peru silver, and make them realize that now is the moment to lay hands on those

goods to escape her for the sake of a treaty such as this new Holy Alliance? Or should we, after all, appeal to the States? Would Washington begin a war with Spain, now that it no longer needs her? Even though Chateaubriand is proposing Bourbon princes for the Spanish colonies, God preserve King Ferdinand the Beloved in his stupidity, so that he may refuse!

Such were the thoughts behind letters he wrote at this time to influential Englishmen. For instance: "The philosophy of the century, English policy, French ambition, and Spanish stupidity have orphaned America and allowed it to relapse into a condition of passive anarchy. Both the balance of world power and England's interests demand the salvation of America. What a prospect! Science, art, industry, culture, everything that attracts admiration and glory in Europe, will fly over to America. England will have practically the sole enjoyment of it. What! Great Britain, the liberator of Europe, the friend of Asia, the protector of Africa, not become the liberator of America also? Should every ear remain deaf to the voice of humanity, I will, if need be, march to the Pole and there die for my country. The aim of Spain is to annihilate the new world, to blot out its population, so that culture and art should vanish from it, and Europe find there a desert, without so much as a market for its goods. And Europe looks on at the destruction, by envy and jealousy, of this beautiful continent."

At the same time Bolivar poured out all his reflections as a statesman and a prophet on the future of his continent, and still more, all his feelings, in a letter he wrote in September, 1815, to the fictitious address: "To an Inhabitant of Jamaica," who seems to have asked him for an expression of his views. The great document was intended for immediate printing; he was aiming at influencing both continents.

His opening words are winged with passion. "The hatred we feel for one half of the island inspires us deeper than the sea which rolls between. It would be easier to unite the two continents than the two peoples. . . . All our hopes once came from Spain. But we are threatened with death and dishonor. An un-

natural mother has cast us into torment. The chains were broken. We were free. Our enemies are out to make us slaves again." Then he enumerates sixteen million Americans under the Spanish dominion, and asks how Europe can "suffer the old snake to void its poison on the most beautiful part of the world."

After a comparison with the peoples into which the Roman Empire was divided, he considers the mixture of blood and races which makes the South Americans neither Indians nor Europeans, but a cross between the two. "In an absolute regime, a sultan or a great khan is all-powerful, but the lords of Ispahan are, after all, Persians, the viziers of the sultan, Turks. Here, on the other hand, our peoples have been kept in a state of childhood for three centuries; they were even deprived of the power of active tyranny. They were forbidden to cultivate European crops, to manufacture goods, and were forced to do nothing but grow coffee, sugar, indigo, cotton, to keep herds on the savannas and to mine the earth for gold for the masters of the country." Even the noblest were excluded almost entirely from high worldly positions, and entirely from positions in the church, in spite of the fact that the high culture of the Incas had preceded that of the Spaniards.

Can people so dominated suddenly become free? Are they not, in their first failure, rather to be likened to Icarus? Are they capable of at once uniting into a single republic? Why not create fifteen to seventeen independent kingdoms out of them? He replies: "I am against monarchies in America. The interests of a republic comprise its maintenance, its welfare, and its glory. Nothing provokes it to expand its frontiers. A victory over its neighbors would bring it no advantage unless, like ancient Rome, it means to turn them into colonies. Permanence is the essence of small republics; big ones may grow into empires. The small ones are long-lived. . . . A king, on the other hand, must always extend his possessions, his wealth, and his power."

Yet what form of republic? The inhabitants of those countries were not ripe for federalism, yet a democratic monarchy "can only flourish in a people as democratic as the English, who are

capable of maintaining the spirit of freedom even under the scepter and the crown." For America, he conceives a middle way best, scorning the advice to await the return of a legendary Mexican Buddha or to seek some heir of the Incas. Instead of that, Bolivar invents groups of states; those round Panama to form one group, Venezuela and New Granada another. This fertile country should bear the name of Colombia, should be given an English constitution, but with a president elected for life instead of a king, with a House of Commons and an hereditary Upper House. This was the point from which he was soon to set out for his goal. He then sketches the difficulties in the way of Peru, which is corrupted by gold and slavery, and which will be troublesome to liberate. He anticipates a kingdom in Brazil with all its confusions, since a great republic would be difficult to maintain there, and then returns to the fundamental question:

"A grandiose idea, to form a single nation of the New World! With the same race, the same language, the same religion, and the same customs, a government should be able to unite the separate states. And yet it is impossible, for their situations, interests, and characters are too diverse. How splendid it would be if the Isthmus of Panama could be to us what the Isthmus of Corinth was to the Greeks! May heaven grant that we hold a great congress there one day to negotiate war and peace with the other three continents also. The situation of Panama between the great oceans could make it a center of trade; its canals could speed up communications between the continents. It may yet be that the capital of the world will be founded there, as Constantine dreamed that Byzantium might become for the ancient world. Today, however, that is no more than a daring hope, similar to that of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, who conceived the glorious but insane idea of a general congress to determine the fates and interests of the states of Europe."

In this letter, and in others written at the same time, Bolivar gives an impartial historical and philosophical account of the troubles he had passed through in the struggle for the form of the constitution, and which he was to experience still more griev-

ously soon. If he exaggerates details, it is because as a man of rank he took a single rebuff as a general outrage, as he had already done in the affair of the diamond links outside the gate of Madrid. After all, his Creole ancestors had become millionaires by the cultivation of European crops and the construction of mines in the country, and even though their title of Marqués was not accorded full recognition, within the country itself, it impressed their thousand slaves. Moreover, in three centuries there had been eighteen Creole governors. In spite of such misrepresentations, however, he carries his reader with him in his deep-seated hatred.

Where doubts arise in the reader's mind, however, it is in the question of the rights of the people, because he is himself vague on the subject. He had, it is true, set all his slaves free as an example, even though he spoke at that very time of the "hereditary affection of the colored people" for their white masters. But in the constitution he dreams of, he confuses French theory with English practice, is enthusiastic for a lifelong presidency, and probably swore, like the First Consul, that he would never become Emperor. As a man of noble birth, he wants a House of Lords, a hereditary senate, and while he takes his stand on the fact that even in Athens there was one citizen with full rights to four, or even ten, without, he is simply throwing a veil of classical antiquity over his real work.

For everything in his character and in his work goes to show that this powerless fugitive, when drawing up constitutional schemes, always saw himself in the role of leader, and it may even be in the role of leader of the neighboring countries. "If only we are given this little help, if only money and arms are sent to us, I will undertake to liberate the center of the world and to restore the balance of the continent."

While he was thus dreaming himself forward and upward, Bolivar, as a past or future leader, was sufficiently hated, even in exile, to suffer persecution. One day, while on a visit to a beautiful woman he had known for a long time, a colored man crept into his house with a dagger intended for him and, in mistake for

Bolívar, killed a friend of his who was lying in a hammock awaiting his return. The murderer was a slave he had freed himself and was in the pay of the Spaniards in Caracas.

IX

AND yet it was a slave, or the son of a slave, a colored man, whom Bolívar visited not long afterwards to ask for help on a large scale in order to return home. He now sailed over to the island of Haiti, there to show the President, Pétion, the advantages which he, as a foreigner, stood to gain from the liberation of Venezuela. These were his usual tactics. What he offered in exchange this time was the abolition of slavery.

The black President, whose island was an asylum for many fugitives from the coast, was familiar with the problem in all its aspects. When Bolívar landed at Port au Prince, he found a throng of *émigrés* there, among others Marino, Piar, and Soublette with his two charming sisters, both of whom seem to have attracted him. All these men needed a leader. When he arrived, the command came to him almost of itself, for even a witness like Colonel Holstein, who later hated Bolívar, admits in his memoirs that he was the best man.

Yet everything looked and was precarious. If he was going to achieve anything here in Haiti and Jamaica, he had to play the part of Coriolanus, hobnob with anybody he wished to win over to his cause, walk or drink with all and sundry, for here he saw the possibility of fitting out a few ships with which to make a fresh start. These few months in Haiti show Bolívar in one of the most precarious positions of his career; today in want and utterly uncertain as to how he was to live on the morrow, while the day after brought him power and the knowledge of what he had to live for. In a number of letters he asks friends for money, writing: "I am seeking help from the government here, and it will be given, though not at once. Meanwhile I am living in trouble and want. Death is better than such a wretched existence." At the same time he writes to a nephew, to a brother-in-

law, both *émigrés*, asking why he has heard nothing from them and saying how glad he would be to do so, and all the time he is seeking men and means like one who has no friend in whom he can confide.

In the end, Bolivar obtained help from the President, but not before the latter had scrutinized the white aristocrat with the suspicion of the colored man and the upstart. Bolivar, with his pure Spanish blood, yet bearing the name of Creole, knew what it was, now and then, to be distrusted both by white Europeans and colored Americans, as though he were a half-caste masquerading as a white man. This problem sometimes increased the difficulties of his position in the ensuing struggles.

In 1816, when, for the third time, he left the shores of an island to liberate his country, he must have seemed to himself an adventurer pure and simple. For as he sailed on a brigantine escorted by six galleasses, all small and antiquated craft, with 250 men, a mass of arms, and rather too many than too few officers, a quarrel at once broke out on board as to whether Piar was more important than Marino, whether Bermudez or Marino should be in command. Yet the ships belonged to none of them, nor even to the colored President, but to yet another adventurer, namely Brion, a merchant, who lived a life divided between the business spirit and the love of liberty, but may have realized Bolivar's genius. In any case, it was he who placed the very dubious supreme command in Bolivar's hands and gave him his imaginary army.

For when they landed on the island of Margarita, lying off the northeast cape, where the last resistance of the defeated republic had taken refuge, the defender of the place, Arismendi, at once submitted to the much-discussed and much-hated liberator, who had tried to arrest him as a traitor only a year before. The notables of the island were assembled in the church, together with a few hundred soldiers; Bolivar seized some staff or other with a gold knob and had himself proclaimed supreme leader. In these circumstances, so cramped that all his dramatics verge on the comic, he nevertheless maintained in his romantic heart his

bearing as a maker of history, and issued a resounding proclamation to his people, who for the moment could not even hear him, since the sea again lay between: "Venezuelans! The third period of the Republic is dawning! The people of the immortal island of Margarita, led by the heroic Arismendi, have proclaimed the independence of the government of Venezuela. Your brother and friends are not coming from a foreign land to subject you. Their goal is your freedom. . . . Since the people of the free part of the country have done me the honor to bestow the supreme command on me, I herewith call upon you to summon a congress with the same rights as in the first Republic. I do not wish to lay down the law, but I implore you to listen to me when I recommend you to preserve unity and freedom."

Here, as always happened when Bolivar was in the most wretched circumstances, when he was powerless, abandoned, or beaten, we see him turning the charge laid upon him away from its immediate issue and placing it in a generally human framework. He wanted to put an end to the war of annihilation, and openly apostrophizes the enemy general. "The true soldier glories only in conquering his enemies, not in general destruction. As a soldier of honor, you will not wish to prolong the war of annihilation. I do not wish posterity to hold me blood guilty. I shall leave documents behind me which will prove my humanness and the guilt of the Spaniards." At the same time he proclaims the liberation of all the slaves, as he had promised the President of Haiti. "Our country recognizes in you her worthy sons and, through me, thanks you for the great services you have rendered her. Let everyone who loves freedom more than his repose take up arms to defend his sacred rights. He will then be a full citizen of his country. Humanity, justice, and policy all demand your liberation. Now and henceforth there is only one class of men in Venezuela. All are citizens!"

As he drew up this historical manifesto, Bolivar felt weaker than ever. The authority he had laboriously established on the ship evaporated within the first few days. Neither Marino nor

Piar would serve under him; everyone marched and commanded on his own account. Bolivar, drawn by the scenes of his former victories, advanced on the capital with 600 men, and while he had nothing to fall back on, and only the powerful enemy ahead, he announced the advance of the generals under his command, who had long since broken away from him, and boldly wrote in his proclamation: "An army with arms and munitions of every kind is on the march, under my orders, to set you free. I will destroy the tyrants and restore your rights, your country and peace. After taking the capital, we shall summon a congress."

In actual fact he merely takes this tone in order to keep up the people's courage and his own, for at the same time he wrote: "If things go wrong, I have nothing but my life to lose. It is always great to undertake a heroic action. Boldness must save us. What you consider reckless is the best course of action. Recklessness is wisdom today." Shortly afterwards he was beaten by Morales and forced to retreat to the coast.

At this moment, devoid of support, moral or material, Bolivar again deserted his troops and fled. This incident, which his enemies quote against him even today, is easy to explain. Bolivar did not admit the principle that the captain must go down with the ship. If he saw that all was lost, whether on this or on former occasions, he fled, and proved his right to do so by always coming back, beginning again, and in the end carrying off the victory.

In this crassest and last case of flight, two circumstances added to the confusion. The report of a dispatch rider who came galloping up ran: "The Spaniards are entering the port," while Soublette later declared that he had merely sent news of the enemy's bivouac outside the town. Bolivar felt himself menaced by the population, too, for they were crying: "Down with Bolivar!" He hurried to the harbor, signed to a boat, and was rowed alone to a brig riding at anchor outside the harbor.

"I dare not," Soublette wrote to a friend a few years later, "interpret this unexplained chapter, the more so as my memories have already faded a little. All the same, I must refer to one point

in explanation. The situation was complicated by a passionate love affair, and we know that Antony, in the very teeth of danger, wasted irrevocable moments with Cleopatra."

This ironic hint lends the incident a certain charm, without depriving it of its humanity.

X

ONCE more the homeless liberator landed on Haiti and stayed there five months. On the ship which had taken the fugitive aboard, and which even bore the name of *Indie Libre*, he had for a time lived the life of a corsair, only landing for news and provisions; once he had even tried to reach his home port of La Guaira, but in vain. The poetic bias of his mind can only have been reinforced in such surroundings; in his natural solitude, the tragic nature of the part he had to play must have seemed to him a source of strength. Bolivar had probably already begun to liken himself to Don Quixote: he was to identify himself with him more and more.

What did he care about his rivals? When he read that a committee dressed up as a "Congress" had declared him dead, that Páez in one place, Santander in another, were proclaiming themselves leaders, the exile knew very well that, in spite of all, it was the name of Bolivar which was surrounded with the glory of the liberator. If he could only find arms outside the country, he would find men to follow him inside.

The black President again received the Creole, though with marked coolness. "A man in misfortune," Bolivar wrote to a friend at the time, "is always in the wrong. I too am subject to that law." To the ruler of the island, however, he wrote in terms of highest praise. "The pen is a faithful instrument for transmitting admiration. While flattery is poison to little souls, great ones are nourished by well-merited praise. I write this because I cannot venture to say what I feel for you. It is only in absence that I venture to open the depths of my heart to you." These Spanish flourishes, however, do not stifle his talent for practical

affairs. Brion, the merchant who had followed him, brought him for the second time money enough to buy arms, and even a kind of assurance from his rivals that they would hand over the military command to him if he returned with arms. It was thus mainly due to the sea trader that Bolivar, at New Year's, 1817, was able to land for the fourth time on his coast, this time at Barcelona, with 300 men and abundant war material, and there once more establish a temporary government. It was his last return home. In the remaining thirteen years of his life he never left the continent.

At this point, where interest centers, not on the everlasting intrigues between the individual leaders, but on the feelings in play, we can again see, as an interesting trait in Bolivar's character, how he always enhances his demands, his visions, and even his promises at moments of distress. Again involved in guerrilla warfare, again abandoned and betrayed, now by this comrade, now by that, and again driven back in the first few weeks by the far superior Spanish forces, what does he proclaim? Firstly, the demand for a Congress, for "the fatherland is orphaned so long as the government remains in the hands of a soldier. Let your first action be the acceptance of my resignation." At the same time he announces the extension of his plan of action.

He had some 700 men, but he declares: "We shall soon have liberated Venezuela. Then we shall pass on—people by people, state by state. Our arms shall liberate first New Granada, then Quito, then Peru. We shall climb up to Potosí and plant the flag of freedom on the summit of the silver mountain." This was never written. He said it aloud to himself in a hiding place in the reeds where he had taken refuge for the night with a few dozen men. They heard it, and an officer said: "In God's name, the Liberator has gone mad."

When a scene of the kind ends in defeat, it merely shows the wildness of an enthusiast's dreams. But what if, eight years to the day, the vision is fulfilled, if it is turned into reality by the very officer lying hidden in the reeds?

The nervous sensitiveness of his nature, his poetic prescience,

gave Bolivar the power to feel the approach of sun and warmth in the midst of rain and storm. He tried to communicate it to others, partly as an act of faith, and partly out of foresight. For it would seem to be a mixture of both which makes him write at the time to Marino, who was threatening to slip out of his hands: "Beloved comrade! I am mad with joy. I long for the arrival of the Spaniards more than for your own. Providence will sacrifice those men on the altar of the fatherland. My only dread is that the Spaniards might retire on hearing of your arrival. My cavalry are equipped like gods!" Yet after such moods of exaltation, the same man fell prey to gloom. Everything then seemed vain, and a friend heard him say later on a cliff overhanging the river: "Soon, and this water will have returned to the sea, as we to the earth. Part of it rises in vapor and is blown away like the glory of man and posterity."

Bolivar, now aged thirty-four, shook off this inward depression and steadied himself by overcoming at one stroke the outward unrest surrounding him, not, perhaps, for good, but for a few years at any rate.

Among the rivals who rose against Bolivar's supremacy in these years of extreme anarchy, there was Piar, a colored, highly gifted officer, who had long been in opposition to him. With him, a second tragedy was to set in for Bolivar, as a third with Santander. As the first colored man to rise to power, Piar raised the old problem again; he jeopardized his great gifts of courage and knowledge by his passionate ambition to be regarded as a white man and an equal. He had been born on the island of Jamaica, then Dutch, probably a year before Bolivar, of a colored mother and an aristocratic white father, a fact which may be believed but cannot be proved. He had left his home and his own colored wife very young and had, in Venezuela, succeeded in embarking on a love affair with a beautiful white girl from one of those good families whose privileges he as a colored man was determined to claim for himself. Miranda, always on the lookout for young, and more especially foreign, talents, and free of all prejudices as he was, had discovered him, made him an officer, and even raised

him to the rank of colonel. This had won him, beyond his own fall and death, the devotion of an ever-grateful heart. Marino, dictator of Cumaná at twenty-five, raised Piar to the rank of general and soon became dependent on the outstanding gifts of the elder officer. Bolivar, who knew both, was already drawing his troubled conclusions in the distance.

When, after Bolivar's last landing at Cumaná, the campaign of necessity shifted eastward from the northeast cape, Piar and Brion had sailed up the Orinoco to attack the Spaniards in the rear. They had, in doing so, succeeded in taking the province of Guaira, and with it its capital Angostura, a town of 10,000 inhabitants, lying in a strategically important position as a port of transshipment on the hills above the river. Bolivar, who arrived after Piar, seems to have offended the susceptible colored general by omitting his name in a proclamation.

Long party struggles lay behind. For during Bolivar's repeated absences on the islands, not only the fighting but also the attempts at a constitution had gone forward, each of the three or four leaders standing up before a congress and attempting to legalize his power. During that time, and even now, Piar had made common cause with Bolivar's rival Marino. Among these little dictators, robber chieftains, liberators, or whatever else they may be called, there may have been men who could stand up to Bolivar as soldiers; certainly none showed any ability as a statesman. Yet that very fact gave Bolivar the legitimate and Napoleonic right not only to liberate his country by the sword, but to organize it by his brain. His youth, his education, the whole thinking part of his nature raised him into the sphere of the statesman. While the other leaders were born soldiers aiming at permanent power in the state based on victory in war, Bolivar was the born statesman, merely using the soldier as an alien instrument by which to reach his great goal. Hence it was with satisfaction that he saw his rivals come to grief when they made their attempts at congresses and constitutions.

Bolivar's spirit, however, was of the very kind to make his rivals hate him. Was it for this that they had suffered distress

and want in the siege of so important a place as Angostura—where, at the end, a cat cost three dollars—for a traitor and fugitive to appear and steal the fruits of victory with his speeches and manifestoes? What right had he to demand anything of Piar, considering that Piar had been promoted by Marino, who was independent? What right had he to announce, or at any rate prepare, elections, considering that Marino had not been able to carry them through and that the few members of his congress had dispersed again. That “nomad republic,” as Bolivar is said to have called it, was not good enough for the Creole gentleman who did nothing but coin fine phrases and run away in the hour of danger.

When Bolivar reached Angostura, he learned of the jealousy of the victorious Piar. As soon as he set to work to turn chaos into the small beginnings of a state, he at once stood out as a master among his rivals. “I was in despair,” he wrote, “as long as I saw my country without a constitution, without laws and courts of justice, and led only by flags.” He therefore in all haste appointed a council of state; for its president, only Brion or his friend Zea seemed devoted enough—not Piar. He also nominated three ministers with Venezuela in his mind all the time. Later, he called this performance, carried out with skepticism and irony at the end of the world among half-illiterates, a piece of bravado, “in which I not merely declared the independence of Venezuela, but also challenged Spain, Europe, and the world. At that time I had hardly a bit of land and no army, and simply turned a few soldiers and officials into a council of state.”

Piar may have seen through the situation, but he can hardly have reckoned with Bolivar’s determination, for while he compared him to Napoleon, he always did so with irony. Piar’s resentment against his white rival, his passionate desire to equal him, and his hatred of him were known to Bolivar; he regarded a reconciliation as impossible. Piar’s hatred led him to seek a way to annihilate Bolivar, or at any rate his power. Hence he left the town in which a first form of order was being established

by the state council, declaring that he wished to leave the army and retire to the island of Margarita. Hardly had he gone, however, when he joined forces with Bermudez and other enemies of Bolivar, and carried off a quantity of gold which he had collected as taxes.

The moment had come for Bolivar to act. He sent troops after Piar, had him captured, tried, sentenced, and shot.

One is tempted to say, paradoxically enough, that this event was no less important for Bolivar than for Piar. It shows the ruler in him breaking through. Up till then, he had been so hampered by Rousseau and humanism that, as a man of action, he was not always victorious over his feelings and principles. He had found little difficulty in shooting a Spaniard or even in killing prisoners where his own had been killed; that was the enemy outside, he had to be destroyed. But it took Bolivar years to counter the enemy within the gates, to overthrow the fellow countryman who was pursuing the same goal. In the one case the prize was glory, and for that no sacrifice was too heavy, but in the other, there was ambition, which the thinker in him struggled to strangle. It may be that this struggle with a morality practiced according to classical models had till then cost him and his country so many sacrifices and perhaps the victory. If Bolivar had not abhorred Machiavelli, as he repeatedly declared, America might have been liberated sooner.

A nature so divided against itself, however, could not silence all inward protests at one blow. When Bolivar, after years of striving against his rivals, first took one of them prisoner and charged him with high treason in his new law court, he realized to the full how shifting was the boundary between law and force in a condition of semianarchy. He learned what it was to condemn a general who had rendered great services to freedom and who, for the time being, possessed as many or as few revolutionary rights as himself. Bolivar had moods of misgiving, and wrote: "My personal wish would be for the court to find a way of satisfying the rigor of the law and the dignity of the state, while al-

lowing the services of the accused to speak for themselves. I shall be an unhappy man if the court pronounces sentence of death, and there is no clear way before me save to execute it."

His action, however, was directed to that very goal, and rightly so. The question was not whether Bolivar's formal rights to supreme power were much better founded than those of his prisoner and rival, but whether a sinister example of the kind would move the discontented officers to decide at last for obedience, without which liberty could not, in the long run, be maintained. By thus intervening and acting among his comrades for the first and last time with a hand of iron, Bolivar, at thirty-four, literally saved the country. As his friend O'Leary wrote later, he actually took his authority at the time from the free decision of his second in command to obey him, in the same way as the kings of Europe had received the same power from the free obedience of the feudal lords.

It was not only at the time, but later in historical retrospect, that Bolivar realized his intervention to have been a turn in the tide. "It was a master stroke of policy," he said later in confidence, "which disconcerted all the rebels, brought them all under my orders, and prevented civil war. Only then could I found Colombia. Never was a death more useful and politic, and more deserved too." The effect was so overwhelming that Marino, whom Bolivar spared only because he was less dangerous, immediately fled as far as Trinidad, and there wrote a long letter of apology and submission.

Bolivar's inward distress during the trial infected the witnesses. Piar himself would not believe in it, and laughed at the doctor who visited him the day before his execution. He then asked to see Bolivar. Bolivar refused. Then Piar understood, reeled, recovered himself, and died the next day like a hero. Bolivar issued the following manly and wise army order:

"Soldiers! Yesterday was a day of mourning for my heart. General Piar was shot for treason, conspiracy, and desertion. A lawful and just tribunal has pronounced judgment. The general had rendered the Republic signal services, but he planned not

only a republic, but anarchy as well. With one hand he dug the grave of the republic, to bury in it the life, happiness, and honor of its brave defenders, our sons, husbands, and fathers. Heaven is watching over your welfare and the government. Your father, your leader, who was always with you in hardship, danger, and victory, trusts you. Trust him, for he loves you as his sons."

XI

INTO this dissension the enemy burst with a great flourish of trumpets, recalling the quarreling leaders to their common task. By that time the Spaniards had won back the major part of the country, and what the revolutionaries were doing, together or apart, was merely to harass them by guerrilla warfare. The year 1818 was full of battles in favor of the Spaniards, and no wonder, for the aristocratic and especially the wealthy sections of society, who even then loved their property more than freedom, were giving the Spaniards money, horses, and arms, the ladies their jewelry, and were exerting moral pressure on the thousands in their service. Anything seemed better to them than the insecurity and provisional anarchy inseparable from revolution. General Morillo issued stringent orders against desertion; any man catching a deserter was exempted from service; any village from which a man had gone over to the enemy had to provide arms, uniforms, and a substitute. Since Morillo, a serious-minded and intelligent man, had been in command on the Spanish side, the liberators had good reason to fear the enemy, even when he was not 25,000 strong, with more to come from Spain. Bolivar said later: "They proceeded with a caution verging on cowardice. Discipline is the soul of the enemy troops, courage of ours."

This time, too, Bolivar's plans, hopes, and vows swelled with his defeats. He was, as one of his enemies said later, more formidable in bad fortune than in good. Here again we get an insight into the high-strung and sensitive character of a man who

supported hardship not by healthy habit, but who took it upon himself as a kind of sporting challenge, and thus became stronger than nature had made him. Now he looked away over rivers and mountains to the other parts of the continent and wrote: "If we are going to liberate the new world, we must dismember its body!" While he lost all the land along the Orinoco, he drew fresh courage from the magnificent passage of the Andes by the Argentine general, San Martín, and fresh hopes from the conquest of Chile by the English admiral, Lord Cochrane. He sent a prophetic message to La Plata: "The Republic of Venezuela, today in mourning, offers you its brotherhood. When it has won its laurels and destroyed the last of its oppressors, it will summon a congress under the device: 'The Union of South America.' "

At the same time he sent to New Granada a small troop of men with an appeal which started off in the same bold fashion: "Granadans! Morillo's army has ceased to exist! Other armies sent to his relief have been destroyed. The Spanish Empire has exhausted its boundless resources and all its reserves against a handful of almost naked men fired with enthusiasm. Spain is approaching her end. Our corsairs are destroying her trade. Her national spirit is undermined by taxation, inquisitions, and despotism. The day of America has come. No human power can check the course of things foreordained by eternal providence. Unite with your brothers of Venezuela. March with me to liberate yourselves as once you marched to liberate Venezuela. The sun will not complete its revolution without seeing in our country the altars raised to it by freedom. Headquarters, Angostura. August 15, 1818, Year VIII of Independence."

Behind these pompous phrases there was nothing but the will of a man who, even as he wrote them, lacked everything. In a very similar tone he wrote a warning to King Ferdinand. Yet the declaration, as his adjutant wrote later, "which was mere bombast, scored a great moral success both inside and outside of the country among all who did not know the truth."

At the same time, Bolívar tried to stiffen his forces with for-

eign officers. Through Brion's money and his own connections he succeeded in enlisting 300 in London, and then in bringing over 1000 Englishmen, together with other officers. Soon afterwards he obtained the services of an enthusiastic Irish officer from La Plata. This was the man who arrived with his men on the island of Margarita, looked in vain for the General, went further, saw the Spanish flag, went further, landed in Jamaica, and finally in Cartagena, whereupon a great dispute arose as to whose orders he was under. Six thousand men from Great Britain alone joined Bolivar bit by bit. This foreign help seemed such a grave matter to the enemy that he addressed a proclamation to them, inciting them to desert: "Englishmen! You now know the man whom you, in England, compared to Washington. You have now seen the hero of that wretched republic, his troops, his generals, and the madmen who form his government. See how you have been deceived."

At that time a large number of mercenaries and adventurers came from Europe to join Bolivar, some to get back to the fine campaigning life which had died out with Napoleon, others seeking a new oppressor, now that the greatest had abdicated. A nephew of ex-King Joseph Bonaparte, a nephew of Kosciusko, a son of Murat, a Prince Ypsilanti, a son of the dictator of Mexico, all met around Bolivar, reflecting in their rapid comings and goings the ups and downs of European sympathies.

During this year of weakness and menace, Bolivar the politician endeavored in every way to supplant Bolivar the general. He founded a weekly review, wrote anonymous articles in it, and at the same time spread it abroad in the English press that he wanted peace with the Spanish people and war only with the existing Spanish government. When at the same time he tried to raise a loan, the narrowness of his circumstances is revealed by the fact that he offered £300 for the negotiation, like a factory owner seeking a mortgage. He was, of course, aiming at an armistice, and after a successful skirmish, he wrote boldly to the Spanish general: "I offer you an amnesty in the name of the Republic of Venezuela. I would even pardon King Ferdinand if he

would yield. Profit by our leniency and make up your minds." Soon afterwards he again suffered defeat.

At this time he was obliged to remain in bed with fever for a fortnight. He lay in his little room at Angostura, ill and without resources, setting forth his present plans in a proclamation to the Old World: "Seven points to prove that Venezuela has been bleeding for liberty for eight years, and that the other great powers should at last invite Spain to make her peace with the young Republic."

When he was in normal health in the field with his men, his life was still more unsure. He lay sleeping alone in his tent on the savanna, his adjutant having gone off dancing. A dispatch rider came to report that the enemy was two miles off. "Fearing that he would surprise me at night, I gave orders for the bivouac to be changed. I sent men out to reconnoiter. Meanwhile I lay down again in my hammock. My adjutant came back and lay down on the floor; he came in very quietly. I called to him to tell him to go to the chief of staff and hurry on our departure. He had only gone a few steps when Santander, the chief of staff, asked in a loud voice close by where I was. The adjutant told him; Santander came galloping up to report that everything was ready. I put on my boots in my hammock. Santander was speaking to me, the adjutant standing by, when a burst of firing was directed on us. In the darkness we could distinguish nothing. Santander cried: 'The enemy!' We hurried away across country, without our horses; the darkness saved us. Someone had shown them the way." Later, Bolivar tried to get a horse, but the officer he asked refused to give him one. He then found another. Two weeks later he wrote to a general to get his own back, with an exact description of it.

This confused affair, which petered out in the darkness, is completed by a plan for Bolivar's assassination; in a hand-to-hand fight he was thrown from his horse and believed to be killed. How unpopular he was in those days we can see by the testimony of a friend: "How few can say that they never hated Bolivar in the years 1817-1819!" These sinister words reveal the

persistent distrust his inferiors felt toward him and go together with the almost total absence of testimonies of genuine friendship.

No. Although in a general way Bolivar did not inspire fear, like Napoleon he was all the same not the man to inspire the love of other men, probably because he remained the *grand seigneur* among the upstarts of his corps of officers. Though from time to time he ate raw meat with his men, as Caesar ate his barley soup, he was obliged, in these early years at any rate, to impress them with his horsemanship, which formed the one link between himself as a man of breeding and his totally uneducated soldiers. Once when his adjutant Ibarra, a man of gigantic stature, saddled a huge horse for himself and a small one for Bolivar, then sprang in a single bound into the saddle in full view of the *llaneros*, Bolivar noticed a faint smile on their lips as they looked at his slight figure standing by. He took a step back, leaped, fell short, and slipped off, while the horse kicked out at him. He limped off and made another attempt, only to fail again. All were laughing; Ibarra whispered to him to give it up. At the third attempt, Bolivar succeeded. There was great applause. That leap was as good as a battle won.

It may be that he attracted men so little because he attracted women so much. There were and are hundreds of anecdotes on the subject, but very few documents like the following: "My love to Bernardina. I am tired of writing to her and getting no answer. Tell her that I am unmarried and that I am glad she is too. Also that I was never unfaithful to her."

A man capable of writing in such a tone was separated by his very way of life from his *llaneros*, to whom one woman was as good as another. They could hardly fail to feel more akin to one who came from their midst, such as General Páez, a completely uneducated mestizo, though of the blond type. Vigorous and bold, he had run away as a boy, been humiliated by mulattoes, and was filled with deep hatred of everything Spanish. Seven years Bolivar's junior, he had early fought his way up to a high position. After the death of Boves, he had succeeded in

winning over to the republican side the *llaneros* Boves had led against it. To him, as to Boves, his real homeland was the savannas, and like Boves, he nevertheless fired the savannas to drive the enemy off by flame. Soon, with his centaurs, he had got the upper hand of several provinces, but he was clearly cast in a finer mold than Boves, while his ambition stretched even into the domain of culture. There seems to have been a connection between this double-sidedness of his nature and the epileptic fits from which he suffered. He had strange habits, such as keeping a hunchback Negro to carry his lance for him, and tolerating in him the outspokenness kings suffered in their fools. The English officers were more attached to him than to Bolivar.

Bolivar needed this General Páez, and made very careful and precise inquiries about him before their first meeting, which was to lead to a permanent connection, sometimes friendly, sometimes hostile. He saw Páez watching with sidelong glances how the English officers used their knives and forks. So powerful a leader naturally only obeyed Bolivar as long as it suited him. When he and his horsemen were needed on the Apure, he had plenipotentiary powers conferred on him by a miniature congress at San Fernando, and Bolivar was left in the lurch. Bolivar marched 1000 miles to obtain Páez' invaluable cavalry. When they reached the river at the point where the boats were to be waiting, he cried: "In God's name, where are the boats?"

"Over there."

On the other side there lay Spanish boats to prevent the crossing. Páez swam across with 50 men, fell on the enemy, got possession of the boats, and brought them back to Bolivar.

In dealing with a man of this kind, whose feelings for Bolivar vacillated all his life and who in the end succeeded him, Bolivar had to behave with the utmost adroitness if he did not wish to see him and his cavalry turned against himself. "At that time," he said later, "all we wanted was men of courage. Every man was welcome, whatever his origin, provided that he was a good fighter. Gold was useless, and I had none to give. The only thing to fire them was rank or titles. Hence we had generals and offi-

cers of all classes—Negroes, mestizos, mulattoes, white men—most of them without any claim except that they had killed their toll of Spaniards.”

Bolívar was so skillful in his dealings with men that he could command respect even when he had nothing behind him. When the English Colonel Wilson, at a military parade, proposed to General Páez to proclaim him chief and then to support him with English troops, Páez at first agreed, but soon had misgivings and finally confessed the whole plan to Bolívar, who first arrested, then banished the Englishman, both with Páez' consent.

That Páez, who was at the time both extremely powerful and extremely jealous, should thus submit is another proof of the effect of the trial which had led to the death of Piar. At the same time, however, in a more general way, we can see in the incident the effect of the aura which surrounds superior men at critical moments. While the fear of the colored for the white man doubtless played some part in it, it remains a splendid instance of that handling of men which is the supreme quality of every politician.

XII

IN Angostura, not far from the river, there is still shown today a little house with a seven-windowed front; its importance is due less to the first Congress of twenty-nine deputies which met there than to the first speech which Bolívar made before it. The constitution Bolívar wished to lay before it, the sum of his philosophy of state, was not conceived in the quiet armchair of the thinker, but dictated in the jungle and mangrove swamps, to an accompaniment of monkeys and parrots; his long speech was prepared on the boat as he sailed up the Orinoco to obtain Páez' services for himself and the Congress.

He had succeeded; Páez had been satisfied with a fine title and the command of all the cavalry. Thus safe for the moment from reverses in his own camp, Bolívar had summoned the Con-

gress to delude his country with a show of unity and to prove to the outside world that a new state was coming into being.

In actual fact, this Congress was a fiction, a dream, for the country it was supposed to represent was for the most part occupied by the enemy. When his candidate was elected President, it was done under some sort of pressure, namely by a vote taken in the presence of the actual dictator, who needed an honest, weak, and devoted man at the head of his government. Zea had been guilty of the crime of studying natural history at Bogotá, where it was prohibited, and had later been set at liberty in Madrid and made director of the Botanical Gardens. His face, the face of a philosopher, was enough to reveal him as an impractical and benevolent thinker. He also brought back to Bolivar the atmosphere and memory of Humboldt, who had helped his colleague on his adventurous flight back home. Men who combined such education with such force of character were rare among Bolivar's fellow countrymen at the time, and yet he needed many of them, and as quickly as possible, to fill the most important posts in his new government. Later he called the whole a funeral of his enemies. "Never," an English colonel wrote home at the time, "has General Bolivar acted more skillfully and done the Spaniards so much harm as by calling together this Constituyente. He has shown himself to be a great man and a good citizen, he has awakened a national spirit and will be able to carry out the liberation by rapid moves."

How far away it all seems! How faded the names, how dull the motions and debates! As empty as the house in which all this history crumbled into dust. All that has remained is Bolivar's speech, because it treats of the ancient problems of state and society, of the most precious possessions of mankind—freedom and law. It took three hours, and we may be sure that the twenty-nine lawyers, teachers, and officers in the little hall did not fall asleep. Yet this great speech, apart from its immediate consequences, was the monologue of a thinker and ruler who, as he spoke, conjured up an invisible audience of classical philosophers and historians, and who, in his mind's eye, saw

through the window, not the Orinoco, but the Tiber or the Seine, while in front of him there sat the wise men who had studied the state and whom he had studied in his turn, from Cicero and Seneca to Montesquieu and Rousseau.

"Happy the man," Bolivar began, "who summons, in the name of the army, a national assembly, the expression and instrument of the will of the people. Rigorous necessity alone, supported by the deliberate will of the people, has forced me to undertake the difficult and onerous duties of a dictator of the Republic, a charge which I now return to you, the representatives of the people." In the style of the great revolution, he then proceeds to contrast the weakness of his individual person with the force of events, holds up his actions for public judgment, and desires "rather to have merited the name of a good citizen than that of Liberator, which was bestowed on me by Venezuela, or Peacemaker, which I owe to New Granada, or than anything the whole world could give me. The persistence of a single man in power has often put an end to a democratic regime. The crucial point is that elections must be repeated, for nothing is more dangerous than the permanent domination of one man. The people acquire the habit of obedience as he of command. Then force and tyranny are born. I take the liberty of reading to you my scheme for a constitution. I know well," he continued with cold irony to the twenty-nine mediocrities in front of him, "that your wisdom stands in no need of my counsel, and that my sketch must seem to you mistaken and impracticable. Yet perhaps the warning of a citizen may make you aware of hidden dangers."

He then passes on to a superb review of the eight years of revolution, compares them with the decline of the Roman Empire, speaks of the suppression of intelligence by the Spanish rule, and the resulting aimlessness of all personal instincts, of ambition, intrigue, treachery to the fatherland—all of them faults committed by their friends and the twenty-nine men sitting in front of him. He then continues, and it might be a philosopher of state speaking in 1941: "If a people so perverted demands its

freedom, it will soon lose it again. Freedom, Rousseau teaches us, is a sweet but indigestible nourishment, and our fellow citizens will have to strengthen their minds before they are able to digest that wholesome food. Nature endows us with the desire for freedom at our birth, yet men, whether from apathy or in-born inclination, suffer the chains laid upon them. It is a terrible truth that it costs more strength to maintain freedom than to endure the weight of tyranny. Many nations, past and present, have borne that yoke, few have made use of the happy moments of freedom, and have preferred to relapse with all speed into their errors. For it is peoples rather than systems which lead to tyranny. The habit of subjection makes them less susceptible to the beauty of honor and progress, and they look unmoved on the glory of living in liberty under self-made laws. But are there any democratic governments which have combined power, prosperity, and long life? Was it not rather aristocracy and monarchy which created the great and durable empires? Is there any empire older than China? What republic ever lasted longer than Sparta or Venice? Did the Roman Empire not conquer the world and the French monarchy last for fourteen hundred years? Who is stronger than England? And yet all these were aristocracies or monarchies."

After having praised the pure democracy of Venezuela, while describing it as unserviceable, in spite of its sanction by the Congress, he attacks its federalistic basis, which was suitable to North, but not to South America, and sets forth all the points of difference which had been overlooked. "Our morale was not yet sufficiently established to bear the benefits of a purely parliamentary government, and all the more so as it had been established for saints. The Gospel, the moral teachings of Jesus, which were sent to us from above, did not diminish the terrors of Byzantium, and all America preferred to cast itself into the flames rather than abide by that book of peace and morality."

While Bolivar, in what follows, emphasizes the equality of the rights men are born to, he discriminates between their capacities, which cannot be leveled down by education and laws. That

is why even Solon's classical republic of Athens lasted barely ten years, while Sparta was maintained by its two kings; Pisistratus and Pericles, both usurpers, achieved more than all Solon's fine laws.

All this led up to Bolivar's ideal, England, where he had with his own eyes seen the incomparable example of the rule of the lords regulated by the King and the people. For that reason, his new constitution proposed a hereditary senate as "the basis, the bond of union, and the soul of our Republic. For since the individual opposes the mass, and the mass opposes authority, there must be a neutral organization which will always resist the aggressor. To achieve genuine independence, that organization requires neither the government nor the people; it must be hereditary. The first members must be elected by the Congress, their sons and successors will be most carefully trained from childhood up. No new nobility! But the liberators of the country have the right to power in the land they have created. This upper house will stand above all conflicts, like the rainbow after the storm, having as little to fear from the government as from the people."

Having then referred to the three pledges laid upon the King of England by the Cabinet, the House of Lords, and the House of Commons, he demands more, not less, rights for the head of the Republic, expressing the difference in classic phrases, which reflect equally his culture, the power of his thought, and the bitterness of his experience.

"In a republic the executive must be strongest, since everything conspires against it; in a monarchy, the legislature, since everything conspires for the monarch. Among the people, reverence for the monarch is almost a superstition. The brilliance of his throne, the support he means to the aristocracy, the wealth of an ancient dynasty, and the fraternity of kings among themselves reinforce his authority. Hence the head of a republic, who lacks all these things, must be granted greater rights. He stands alone in the midst of society, exposed on all sides to the onslaughts of public opinion, to the interests and passions of a

community torn between its desire to rule and its desire to evade rule; he is an athlete faced with a body of other athletes. Unless he is invested with all the resources of the executive, he falls into the abyss, and his heirs are anarchy, usurpation, and tyranny."

Bolivar then proceeds to show the necessity of providing democracy with as firm a background as possible; that is, of restricting freedom, "for only the angels can live in freedom, peace, and happiness, since each of them is sovereign. Men cannot. Let us therefore clip the wings of our demands, let us abandon federalism, which is not suited to us, let us unite all power in the person of the President. This is no chimera. All nations have striven for freedom, some with weapons and some with laws, and yet they moved from anarchy to despotism and from despotism to anarchy." Above all in Venezuela, the meeting place of so many races from three continents, those races should not be segregated, but mingled. Morality and knowledge, the two poles of the Republic, must first be developed in all races. When Bolivar then passes to the repeated demand for the liberation of the slaves, the whole passion of his idealistic youth breaks through his political moderation, and he cries:

"I leave to your sovereignty, gentlemen of the legislature, the approval or rejection of my orders and decrees. But I beg you to confirm the complete liberation of the slaves as I would beg for my life or the life of the Republic."

Then suddenly, without warning, in the closing words of his speech, he brings forward the great plan he had had in mind for years, namely the union of Venezuela with New Granada. His past, which had brought him, as Liberator, from west to east, from a foreign country into his own, merges into the plans for the future which were to take him from east to west, from his own into a foreign country. "If, in my mind's eye, I wish to survey this huge country in its union, I must rise to sublime heights, from which sublime vistas open. It then seems to me that I can see my fatherland in the heart of the world, along vast rivers, between two oceans which nature first separated,

then linked by long streams. I see it yielding up the gold and silver of its mountains to the four corners of the earth, its healing plants to the weak in the Old World, and its precious secrets to the scholar. . . . Gentlemen of the legislature, begin your labors. Mine are ended."

The greatness of such a speech, both as a plan of action and as a work of the imagination, cannot be measured by its immediate effect; on the contrary, it shows Bolivar once again as a Don Quixote. How little could his twenty-nine hearers in the small house on the Orinoco understand of it! Most of them distrusted the man who made it; they adopted neither the hereditary senate nor the lifelong presidency, but senators for life and a president for four years. Bolivar was elected President. If, however, we think of his two aims, power and stability, he had actually achieved nothing, for neither was attained. He could not fail to realize that for the moment he had thought, schemed, and spoken in vain.

But Bolivar the statesman, the politician whom bitter experience had made cunning, never ceased to think of glory; before his eyes there always stood the historian who would one day describe and judge him. His view of posterity in a century to come was clearer and at the same time more ardent than his view of the morrow. Many of his late confessions show that he knew the exquisite joy of historical prescience, and that, considering it all in all, it was that joy alone which enabled him to bear the blows and disappointments to which he would otherwise have succumbed in the coming years. While feeling and calling himself Don Quixote, he had Don Quixote's faith, and although less single-minded than he, he nevertheless kept that faith till the end.

These feelings were the fount of freshness and joy in action which mark his increasing efforts to turn his ideas into reality. Apart from the wealth of ideas in his speech, which even today, a hundred years later, provides material for comparison with current events, the most astonishing thing in it is his decision to abandon to the course of events, immediately after its founda-

tion, the new state to which he had given first freedom, then a constitution. The very legislator and philosopher of state who had expressed his thoughts from the speaker's stand to the twenty-nine deputies set out three months later to cross the mountains and bring freedom to the neighbor state. He had obtained freedom from it; he now went to fuse it with his homeland into a new creation.

XIII

HISTORY constantly repeats the spectacle of the great amateur showing a boldness and enterprise beyond that of the expert simply because his resolution is not weakened by full knowledge of all the difficulties in his path. Bolivar, who first saw a gun fired at twenty-eight, led at thirty a motley troop of adventurers over a thousand miles of steppe and mountain. Within six months, that troop of volunteers had grown steadily from a few hundred to a few thousand men; it was with the same rapidity that Bolivar, turning his daily experience and knowledge of special conditions to account, had progressed to a general notion of the art of warfare, by opportunity and chance, and without any real foundation. That is why, to this very day, most critics of Bolivar have refused to admit his knowledge of generalship while granting his genius for doing the right thing at every critical moment by instinct and experience.

It is here that we can see how richly receptive and imaginative Bolivar's nature was. For by realizing, with the human curiosity and sensitiveness of a poet, the value of a weapon or the character of a tribe, the reaction to fear or the effect of a communiqué, the consequences of a storm or the causes of a desertion, he was enabled, from campaign to campaign, to attain without study a knowledge facilitated by the recurrence of similar conditions in a given climate and people. Hence when, in 1819, just six years after his first march of liberation across the mountains, he set out on another in the opposite direction; the amateur had be-

come something of an expert, and the brigand chieftain a general.

We see him at the beginning of the year, while he was organizing the Congress and the government, elaborating in incessant orders the details of the troops he was soon to stand in need of. How to establish each arm, whether to draw up cavalry in squares, in close formation, or in single ranks with wings, how many outposts he needs to secure his position, with concrete examples of his experience at this place or that, what ruses to use against spies, how to keep the troops in ignorance of their destination—and the whole in a single day in two letters to the same general. Then he had to consider the pros and cons of his large proportion of foreign soldiers, to calculate that it would be better to place them in the advance guard, since they were less familiar with local conditions than the natives, or try to work out weather conditions for weeks and months ahead at high altitudes in a country innocent of statistics. In an autograph postscript to a dispatch, he orders the messenger, “should he be caught, to throw the dispatch into the water, or himself with it.”

And all the time he was burdened with a government to which he had ceded half his rights, and which he, who had once commanded, now had to request—for instance, that General Marino should be recalled to the staff, since he could not agree with Bermudez. Páez, in his turn, was sowing disaffection among the troops till just before they marched, and had to be carefully kept at a distance.

Through it all, however, Bolivar, as he prepared the government and the campaign, lived on in the classical world which gave him both warnings and examples all his life. Once he called himself stronger than Cato the inflexible, since he had renounced power, or he would quote Midas, or adopt the tactics of Fabius, “although my character is so different from his, since he was cautious and I am reckless.” Yet another time he complains of a weakness “for which Montesquieu blames Pompey—namely that I seek confirmation of my actions from others. But

since I have realized this, I am trying to improve"—a statement that would of itself be enough to stir our sympathy for a man at the summit of his success.

On the other hand, in this enterprise and at this period, he seems to have had Napoleon less in mind than later. At that time Napoleon had reached the nadir of his glory, for he was still alive, and legend first began to form about him after his lonely death. Indeed, in this second march across the mountains, Bolivar had no comparison save his first, and realized the inner motive of both to be the same impasse, from which only a bold, or rather a reckless, move could save him and the cause. Moreover, a victory before the beginning of the march had more or less opened the way across the arid steppes. It was less the Spaniards than the elements he had to fear. That was why great haste was imperative this time, for he could only work by surprise tactics. Within two months he had rushed across two thirds of the continent with his 4000 men, the time a courier would have taken to carry the news of the advance to New Granada. It was at that time that he pronounced the grotesque axiom: "Where a goat can pass, so can an army." And yet, a hundred years later, the French general and expert, Mangin, described Bolivar's crossing of the Cordilleras as "the most magnificent episode in the history of war."

It was Bolivar the horseman who accomplished this, the greatest physical feat of his life. In his fancy uniform, a blue tunic with red facings and gold buttons, with an English helmet on his head, he is said to have been recognizable to his men from far off, chiefly by his white horse. Soon water and dirt had cost him, like everybody else, his finery, but he always tended with great care his fine boots which, black as his carefully knotted cravat, accompanied him, like his horse, through all his campaigns, through five countries, for fifteen years, till his death. His soldiers, however, are described as so ragged as to have been almost naked, one in a gold helmet, another in a hat with feathers soon doomed to droop, some in breeches, others in boots and spurs.

On this march Bolivar was ubiquitous, encouraging his men

to speak, imploring and exhorting them. At times he would take a tired man up behind him on his horse, and he lent a hand at every river crossing. A German soldier writes: "The four corners of a cow's hide were bound by rings to the middle, so that it formed a kind of round pail. A man cowered in the hide. The swift current and the equally swift tautening of the rope kept this improvised boat over water." In this way they marched and walked through water for nine days until they found what they most needed, namely salt.

No one can give a more vivid description of it all than an eyewitness. Hence we can turn to the unimaginative, or at any rate dispassionate, O'Leary, whose sharp-featured face is guarantee against any exaggeration.

"The first sight of the wonderful mountains caused astonishment and fear among the *llaneros*; they could not imagine a country so different from their savannas. Their wonder grew with every climb, for the summit they believed the highest was always the first stage of a yet higher one, till in the end the highest of all was separated from earth by cloud and mist. These men, accustomed on their plains to cross torrential rivers, to tame wild horses, to fight the buffalo, the crocodile, and the tiger with their naked bodies, were terrified by the alien scenery. Rendered desperate by so much hardship, they came to the conviction that only a madman, on such an enterprise, could resist the cold that shook their bodies. Thus it came about that many deserted.

"The mules carrying arms and munitions collapsed under the weight. Not many horses survived the fifth day, and the carcasses abandoned by the advance guard blocked the way of those following. Day and night the rain poured down, with the altitude the cold became more rigorous, and the ice water, to which they were not accustomed, caused an outbreak of dysentery. Accidents were the order of the day, as though to bring Bolivar's hopes to nought. Yet he was the only man to remain calm under reverses which would have broken down a soul less great. By his presence and example he encouraged the troops; he spoke of

the glory awaiting them, of the plenty in the land they were to liberate. The men listened eagerly and redoubled their efforts. On June 27th the advance guard dispersed an outpost of 300 men at Paya.

“At four places the way was completely blocked by huge boulders and fallen trees, or undermined by the incessant rain. The men, who had been given rations of raw meat for four days, threw them away because they could hardly carry their rifles on the steep slopes. At that time the last horses fell. Very late at night the army bivouacked at the foot of Mount Pisba, at nearly 13,000 feet. A terrible night. Nobody could get any warmth, for there was not so much as a hut, and the rain, with hail and an icy wind, put out the fires they had attempted to light. As the men were in rags, and mostly came from the hot plains, their sufferings may be left to the imagination. The next day the troops crossed the plateau, gloomy and treeless. The icy wind cost many a life that day; men fell marching and many died within a few minutes. Some of them succeeded in restoring some warmth to their half-frozen bodies by beating themselves.

“That day I noticed a group of men not far from where I was sitting exhausted. To my question, one replied that the wife of a man in the rifle battalion—for a large number of women had come with us—was in labor. The next morning I saw the woman marching on with the rearguard of the battalion, her newborn babe in her arms. After its birth she had marched two miles on one of the worst parts of the steep valley. On July 6th the division reached Socha, the first village in the province of Tunja. When the men saw the mountains behind them, their summits lost in mist and cloud, they swore of their own free will to conquer and die rather than retreat by the way they had come, which they dreaded more than the enemy.

“The General’s cares, however, increased as the hardships of the men lessened. Not a single horse had survived for the cavalry, the chests of provisions had in part been lost on the way because there were no more mules to carry them. The infantry were hard put to it to keep their powder dry in the torrential

rain. Most of their rifles were rusty. . . . The men were almost naked, we found the hospitals overflowing, the enemy was only a few days' march away. But Bolivar's grandeur of soul remained unshaken. He grew to new heights in all these difficulties, for he always discovered fresh resources. Then came the boundless astonishment of the Spaniards when they heard that an enemy army was in the land. They simply could not believe that Bolivar had undertaken such an operation in the rainy season, when people would hardly leave their homes."

The surprise had come off. It had been the crux of Bolivar's calculations, and with it he both weakened the enemy and inspired the Granadans. In the decisive battle at Boyacá, which took place immediately after the descent from the mountains, three thousand exhausted mountain climbers, with a 75 days' march behind them, defeated five thousand rested and well-equipped Spaniards, taking 1600 prisoners, at that time an unparalleled number. The Viceroy of Granada fled incontinently, leaving half a million silver dollars in the capital. Bogotá fell into Bolivar's hands with hardly a fight, and when he entered the city he was acclaimed for the second time with the name of Liberator.

The effect of the victory and the surprise was overwhelming. Thousands of Granadans rallied round him, more especially the authorities and all the other leaders. At a stroke, Bolivar had become the great and legitimate enemy of Spain. His first communiqué to his men, however, sounded like a poet's prophecy:

"From the lagoons at the mouth of the Orinoco to the rocky heights of the Andes where the Magdalena rises, you have taken fourteen provinces from the legions of the tyrants, from the robbers who wished to enslave America. They have been annihilated by the onrush of your weapons. When you set out on this incomparable campaign, there were not two hundred of you. Today, when there are thousands, all America will be the scene of your deeds. Yet that scene is still too small. North and south of this center of the world you will create a haven of liberty. Soon the capital of Venezuela will see you within its walls for

the third time. Our flags, side by side with those of the Argentine and Chile, will wave over the wealth of Peru. Lima will be the meeting place of all the liberators who are filling the New World with their glory."

Another four years, and it had actually come to pass. But even at the time, General Morillo realized the extent of his defeat, for he wrote to his minister in Madrid: "The traitor Bolivar at once occupied the capital. The disastrous end of the battle [at Boyacá, where Morillo was not present in person] has placed the entire kingdom and the vast resources of the densely populated and fertile lands in his hands; he can take from them everything he needs for the continuation of the war. For the rebels, and more especially their chief, are not given to scruples. They can count on the people; there is no law. In the advance, Bolivar's forces were swelled by our deserters, by malcontents and all sorts and conditions of men, so that he was, in the end, able to cast our forces into utter confusion." The words scruples and confusion betray the admiration of the enemy.

Bolivar felt that the moment had come for the union of the countries. He issued manifestoes adjuring both peoples in that sense, already addressing them as Colombians and demanding a national assembly. But as he marched victoriously northward, news arrived of intrigues against him in Angostura; he was to be court-martialed for having taken the army into a foreign country. With the *élan* he drew from every new danger, he at once decided to return to Angostura with a few men, to surprise it by appearing, not as a delinquent, but as a dictator.

XIV

BOLIVAR'S plan of uniting the two countries and even of joining a third to them, a thought he had had in mind for six years, was combined with another thought, which rulers have conceived before and after him, of a personal bond of union embodied in himself. If the two countries had been united for three centuries, and then perhaps liberated by two different men leading

two different armies, their separation would have caused no surprise. But that two separate colonies should unite in the course of their liberation was only possible as the result of a personal plan which, in its turn, could only be conceived by the liberator of both.

What had happened was astonishing enough. A Venezuelan, defeated and banished with his party, had conquered Venezuela with Granadan troops, had been again defeated and banished, had again returned and had liberated the Granadans with Venezuelan troops. The fact that the two countries had a common enemy was for them no reason for fusion. It had not even been possible to achieve unity of leadership and movement in the one country; it was hardly to be expected that it would come about in two countries so different in character and climate.

The political principle was clear, then and later—to continue the liberation of America southward; for that reason the northern countries had to be strengthened by union. Bolivar himself, however, would represent a higher authority as leader of the union. His personal history during the last eight years of his life strengthened his resolve to unite the two countries he served. In this sense the foundation of Colombia may be called the dream of one man.

The idea of honoring Columbus by its name had come to him years before—a genuinely poetic idea, born of an imagination dedicated to glory and hence paying its sacrifice to glory. Yet it was born too of the calculations of a realist, for Bolivar, in all truth, did the last thing expected of him at the time. He felt that the Venezuelans would only tolerate a foundation of the kind if undertaken from his own country. Hence, immediately after his triumphs in New Granada, he set out for, and within a few weeks was back at, Angostura, on the other side of the continent, where, in spite of all, he could not feel sure of his power in absence.

And in actual fact, the Congress he had called into being was accusing the General of having left his country's territory with the troops. There was nothing for it but surprise tactics. Hardly

had the news of his arrival in the west been received when Bolivar, like a ghost, was already back in the east. In the flying haste which, like a galloping horse, befitted the pace at which he lived, he now founded the new state of Colombia within a few days. Here he makes us think of a bell founder who works at his mold for months, but, when all is ready, casts his bell in an hour.

"Colombians!" he cried to the crowd. "I had to see whether you wished to bear that name, and so I call you Colombians!" And later: "The plan is great, for it will permit us to wipe out some of our guilt toward a great man by at last setting up a memorial to his name. Let us found a capital, Las Casas, and prove to the world that we have the right to be free and to pay honor to the benefactors of mankind. We do honor to ourselves in making his name immortal."

The new state, which united the Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador of today, comprised an area almost equaling that of Europe. Its first President was Bolivar. It is difficult now to guess the tenor of his secret thoughts in those days, yet his character makes it pretty certain, and the struggles of the next few years go to support the assumption, that he did not contemplate life-long power for himself as a kind of supreme functionary. For the time being, he saw himself issuing orders, not from a palace but from the field, moving on southward to liberate further tracts of the continent. His native impatience made him follow in the footsteps of Alexander; for a Caesar, he lacked marble coolness and patience.

It is true that the presidency he proposed to the Congress in laying his constitution before it was lifelong, with himself, of course, as its holder. Yet his impetuosity, that side of his nature which, ever pressing forward, could never be satisfied, made any kind of regular existence insufferable to him, though it should be the highest in the land. We can therefore have entire faith in him when, having been elected President for the duration of the war, he soon afterwards wrote to Santander: "The first day of peace will be the last day of my power. Nothing can shake my resolve. Though all the storms of heaven should break over my

head, though all the chasms of earth should open under my feet, though glory should enshrine my name and preserve it to remotest posterity, thus opening the gates of the paradise of my desires, I should resist, inflexible as Cato. If there is no way but flight, flight shall be my salvation." And he suddenly concludes his letter with a quite unusual figure of speech: "May the angels come winging to sing us litanies. I have spoken." The idea of flight shows us that he still had to keep a firm hand over himself in order to abide by Robinson's teachings.

The realization of that dream had put Bolivar in the best of spirits; his letters are seldom so gay, so sure of victory, so overflowing. Extracts from letters, most of them addressed to Santander, whose mission it was in the meantime to accustom the people to the union, testify to this confident, even playful mood, so rare in Bolivar's life.

"I have come here on the wings of the lightning and everything has happened according to plan. Zea is Vice-President of Colombia. I am using Arismendi in the east. Marino is ill; he will march west later, though I really do not know what to do with the creature. I leave here the day after tomorrow. It is Easter Eve, but we cannot lose a moment. I shall send 10,000 rifles to Granada, or I shall go mad. I shall send them within the month though the world should bar the way. Everything is safe, perfectly safe. I am exaggerating nothing. Everything I write is what is called the truth pure and simple. I speak to you candidly and from my heart. Your friend. . . ." "I have the fate of eighteen provinces in my hands and cannot play at ducks and drakes with them. In a general way, fate is blind. I have made myself clairvoyant. That is a good premise for a happy end to our affair. I may be mistaken, but I have more faith in my foresight than in all the prophecies of the saints. . . . As regards your misgivings—wipe them out. As regards the slaves—wipe that out. I never believed you refused anything to the army—wipe that out. As regards your resignation—wipe it out. We have discussed it three times. If you resign for a fourth, I shall sentence you to become President of Colombia."

Another time he writes, again to Santander, about a priest who had written equivocal pastoral letters: "I have three points to discuss with you today—Pater Cuervo, Pater Cuervo, Pater Cuervo. I have great respect for his cloth. But since his kingdom is not of this world, he should not meddle in things of this world. We must relieve his conscience. God approves of the creation of a government for the general welfare. Law is as different from force as the sacrifice from the sacrificer, as America from Spain. That is what priests should preach and anoint with their oil. So there has been a second pastoral letter? And an equivocal one." Autograph postscript: "Forgive all the nonsense in this letter. Some I dictated, some the secretary wrote on his own account. What a pastoral letter! I read it day and night, marveling at its awful beauties—a torrent of words and a drought of ideas."

"We can strike a good bargain with each other," he writes shortly afterwards to the same correspondent. "You send me the things I need, and I will pay you in hopes. By ordinary standards, you would be accounted the generous party. An error! The present is already past. What really belongs to human beings is the future. It is always more pleasant to live in the land of illusion, of appetites, and of fictitious desires. Let us balance up what you send me and I send you. Do you believe freedom can be bought with 60,000 pesos? Can glory and liberty be acquired for the mines of Cudinamarca? That is my mission today. Can you feel my mood? With all my heart—Bolivar."

To the same Santander, who wanted a house and asked for it instead of taking it: "I have no right to dispose of national property. But I can do more if you ask me for something worth while. It is cheap to render service to friends; it is not so cheap to reward merit with national property. Compared to that house in Córdoba, you can demand something of ten times its value. Remember that I am almighty as regards national property so long as there is no legislature. You understand me? Then tear up this letter and think of what I say."

At the same time he writes to a comrade: "To my eternal

friend. If I were as mad as Thomas Montillo, I would ask myself what answer could be given to his apology. Why, none, my friend. You are the same as ever, and I more so. Come here, so that we may embrace. If you need money, ask Don Domingo for twelve ounces of gold and come." Or again to Santander, quite suddenly, without warning: "I often look forward with great anxiety to the offspring of our great mother, revolution. What if the mountain should bear nothing but a mouse?"

In these letters we see Bolivar at some of his rare moments of happiness; it is as if he were a little drunk with joy, a mood that hardly ever reappears in his letters. The events and even the names we find in them are, for the most part, forgotten, but what moves our hearts, even today, a hundred years later, is the charm of a high-spirited nature which falls without warning from the bright laughter of victory into the gloom of disillusion and, at thirty-six, is still what it was as a youth in Paris. In his extravagant manifestoes, we can hear the truly Spanish grandiloquence of a victorious, superior, and mobile mind tempered by the grace of the French spirit. And the whole becomes still more enthralling when we know in advance that, hard on the heels of these moments of fulfillment, there come really tragic depressions, from which, for all the marvel of his career, he rarely issued. He knows himself that they are coming; the revolution—a mouse! Once more Don Quixote, but a Don Quixote with self-knowledge.

XV

IN addition to the romantic emotions inspired by the foundation of Colombia, Bolivar's high spirits, in 1820, had practical grounds, which one is tempted to regard as more important. Things were going extremely badly for the Spaniards, and Bolivar had the right to hope that he could force them to conclude peace and recognize the independence of America, a far more precious and probable thing than victory in battle.

The first thing he had done was to establish order within the

country. With his far superior forces, he had removed Arismendi, for the time being the last of his rebellious rivals, and banished him to the island of Margarita. Santander, in whom he believed he could place implicit confidence, was his deputy in New Granada; for the next ten years, Bolivar's most important letters were addressed to him. Without them we could form no real idea of the elder Bolivar. A Congress of the union was proclaimed; anybody not in favor of union was to be given a passport and the right of free emigration. Bolivar, back at Bogotá, was acclaimed with popular rejoicings by the name of Liberator which he was to retain for life.

At the same time the fruits of victory were ripening abroad. Europe, which had so often thwarted him and his predecessors, now made him a free gift in the form of a Spanish revolution which had broken out against Ferdinand's absolutism just as a great army of 25,000 men was embarking at Cadiz. Half of that army was intended for the subjection of the newly founded state of Colombia. There was nothing for General Morillo, who had long been awaiting the troops, but to make the advances which all despots make *in extremis*, instead of at the summit of their power. He proposed an armistice of a month to the Congress at Angostura and offered Bolivar the rank of a Spanish general!

The official refusal was unconditional. Yet friends of compromise raised their voices in both camps, and each camp was divided against itself. Morillo at first sought in vain to suppress the news, which soon spread over America, that the rebels in Spain had forced King Ferdinand to grant a liberal constitution, which the colonies were also to adopt. At this point there began that test of endurance on both sides which is the end of all protracted wars. Bolivar, as often happens with men of high-strung temperament, maintained his equanimity longer than the Spaniards and many of his own friends. He refused to adopt any kind of Spanish constitution. What he was determined to have, now as at the beginning of the revolution, was entire freedom, complete independence; he wanted Colombia. Even when he received his first letter addressed: "His Excellency the President of

the Republic"—the word Colombia, of course, was missing—from an officer sent to him by Spain, he maintained his uncompromising attitude.

And yet he was on the watch for an armistice, for, in face of a Spanish army still numbering 25,000, he felt his own situation and that of his little army so precarious that he wrote to Santander: "I am in a state of such suspense that I cannot sleep at night. I am afraid of a collision. I am afraid of hunger, sickness, poverty, and idleness among the troops. I am afraid of their becoming discontented if they remain inactive. But if we have to fight before our arms arrive, how are we going to make up for our losses?" At the same time he feared an alliance between France, Spain, and England. What he wanted was a respite, but the enemy was not to know that.

Later, he was blamed for having accepted an armistice instead of crushing the Spaniards then and there, and thus saving four more years of bloodshed. Even at the time, some members of the Congress turned against him for not having demanded the recognition of Colombia before and for having carried on the negotiations on his own account. This protest overlooked the disunion in the Congress itself, and the recognition which it, *de facto*, received at the time, although never with King Ferdinand's formal consent. Whether Bolivar, however, should have carried on the campaign instead of gaining six months' respite can only be judged by the outcome of the whole, and that was successful. Eight years later Bolivar explained his own motives in concluding the armistice:

"How falsely that famous meeting was judged! On my side, some refused to recognize a politician in me, but only a noble ass. Others decided that I was out for peace at any price. In reality I was never so politic and astute in my life. I won General Morillo over to my side, as I had beaten him before. At that time I was armed with a policy which I draped in a mantle of candor, good faith, confidence, and friendship. The whole was a mere pretext to show the world that Colombia was already negotiating on equal terms with Spain."

In all that led up to the armistice of 1820, Bolívar displayed all the arts of a great diplomat—reserve, self-confidence, adroitness, even bluff. In the first negotiations, which he handed over to Sucre, he seems to have laid all the emphasis on the humanitarian side: security of prisoners, exchange, no death penalty for deserters, protection of the population. Yet he had his answer to unsatisfactory proposals; it betrays the old fencer:

“When His Excellency received your letter today, he laid his pen aside and ordered me to return the following answer. It is the height of nonsense and absurdity to suggest that Colombia should submit to Spain, always the worst governed of all countries, and now the laughingstock of Europe and the horror of America. How are we ever to forget our thousand victories over the Spaniards and the glory and heroism of our soldiers? Do you believe, Sir Governor, that Spain, old and corrupt as she is, could today rule the New World? Tell your King and your people, Sir, that the Colombians are ready to fight for centuries against everybody in the world, against the gods themselves, if they should be on your side, rather than endure the disgrace of again bearing the name of Spaniards.” And when feelers were put out to induce him to retire to Cúcuta, he wrote: “Tell General Morillo that he will sooner retire to Cadiz than I to Cúcuta! Tell him that I was a fugitive when he was leading a great army, and yet I was not afraid—and now they dare to make a suggestion of the kind!”

In confidence, however, he wrote to a friend at the time: “We must build no castles in the air, although there is no better builder of them than I.” Or to Santander: “I prefer politics to war, although we have already something with which to confront the gentlemen. Morillo seems well disposed toward peace and toward me. I have a great deal more to say, but my head is full of war and peace, Europe and America, north and south, and into the bargain I am not well. . . . The negotiations fill my days and nights. I dream of them.” At the same time he arranges for public praise of himself. “Put something together for the press, and add that a superior officer in Morillo’s camp has

drunk my health, comparing me to Napoleon. The latter, he said, fought with great resources, I with none. That means peace, otherwise the Goths [the nickname of the royalists] would not speak in that tone."

And yet, in spite of all his astuteness, and precisely in those wearing weeks between peace and war, Bolivar's feelings went out to the enemy camp if his heart was touched. When a del Toro, a relative of his dead wife, appeared as one of the enemy negotiators, Bolivar wrote to him: "Today I had a sweet feeling as I read your lines. They awoke so many memories! To know that you are near me, that I shall soon see you, makes me forget that you are coming in the name of the enemy. For me you will always be the good old sympathetic Juan Toro." To Iturbe, however, who had stood surety for him after Miranda's collapse and saved his life by obtaining his passport, he wrote a spontaneous letter at the first contact with the enemy. "*Mi adorado amigo!* I would sooner be at peace with you than with the whole Spanish nation, for I love you more than peace. Why did you not write to me at the same time as the parliamentarians? How can I be of service to you? You must know that I owe you everything you can ask. Your most grateful—Bolivar."

A letter of this kind is indeed a document for all time. It outlives all plans of battle, all ruses and tricks; it outsoars the rise and despair of a man, the causes and consequences of which fade so quickly that only a few names now pass before our eyes like shadows on the wall. On one side is the leader of revolution, on the other an officer of the enemy. But Bolivar does not even wait for the other to approach him with the rest of the delegates; he writes with flying pen to ask why the other had not turned to him, and what he can do for him, now that the spell between them is broken. "You must know that I owe you everything you can ask"!

A six months' armistice was concluded between the governments of Spain and Colombia. The two generals could now meet. The meeting took place at a village on the western slopes of the Cordilleras.

"But which is he?" asked the Spaniard as he rode up. "The little one in the blue tunic and cap on the mule? Is that the man?"

For—we owe all these details to O'Leary—Bolivar had already found out that Morillo was going to appear in a brilliant uniform with a squadron of hussars, and hence had dressed himself as simply as possible and merely taken a few adjutants with him: that was how he had seen and admired Napoleon in Milan. When Morillo saw him, he speedily dismissed his escort, so as not to seem more auspicious than his enemy. But when they dismounted, shook hands, and forgave each other all their misdeeds with a kiss and embrace, the two men seemed to reverse roles. The lowborn Spaniard, who had risen to be his King's field marshal and Count of Cartagena, appeared as the defender of the highborn, the rich, and the crown. Bolivar, the Creole born to wealth and rank, had given up his title and privileges to live with the army and stood for the people. After this first conversation, the two felt like Schiller's hostile brothers, one of whom said to the other after their reconciliation:

*"Had I but known thee as I know thee now,
Much that has happened would have never been."*

At the banquet held at the same place, Bolivar proposed a toast which soldiers of today, concluding peace, might take as an example:

"I drink to the heroic endurance of the soldiers of both armies, to their loyalty, patience, and courage. I drink to the men who, defying all terrors, take up the cause of liberty and to those who have gloriously fallen in the struggle for their fatherland. I drink to the wounded on both sides, who have shown dignity and fortitude. But perish all who desire bloodshed and who shed blood in an unjust cause!"

Morillo: "May heaven punish all who are not inspired by the same feelings, by the peace and friendship which unite us here."

At such moments, the born poet stands out from the soldier. Morillo was by no means innocent of the murders and burnings

committed by his wild cavalry colonels. Yet he had once beaten Napoleon's troops in Spain, and that must have impressed Bolivar; perhaps, in his historical romanticism, he felt himself a kind of avenger of Napoleon's honor. At such a moment, when everything depends on supreme tact and on the delicacy not only of words but of feelings, genius carries the day, for, without advice, without an example, it finds a few words which embrace a whole situation and indeed the spirit of all those struggles whose end is to be celebrated. In any practical situation, the poetic nature, other things being equal, will always rise superior to sober calculation.

The two men spent that night in the same room. Bolivar was up first in the morning, and waited breakfast for his guest. But they would not have been generals had they not tried, in spite of the kiss and the signature of peace, to wrest a few scraps of land from each other, Bolivar under the pretext of delaying publication of the armistice; the document might be lost or the messenger fall ill. Immediately afterwards, Morillo took his leave, returned home to Spain, married a rich wife, and lived happy ever after, but his name would be quite forgotten had he not been Bolivar's adversary. Bolivar's heart was burning to carry his own name to the stars. About this time—he was now in the late thirties—he developed a truly radiant vitality, overflowing with schemes, ideas, and whims. His life was now approaching the zenith of its third act. The wording of his communiqués, speeches, and letters expresses this mood of exaltation. Once he concludes a letter with the words: "I pray God for one victory only. I am sure of the rest."

XVI

WAR broke out again before the armistice had expired. In the months of quiet, Bolivar had begun by expressing in several documents his readiness for reconciliation, though of course reconciliation as he understood it. He had even made up his mind to write a letter to the more hated than beloved King

Ferdinand, at whose head he had thrown a shuttlecock thirty years before. "It is our ambition to offer the Spaniards a second home. But if that is to be, must not our country first be freed of its chains?" He could, of course, only speak such home truths under cover of a fiction, for this letter was destined for the world.

The thoroughly Spanish letter which Bolivar wrote to Morillo's successor, on the other hand, was a genuine one. "I am happy, my dear General, to see you at the head of my enemies. No one can do less harm and more good. You seem marked out to heal the wounds of your new fatherland. You were always a noble enemy. Now become a faithful friend."

When in the end the armistice was broken, each openly put the blame on the other; the pretext was the occupation of the town of Maracaibo. The resumption of hostilities came most opportunely to Bolivar; he even wrote to his enemy: "Do you expect us to die on our rifles instead of using them?" His army was hungry. He could not keep it together unless it marched. "Necessity is the first and most inexorable law. I must obey it." Quite in the tone of Napoleon, only that the Emperor, when he wanted to get his way, was prone to speak of "the nature of things."

How much it was all a question of necessity and not mere desire of conquest we can see by the scruples for his men which find repeated and moving expression in Bolivar's private letters at the time. "You would not believe the spirit in our troops. Men who have fought long, humiliated and hopeless, real, ignorant troopers. After all that has happened, I do not know what they are capable of. I treat them with the greatest respect, but even that is not enough to inspire their confidence. We are standing on the brink of an abyss, or rather on a volcano. I fear peace more than war, and that will give you an idea of what I do not and cannot say." The nation as a whole seemed to him as dubious as the individual soldier. After the recent taking of Caracas, a great victory, he calls his compatriots a people rising out of great lethargy, "and nobody knows what it ought to do

or what it is. Everything embryonic. Not a man to do anything for me. And to crown it all I have an army on my hands and do not know how to feed it." He wrote the same letter to two leaders of the government. He even went so far as to argue that a certain sum of money should be used for the Congress rather than for the army, since the former must not be dissolved for want of funds, while the soldiers would sooner or later be either dead or victorious.

Bolívar's dual position as head of the government and of the army began to tell on him at this time. A problem that Napoleon had easily solved because the government, state, and power depended solely on his ever-victorious sword presented difficulties to a man who had only learned to draw and wield the sword in order to rule, and who was condemned to perpetual warfare. Here the subtlety of his mind, the sense of responsibility implanted in him by his education in Rousseau, sometimes proved a hindrance. Sometimes, at night in his camp in the savannas, on horseback, or on bold marches over mountains and passes, romantic moods would come over him enhancing his sense of life. At such moments he would hate commanding and dictating, and would write: "My life is too active. I am repelled by sedentary work. . . . A writing table is sentence of death to me." "Do you know that I have never seen a bill and have no idea of what is spent in my house? I am too candid, sometimes too irritable, for diplomacy, and know it only by name. I am utterly ignorant. But as I love freedom and good laws, I shall both fight for my country and defend the law before the Congress."

Sometimes he endeavored to be only a soldier and no longer a President. Among the troops at the time he was relatively independent; in the Congress, on the other hand, he was beset by perpetual intrigues. That was the cause and origin of Bolívar's play with his resignation, which he carried on for the next ten years, until the end, although the game often turned to deadly earnest. Before his final election as President of Colombia, he gave the following brilliant series of reasons for declin-

ing: (1) Because I am tired of commanding. (2) Because I am tired of hearing my ambition talked about. (3) Because the world might think there was no other man fit for the position. (4) Because I am only fit for soldiering. (5) Because the government would be orphaned as it was before, since I have no time for it. (6) Because it is better for me to be at the head of the troops. (7) Because we must first restore peace to Venezuela and then pay a visit to Quito. And finally because my mind is made up, and if you compel me, I shall go for good.

In other moods this dash and vigor turn into deep knowledge of himself and his situation. Then the master horseman becomes once more a deeply moved Don Quixote, and he writes:

"No! I am too tired of hearing myself called tyrant and despot. . . . I have only taken over the command in order to prevent anyone worse fitted from doing so. Everything else is due to my friends' imagination. Because they saw me steering a ship in a storm, they think I can command a fleet. You think that history will praise me? It will have nothing greater to tell of me than my renunciation of power and my readiness to devote myself exclusively to the army in order to save the country. History will say: Bolivar seized the supreme power in order to liberate his fellow citizens; when they were free, he left them to govern themselves, and that not by commands, but by laws. You think you can frighten me with perils? I see none greater than those at the front. The Goths are the only enemies of the country, the others are merely enemies of General Bolivar. These latter cannot be conquered in battle, but only by flight."

Magnificent confessions of this kind, which appear in still more intensified form in the last decade of his life, make it possible for us to understand why a number of portraits of Bolivar in his late thirties make him look like a man of over fifty. They are astonishing, perhaps unique in history, seeing that their subject was a man at the height of his power and in the midst of victory. By listening to such monologues, we can gain an insight into the judgment passed by a man of action on his own deeper motives for doing or leaving undone. We see on a higher

plane the man who set out in search of glory. Not that he ordered all his days with the thought of what posterity would think of him. But whatever he did, he looked away from earth to the clouds, trying to anticipate its reflection there. His heart in youth had been filled with the ideals of freedom and equality; in Napoleon he had seen the dangers of power, first as a philosopher, but at Napoleon's fall, as a realist. Bolivar was able to overcome his jealousy and intrigue by a magnificent interpretation of his own attitude. The source of his whole activity, the quest of glory, made him in actual fact continually return to the past, and he gained thereby a critical power worth far more than the cheap applause bestowed by the mob on other dictators.

Meanwhile, however, the desire for historical greatness had become mingled with the gravity of responsibility. He had learned to feel the distress of thousands of human beings, the precariousness in which a whole people was living, and began to bear as a duty and a burden what he had begun as a dazzling game. That meant a turn in his inward path which cannot be fixed down to a day or a battle, but only read in his letters and in the transformation of his countenance. It was often interrupted and apparently refuted by many hours of boldness and brilliance. Yet now, when Bolivar was thirty-eight, we must begin to reckon with his very premature old age. There are here important points of difference from Napoleon who was, at the same age, healthier, more resilient, and, as a whole, more simple-minded. But Bolivar can hold his own against Napoleon in the manifoldness of his activity and in the rapidity and directness of his power of decision.

The burden was too great, but Bolivar's swiftness was greater. One has the impression that he was refreshed by the many-sidedness of his work, for, as a poet, he grasped its symbolic meaning. On the Orinoco, at the foundation of Colombia, he was not only a statesman and a general, but a doctor, judge, merchant, agent, and inventor. When the troops lacked bread, he had it baked from a native root. When cattle sickness broke

out, he turned a monastery into a hospital, had remains of soap and candles collected from deserted houses, and put a monk with some knowledge of medicine in charge of it.

There was one Pater Blanco who always found a way out. Where were they to find more asses to carry the provender, when suddenly a few hundred were missing from the thousand they had? Who could build new boats? Since everything was lacking on the fringe of the jungle, and the little there had been destroyed by the civil war, the church, the former center of culture, had to step into the breach. Bolivar founded a kind of church council. But he never treated it with grandiloquence. Once, on a march, when monks came riding up to make a ceremonious offer of their services, Bolivar replied: "The great service you could render us at this moment would be to hand over your mules. Ours are very tired. Please accompany us on foot." When a priest who had never countenanced the revolution wrote asking for the arrears of his stipend, Bolivar noted in the margin that he should apply to the King. To a doctor writing in the same sense, he answered that he should be content with what he had stolen. At the first words of a petition he interrupted the reader: "I know. The man wants promotion." A hundred times he transmuted sentences of death, but when the officer was taken who had betrayed the fortress, compelled Bolivar to take flight, and hence caused the tragedy of Miranda, Bolivar sent for him: "You are not worthy of a soldier's death," he said, and had him hanged.

From this time on, Bolivar's manner of writing reflects every modulation of his moods; among men of power there is hardly another whose writings show such a variety of tone. Often he gallops off as he loved to gallop on horseback. Or we can imagine his mind leaping forward as he dictates: "Make him a tactful offer of 100,000 duros or rank up to that of colonel [for a spy who had taken Cartagena without drawing his sword]. If he is already a colonel or a general, you can always assign him an estate of that value." Again: "God is very high, the deputation very wide, the Congress of Cartagena very near, so that I can-

not cast my vote between Cato and the Senate, while Caesar sleeps and our Cicero is playing the ambassador." When the grace of his tone was misunderstood by a general who, expecting a command, was confused by a request, he replied: "Is it not a test of friendship, or even of affection to request that this or that should happen? If you were not my friend, I should have taken a different tone. Yet I am glad that your feelings are so sensitive that you are offended at the first hint of a lack of confidence." What was a swashbuckler to do with such subtleties?

If he felt any obligation toward the man in question, however, this grace was transformed into all the warmth of a grateful heart. Bolivar's gratitude distinguishes him from most men of power. Iturbe, who had once saved his life, had left the country with General Morillo; his estates were confiscated. Instead of issuing orders for their restitution, the founder of Colombia wrote to the President of his Congress: "For the first time, I appeal to the good feelings of the Colombian government in a personal matter." Then he quotes the long-past scene between himself and the Governor, Monteverde. "Can I forget so splendid a man? Can Colombia punish him without showing ingratitude? If the property of Don Francisco Iturbe is confiscated, I offer mine for his, as he once offered his life for mine. If the Congress is ready to show mercy, let it take my property, for I am the one who owes gratitude. Iturbe emigrated as a man of honor, not as an enemy of the Republic."

How few dictators in history have written in such a tone!

XVII

IN the summer of 1821, Bolivar liberated his country for the second time by a great victory. It took place at Carabobo, not far from Valencia, where he had already been victorious. This time he is said to have had 6000 men more than before. The battle lasted an hour. The Spanish generals took refuge in the neighboring fortress of Puerto Cabello, Bolivar's fort of fate, the last stronghold, which held out for years to come, as if never

to let the victor of today forget the greatest disaster in his life. It appears that the English decided the battle, from which only 400 Spaniards are said to have escaped. Once more the consequences were decisive. Venezuela was liberated forever.

But what an entry! Eight years before, when Bolivar entered his native city, a stream of living humanity had moved to meet him and beautiful women had drawn his chariot. This time he came to a devastated and deserted place, for any survivors who were able had fled when the Spaniards retreated. The streets were lined with the beggared, the sick, the famine-stricken, and the dead. Sitting on his horse, he recognized not a single face, and when at last a few hundred voices cried: "Long live Colombia!" the hollow, shrill tone moved the victor more than the silence. There were even illuminations, with nobody to look at them, and instead of young beauties, the last old ladies of rank appeared on their balconies, stammering soft words of thanks. The next day Bolivar's proclamation expressed his disappointment that everybody had fled, "for fear either of the Colombian or of the Spanish army. I know you to be patriots, though you left Caracas. Could you take flight intentionally before the arms of Colombia? No, no, no!"

His experiences at the Congress of Cúcuta, to which he summoned the delegates of both countries soon after, were no happier. In the midst of victory, the elementary conflict in his heart again robbed him of the joy of achievement. Once again, the discord between the democrat and the dictator in him broke out and made itself felt among the deputies to whom, in theory, he was resolved to submit, while in actual fact towering over them all. The disciple of Rousseau abhorred a dictatorship; the disciple of Napoleon sought and needed it. His truly magnificent letters in these weeks reveal the duel in his soul.

"I am resolved to give the example of a great republican, so that it may be a lesson to others. Government should not be placed in the hands of the most dangerous man. It is not right that power and opinion should be in the same hands, and that all power should be vested in the government. The chief of

the army should not administer justice. For the general blow will fall on that man, and once he is destroyed, the government will fall. Two powers are less dangerous than one, and I, as Commander in Chief, represent a power in this state. Many believe that I am aiming at absolute power. Would it not be a heavy blow for the government if this personal intrigue should involve it? If I command the army, Colombia will always have me behind her, the government will always have me in the advance guard. If I suffer a defeat, the government can make up the losses. In the other case, every shot must hit me, I must fall and, in the end, drag the community down with me.

"These considerations are profound and exact. Make them generally known. You say history will speak well of me. I think history will have nothing better to tell of me than my retirement from the ruling power."

Here we can see Bolivar, like his noble horse, eager to gallop off, yet submitting to the bridle. But he is under the control, not of a rider, but only of an idea, and that idea pursues him even into his old dreams of glory, to which he is ready to sacrifice everything, even power. Is it any wonder that he, who gave up power, was wounded by the independence of those to whom he gave it?

For what he demanded happened; he was given plenipotentary powers as dictator only for the duration of the war. Santander, on the other hand, was put in charge of the administration. Yet in this hasty acceptance of his own moral warnings, especially on the part of his friends, Bolivar at once scented distrust. The deputies clung dogmatically to the imitation of North America. He was hurt that the assembly at once dropped, in the new constitution, the principles modified two years before, depriving nearly all the Negroes and most of the Indios of their vote. The worst, however, was that his fundamental idea of an aristocratic senate, which he wished to have hereditary and which, at Angostura, they were ready to make at least life-long, was abandoned in favor of eight years' mandates, so that his counterbalance of an absolute democracy by the control of

the senate went by the board. What did these lawyers do with his ideas? They printed them as an appendix to the constitution and invited all philosophers to express an opinion on them.

A man with a mind born to rule, and in every sense superior to those about him, could not fail to regret that he had not chosen to act the tyrant in the classical sense rather than remain the enlightened disciple of Voltaire. The whole was bound to depress him. When the bells of the little town rang in the new constitution, Bolivar said: "That is the death knell of Colombia." Again Don Quixote knew himself for what he was. How was he to regain his poise, the *élan* of his soul?

We now see Bolivar at the height of his inward composure. With everything about him dull and petty, with his vision of a great state cut to pieces by paltry methods and laws, he could do nothing but take the longer view. By a splendid paradox, the very man who heard the death knell of the state at the moment of its foundation began, as the servant of an idea, to carry out the expansion of that state. As field marshal, his powers were unlimited. There were other countries to the south. Quito (Ecuador), bordering on Granada, was the predestined completion of the new state. To see America without a Spaniard in it was the ideal. Another field marshal, San Martín in the Argentine, was already advancing northward and approaching Peru. There was nothing for him to do but to set out to meet him. Was he not called the Liberator? The continent was boundless.

On the day after his re-election by the Congress, Bolivar left the town and marched south in order to round off, according to the popular term, his new state. "This beautiful country," he wrote, "has several virtues. It is very patriotic, Colombian, and so tremendously big."

With a fresh inrush of strength, the Liberator hurled himself into the new conflict. "I shall not go very far away," he wrote to Santander, "if glory does not follow me. For if I ceased to follow glory, I should lose my way in life. I am not going to lose the fruits of eleven years in a single reverse, nor shall San Martín see me otherwise than as befits a predestined man. Send

me everything I need to form an army of liberation. Work miracles if you love my glory and Colombia as much as me. The man is a fool who mistakes the blessings which Providence pours on his head. At this very moment we are beloved of God and must not leave His gifts unused!"

Such were the radiant feelings of the man, but recently plunged into gloom, who now threw himself into a new and still-bolder venture to which nothing obliged or called him save his love of freedom and glory. Leaving his double homeland to drive the remnants of the enemy from the south, a second impulse awoke in him. There were not only Spaniards down there, but another liberator, who seemed to be rapidly approaching his own frontiers from La Plata. He too had crossed the Andes. The fame of his passage had spread all over America and, for a time, cast Bolivar's into the shade.

It is true that both men had the same goal. The place and the time were yet to come, however, when these two, united only in their hatred of the Spaniards, but differing in race and breeding, were to meet, when their paths were to cross. It was by this second liberator that Bolivar wished to be recognized as a man predestined. That was the place and the time he foresaw when he set out from the northern Congress city to expand the frontiers of his new country southward. Like the other two, it was a march of liberation, for his aim was not subjection. Yet at the same time it was a spiritual conquest, for the founder of Colombia wished to give his creation a more vigorous form. The figure of Napoleon had not only been a warning to him; it had also been an example.

Bolivar the poet began to dream in continents.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Dictator

“The legislative power may be as reasonable as it is—it does not help the state if the executive power is not omnipotent.”

GOETHE

I

THE liberation of South America might be likened to a coalition war in that half a dozen different countries fought the same enemy at the same time and in the end conquered. The difference lay in the lack of unified leadership and action. Bolivar's victories in the north had as profound repercussions on the revolutions in the Argentine as his reverses in Colombia had on the fighting Chileans, though both countries were thousands of miles distant with little communication to link them. Owing to the diverse natures of the peoples involved, however, and the barriers of mountains and seas between them, each, in the end, played a lone hand, while not even the common enemy, the Spaniard, could form any coherent plan of action.

In the history of Colombia and the Argentine, the two main seats of the revolution, dates do not always tally; it would be idle to try and work out who led the way. The first independent Junta met in Buenos Aires a few weeks after the Junta of Caracas. In this book, which is devoted entirely to the Liberator, and not to the liberation, anything outside his scope must be disregarded, nor should we find there anyone to equal him in genius and complexity of character.

One man, and one alone, whose path crossed Bolivar's in fateful fashion, might tempt us into a comparison. The encounter becomes dramatic by the similarity in their aims and the difference between their characters. Historically and psychologically, politically and humanly, the situation was equally tense, and took on such a significance in Bolivar's life that we can only compare it to that other fateful imbroglio, his meeting with Miranda.

While the meeting between Bolivar and Miranda, however, culminated in a tragedy which strengthened Bolivar's character, the second, coming at the pinnacle of his victories, could only spur him on to yet bolder ventures. It coincided exactly with the steps which finally led him away from his own country on a great, but alien path, and with an emotional upheaval caused by the first sight of the most beautiful woman in his life. As in the crisis of a great novel, the hero's powers as a man, a fighter, and a lover culminated at the same moment, in the summer of 1822, to bear him, at forty, to his greatest heights.

II

WHEN José de San Martín was born in 1778, five years before Bolivar, no palace was standing waiting for him, but only a little blockhouse, and no capital of a country, but only a little town in the midst of the forests of the Argentine. The meager pay of his father, a subordinate officer with five children, put out of his reach those luxuries which were lavished on little Simon Bolivar. A Creole, like him, though not of the rich and privileged class, the child associated almost entirely with mestizos and Indios; he had, however, less to suffer from Spanish pride, since he knew no half recognition which could stimulate him to make it whole.

When the boy, whose father had been made governor of a fortress in Spain, went to school in Madrid at the age of seven, he seemed physically and morally cut out to be a soldier, though his talents in drawing and mathematics seemed to point to the General Staff. Certain romantic leanings, which he concealed all his life from the world and even from himself, came out very early in his fondness for music and painting. But neither the eleven-year-old cadet nor the young officer he soon became had much time for the artistic side of life; he had first to fight in Africa and Spain against France, then under Napoleon against England, and thus spent his twentieth to his thirtieth year fighting for his life, an age which Bolivar idled away among women

and gaming rooms and boredom as a man of fashion in Madrid and Paris, Vienna and Rome.

San Martín, earlier inured to the seriousness of life than Bolívar, matured much earlier, yet, like Bolívar, he was already thirty when he was stirred to the depths by a personal experience. While the latter, in the indignation of his soul, had delivered up his friend and superior officer, Miranda, to a tragic fate, San Martín had seen his friend and superior officer lynched by the crowd in Madrid before his very eyes, at a moment when, as the officer on duty, he could not hurry to his help. He too, at that moment, was torn between duty and human affection, and he seems to have pondered over the incident in later life as deeply as Bolívar. It is true that he was not banished immediately after; he banished himself.

This catastrophe in which he, as a Spanish officer, had been involved by the general confusion and through no fault of his own embittered him deeply. Yet it was not the only thing that made the Spanish service galling to him, although the incident of Cadiz put the final touch to his alienation from the cause of the King. For San Martín remained royalist for the ten years during which he still wore the King's uniform, which he had, moreover, worn in Spain itself as the son of a Spanish officer, even if only halfheartedly. His youth among the Indios, his humiliations as a Creole, the growing feeling that he was an American at heart in spite of his blue and white uniform, had all moved him, a few years previously, to join the same lodge in Cadiz which had admitted Bolívar almost at the same time on account of his money. He had there heard the revolutionary schemes of Alvear, Carrera, and other young Creoles who were later to take important parts in the wars of liberation.

San Martín, however, like Bolívar, did not make the revolution; he fell heir to it. Not until news of it began to filter through did he leave his regiment and go to London to meet Miranda. Both Miranda and Bolívar, however, had just embarked, leaving only their representatives for him to find. We

might call the chance symbolic which made San Martín just miss Bolivar in London. In any case, it compelled the two men, who soon after began to liberate their countries in the same continent, at the same time, occasionally with parallel ups and downs, from the same oppressor, to form an idea of each other from all they heard. For in the long run, the thoughts of each could not but be preoccupied with the comrade and rival at the other end of America.

In courage and resolution, in joy in battle and hatred of their common enemy, and even in success, the two were equals, and when San Martín liberated Chile by a decisive victory, Bolivar exclaimed at the news: "The day of America has dawned." Yet there was no co-operation, nor even correspondence, between them. Each beat the Spaniards in his own way, each in his own way endeavored to reorganize his states, and since their starting points were Buenos Aires and Caracas, in the nature of things the one had to march from north to south, the other from south to north. Both could foresee the point at which their spheres of action would approach. They were like two engineers setting out to excavate a tunnel from opposite ends and each foreseeing the thrilling moment when he would hear the other hammering at the rock wall. In their case, however, no concerted plan assured them that they would meet in the middle.

In certain points, the two could very well draw a comparison between their campaigns. Both left their own country to fight the Spaniards. Halfway through the decade which each passed in supreme perils and success, they achieved the liberation of neighbor countries hard on the heels of each other, for Chile was liberated by San Martín just before Colombia by Bolivar. Both then continued their campaigns in the direction already taken and thus, leaving a first and second goal behind them, reached a third which brought them together. In 1820, San Martín had marched northward from Chile to Peru; a year later Bolivar decided to march southward to Peru. While Bolivar was organizing and governing the new state of Colombia,

San Martín began the same work in Chile. During these campaigns, both were persecuted by envy and attacked by jealousy in their own countries. Both owed their bitterest experiences to their compatriots, whom they left equally far behind them.

Their personalities, however, developed on lines as divergent as their births. Nature and history could hardly set the same goal at the same time to two more different characters. What Bolívar heard of San Martín, and San Martín of Bolívar, could not but make each wonder. And yet nothing would be more pointless than to weigh that wonder in the balance of history, instead of comparing them, without prejudice, in their vitality and energy.

Both characters possessed in an equal degree personal courage, decided pride, utter devotion to the cause, complete disinterestedness, and an unflinching belief in the morality of their aims and the importance of their mission. They also share a marked sense of good form and some education in the classics, which filled their minds with the ideals of antiquity. But in everything else, one only has to look at them to get an insight into the world that lay between them.

Bolívar's slim, graceful horseman's figure is as different from San Martín's rigid physique as an inhabitant of the Mediterranean from a typical Prussian of the old school. The one is restless, hurrying, galloping, or at the very least swinging in a hammock, a man who, as he said, danced himself in youth into his best ideas, a born fencer, rider, dancer, whom nothing tired but rest; the other a grave muscular man, burdened by his sense of responsibility, often gloomy, never smiling. On the one hand, we have a radiant mind, swift in speech and writing, out to captivate everybody and captivating the best; on the other, a silent thinker who spoke as slowly as he thought, who, with his swarthy skin, big ears, keen eyes, and hoarse voice, tried to captivate nobody and hence inspired more respect than enthusiasm.

While Bolívar had lost his first love in youth, and was surrounded all his life by women, none of whom he married and

whom he could never do without, San Martín, in his middle thirties, married a Creole woman whom he left behind on campaigns lasting for years without ever looking at another woman. Bolívar's line died out, nor did he wish to leave behind him anything but his glory. San Martín, embittered in age by the destruction of his glory, devoted himself entirely to the education of his daughter, and drew up precious rules of behavior for her.

Bolívar sought the reflection of his own brilliance in everything; in freedom, in the classical world, in women, in Napoleon; his idea of glory and his devotion to it was his supreme criterion, and to preserve that ideal intact, he sacrificed to it the outward ambition which at times brought the crown within his reach. His triumphal entries into city after city, the laurel crowns, and the favors of women were for him the visible symbols of that antique heroism which had to compensate him for the brilliance of Paris, for the colors and sounds of the great society of Europe, for the lack of all the spiritual and artistic in the deadening round of camp life. If it had not been for the thought of history, Bolívar would have merely regarded himself as a successful general, and that would have palled on him as quickly as his youthful riches.

San Martín's only incentive was the moral challenge. Slower and more cautious, mentally and physically, the outward show of things meant less to him; he was therefore less subject to disillusionment. The pendulum of Bolívar's life, swinging high with tremendous momentum, sank more often and more swiftly into the depths; dejection and ecstasy followed always on each other's heels. San Martín, who had grown up in the service of the state, had an almost religious sense of duty, and although he carried that sense of duty far beyond the limits appointed to him, by that very fact he remained with his feet on the earth and distrusted life's purple patches.

For Bolívar was first and foremost a poet, San Martín a soldier. We have seen Bolívar's improvisations of genius as a commander in the field, and if nothing remained of his work

but his great crossings of the mountains, his marches across the steppes, and his adventures in the rivers, his name would be immortal in the history of war. That world history has given him a place between Napoleon and Washington, however, is entirely due to his poetic prescience, the visionary power which made him feel history in the making and guide its course. That was how he thought of himself in his last years. He strove above all to combine the impulses of the practical thinker with the arts of the diplomat and an unerring judgment of men, and it was this knowledge of the human heart, with his poetic sense of the forces in play, which assured to Bolivar his spiritual victories. He loved freedom and knew its limitations; he loved glory, and sacrificed his ambition to it. With indefatigable energy and persuasion he overcame the apathy of his contemporaries and compatriots, and left plans behind him which are now, a hundred years later, approaching fulfillment.

San Martín, to whom this inward fire was alien, was also safeguarded against all the exaggerations which so often make Bolivar's speeches and manifestoes lapse into rhetoric. While Bolivar had taken up arms relatively late in order to realize his political schemes, San Martín, who had been in uniform since the age of twelve, was always reluctant to expand his victories into political moves, and entered political life with hesitation and distrust. Compared with Bolivar, the born founder of states, he was a victorious commander, whose achievements in the field gave him a political influence for which he felt no enthusiasm.

Bolivar had set out on his first march with two hundred men, and while his passage of the Andes five years later was far better prepared, part of it, and that perhaps the best part, was pure improvisation. San Martín had begun by setting up an arms foundry at Mendoza, at the foot of the mountains, and spent two years in preparing, in meticulous detail, his parallel march of liberation of the west coast a few thousand miles farther south. His sense of duty forbade him to reckon with the moods and influences which lent wings to Bolivar. His natural

sobriety left no room in his mathematical mind for flashes of genius.

And yet this gloomy San Martín seems to have had a deeper mystical vein than his brighter rival. He loved the lodge mysteries, he loved music, though abhorring dancing. But instead of putting his imaginative gifts at the service of his practical aims, as Bolivar did, he set a gate of iron between the two worlds and took good care never to allow loopholes between them.

As a result, the hidden gentleness of his nature only showed its head in secret, for instance when he gave his repentant gamester of a paymaster the money to refund the regimental chest for his depredations, but imposed silence on him with the threat that if General San Martín ever came to hear of it, he would have him shot. He is also responsible for the fine saying: "If my right hand knew what my left hand did, it would cut it off." Yet he maintained rigid discipline in the army, demanded a strict rendering of accounts, and, having issued an order that nobody should enter the field surgery except without boots and in a white coat, rewarded the sentry who refused to let him in in uniform. The precision of his life in the midst of war, as we see it reflected in his correspondence and notes, the temperance of his habits, stands in sharp contrast to Bolivar's noisy sociability.

San Martín, on the other hand, was subject to rare but terrible outbursts of anger, and parted company with his friends and collaborators less easily, but more radically, than Bolivar, who knew how to cajole his enemies with rank and titles and who, in a general way, could not only lead but lure. It is possible that San Martín's outbursts were connected with an ailment which attacked him in the middle thirties in the form of vomiting of blood, and led to the one irregularity in the strict discipline of his life, namely opium, which he used so long to relieve his pain that for years he was a slave to the habit. All the same, the regularity of his life preserved him far longer

than Bolivar. While Bolivar died in the midst of his activity at forty-seven, San Martín, who retired at forty-four, lived thirty years longer.

This physical weakness may explain another peculiarity of his which more than any other trait distinguishes him from Bolivar, namely, his inaction after victory. San Martín would repeatedly sink, after great successes, into a kind of lethargy and would even relinquish his power. After having liberated Chile, he handed over the government to his subordinate and friend, General O'Higgins, and allowed himself to be appointed general by him. Later, in Peru, this behavior went so far that it influenced the course of history. Moods of the kind even misled him into preferring tactics to battle, and brought him into conflict with his closest collaborator. It seems that he never felt happier in his own country than in those two years of secret preparation at the foot of the Andes, when he was able to make sure of a great conquest by systematic calculation. It is no mere chance that San Martín would play chess in the evening hours which Bolivar danced away.

As he distrusted all show, and even at a festivity in Chile rebuked a lady for her elegance at such a time, as he tried to escape all public celebrations, and, after a great victory, returned incognito to Buenos Aires, he also distrusted all popular enthusiasm, and, as he rode through a scene of tumultuous popular rejoicing, once coined the classic phrase: "The country needs such madmen." Sometimes he would go so far as to have a table laid for his officers, while he took a meal standing in the kitchen. Such oddities won for him the reputation of an eccentric rather than a hero. The austerity and simplicity which he instilled into his army could not win him the popularity Bolivar gained by his graciousness and brilliance. Since he did not wish to rule, but only to command, San Martín made people feel that he was not a born ruler. His natural uprightness prevented him from threatening resignation, as Bolivar did; on the other hand, he repeatedly resigned. When he was recalled

home, he refused categorically, saying: "I shall only draw my sword to fight the Spaniards and in the cause of freedom, not for political ideas."

While Bolivar was tossed about by conflicting ideas, seeking all his life the golden mean between democracy and dictatorship, which he never found, San Martín in so far kept to his own way of thought as a loyal soldier that he believed in the necessity of monarchy. Both men were striving for freedom from Spain, they were not both striving for a free republic. While that was Bolivar's goal, San Martín wished to see it replaced by a monarchy, since he possessed neither Bolivar's revolutionary passion nor his dictatorial fire. According to San Martín, a Spanish or even a Bourbon prince was to become the modern constitutional ruler of the countries over which the King of Spain had tyrannized. The divergent aims of the two liberators recall the conflicting ideas of Cromwell, to whom, of the two, San Martín was more akin, since he too, a soldier and a gentleman, tried to protect the crown as long as he could.

San Martín had much to suffer from his compatriots, who suspected, under his moderation and balance, a double game which was utterly absent from his mind. Hence he did not return to the Argentine when, confusion having reached its highest pitch, he was expected to establish a monarchy; he simply disobeyed the official order to return and, instead of marching southeastward home, turned northward to Peru. Bolivar, nourished in youth on European culture, yet slighted by the Spaniards in Madrid, behaved throughout as an American; San Martín never relinquished his European sympathies, and sought the fusion of the two cultures which Bolivar had achieved in person, but contested as a program.

When fate brought these two so fundamentally different men together in order to settle a quarrel, the meeting could only lead to a war or end in a renunciation. The bent of their characters was prophetic of the issue.

III

SAN MARTÍN was forty-three, ailing, disappointed, and tired, when he entered Lima. He had marched northward with the support, not of the Argentine, but of Chile, in order to liberate, not conquer, Peru. Nor was the country by any means free of Spaniards. His plans, however, were laid for a treaty, not for a life-and-death struggle. There was no question with him of a surge of victory such as had borne Bolívar aloft at Caracas and Bogotá. "Our dreams have come true," San Martín said at the time. "The freedom of Peru is secured. I can see the end of my career approaching. I will lay the heavy burden in safer hands and live as a human being. I have not come here to shed blood, but to bring freedom and law, which are guaranteed by the new Spanish constitution."

He at once opened negotiations with the fugitive Spanish viceroy, and said to him: "If you will give up the fruitless struggle and unite your flags with ours in the proclamation of the independence of Peru, our men will embrace in the field." And he concluded his speech at a banquet with the words: "I drink to the happiness of Spain and America, to the brotherhood of America and Europe." It was the very hope of that union which made him so happy at the time that he embraced his adjutant in a quiet corner, an unprecedented effusion for him.

When the Spaniards, however, tried to hoodwink him into accompanying them to Spain to look for a king, he at once broke off relations. He even had himself proclaimed Protector of Peru—the title Cromwell chose—did what he could to cut down ceremony, as he had done before, but, like Bolívar, founded a special order of merit.

In this situation San Martín would have carried on the war if a dispute with his most important officer, Admiral Cochrane, had not supervened. On the surface the quarrel was strategic. The Admiral was insisting on a combined attack by land and

sea on the Spaniards shut up in Callao, while San Martín merely wished to besiege them and thus avoid a pitched battle. The deeper cause, however, was that Cochrane, who felt himself a Chilean, was outraged by the title of Protector assumed by his friend and superior officer, and saw in it a kind of moral treachery. San Martín, moreover, had actually omitted to mention the fleet on the Peruvian Liberation Medal. The Admiral had also a reputation for greed, made scenes on account of arrears of pay, and is even alleged to have attempted to sell the Chilean fleet to Peru. The whole nobility of San Martín's character comes out in the correspondence which led up to the breach of the long friendship between the two men.

Since the whole expedition was devoid of legal justification, since an Argentinian, who had liberated Chile, invaded Peru with Chilean forces, the only obligation to obedience was a moral one, and after the quarrel, the Protector stood there alone with his Admiral, but without the ships he would have used for the final victory over Spain. In that state of things, there was nothing for him to do but to turn to his great brother and rival, who was then just approaching Peru.

Bolívar, however, was in no mood of victory either when he set out for the south. The mutilation of his constitution for the new state of Colombia had wounded him deeply, while his remark about the death knell of Colombia reveals him as a critic with the incorruptible eye few fathers turn on their darlings.

A great deal followed which raised Bolívar's spirits. At the beginning of 1822, Monroe and Adams carried the recognition of the new state through Congress at Washington. Its foundation was celebrated in Mexico. San Domingo joined it. England refused to co-operate with the Holy Alliance in supporting Spain in America. When Bolívar dispatched his first ambassadors from Colombia to the Argentine and Chile, there already seemed to him no limits to what they could do, and he again took up the idea of an American league of nations which he had sketched as a fugitive in the island of Jamaica. His instructions to his ambassadors ran:

"Nothing, I repeat, in all I have laid down is so important at the moment as the formation of a League of American states. It must not, however, be founded solely on the principles of mutual assistance in offense and defense. It must be closer than the Holy Alliance, which was merely founded to suppress national freedom. A council or congress of plenipotentiaries should meet at once to safeguard all American interests and settle all disputes. If there is no such organization, we shall find ourselves plunged into disastrous wars which have already destroyed other, less fortunate nations." Bolivar urges the formation of this league among the former Spanish colonies, in the first place, for the discussion of important subjects of dispute, as a court of arbitration, for the interpretation of treaties, in short for everything that we, a hundred years later, call the International Court of Arbitration and are still trying to achieve.

World plans of the kind always arose in Bolivar's mind when perils were close and pressing. At such moments he seemed to take refuge from the pettiness of local and personal complications in the purer air of far-reaching speculation where he could draw breath. Even now, he was being appealed to for help from two sides. While the Spaniards were taking Coro in Venezuela, and Morales was advancing, laying the country waste as he did so, Bolivar won a victory in the south at Bombona which opened the way into Ecuador. After a new march over the Andes which cost him a third of his little army, he carried off the victory in a mountain battle, man fighting man in a hand-to-hand encounter with bayonets and daggers. Sucre, who first showed his mettle to the full on that occasion, now hurried on ahead, and again fought his way through at the foot of the volcanoes, winning a decisive victory with a handful of men. Quito, the ancient city of the Incas, fell into their hands. After a Spanish domination of three centuries, the whole great country, within a few weeks, came into the power of a foreigner, a Venezuelan, who was joining state to state in the name of Columbus.

Here, where there were few Spanish troops, but where part of the population rose against the union, the haste with which

Bolivar and his general, Sucre, moved was due to the activity of the new Protector who had begun to liberate Peru and had subjected it at the same time. The thought of the strange, remote Argentinian, moving on the southern frontier of Ecuador, could not but incite Bolivar to take possession of this intervening territory which had long been in his mind as part of his new state. For nothing was more likely than that the other too, the liberator of the south, should be aiming at those fertile tracts of country, and more especially the sea, where Guayaquil was the only good harbor for hundreds of miles along the coast. That was why Bolivar hurried on to Quito, the capital. When he made his triumphal entry into the city, one day in June, he did not know what was awaiting him there.

IV

IN the midst of the tumult, the pealing of bells, and the flowers, the maids of honor, the soldiers, and the bands he knew so well from other days of triumph, Bolivar, from his horse, saw a laurel wreath falling on his head from a corner house. The woman who crowned him in this romantic fashion, hoping to attract his attention to herself, was a southern beauty in her middle twenties. When he saw her again in the evening at the ball at the City Hall as the wife of an obscure doctor, a love story began which was the only one in her life and the most important in his. Bolivar was then entering on his fortieth year. Till his death, for the last eight years of his life, he loved no other woman; before her he had loved, at nineteen, only his wife.

This was the first woman to gain a real ascendancy over Bolivar after a lapse of nearly twenty years. We may well wonder who and what she was. She seems to have borne as little resemblance to the romantic child who had so soon drooped and faded in the arms of the youth as to the silly, affected blue-stockings who had tried to cut a figure with the interesting millionaire in Paris. Born on the equator and married at seventeen, she whose first greeting had been the laurel wreath was

a Spanish woman in the full bloom of her youth, a rider and fencer, a student, too, of Tacitus and Plutarch, and must have seemed to Bolivar the very embodiment of his dreams. In her he saw pride in its most elegant form, glory with its earthly smile, wit, pliancy, freshness, laughter, and daring united in a perfect picture of womanly beauty. She was the first woman he knew to match him as a rider, to accompany him on his campaigns, astride her horse in wide trousers and a red dolman, to fear no danger and shoot like a rifleman. Such was Manuela Saenz, whom he used later to call Manuelita, as if the tenderness of the diminutive could recall her to her role as a woman. To complete the symbolic significance of the whole adventure, the beautiful young woman, who had lived in Lima for a short time with her husband, had met San Martín there not long before. Hardly had she seen Bolivar, however, when his great rival and, of course, her husband, were forgotten.

Many are the stories told about her, yet few documents have survived to tell us about her character and the nature of her love. Both may become clearer if we first listen to the voices of other mistresses of Bolivar's in their letters.

"If you knew what my heart was made of, you would deign to heal its wounds. You are the spirit of harmony, you who grasp everything at the first glance. Your letter was such a sweet surprise!" Or again: "My sweet and true friend, my Liberator! You are like the rising sun. Wherever your foot treads, the earth revives. You are like the spring in nature. Not a moment passes in our home without your name being heard." Or again: "My glorious one! I am beside myself. When I think that you are leaving Colombia, I cease to understand myself. You know what you mean to me, although you cannot know what I feel. I hear you, kiss you, worship you, and finally flatter myself that I have your confidence. The whole world admires you!"

Compared with such twitterings, how firm is the ring of Manuela's voice! Only five of her letters have been preserved, for it is an ironic injustice of history that the most united couples leave fewest letters behind them, having seldom been

parted. Here is one, written shortly after their first, tumultuous meeting:

"My incomparable friend, your kind letter expresses your wish that I should stay. I say thank you, but you deserve more. If only it had happened before, and at once, instead of now, when I am sixty miles away! That battle will cost me dear. Now you will say that I am no patriot, that I should have felt more triumphant, and rejoiced that there had not been ten triumphs at Pasto. I have too much regard for you and I abhor the way the people are carrying on. But however discouraged you may be, there is no more desperate creature than the best of your friends—Manuela."

Sometimes there seem to have been crises, provoked now by his own adventures, now by her husband's protests. In one of these, Bolivar wrote to her:

"Every moment I think of you and of the fate that has befallen me. Nothing in the world can unite us in innocence and honor. Sighing, I see you with a man you do not love, while I am forced to part from a woman I adore!!!! Now, when I have to tear myself away from your love and the possession of you, my thoughts of you, my wonderful one, widen to infinity. When you were mine, I loved you for your genius rather than your charm. Now an eternity lies between us, since my own resolve tears me in torment from your love. Thus do we tear ourselves away from our joy in life. You will be alone with your husband, I in the world. Our only consolation will be the joy of having mastered ourselves. Duty tells us that we are not guilty."

In the chiaroscuro of this farewell letter, the emotions of the lover are mingled with those of the man beloved of women, for, knowing Manuela's determination to stake her all for this one man, we can read between the lines a certain act of liberation. The man who wrote them was secretly, perhaps unwittingly, glad to wrench himself free from a dangerous passion. Nor did he take her with him on his first expedition to Peru. Meanwhile, however, she threw herself into events in Quito, and put

down a mutiny there by placing herself at the head of a loyal squadron. Later he asked her to follow him, and in Peru she was treated and honored as the wife of the Liberator by all the officers but none of the ladies. Since he always had other adventures, however, there were more crises, one of which comes out in the following hasty lines written to one of Bolivar's adjutants:

"Misfortune is with me. Everything is coming to an end. The General has ceased to think of me. For nineteen days he has not written me as much as two letters. You always told me he was my friend. Now you must tell me why. I don't believe that, because you say so little. Whom else should I ask? Nobody, not even my own heart, which is the best friend I have. I could commit some act of madness. Afterwards I will tell you what, and you will say I am right, if it does not turn out wrong. Good-by. Chance may bring us together again. I am ill. I may die, nor do I wish to live any longer."

A year later, to Bolivar: "Sir, it is true that long absence kills love and inflames passion. You loved me a little, the great distance has killed your love. But I, who felt passion for you, have preserved it, in order to preserve my peace of mind and my happiness. That passion will live as long as Manuela lives. The General came and brought no message from you. Does it cost you so much to write to me? If you have to force yourself, let it be. I am leaving here on the 1st, because you wish it. But do not tell me to go back to Quito, for I would sooner die than be accounted shameless. P.S. I have a terrible headache. The General found me in bed."

A year later, from Lima, a scene from this semimarrried life, a mere note from her to him, quivering with pride, breeding, irony, and passion: "Sir, I know that you are angry with me, but I am guiltless. I went through the dining room and saw people there. I wanted to have the carpets beaten. Then I met you all. After that annoyance I could not sleep, and it is better, sir, that I should not come to you unless you insist on seeing me. Let me know if you wish to see me before the bull-

fight. I should think you would enjoy breakfast. Eat it with God."

Hasty lines, kept by the much-beloved man, because he recognized in their pride and scorn, in the tone now of command, now of submission, the great passion he had aroused which was no longer to be banished from the heart of either, even though Don Juan was too spoilt not to amuse himself elsewhere as he pleased. Manuela, however, was too strong and too proud not to be on the watch and intervene when the moment came. While he was marching in the south, she discovered a plot in Lima, had letters confiscated, men captured, and even tried to lead a battalion against the conspirators, though this time without success.

She had thrown far behind her her husband, her good name, her security. To her husband, who still refused to set her free, she could plead nothing but a passion which, she knew, would lead to no second marriage. Seven years had passed in this stormy attachment, in pain and reconciliations, when this woman wrote to her husband:

"Why do you try to write to me to change my resolve? Why do you cause me so much pain? You are an excellent man, and I shall never say anything else of you. But to leave you for General Bolivar's sake means something; to leave another man without your qualities would mean nothing. Now that the General has been my lover for seven years, and I know that I have his heart, I prefer to be the wife of nobody. If I regret anything, it is that you were not a still better man for me to leave. What you call honor leaves me cold. You think it does me little honor that he is not my husband. There is no room in my life for such prejudices, which only exist to cause mutual torment. Leave me alone, my dear Englishman.

"Let us do something else! In heaven we shall marry again, never on earth. Does that seem so dreadful to you? In our heavenly country we shall lead the life of angels, everything will be spirit, in spite of your weight. There everything will be English, as dull and prosy as life in your nation! I mean

as regards love! For as regards other things, what country is better at trade or on the seas! You love without charm, converse without grace. To bow with respect, stand up and sit down with circumspection, joke without laughter—divine formalities! But I, poor mortal, laugh at myself, you, and all that English society. I shall be hard put to it in heaven, as hard as if I had to live in England or Constantinople. The English owe me a recipe for how to be a tyrant with women, although, of course, you were never a tyrant with me. But more jealous than a Portuguese, and that I do not like.

“Enough of jesting. In all form and without laughter, with all the seriousness, truth, and integrity of an Englishwoman, I now inform you that I will never join my life to yours again. You are an Anglican, I am an atheist. That is the great religious impediment. The man I love is greater and stronger. Can you now see how clearly I think? Your unchanging friend—Manuela.”

A letter in such a tone can only be written by a woman of the Amazon type, who combines womanly pliancy with masculine pride, intelligence and irony with constancy in feeling, and lives it all at the headlong pace of the horsewoman. No one who realizes how rare the type is can wonder that Bolivar never met another woman in his life who combined these extraordinary qualities. But he had not met a man of the kind either. And since, in the turmoil of his life, he never really found a friend, Bolivar also gained in this woman a friend of intellectual standing. He knew that, or came to know it clearly enough in the course of years, for his answer to her letter sending him the copy of her farewell letter to her husband means the sealing of an eternal union:

“My heart, you would not believe how happy your letter made me. Salazar brought it. It is very beautiful. I must adore you for your mind. What you tell me about your husband is both painful and pleasant. I should like to see you free, for I can neither bear to be the thief of so wonderful a heart nor think that it should no longer be so by my fault. How to unite

your happiness to mine, or to your duty and mine, I do not know. I cannot cut the knot, as Alexander did, with the sword. For neither sword nor force have any part to play in all this, but guilty love, duty, error, and my love for the beautiful Manuela."

V

THE inhabitants of the port of Guayaquil, between their two approaching liberators, were anxiously wondering about their liberation. Party interests and intrigues concealed the great issues then as they do today. Since the town lay a little south of Quito, and thus on the equator, which was actually the frontier of Colombia and Peru, there naturally arose, between the partisans of union with one or the other, a party demanding complete independence for their native city. Bolivar could legitimately claim that his forces had rid the region of royalists two years before. When Sucre, however, arrived with weak forces in his name and ahead of him, he found a large number of influential men in favor of Peru. A formal invitation had even been sent to San Martín by a section of the population asking him to come and incorporate the city in his new, reorganized state.

Bolivar, dreaming of the great state of Colombia, and needing Quito—that is, Ecuador—for it, had documents forged to stiffen public opinion, for which he gave detailed instructions. They included letters from Paris and London, and even a dispatch from the Spanish general, La Torre, to General Páez, saying that he had received orders from the Cortes to conclude peace with Colombia. His object in taking this course of action in these critical weeks was to frighten the Spaniards and put heart into the Colombians. "The signatures of Páez and Zea are easy to copy," he wrote to his confidant. "But they must be very well copied, so must that of Páez' secretary." He even agreed on a cipher code so as to be able to distinguish the genuine from the forged letters.

This lack of fastidiousness in his methods can be explained by the dread which filled Bolivar when he set out for the south. He felt and knew that it was not merely a question of getting possession of Ecuador, but that his way led farther on, to Peru—indeed no one knew how far it might lead him. The waking dream of the silver mountains of Potosí, at the southern extremity of Peru, was still reverberating in his mind. Something like the feelings of Napoleon leaving Europe on his fantastic march into the unknown, into Russia, seems to have overcome Bolivar at the time, for he writes in unusual agitation:

“I spend my days and nights in the greatest terrors. My mind is tortured with thinking out ways and means for this campaign. I do not know, my friend, whether it will seem exaggerated to you if I say that I can assure you that I wish I had as much faith in the Gospel as in the truth of this letter.”

Bolivar, moreover, could not fail to hear with mingled feelings all the news that came in of San Martín's army—the men lying about idle in Lima, the general depression, the lack of money and trade, the intrigues among the officers even aiming at the General and culminating in the preparation of an attempt on his life. However much he might hate the Spaniards, he felt that he, and he alone, was predestined to drive them out. He had had similar experiences with his own rivals eight years earlier, just before the liberation of Caracas. The reports from the south, however, persistently asserted that San Martín was on the point of coming to terms with the Spanish viceroy.

If this were true, what would be the fate of Quito? For then the army from Peru would be doubled. And what would be the fate of Colombia, which he felt was still only a torso, and scarcely capable in its youthful weakness of supporting so strong a half-Spanish pressure from the south. At this point, Bolivar showed himself at the height of his powers as a political tactician. Far from challenging, or even antagonizing by an ultimatum, the man on whose decisions his whole work depended in this crisis, he wrote him a flatteringly rhetorical letter inviting him to come to Guayaquil, the bone of contention, where they

would soon be able to come to terms. He did this in the exalted frame of mind which, after all his troubles, first overcame him in Quito and was certainly in part born of his new passion. He had, of course, been forced to part from Manuela again almost immediately, but a stream of letters between the two in these very weeks seems to have cast them into the agitation of a choice and its consequences, namely, the union of their ways.

In Guayaquil, Bolivar found feeling divided, as was to be expected, and while, at his entry, he read on the triumphal arch: "To the son of war, the rainbow of peace," he often heard cries in the streets: "Long live independent Guayaquil!" One account says that, hearing such cries, he looked up at the balconies, from which no laurel wreath fell, pulled his helmet down on his forehead, and rode gloomily on. He wore, however, a gay uniform with silk ribbons and a helmet with plumes. Everything was planned to win the people's favor. Immediately afterwards he had the flags of Colombia hoisted, as if to show that he would not even recognize the existence of a problem.

There was no question of opposition. Even the mayor's speech turned out much more obsequious than it was when he had submitted it the day before. But when Bolivar, at the banquet, "gave the kiss of peace to all those who had won freedom by so much courage and enthusiasm," one of the superior officers of Quito rose and drank to the fighters "who had won freedom without foreign help." Bolivar is said to have listened to the toast with his head thoughtfully bent.

But where was San Martín? He had been invited. A year before, Bolivar had written him a courteous letter, overflowing with admiration and friendship, yet with an underlying coolness which could not escape the man who read it. Communications in those parts were uncertain, and as he was coming by sea, nobody knew whether or when he would arrive. In actual fact the announcement of his arrival seems to have been lost, for his ship came in unexpectedly on the day of the banquet given by the authorities to General Bolivar. The latter improvised full military honors for his guest, but the people were so con-

fused and so divided among themselves that, in the presence of Bolivar, they presented the foreigner from the Argentine with a wreath of laurel in the hope that he had come to deliver them from Colombia. The two men had two long private conversations, about which very little transpired, and that only later.

The question of the flag, that is, of the nationality of the city and its hinterland, was not raised. San Martín would have had to challenge, leave, and fight at once. His quality as a commander, his character, and his present mood all made that course impossible. The whole discussion at once turned on Peru, and the crucial question at issue became the constitution—a republic or a monarchy. Here the two characters clashed, for both had arrived at their proposals not suddenly, not by chance, and not from self-seeking, but by a long process of mental development. We know that Bolivar took his stand on the example of the recently crowned Emperor of Mexico, Iturbide, and his initial failure. Thus in order to form an idea of the arguments he brought forward in his conversation with San Martín, we can turn to a private, ironic letter he wrote shortly afterwards:

“You have heard that Iturbide has become Emperor by the grace of Pius, his sergeant major. I am afraid that the four boards covered with red cloth which they call a throne will cause more blood than tears to flow, and bring more strife than peace. I regard the epoch of monarchy as past. Thrones will not come back into fashion as long as there are men who love freedom and feel repelled by glamour of that sort.”

That is the sense in which he must have argued against San Martín's monarchistic ideas. But the thing that separated the men more than anything else was Bolivar's aversion to all things European, while what San Martín had in mind was not a native ruler, but a Spanish prince, for Peru at any rate. Bolivar first demanded the complete liberation of Peru, the annihilation of the royalists, and promised the help of his troops for the fight.

Bolivar, at this moment, displayed supreme worldly wisdom. He saw before him a man who lacked everything which made him himself irresistible at his best moments; he certainly real-

ized that the same man possessed characteristics and powers that he lacked. He felt that it would have been impossible for this taciturn, sober, and methodical personality to make a final challenge or breach at the moment. With his unerring knowledge of men, he foresaw that he could offer the other more than such a character would ever accept. He could not embarrass him more profoundly than by offering him his help.

San Martín, alienated by the brilliance, the bright mobility of Bolívar's mind, could not but be moved first to amazement, then to secret hostility by his whole being, from the plumes on his helmet to his first public embrace. The man whose mind was at home in discipline and plans of battle, and at sea in persuasion and compliments, was lost at the first step he took from his ship into the seductive ambiance of his rival. Since he, as an American and a liberator, was determined not to enter on a conflict with another American and liberator, his rigid gravity was foredoomed to defeat by the charm and pliancy of the other. His disappointments in Peru, his dejection after the breach with the Admiral, his old inward resistance to any kind of politics, all helped to make the situation more oppressive.

At that moment he did what is only possible to a noble character and a great soldier making a voluntary retreat from his position. Instead of accepting Bolívar's offer of military help, he offered in his turn to fight as a general under his command.

Bolívar's sense of pride and honor was too deep for him not to bow before such a gesture. His very knowledge of the antique world and his habit of seeing himself in its tales showed him the heights to which his older, less fortunate guest had risen. He foresaw San Martín's retirement, he did not refer to it. No kind of agreement was reached.

When, however, they were sitting together at the banquet, San Martín, whom Bolívar had toasted, rose and said: "To the speedy end of the war, to the organization of the country, and to the health of the Liberator." Such a situation seals a man's doom, but opens his way into history.

Immediately afterwards, the ball began. San Martín took pri-

vate leave of Bolivar, beckoned to his adjutant, and embarked again after a stay of thirty-six hours, to sail south the next morning. While San Martín sat on deck, oppressed by heavy thoughts, Bolivar danced half the night.

VI

THE two men were divided less by politics than by character; the little they said in confidence expressed their mutual disappointment. San Martín's high sense of justice made him say later in public: "Bolivar's feats of war have made him the most outstanding man in South America; more especially his endurance in every ordeal, which grows greater with difficulty and remains unshaken in all the perils into which his fiery temperament plunges him." On his return to Peru, he even spoke in general terms of undying gratitude for the immortal Bolivar, who was to send men and arms. Yet to O'Higgins he said in confidence: "The Libertador is not the man I had expected."

As the victor, it was easier for Bolivar to praise the other, and he expressed that praise in the veiled and succinct statement: "I thought San Martín corresponded exactly to the descriptions given of him by Ribas, Castillo, and others who were very devoted to him." A great deal may be learned from the official report Bolivar dictated to his secretary for the ministry: San Martín, he states, expressly declared that he was not going to interfere in the question of Guayaquil. As regards a prince for Peru, Bolivar spoke less against the prince than against Europe. He thus continues:

"It is to be presumed that San Martín wished to set up a provisional monarchy, and offer the crown to a prince, with the obvious intention of usurping the throne himself afterwards, as he is more popular in the country. He seems penetrated with the sense of the difficulties of government. He himself is entirely in favor of the union of Peru with Colombia, even if no other state were ready to join it, because the troops of one state in the

service of the other would reinforce the authority of both governments in dealing with unrest in the country. This is the idea on which his thoughts and wishes mainly turn. He explained with enthusiasm how recruits should be exchanged to fill up the cadres: this was the point on which he spoke with the greatest vivacity." He was ready to speak in favor of the new frontier before the Congress, but would not pledge his country without consulting the civil power. The visit was a private one; he would not be questioned on it. Bolivar might later ask for everything he wanted in Peru: he would be sure of San Martín's consent. "His offer of help is unlimited. It is made with a pleasure and generosity which look perfectly sincere."

A letter written by Bolivar to Santander completes this account in important particulars. "San Martín seemed to me a thorough soldier, active, resolute, never at a loss. His precision of mind is attractive, but he does not seem to me very subtle in the fine shades of distinction which come out in ideas and enterprises." . . .

With all its double meanings, this report is most favorable to San Martín, for the only point at which he was under suspicion, namely the crown, is withdrawn in the second letter, and is moreover refuted by the whole bearing of the man. More than anywhere else, we see here the supremacy of the soldier in San Martín, yet at the same time the superiority of Bolivar as a statesman over a man who was little more than soldier. It would almost seem as if Bolivar pitied his rival a little and felt a little disappointed by the upshot of the encounter. All his life Bolivar sought a foeman worthy of his steel and never found one.

San Martín found one without looking for him. We cannot explain the way he retired before Bolivar, as he had done before in the fits of lassitude already described, the rapidity and quietness with which he handed over his protectorate to the quarreling factions in Lima a few weeks after the meeting, simply by assuming it to be his way out of a too-intricate situation. San Martín was too much the soldier, too much the man of conscience, in a word, too brave, to run away from the anarchy in

Peru. It is true that he was disgusted with the quarrels of the party leaders, being far less able to cope with them than Bolivar. An attempt on his life may, and his breach with Cochrane must, have depressed him.

But what really weighed on him, and soon broke him down completely, was the apparition of the lover of women, heralded by glory, crowned with laurel, bringing victory in his train. The very things that alienated him in Bolivar weakened him, since he had nothing but silence and renunciation with which to counter such a mind. San Martín could have stood up to a soldier of his own kidney; Bolivar was simply out of his reach because he possessed personality, that is, an indefinable quality which can no more be acquired than a beautiful voice.

The struggle in San Martín's mind which led to his retirement may have lasted no more than a few minutes when he found himself confronted with the plumed apparition.

At that time, moreover, San Martín's strength was undermined by disease. "I ought," he said soon afterwards, "to have had several officers shot, but I had not the courage. They were, after all, friends of former days." Yet that was the courage Bolivar mustered up when he had Piar shot.

San Martín's position was jeopardized, or even, in the constitutional sense, made untenable, by his abdication, for if he ceased to be a Peruvian or a Chilean, he was hated by too many people in his own country to be able to call himself an Argentinian. A year later, when his wife, then very ill, sent for him to come to her at Buenos Aires, he turned back halfway because he was threatened with arrest, to prevent his intervening in the civil wars of his native country. His wife died without seeing him. To a second warning given by his friends against his return home, he made the fine reply:

"I am to be arrested? That is impossible. I shall go alone, as I came overseas alone, alone as I was in Mendoza. If it must be, I shall, in answer, hand over my sword, the freedom of half a world, the standard of Pizarro, presented to me by Peru, and all the enemy colors I have captured without shedding the blood

of the Argentine. The people of Buenos Aires will not lay unjust hands on me."

In Europe, where he arrived two years after his retirement, he had to wander about between Paris, London, and Brussels, as difficulties were put in his way everywhere. He devoted himself to his daughter's education, listened with the intensity of the exile to all news from overseas, and when, four years later, he heard of a war between Brazil and his own country, and offered his services only to have them refused, he none the less set out with his old servant and sailed across under a false name. But what did he find on landing? The war over, the papers had got wind of his arrival and were saying, half in mockery and half in menace, that he had come too late on purpose. He read them, refused to land, and said to his servant: "Let us go. They have thrown us out." He left the continent without having set foot in the country he had served better than any other of her sons. He was then fifty, and he was enough of a philosopher to spend his old age cultivating his garden.

A few years later he married his daughter to the son of an Argentinian general of his former staff and followed the development of his country through the couple who were soon sent to the embassy in Paris. Five years after his first abortive visit he refused to return to a new revolution, and declared that he preferred exile to that kind of freedom. But when a friend later reproached him for having resigned, San Martín replied: "You don't seem to know that two thirds of the inhabitants of this earth are idiots, the rest criminals."

Twelve years after his death his monument was unveiled in Buenos Aires: yet another ten years and his ashes were brought home.

VII

THE traveler flying over Peru sees two high ranges of mountains with countless peaks flanked by three narrow plains differing widely in type and color. The southwestern chain, a branch of

the Andes crossed by several passes, falls steeply to a narrow strip of flat yellow coast which runs along the Pacific for over twelve hundred miles. On it there lie Lima with its port of Callao, and a dozen smaller towns, mostly ports.

The middle strip, broader but lonelier, embedded between the high mountain ridges and marked by a big lake and a number of long rivers, is also characterized by curious patches, most of them half-moon-shaped, and almost all pointing in the same direction, like buried green domes. These strange dunes or oases advance some thirty yards yearly under pressure of the winds. These are the trade winds, which always blow steadily, so that the regular half-moons rise where a little moisture has permitted as much as a tamarisk to live. To the east of the reddish mountains, wide green grasslands lie along the Andean plateau, a pastoral country with countless herds of llamas and caravans of horses, with snow-capped volcanoes towering over it and falling steeply to another boundless country, Brazil.

Between these three colors, the air traveler notices striking white patches in the yellow sands of the coastlands. These are the guano heaps, deposited by the multitudinous birds. Since it does not rain on the coast, one is reminded of the Egyptians, whose skill in irrigation turned such deserts into fruitful land, and the more so as the natural oases have a threefold harvest, as in Egypt. Although Peru seems uninhabited, and although, with an area as big as France and Spain together, it only has five million inhabitants, it is fertile and rich; it is the home of the potato, of tobacco and maize, it is rich in wool and rubber, which are shipped on a tributary of the Amazon. Why, then, did this country awaken so late?

It was awake and flourishing until the Spaniards came and destroyed the culture of the Incas. Even if we guard ourselves against any romantic exaggeration of the beauty and wealth of a world subjected by cruelty, what we know of the Incas shows us one of the two or three civilizations which developed spontaneously in America. In its primitive refinement, it can really be compared only to Egypt.

What a people here created quite spontaneously and developed between the tenth and fifteenth centuries was amazing because, without any previous tradition, and without any communication with European culture, it led a pastoral life as if it were alone on one of those islands in Lake Titicaca from which the sun took its rise. Tidings of Osiris, Plato, and Jesus had never reached these men, yet they lived without human sacrifice in a community based on moral principles—with the sole exception of slavery—where all had the same rights and that share of the gifts of life to which their work entitled them. Without knowing the Egyptians, they elaborated a similar cult of the dead and counted and valued everything by the sun. The moral principles of the state were very similar to those laid down by Moses two thousand years before at the other end of the world. They carried on communal tillage and stock raising, regulated marriage and education, distributed craftsmen among the villages, gave each individual his own house, every child or aged person the necessaries of life, tolerated neither trading nor private capital, accumulated stores in state granaries against bad harvests, and seldom made war, although their army safeguarded them against attack by their neighbors.

Without ever having heard of a doctor from Greek times to Paracelsus, the Incas could kill the nerve of a tooth with a red-hot needle, fill the cavity, and, eight centuries before Lister, deaden pain with cocaine. Without having heard of an engineer from Archimedes to Galileo, they built stone and suspension bridges, erected aqueducts, and irrigated the steppes. They invented an alphabet with sets of cords variously colored and knotted at definite intervals representing characters, which has been the sole record of their history for us. They created a kind of wireless telegraphy, carefully calculating the curves of sound emitted by apertures in hollow tree trunks, similar to the sounds produced by short lengths of elastic wood of hourglass shape used for violins. Since the knotted-cord letters, placed in a hollow bamboo, were quickly transported by a chain of couriers, there was a news service spread over the whole 2500 miles'

length of the country, which had a single system of government from the Amazon and Quito to the frontier of Chile.

Their kings, the real Incas, by whose name the people came to be called, who counted their descent from the daughters of the sun, propagated their race, like the Pharaohs, by marrying their sisters, were priests as well as kings, and as such were just as greedy as the Egyptians before and the Spanish after them. In the mighty city of Cuzco, which was as populous as Thebes, they held the brilliant court which ensured them the enjoyments of life and the reverence of the people. In Peru, ten to twelve millions of people seem to have lived and flourished. Where they came from, and whether they were Mongols who had migrated by way of the Bering Straits and Alaska, is not certain. Their end is known.

With all their cruelties, the Spanish conquerors, advancing their dominion eight thousand miles from the California of today to the Straits of Magellan, sacrificed more and created less than the English; the destruction of the Incas of Peru stands terrible witness to it. Anyone visiting today the gigantic walls of the ancient Inca palaces in the capital, marveling at the temples on the islands in Lake Titicaca, or comparing their rock-hewn temples, their images of the llama, or their mountain passes with the handful of forts and monasteries left in the country by the highly cultured Spaniards, can better understand the spell of the gold which made the conquerors come without any wish to carry out any methodical cultivation of the soil or the people such as the English and the French carried out soon after in the northern half of the continent. While the latter found a wild country in possession of a wild people, and took the forests and prairies in order to make them useful to man by the labor of their own hands, the Spaniards destroyed what they found, forced the natives to work in the gold and copper mines, and tried to cast a veil of nobility over their domination by giving baptism to the natives, thus holding out the hope of a better life after death.

Was it any wonder that hundreds of thousands of Indians, es-

pecially in the first century of the conquest, fled into the remote valleys of the Andes? There they founded new tribes and peoples who lived on in freedom, since no road led to them. When Pizarro landed in Peru in 1525—exactly three hundred years before San Martín and Bolívar—with 170 men and a few horses, it was the firearms and the armor of his soldiers which gave him the victory. Sixteen years later he was himself assassinated. He, too, and his successors, founded cities and universities in the country. But the loss of freedom, the compulsion of an alien culture and religion, the decay of all native institutions, led to more conspiracies in that century. The quartering of native revolutionaries in 1660 did not prevent an indignant silversmith, seventy years later, from making a fresh attempt, and the sacrifice of the lives of his followers fired their sons and grandsons, allied Indians and mestizos, to a new rising in 1780, at the end of which the surviving leaders were torn in pieces by four horses.

Nor was San Martín the first liberator. In 1810, soon after the revolution in Caracas, Lima had risen; this rising had been quickly put down and held under until, in 1816, a congress proclaimed the independence of the Argentine and Peru, amid continual counterefforts. San Martín had then declared his protectorate over the ravaged country. Anarchy had reached such a pitch that a single colonel was able to proclaim High Peru independent, a fact which later had important consequences for Bolívar.

This anarchy, which had made San Martín's retirement easier, had been increased by his intervention. In Peru, as in so many other places, it was the fact that the liberator was a foreigner which awakened suspicion in spite of the fact that he brought freedom. In Peru too the Creoles were almost the only revolutionaries, and there too they were divided by intrigue and could not even present a united front to the Spanish Viceroy when he prepared a great army of 23,000 men to march against Peru and Chile. The Indians and half-castes were on his side; they abhorred the Spaniards, yet feared republics, and they had just seen their

monarchistic leanings supported by San Martín. The Emperor of Mexico, who had at any rate kept his throne for a year, had given a thrilling example, though nobody seemed disposed to follow it anywhere else.

Thus parties and tribes fought each other in the capital and the provinces, one leader negotiating with the Spaniards, his successor openly betraying the country to them. Trade was at a standstill, the country a prey to famine and brigandry, and in the midst of it all the lawyers and tradesmen in the little congress at Lima argued over Lycurgus and Montesquieu, realized the necessity of foreign troops, yet feared the offer of Colombia, and only allowed its troops to enter the country when nobody could master the general chaos and when, by a treaty, they had forestalled any disastrous tendency on the part of the liberators to remain. San Martín was again recalled, and again refused, but the fine words he wrote called forth a profound echo in the midst of the wrangling and may have led to a revulsion of feeling:

“God protect Peru. Yet I believe not even His supreme help would suffice to liberate that unhappy land. There is only one man who can achieve its liberation, supported by his strong army—Bolívar!”

VIII

BOLÍVAR, however, was in no sense of the word free. While Peru had taken the lead in refusing his help, his own country, Colombia, now refused him permission to advance. Further Spanish advances seemed to make it necessary for him to go to Venezuela. At the same time there were repeated risings at Pasto in Ecuador, and here and there the Colombians won victories in which he had no hand. In a certain sense he was glad to be able to turn south again at once; on the other hand it made him restless to see Sucre reaping all the glory for the victories in Quito. He made Santander publish an article in the newspaper, defining their respective achievements: “With a certain delicacy, it

would be possible to pay a great deal of honor to the guard without disparaging Sucre's division." And in point of fact, Bolivar was justified at the time in regarding himself as so much the embodiment of his country that he wrote to his friend: "The whole power of Colombia is worthless without my leadership. The entire population, down to the tradesmen, are offering their services on the sole condition that I make use of them."

The fighting in Peru had been going on for a year before Bolivar was called there. While he himself remained behind at the request of the Congress, his next step was to send Sucre to Peru, and his restlessness was doubled because he was not there. The separation of powers he had himself desired could not but lead to friction. Santander, whom he had installed in the capital as "his other, perhaps better self," whom he honored with his most intimate journal letters, and in whom he was so sorely deceived, criticized a certain order of Bolivar's as too autocratic. Bolivar replied with some irritation: "There is only one government, which you represent in the capital and I in the countries under my command. I did not know till today that I was not allowed to exercise the rights of the executive there. I have never declared, seen, or heard that I did not possess them. The best thing will be to appoint a President who is a real President and wishes to be one."

Thus at the height of his success, Bolivar was again plunged into the conflict between the dictatorship of an army commander founding states and the democratic constitution he so passionately desired. Since nobody was disposed to let him leave the country with the troops, he was repeatedly recalled to Bogotá, and for a time seemed inclined to go; he would, as he wrote, live outside the town as an invalid and carry on the government from there. Santander might be good enough to buy china for him, but not prepare a pompous reception. He would arrive by night and only give audiences in town for one day. "I am already old; I have not enough resistance. I am always turning over in my mind what reef the ship whose rudder I hold in the eyes of history might founder on. It is very painful to me

that after so much effort, our work seems to be coming to nought. We will be called a handful of miserable politicians and administrators, after having been acknowledged as soldiers." In the full possession of power, Bolivar was still tormented by such moods and forebodings. He was detained only by the rising at Pasto, which he put down with a firm hand. It was the only time in these later years at which his adjutant's memoirs show him fighting in person; he placed himself at the head of a few dozen lancers and dispersed the rebels. A significant spectacle, rare among dictators at the age of forty, when Napoleon was already fat.

And yet at this time the signs of embitterment and fatigue movingly reveal themselves in his letters. The repetition of their burden to several of his friends makes it impossible to dismiss them as mere moods. The question whether to go or to stay, to help in the consolidation of the new, as yet feeble country, or win new glory outside it, left Bolivar no peace toward the end of his years of health. Although he longed to turn his back on the paltry quarrels of party leaders and live a free life as sole master in the military field, politics as such attracted him irresistibly all the same, while, in his premature weakness, he felt he would soon be unable to bear the physical strain of war. There is no doubt that the idea of glory turned the scale. He strove in every way in the letters he wrote during these critical weeks to cast a mantle of logic over his desire for further laurels, and we can hear his profound agitation of mind overwhelming his cool reasoning.

To Santander: "You could fill a volume with considerations, for and against. Here two great spheres of interest overlap. The advice of reason is to step in on the side of the weaker in order to counterbalance the stronger. In this decision I am not thinking of the threat to my good name, nor of the disapproval of Colombia. I am, like an unbiased judge, weighing up the respective interests. In the end, the post [the vote of Congress] will fall into the scales. . . . Nobody imagines that Peru cannot live without me. On the other hand I do not doubt that

Colombia can live very well with you, Páez, Carrera, and Montillo."

Ceaselessly he turns the question over in his mind; ceaselessly his mind revolves round the question. He feels that to go or to stay is this time a decision for life.

"In Venezuela," he had written shortly before to Mendez, "I am like a ship in a storm and can go under at any moment. If, on the other hand, I am sailing in the Pacific, I can at all times safeguard my ship and bring her to anchor in the best harbor. In the end, the south may be my salvation."

To a relation trying to detain him, he used the following metaphor: "Today I belong not to the Bolivar family, but to the Colombia family. My origin is not Caracas, but the whole nation. Venezuela, I imagine, is our vanguard, New Granada our main column, and Quito our rearguard. The philosophy of war teaches us that the vanguard suffers, but demands reinforcements, that the center should support the vanguard with all its might, while the reserve should act as a rearguard, since it is the salvation and the hope of the whole army." Shortly afterwards to another relative: "I am tired of commanding and serving. I shall come to Caracas; my authority will be useful as an intermediary in difficult cases."

At other times he measures the danger of the enterprise by historical examples, or even by the example of his closest colleagues and rivals. The Emperor of Mexico was on the brink of his fall:

"That weakens my desire to go to Peru. I do not know if a fall will mean the same to me as to my American colleagues. Their fate frightens me. If anything restrains me it is my understanding of the example given to us by San Martín and other heroes of his country. My companions in Colombia have preserved their glory." Suddenly his reflective mood changes and he hurries on: "This consideration deserves an excellent article in the Bogotá paper. Contrasts had to be: Colombia, its heroes and generals on the one hand, America on the other with its

heroes, emperors, protectors, directors, admirals, delegates, regents. Consequently—no better thing in the world than our constitution and our behavior.”

On other days he falls victim to fresh doubts and does not know if he really wishes the Congress's sanction, though its non-appearance would infuriate him:

“There was one Bonaparte,” he writes to Santander, “and our America had three Caesars. These evil examples prejudice my situation, for no one will believe I was not devoured by ambition, since, after all, my career resembles that of the others. My three colleagues, San Martín, O'Higgins, and Iturbide [Mexico] have already experienced the terrible end because they did not love freedom; that is why I wish to avoid any suspicion in that direction. The wish to end the war in America urges me to go to Peru, yet the love of my good name keeps me back, so that I vacillate, coming to no decision, since both motives are equally strong. Yet I tend to believe that the love of my country will come out victorious, as it did in classical times. The fear of yet more ordeals holds me back. I do not know whether I shall not be regarded as more ambitious than I really was.”

In other letters written at this time he puts the question still more clearly, and purely as one of principle:

“I wish to devote the last third of my life only to glory and to rest. Whether the rest I long for is so necessary I do not know. I feel I need rest, but perhaps the urge to action will reappear after a time; I shall begin to miss it. It may be that if I return to the status of Simon Bolívar, I may wish to be President again. Perhaps such whims may be allowed me as a reward for my services.”

And yet they were no whims, but strong feelings, for a few weeks later we find a variation on them:

“Two thirds of my life lie behind me. The last I should wish to devote to my peace of mind and my glory. I owe God and the world an account of my life, and should not like to die without rounding off current accounts. May it be given to every

citizen to serve his country for twelve years. Later I must take my turn again. Not before. I was not born a slave. I am determined to be a citizen in order to be free."

About the same time he writes: "We have sent 6000 men to Peru. I had to give up leading them, in order not to transgress the law. But I am going to Peru, where superhuman difficulties await me. I will overcome them, for Colombia must be safeguarded against further sacrifices, which would mean its ruin. . . . I have reached the end of my career. It is fitting for me to retire. I must therefore make sure of an honorable and peaceable withdrawal. If I do not do so, it would be easy for me to meet with a violent fall which would break my life's work to pieces."

If he meets with the slightest hindrance or criticism in the capital, however, he rears like a shying horse:

"The constitution of Colombia has been consecrated for ten years. It will not be infringed with impunity as long as blood flows in my veins and the liberators remain under my orders." Another time he compares himself to the Cid, whose mere life was an assurance of victory. A third time he writes to Santander in the capital in a thoroughly dictatorial tone:

"Tell them that I have no need to threaten, but that I have the power to do what I think best when order is disturbed, for the army and the people wish me to save them from the appalling stupidity of their reformers. Tell them that Constant said that only a scoundrel introduces reforms into a new constitution before it has been put to the test."

Finally, this crescendo, which had been mounting for months, ends in a truly demonic chant which he sent to his friend Santander immediately before his departure for Peru. It shows Bolivar, the poet and man of destiny, at his height:

"This war is like an artificial diamond; the more you beat it, the firmer and more glittering it grows on all sides. Truly there has never been a more glittering spectacle. Never have soldiers made their weapons keener. Each is fighting the inexorable Hades. All the elements are united; all that is needed is a blow.

My heart swings between hope and caution. The worst of it is that I am nowhere, because I have to deal with these fellows in Pasto, far from the battle and its glory. Every day gives me reason to thank fate. The higher I rise, the deeper yawns the abyss at my feet. My courage always rises with the fears in my mind. My march into Peru is a wonderful plunge. It terrifies me not at all. I shall imitate Curtius who plunged into the flames for his fatherland. Harden yourself, so that the bread shall not burn at the oven door! I bid you farewell as one going into another world. It might also be called a terrible cavern, where possessions, freedom, and courage will be swallowed up.

"I fear in Peru the same thing as at Cartagena. It would seem as if my life were guided by a demon. At Cúcuta, you saw me ride off to a deed of desperation, and now, ten years later, we are at the same place, having taken no steps in the right direction, but many impossible ones. If it turns out well, a good genius has led me. If not, an evil demon. If I do not come, call San Martín, but he will do nothing for Peru, since he himself is an element of discord."

It is difficult to stop quoting these moving confessions, for they are soliloquies, held to his closest friends, with a minimum of rhetoric; they reveal to us the hidden states of mind of Bolívar at forty on the eve of his departure for his last and most distant campaign. By this time the Spaniards had been almost entirely expelled from his own country, the two others almost wholly torn out of their hands. Colombia, the long dreamed-of union of three countries, had been created and was hardly even threatened by the Spaniards in it.

Was there not something similar in Napoleon's state of mind about 1811, when he had moments of relaxation and looked forward to living peaceably with his wife and son and ruling France? At that time he was urged onward only by the ancient law of dictators which forces them to acquire territory and yet more territory, and to beat even their last surviving rivals. The spirits of his youth rose behind him, urging him on to Russia, perhaps to India. Yet at the same time he was harassed by the

unrest of the usurper. He knew that he owed fresh surprises to the sensation-hungry people of Paris, that he could not, like a legitimate heir to power, rest on his laurels.

Such motives had no power with Bolivar. He set out to liberate, not to subject. Yet he too was carried forward by the momentum of war, which cannot come to a standstill should the commander even wish it. It seemed important to him to occupy his army, he even declared to Santander that freedom could only be maintained on that condition, and later uttered the terrible truth that the expulsion of the last Spaniards would mean the end of Venezuela, since the army would then have nothing to do.

Indeed, at the end of all his dreams and all his calculations, there stood, for him as for Napoleon, the victory over the master of the country he had already conquered in three states. Why now in a fourth? Was he setting out in order to reach the Argentine? Against that there was the experience of ten years, during which the southern part of the continent had liberated itself entirely on its own account, without any question of the north. Then why Peru? The calls that reached him were very feeble, some he had asked for himself. Did he perhaps wish to extend Colombia by that huge territory? That was refuted by his definite promise to the country and by his later policy.

Political reasons are easy to find. The founder of Colombia wished to clear his frontiers of a Spanish army which might invade his country and destroy all his work. And yet, in many of his reflections, he passes over that danger entirely. Even the thought of San Martín, the desire to outstrip him in the eyes of history, was an all-too-human motive. None of these reasons touches the heart of the matter.

No. What is exemplified here is simply the law of the expansive type of human being, whether incorporated in a conqueror, a liberator, or an industrialist. In Bolivar's case, that law is ennobled, for it is seen by the eye of a poet enjoying the spectacle in which he is to play a part, and by the vision of the man who feels himself a maker of history, yet sees his work in the light of

the present. The risk, after all, was considerable for a conqueror marching into a foreign country in a state of anarchy, there to expose his fame and his life. But what impelled him? Simply his glory. After such success, a man cannot but feel himself predestined, cannot but strive further and yet further, without turning into a gambler on that account. Everyone believes in the altruism of his impulses, is convinced that he can improve a situation simply by setting out to fashion the clay into the shape his dreams, his visions, have foretold. While it is easy for this formative impulse to fuse with the quest of glory, the ultimate aim of the man of action, whichever way his action takes, is immortality, in this relentless onward impulse which resembles a longing for death.

IX

WHEN Bolivar, in September, 1823, landed at the port of Callao, which San Martín had left a year before to go into retirement, he found chaos waiting for him and his own General Sucre between victory and defeat. Only a dictatorship, and one exercised by a name famous far and wide, could create order and freedom at the same time. Bolivar's state of mind as dictator perfectly fitted his situation: it was even the premise of success.

After the torturing vacillation of the past months, in which he had been hoping for what he persuaded himself, now and then, to curse, his patience had come to an end. He had, without waiting for the sanction of the Congress, written his decision to it. When the courier was ready to start, the sanction arrived; he tore up his letter and wrote home that he felt relieved: "I have the right to everything, but I did not wish to make use of it in order to avoid creating a precedent. You would hardly believe how grateful I am to you and the Congress. The situation of America is no longer a problem, it is a fact, a sovereign law, made unalterable by fate. This world cannot now be bound to anything, for it is surrounded by two oceans, and

the heart of the Americans is completely independent. Europe is not blind. Recognition will come." After these dramatic phrases, like all generals writing home he asks for a reinforcement of 3000 men.

When Bolivar, on his arrival in Peru, found the place in a state of anarchy, with a President at loggerheads with the Congress, with others aiming at making themselves President, in a country afflicted by famine, robbery, and bankruptcy, with the Spaniards in possession of large parts of it, he wrote a threatening letter to the acting President of Peru, and soon after had him arrested, while treating the deputies with the utmost civility: "The wisdom of the Congress will be my guiding star in this chaos!"

And all the time the little tradesmen of the country were dreading the terrible foreign general who was approaching, and once, when the quartermaster sent orders, before their entry into a town, "For the General, good food, a good bed, etc., etc., etc.," the fathers of the city took counsel. What did etc. mean, three times running? Clearly the great Moloch must have everything in triplicate. Thereupon they laid hold of the three prettiest girls to present to the stranger. On his arrival, Bolivar set the girls at liberty and dismissed the mayor.

Invested with the civil and military power, he took strong action, set up an army of Peruvians with his own men acting as a nucleus, but could not prevent some Argentine troops from going over to the Spaniards, commandeered the church treasures, set up schools, and, while he had to play the part of the savior of the country at public festivities in resounding speeches, he wrote:

"I wish I had never seen Peru and had let it perish rather than have to bear the name of dictator here. Everybody hopes for freedom at my hands. But, my dear friend, how sorely these men are deceived! I cannot treat them as Colombians, yet I myself am not a Peruvian. This country requires complete renewal. The Congress could carry it out, but will not. I only make suggestions, so that few, or none, can complain of me. What a

chaos for the man who fell from heaven! I already repent of having come, for my good name might suffer by a reverse in the field."

On this campaign, he sent for Manuela. She soon arrived, to remain with him for the best part of two years. The constancy of this association, now as close as marriage, has no parallel in Bolivar's life. How truly extraordinary she was becomes fully clear if we think of the precariousness of a situation in which the field marshal and his staff were out to snatch what pleasure they could. For that time in Peru, with its conspiracies, its dejections, its anarchy, fighting and suppressed revolts, was punctuated with gallant episodes, which made a secretary at headquarters give a general description of it as "a Babylon, where all the beautiful women seem to have conspired to turn our heads. A giddy succession of personalities, beauties, flirtations." And yet, as another report says: "All the generals in the army and the most important men of the time paid Manuela Saenz the respect they would have owed to the Liberator's legitimate wife."

Often, it would seem, she alone kept him alive, for a few weeks later he developed consumption and was in a fever for weeks on end. He therefore retired to the country, though keeping in constant touch with affairs and in growing unrest. "You would not know me," he wrote to his friend. "I feel my age. I have moments of absent-mindedness; even when I am better, I lose the thread of things without really being ill. I am going to ask for my passport and go to Bogotá, or I shall follow San Martín's example." In the midst of these depressions, important news arrived from home. The struggle for power had reached such a pitch of violence there that there was only one way out—Bolivar's return and coronation, and, if he had really determined not to marry, the immediate nomination of a Bourbon prince as his heir.

As he lay there in a fever, a great man in a foreign land, the capital buzzed with whispered suspicions of the foreigner; he knew that well. It was certain that many wanted to kill him, as they wanted to kill General San Martín, even while paying

homage to him as the "immortal Bolivar." Although, as dictator, it was his right to appear in public escorted by a dazzling bodyguard, he took good care to return it to the Congress. Living almost without personal means, he nevertheless, as a true nobleman, refused a presentation of a million later offered to him by this foreign people. Friendless, his only support a mistress of a moral stature fit for the wife of a dictator, at the same time recalled home by men of influence to wear the crown which, with his inborn good taste he would have preferred to see on the head of his beautiful mistress, approaching the realization of the great vision of his youth, he refused the crown, as he refused the money and the bodyguard, and remained faithful to his vow not to remarry. A mass of contrasts, simply due to the fact that a man born to rule would not smirch his power by violence to the law, nor his glory by the use of force. A truly romantic existence! After the most amazing hopes, reality was indeed a thing full of shadows, but how poetically the scene was illuminated if he was spectator as well as actor!

In the midst of the dreamer's renunciations, however, news arrived of the formation of a new Spanish army, 25,000 strong, and when a friend, with terror in his eyes, brought it to the sick man with the question: "What are you going to do now?" Bolivar replied: "To conquer!"

The next day he was out of bed. His ruse was to propose negotiations to the enemy in order to gain time until the 8000 men he had asked or was hoping for should arrive from Colombia. He prescribed in detail to the delegates what they were to bring forward at the negotiations. "He must write that verbatim and omit nothing. For the negotiations with the Spaniards a very clever man must be chosen as carefully as a sprig of rosemary." The man chosen was to complain of Bolivar's intervention, to make a feint of seeking peace, and thus drag out the negotiations. For his military situation seemed to him so precarious "that even I am surprised at the depth of the abyss. I say—even I, for I am a veteran in revolution, anarchy, and danger."

Bolívar's depressions may be explained by his disappointment in the strength and confidence he found in this country. He had had his forebodings, had argued with himself from every point of view, but his demon had carried him on. There he was, a hated foreigner, writing home: "Fifteen or twenty officials in Peru are on our side, all the others on the enemy's. . . . I had imagined that things here would be as they are everywhere else. I found another world. Here there are no good men, and any there are are useless. But the name of those who are not useless is legion. We are here like mountebanks, dancing on the points of our swords and bayonets. We are only strong because both friends and enemies are afraid of us. That is what I call living on one's own deeds! The Spaniards are living in the same way. One of the two sides will be annihilated finally and for good." And yet he cannot leave, for "the refrain I repeat a thousand times is: if we leave Peru, we lose the south of Colombia."

At the same time he draws strength from a sudden revulsion of feeling away from the people he has to live with in the foreign country and very much in favor of those he left behind at home. He now calls the Venezuelans, whom he had not long before judged so harshly, "in comparison with the scoundrels here, real saints. Here the white men have the character of Indios, and the Indios are all swindlers, robbers, and knaves." Under the impression of the moment, he constantly blackens the present situation and beautifies the absent by comparison.

The more difficult present circumstances became, however, the wider grew the range of Bolívar's thoughts. Always when clouds veiled the sky one day, he would build castles in the air for the day after. Something important had happened; in 1824 England had recognized the new state of Colombia. World politics reached out to the General entangled in a country not his own, and he attempted to communicate his ideas to his new ambassador via Bogotá. He developed his forecast of the situation in a series of long letters to Santander:

General conflagration in Europe. Advance of the ruined monarchs from Spain and Portugal into such colonies as have re-

mained loyal. England to go to war with them. Then his forecast for his own continent:

"I am a liberal because I am an egoist. I desire the independence of our continent in order to forestall a later war which might ruin us owing to the Spanish superiority in the men and material they will now send over. We are, moreover, committed to the example of Buenos Aires. As long as the Spaniards remain in Peru, the south of Colombia must suffer from the great expense of its garrisons. As regards Venezuela, I shall always be of the opinion that its doom is sealed the day there is no enemy left in the country. I hope Puerto Cabello will remain forever in the hands of the enemy."

We can here see the range and boldness of Bolivar's political thought. Harassed in a foreign country, where any day might cost him everything, he finds the security of his own country on the paradoxical premise that the Spaniards stay there. The bitterness of a man so often disappointed by his countrymen is mingled with the knowledge of the historian and the cynicism of a mind schooled in the world. Anyone knowing the fifth act of Bolivar's life as this, the fourth, proceeds is tempted to explain his amazing foresight by a kind of passion of misanthropy which grew visibly in him from year to year. The nihilism of the dandy of twenty begins to return on a higher plane in the dictator of forty. While as a youth, everything seemed vain to him because he had never attempted anything, he now falls victim to similar feelings, having attempted everything, but in vain.

Then again we can see him casting his depression aside and, having played Don Quixote long enough, once more turning into Don Juan. Friction with Manuela was frequent, for she was proud. The two noble creatures were far too untamed to live in regular marriage. "I am in bed reading your letter," he writes to her. "I do not know what strikes me most—the bad treatment you declare you have suffered at my hands, or the strength of your feelings, which I revere and share. I wrote to you to come to A. where my friends will care for you. Forgive me for not writing in my own hand. You are used to that."

In this hastily dictated note, there is a brilliant play between feeling and the methods of the man of power. Repudiating a reproach, he pays her homage and reproaches her in his turn: he dictates instead of writing, and thus, by letting his secretary know about the disagreement, puts her in her place, but by assuring her that he shares her feelings, he gives her all the same the precious assurance of lasting love.

Remorse may have played its part here, for in Peru he had a host of adventures. The following letters, whose recipients are as unknown as their dates, may belong to this period. They are extremely revealing:

"I received your letter yesterday evening. I wanted to please you, and to see what you had to say to me. But what is the good? In the situation you and I are in, I see no other way out worthy of your honor, your good name, and your family than to forget what has happened, so that there may be no sad consequences for you and no dishonorable ones for me. Reflect a moment whether anything would be permitted except that I should be given your hand, and then reflect whether that could ever happen. No, my dear lady, that can never be, for reasons you will certainly understand. Try to find your peace of mind again and return to your family. If there were a scandal, what would people say of you, and think of me, and what suffering it would mean for those people whom you know and respect! There is no sacrifice I would not make for the sake of your peace. Turn back from the abyss, and I promise not to abandon a family which I love as my own. I shall come daily as before, and my behavior will remain steadfast."

In such a letter, it is the Parisian man of the world who, instead of disposing of an uncomfortable love affair by injuring a distinguished family, tells the lady, in wise and noble terms, that scandals would be useless and unpleasant to herself. To another unknown correspondent, however, he writes in the tone of a wooer:

"To the wonderful, more than wonderful Bernardina. My adored Bernardina! What can love not do! I can think of noth-

ing but you and what your charm means to me. What I see is the vision of my dreams. Heavenly angel, there is nobody in the world for me but you. You alone fire my feelings and desires. For your sake, I hope to find happiness and peril, for everything I long for is in you. After all this, and a great deal more that I do not say, from modesty and discretion, do not think I do not love you. Do not accuse me of indifference. You see how time and distance combine to fan my feelings into highest flames. Your noble suspicion is unjust. Think of my unquestionable passion and constancy. Write me long letters: I am quite tired of writing. And you, in your ingratitude, do not write to me! Write, or I will put an end to this lovely exaltation of my heart. Your Beloved."

Who would imagine that a man of forty or more wrote these lines? A distracted youth, tossed about from adventure to adventure, trying to keep the mistress of yesterday, but unwilling to relinquish the mistress of tomorrow, an idler without aims or duties, might write in such a tone: but so might a southerner, a cavalier, giddy and unrestrained—Don Juan. And yet the letter is written by a man of supreme power, whose mere handwriting would enable the lady to put any amount of difficulties in his way. In these things, Bolivar was far more naïve than Napoleon, more youthful, fiery, unrestrained. He was, of course, hidebound by no imperial court, but was then, as always, the supple, light, unpretentious horseman who once took his morning ride through the Toledo gate in Madrid. Thus when his spirits were high, we see him enjoying life in Lima, taking what the moment offered—women or beauty. "Men respect me, women love me. That is very pleasant. They adore anyone who can tell tales. Everybody complains—I am cheerful. I have everything I want, good food, a good theater, adorned with beautiful eyes, and a magnificent door into the bargain. Carriages, horses, bullfights, *Te Deums*, nothing lacking but money for the man who has none, but I have enough laid by, of course, for the moment."

Bolívar despised money, at first because he had too much, later because he had too little. His estates had been released, but they were ruined, while he could not enter into possession of his brother's because, ten years after his death at sea, there was no conclusive proof of it. Bolívar, who only needed to issue a decree in his own favor, never took up that inheritance; he gave away to his family anything they chose to ask for. When money was scarce, he did not draw his pay, and gave so much to the widows of fallen generals and to other soldiers or their wives that his adjutant struggled in vain to restore some order in the confusion, foreseeing the end. When Bolívar, before his departure for Peru, wished to secure his arrears of pay, he wrote:

"I am poor, old, and tired and cannot live on charity. What I still have is not sufficient for my family, which is impoverished because it adhered to my ideas. Without me, they would be living in comfort, therefore I must care for them. I foresee that I shall have to leave Colombia, and wish at least to take my bread with me. For I have neither the patience nor the gifts of Dionysius of Syracuse, who, when in want, began to teach children."

Immediately afterwards he asked that the whole matter should be dropped and the arrears of pay not mentioned again. In the course of the next few years, however, and as a result of sickness and fatigue, he wondered in confidential letters what he would actually live on should he retire. His family returned to his thoughts, and his scanty correspondence with his sister mostly turns on money or quarrels with tenants. Nor, to complete this romance of a childless genius, was there lacking a wastrel nephew, his sole male heir, who gambled away his money at Bogotá, drew bills in his mother's name, and was admonished by Bolívar from the field in the tone of an outraged father.

Soon he realized "that I have nothing to live on, in spite of being the President of Colombia and the Dictator of Peru. I refused my pay, because I do not wish to be paid by Peru, and I can accept nothing from Colombia because I have no authority there. So I must borrow and live on borrowing until I return."

The characteristic situation of genius in the world, especially when it has never known privation or lived on the work of its hands.

When the Congress at home, however, assigned him a certain sum, he flared up like any nobleman, who will no more accept pay for his glory than a distinguished woman for her love. And yet, as a sick and hated ruler, he had to think of the future. He wrote this fine letter:

"I always thought that the man who devoted his life to freedom and glory should receive no other reward than freedom and glory. This credit wounded me to the depths of my heart; I even hid the letter from my secretary. I asked for what was owing to me, so that I might at last live a few years in retirement. I am still resolved to go; that is why I shall accept only my due. That will be enough for eight or ten years, and more than that I cannot expect to live."

X

WHILE in his troubled mind he was wondering whether this great adventure was not going to destroy both himself and his glory, the General, marching south, kept his eyes fixed, as President, on the north. At this time especially, about six months after his landing in Peru, he reiterated complaints, warnings, threats, mostly addressed to Santander but intended, of course, for the government and in certain cases for the general public of Colombia. In a mixture of genuine distress, oppressive foreboding, and a kind of cold, moral blackmail, he tried to extort troops from his mainly hostile colleagues in his capital or to frighten the intriguers. These motives, as confused as those of Bismarck when, as an old man, he would threaten his king with resignation every time he wanted his way, are revealed to us today in the very human medley of elements in these letters.

The main result was that those in power began to fear that the most capable, and at the same time most popular, leader in the country would, given his rashness and nervous irritability,

embark one day and sail off to Europe. Hence in the attempt to gain an insight into his character, we should not be guided by the moral question as to what, in these letters, is dictated by genuine feeling and what by shrewd intention. Indeed both alternate in them, and he himself did not feel the boundary, since he had the thought of resignation in mind from the beginning of his presidency and had not settled it when he died. The sudden alternations of exaltation and depression in Bolivar's mind are at the root of his vacillation and receive fresh confirmation in further letters:

"I must think of my sole treasure, my good name. I now resign the presidency for the last time. In any case I never exercised it, so that no breach can arise. If the fatherland needs a soldier, I am always there to defend it. The Protector of Peru [San Martín] has just given me a warning example, which I would only follow with pain."

Another time to Santander: "Even Washington did not accept a third period of office. How could I, who know myself to be so much less than he? Fourteen or fifteen years of command are a maximum in a democratic country. I beg you ten million times—hold a resounding speech in the Senate and have it printed in a special number, to say that I refuse to be re-elected, and take a pride in being more liberal than Washington. I must not, cannot, and will not continue to govern, and least of all Colombia if only on account of my beloved compatriots in Venezuela. If New Granada were separated from it, it would be a duty and a joy to serve it in everything. But I will have nothing to do with those horrible soldiers of Boves, those infamous admirers of Morillo, those slaves of Morales. Those men have been obeyed and beloved by our proud republicans, by the very men we set free against their will, their arms, their tongues and pens, and now they oppose our laws. No, dear General, I shall not be President of Colombia again. I shall see the Congress on the Isthmus and then, I hope, die."

This is the voice of the wounded nobleman, the disappointed Liberator, the embittered son of his people. In order to dissoci-

ate himself from his work, he goes so far as to wish he had not done it; the countries should not have been united. If they had not been, he would gladly have served the one which was not his! And all because he felt himself dangling between two countries, his own and a foreign one, abandoned by both, while all the glory he had won seemed insecure. "Will you believe," he writes to his friend, "that this is the fateful hour of my life? If it turns out well, I can legitimately take the surname Sulla conferred on himself—The Fortunate!"

In others of the rapidly shifting moods of these few weeks or months, we can feel the mortification underlying his resignation, and his motives mingled in a strange and moving way:

"No harm will be done if I go. Everybody blames me, saying that I am ambitious, that I want the crown. That is what people are saying in France, Chile, the Argentine, here. If I go, I shall give the lie to all that. I want no more glory, no more power, no more good fortune. What I want is my peace. If that is selfish—well, I have served enough. I have a third of my life left and I want to live. As the Congress has deprived me of all authority, I think that Sucre and Castillo should arrange for the transport of the troops back home." Immediately afterwards he offered to go to Europe as ambassador.

Such moods of mortification yield suddenly to genuine dejection, especially in a magnificent letter written to Santander at the beginning of 1824. He opens by threatening to follow San Martín:

"It would be no wonder if I followed his example, since the great Napoleon found no better one to follow than that of Themistocles. Let him first serve another fourteen years, like me, then he will have deserved his rest. Till now I have fought for freedom. In future I shall fight for my glory, though the whole world should pay the price. My glory today is to command no longer and to trouble my head about nobody but myself. That was always my attitude, but day by day it is growing firmer, in geometrical progression. My years, my sufferings, and

the collapse of all my youthful illusions leave no other course open to me.

"I am so mortally tired that I can see nobody, take my meals with nobody. The presence of a human being makes me ill. In this horrible spot on the coast, I live among trees. Overnight I have turned into a misanthrope. But do not imagine I am sad. This is no physical illness, no personal mortification; it is disgust with mankind and society. It rises from the most profound conviction I ever reached. Actually speaking, I should now have reached the age of ambition, which Rousseau puts at forty. Mine has gone the other way; it is already at an end. You are young, Sucre is young, you must continue another ten years in the path I am leaving. How happy you are, to be still in the age of hope! While I have no more to hope for and everything to fear. I have been so much praised and blamed that I can bear it no longer. I have had enough of both praise and blame for one mortal life. I believe that I deserved such tributes in the good and bad sense. I have achieved more than I could expect or fear. I want no more. Disappointment with reality can only oppress me. It can no longer spur me on. False things are very weak.

"Let us turn our eyes in another direction and consider the convulsion of human affairs. At all times the works of men were weak; today they are like immature embryos, perishing before they develop. From all sides, terror invades me, and the noise of falling things. This is the epoch of catastrophes. Everything seems merely to glide past; how foolish it would be of me to think I could stand fast in such convulsions, in the midst of the moral destruction of the world. No, my friend, that cannot be. If death will not take me under its sheltering wing, I must hasten to plunge my head into the mists of oblivion and silence before heaven pours down its hail and grinds me, with many others, to powder and ashes. It would be foolish to watch the storm and not take shelter. Bonaparte, Castlereagh, Naples, Piedmont, Portugal, Spain, Morillo, Iturbide, San Martín,

O'Higgins, France—indeed everything is being overthrown by infamy and misfortune. And I should stand firm? That cannot be. I must fall. Farewell, my dear General. Receive these confessions with indulgence and patience."

If we read this letter, more precious than any page of a diary, with Bolivar's portrait at forty in mind, we begin to understand how the precocity of an idle youth is reflected and revenged in the nihilism of premature age. While in the case of Napoleon, action, initiative, and creative activity declared themselves in youth, to develop impetuously with his growing strength, Bolivar's doubts of all he had dared and done between thirty and forty, his desolation of soul, came over him so quickly because the illusion itself had been so brief. The way in which the master of half a continent at the height of his visible power takes his place among the fallen is almost an omen of his own fall. Recognizing Don Quixote in himself, and at times regarding all he has won as windmills, he enters a philosophically brighter, but actually darker sphere and, at his moments of skepticism, speaks profounder truth about himself.

He knew it. Bolivar knew a great deal about himself. To Toro: "My moods of heaviness come from philosophy, and I am a better philosopher in good fortune than in bad." We can see how he constantly draws comparisons between himself and others, and there are few more significant contributions to the problem of power and duty than what he wrote at the death of that adventurer, the Emperor of Mexico:

"It was Bonaparte's vocation to work miracles, not Iturbide's. Therefore, his miracles were greater. His life served the freedom of his country, his death its peace."

Yet even at this time, Bolivar always pulled himself out of the clouds of heavy thoughts into the innocence of action, and, immediately after the long letter quoted, wrote another, equally detailed, on the kind of hoofs Sucre should buy. At such moments he disposed of all his Rousseauesque or Robinsonesque ideals, felt himself a predestined individual, and said: "Our national sovereignty should create a dictatorship with

unlimited powers, which would proclaim martial law; that is the only way of safeguarding the public welfare. War feeds on despotism, and is not made for the sake of God. Display (when informing the government) a terrible and inexorable character, and make these ideas as much your own as a beloved daughter. Now is the time to work wonders! . . . The order of the day is terror. By that means I was able to check the spread of crime in my country. . . . I shall now give what the French call a definitive prescription for the cure of Colombia. If no chemist can make it up, order a shroud. Ingredients: 16,000 men, a strong fleet in the Pacific, 2 million pesos in Guayaquil, and four months' time. With these means, we can wait for the recovery of the invalid. If not, then not. I do not know what I shall do. I am floating in chaos, and God has not imparted to me his magic word for calming the elements." Immediately after: "Countless hoofs with good nails! It was the nails and the nails alone which destroyed those troops. The advance of the army was held up by those accursed nails. For God's sake make Viscaia test the iron to see if it is soft enough. Pay what you like for the soft iron, but have it tested by the best blacksmiths beforehand."

XI

IN the summer and autumn of 1824, the war in Peru was moving toward a decision. Bolivar, still ill, again rode across the Andes. On the march he wrote to Santander: "I am writing this letter in the midst of the Andes. Breathing pestilential air, on snow-covered mountains, beside llamas; it would freeze if a condor did not warm it in the sun to bring it to you." Such are the magnificent images to which Bolivar's style rises when he is once more in restless movement, in the midst of the great game. Looking down from the mountains on that dubious land which he was fain to liberate against the will of most people, there and at home, he drew this Shakespearean conclusion from his situation:

"Peru is as well off as Don Carlos of Austria when they put the rope round his neck, as well off as a building that has fallen in and has to make a stand against a host of batteries of big caliber. And my honor. . . . I shall save myself in peace and an armistice. But Colombia remains in chaos. Note that sentence and, if you like, write it in golden letters on the gate of the Government Palace for all to see so that nobody can say I deceived them. If things turn out well here, I shall stop making war and leave the country."

It was a splendid but daredevil mood in which Bolivar set out on the last of his wars. Constantly there hovered before his eyes the picture history would make of him, and yet he could only sustain his courage by cynicism. Such moods, radiating in letters from reckless rides through pathless mountains, from a fantastic scene unknown to the rider, became more intense during these weeks, and the name of God was often in them. He would again and again break through his grim merriment with demands for more troops, the only thing which could save him and the situation.

"Till God helps me, or you with 6000 men, provided they do not come too late. In the end I shall do both and consequently ruin everything. I need six thousand more: I can see you jump. As if twelve thousand were too many to defy the conquerors of America with! If Colombia refuses to make this further sacrifice, it will lose all its liberty. It is the last. I am exposing the glory I have won in thirteen years to certain ruin, and these years count as centuries. . . . Nobody is to sleep, eat, or rest till the troops have left! If not, farewell Colombia, farewell freedom!"

At the same time he was encouraging Sucre by telling him that the 6000 were already on the way, and that he had, moreover, exaggerated the danger. Thus he painted the picture black in the north and bright in the south. Not until August 25 did his hopes revive, when he won a great victory at Junín.

Shortly afterwards, at a council of war, Bolivar came to one of the strangest decisions in history. Out of respect for him,

his generals urged him to hand over the supreme command to one of them, in order to avoid risking his glory in such a precarious situation. There are even reasons for believing that the request was made at his own instigation. Thus he appointed his friend Sucre, then aged twenty-eight, as commander, though keeping affairs in his own hands.

Hence it was Sucre who commanded in the decisive battle on the plateau of Ayacucho in the south of the country. With the 6000 men he beat 10,000 Spaniards so roundly that this battle delivered not only Peru, but one might say the whole continent forever. With the capture of her army, Spain's last power was overthrown. A dominion of three hundred years was broken by a battle lasting seventy minutes.

But what were Bolivar's feelings when the news arrived? What heart could have quite kept jealousy of his rival at bay? Bolivar had praised his handsome young subordinate to others two years before, and said to him: "You will be the rival of my glory. You have already taken two real campaigns out of my hands." Soon after, however, before the battles, there followed a delicate correspondence between the autocratic elder and his susceptible junior, who felt that he had not been shown sufficient official honor, in which the tone and nobility surpasses any ordinary relationship between officers. It may be that Bolivar, in his passion always to be the noblest, was spurred by the memory of Miranda's severity toward himself, to reveal himself in his most brilliant light. Thus in his displeasure he wrote to Sucre: "The action I handed over to you I first wished to carry out myself. It was only because I believed you would do it better that I gave it to you, as a mark of my preference. You know I cannot lie. You know that I am too high-minded to descend to deception. If you retire, you will disappoint me in my idea of you. But if you wish the supreme command of the army, I will retire in your favor."

In moments of despondency, he reveals his discouragement to his junior officer with a candor scarcely to be paralleled in any other commander: "Dear José, I am ready to fight one

battle with the Spaniards to end the war, not more. I feel exhausted, old in spite of my forty years, and have nothing more to hope for from fate. I am like an old man always trembling for his money. Everything startles and alarms me, every moment I dread that I may lose my good name, my only reward for all my sacrifices. None of that will happen to you. You are very young, a brilliant future lies before you."

In spite of, or just because of, his rivalry with his junior for a place in history, this battle won without him left him no peace. Reading the first news, according to his adjutant, he first threw his coat on the ground, then began to dance, everyone thinking him mad, until he at last cried the news to them. Yet he knew very well that he himself had prepared everything, and it is even said that he had drawn up the plan of battle. He knew too, however, that the world did not know that.

In this situation both men displayed what we in Europe would call a truly Spanish chivalry. "Farewell, General," Sucre concluded his first report. "This letter is badly written, its thoughts are incoherent, but it is of some value. It brings news of a great victory and of the freedom of Peru. As a reward, I beg for your lasting friendship."

Bolivar, in his turn, made Sucre Field Marshal and Liberator of Peru, presented him with his most precious sword, and outdid himself in heaping honors on him at the celebration of the victory. Thus it was not by any maneuvering on Bolivar's part if this decisive victory came to be coupled with his name in America. It was the powerful effect of legend, which proved its profound significance by making the real Liberator victor in a battle fought by another man. The Peruvians resolved to erect an equestrian statue to Bolivar, and to hang his portrait in every City Hall; they bestowed on him the name of Father of the Fatherland, gave him all presidential honors for life. At this time Bolivar's name rang louder through the whole continent than after all the battles and campaigns he had actually won. Sucre's name, however, is so unknown in Europe

that a European historian in our day derived the name of the town called after him from the sugar canes alleged to grow there.

The immediate result of the great victory was a union of all parties in Peru for Bolivar, the most far-reaching, the recognition of the independence of America by most of the European powers. A fourteen years' war had killed every third inhabitant of Venezuela; the total number killed in the whole continent was said to be 900,000. Napoleon and the revolution together cost one to two million lives. The war was over, its purpose fulfilled, Spain's power was past, the moment had come whose approach the Liberator had most dreaded.

What did he do? Resign, as he had always declared he would? Hurry back home, where there were a thousand things waiting for his mind to grapple with? Bolivar remained two more years in Peru. It is the law of dictatorships.

XII

HIS official resignation, it is true, he carried out at once in truly immortal words:

"Legislators," he cried to the Congress of Lima. "In returning to the Congress the supreme power it conferred on me, allow me to felicitate the people on its release from the two most terrible things the world knows—from war by the victory, from despotism by my resignation. Banish forever, I beseech you, the terrible power which once destroyed Rome! In past perils, the Congress could not do otherwise than hand over its power to the bayonets. But now that the nation has achieved peace in the country and political independence, it must not tolerate any power without a legal foundation. Señores, the Congress is opened. My duty as a soldier calls me to the relief of Callao, the last stronghold of the Spaniards in America. I shall then hasten back to my own country to report to the Congress there on my mission and the glory of your heroes of freedom."

This speech of Bolivar's is more immortal than all his bat-

ties. If no record of his deeds survived, this one sheet of paper would suffice to ensure him his place among the heroes of antiquity, the grandeur of whose souls outshone the cunning of their swords. It can only be explained by his romantic conception of glory, which stands in sharp contrast to Napoleon's cynical innocence, to the whole naïveté of his demonic fire.

The lawyers in the provincial Peruvian city, however, understood him no better than their colleagues in Angostura had done. They not only urged him to continue to govern without the title of dictator; they also voted immediately a presentation of a million pesos. Bolivar replied: "I have never accepted a gift of the kind in my own country. It would be a breach of self-respect for me to accept at the hands of the Peruvians what I refused from my own people." The sum was then handed over for social purposes in his own country.

On leaving Peru proper, however, Bolivar did not turn northward home, but southward into yet more distant countries. The further he advanced south, a Liberator with no need to fight, greeted everywhere with jubilation, the more fantastic grew the emblems and rejoicings. It was as if fate wished to grant the poet in him a brilliant fulfillment. In High Peru, which till then had only been a province, his imagination could not fail to be drawn to the ancient capital, that Cuzco where the Incas had held sway. There in the streets and on the walls along which the native kings had moved for centuries, to be venerated as half-divine Pharaohs, a host of a thousand women and girls came toward him, offering him a crown of pearls and diamonds. Bolivar did not need to refuse it thrice, like Caesar. He smiled and sent it to Sucre, the victor of Ayacucho and the true liberator of the republic.

At the same time, the southern third of Peru, the picturesque, mountainous part, was proclaimed a separate province, and when Bolivar, advancing from town to town without finding an enemy, reached La Paz, the authorities surprised him with a request to give their new state a constitution, for they wished to call it Bolivia, after their liberator.

The great dream the youth had once dreamed on the Palatine with his teacher Robinson had been realized by Bolivar at forty-two. But where is glory made immortal if not in the name of a city? Did Washington's name not live longer than Napoleon's? And now a whole country wished to be called by his name, and a new republic to realize his most mature ideas on the structure of a modern state! It was not difficult for Bolivar to refuse the crown then, and if, in his heart, he compared himself to Napoleon, whose name, in 1825, was in its worst odor, he could be content. Like a king in some old story, he wrote:

"Believe me, I already feel pledged to defend Bolivia to the death like a second Colombia. I am, as it were, the father of one, the son of the second. My right hand reaches to the mouth of the Orinoco, my left to the sources of La Plata. My arms embrace a thousand miles." At the same time the prophet who found no honor in his own country revenged himself by writing to Santander: "Since you would not agree to a town of Bolivar, what have you got to say to a whole country? Yes, that is what I call a blow for the gratitude of Colombia."

To a Peruvian general, however, he writes thus: "If Bolivia calls itself my daughter, I, in my turn, Santa Cruz, call you my first grandson. You would not believe how grateful I am to those gentlemen for having coupled a mortal name with an immortal cause. I shall soon die, but the republic of Bolivia will live till the end of time. Remus founded a city, and that city gave its name to a state, which is a home of liberty and rich in silver and gold." After rhapsodies of the kind, however, he would relapse into his naïveté, and once said to a friend: "The name of Colombia may be melodious, but Bolivia is much finer. Is Bo not finer than Co, li sweeter than lom, and via purer than bia?" For Bolivar was a poet, playful and dreamy.

At the same time, he never showed more genius and verve as a legislator than here, where, for a moment, he was as free as Solon. At long last the idealist could put his ideals into prac-

tice and the man of action realize his ideals. What he was aiming at has been attempted in vain for three thousand years, namely the fusion of the interests of the state with the freedom of the citizen. "I have," he wrote, "founded my draft constitution on the law of laws—equality. Without that, freedom and law must perish; everything must be sacrificed to it."

By introducing more sublimity into a foreign country everything he had not been able to carry through at home when founding Colombia, he took his revenge, after a lapse of five years, on his compatriots. He may have had that feeling of exultation which comes over us when traveling and, on some bright morning, sound of mind and body, we observe a new and unaccustomed scene and feel it belongs to us. In the detail, Bolivar's constitution for Bolivia was full of ideas which could, in part, be taken up today and will perhaps be taken up tomorrow. He called it "a hybrid between federalism and monarchy, a union of the extremes," regarded it as far superior to that of Angostura, and spent so much thought on it that he began to make notes for the speech explaining it five months beforehand. He recommended that this speech should be printed with special care and had notepaper made for himself with a huge heading which bore, under his name, the words: LIBERATOR OF COLOMBIA, LIBERATOR OF PERU.

At the head of his constitution stood a President for life; he selected the Vice-President, who was also his successor. Even the Muscovites, he added in explanation, chose their successors before they became Great Russians. The advantage was that, instead of an old or even dying man surrounded by claimants choosing his successor, he could train him for years. Comte made the same suggestion a generation later, perhaps inspired by Bolivar's constitution. The President, who selected and also replaced his ministers, convened the legislative assembly, commanded the army in war and peace, and the police as well, directed foreign policy, and had the right of veto on laws already passed. The whole was a very free monarchy without hereditary succession.

Bolivar also restricted the principle of equality by excluding from the franchise all illiterates, servants, and agricultural laborers, who together made up 70% of the population. With this restriction he wished to forestall the possibility of a dictatorship, which always arises from democratic masses, as in Paris, where the people voted for a dictator seven times in fifty years. Beside his elected tribunes he placed his hereditary senators and also the censors, who were to give the government moral support; this was in imitation of Solon's procedure, when he distributed the rights of the Areopagus among the various powers.

This time, the amendments of Bolivar's draft constitution were negligible; all that was added was that it was a Catholic state. That was against Bolivar's principles, for he wrote: "Principles are the guarantees of civil rights. Since religion touches none of these, it is not definable in the social body and belongs to the domain of spiritual morality. Spiritual morality is the law of conscience. Every law made in that sphere annuls it; for every prescription robs faith of its merit, and faith is the foundation of all religion."

Bolivar's constitution, the news of which attracted the attention of the best minds in Europe, was soon adopted by Peru, where he himself was appointed President for life. He had much bigger schemes in mind. He now endeavored to realize the plan he had drawn up as a fugitive in Jamaica, namely a union of all the states of the continent in Panama. The first Congress was to meet the next year. But he now gave himself and the world a foretaste of that union by pressing on southward, so that the Argentine began to look as if it were going to demand part of the new country on the frontiers for itself.

At that time Bolivar carried everybody with him by his fire. An enhanced vitality bore him to ever-greater heights when he heard the echo of his glory coming back to him from ever-greater distances. Washington's heirs sent him, with a letter from Lafayette, a lock of hair and a miniature which he wore

on his breast till death, where Fanny fondly imagined her own was immortalized. Lord Byron called his yacht the *Bolivar*. Bolivar was once more the great vogue in Paris, and now they began to call the big hat he had introduced chapeau Bolivar.

In this mood of exaltation, he was moved to fulfill his rhetorical promise and climb the symbolic silver mountain in the extreme south of Peru. On his triumphal ride to it, he said to a general from the Argentine: "I have 22,000 unoccupied soldiers. If they have nothing to do, they will revolt, and at once. If the Argentine were threatened by Brazil, it would be a good opportunity and a glorious affair. I might become dictator of America. I offer you a corps of 6000 men. With them you could conquer the province of Salta." If we can trust Ric Palma's account, such were the lengths to which his imagination could go. It is another proof of how quickly the liberator can turn into a conqueror. At that time, and at such moments, he quite forgot his ideal mission, was a soldier through and through, and cried to his friend overseas—that is, to himself: "The demon of glory must carry us to Tierra del Fuego! What risk is there? People should leave me to my diabolic impulses. In the end, I shall have done the best I can. Enough of post-scripts!"

By now, however, Bolivar had already reached the summit of that mountain. One day in October, 1825, the flags of all the liberated states were actually united. In the midst of the envoys of the brother states, the slim figure of the Creole from the most northerly city of the continent stood in one of the most southerly and cried: "In a gigantic struggle lasting fifteen years, we have overthrown the tyranny, wantonness, and oppression of three centuries! They wished to keep us enslaved. With courage and endurance we have won freedom for millions! Setting my foot today on the summit of this silver mountain, from whose veins Spain took the means wherewith to oppress us for three hundred years, I condemn such treasures compared with the glory of having carried the banners of lib-

erty gloriously over the continent, from the tropical Orinoco to the peak of this mountain, whose womb fires the desire and envy of the world!"

"All our trophies pale in your presence, sir," replied the Argentinian, "the father of five nations. Hastening from victory to victory, you have come here from the Orinoco to give the New World its complete freedom."

According to Bolivar's own statement, the commission from the Argentine offered him at that time a union of the Argentine and Colombia, with himself as Protector of South America. He adds: "I believe it may come to that in the near future." In this situation, Bolivar's plans took on a Napoleonic range; indeed it is the only moment in his career at which he betrayed imperialistic leanings. He now thought of the continent as a whole, and wrote of the three surrounding countries that they all wished to become Bolivian. He felt rejuvenated and, in his exultation, foresaw immortality. He wrote to Santander: "Chile and Buenos Aires are in the same situation and both wish to keep me. Believe me, Chile is lost without me. If I remain in the south, I could come to Colombia's help from here with 20,000 men. In a word, all is lost if I leave here. Demand the consent of Congress to my remaining in Peru. For I can reach La Guaira from Buenos Aires by sea in thirty days; by land it would take me three months. The troops, moreover, would travel much better and more healthily by sea. If there are no pressing dangers at home, tell my friends that it would be selfish to call me back. I have done enough for Colombia. But I would do still more if they would leave me a free hand to do what I think is right and necessary.

"Why do they look on me as a child in need of a wet nurse? Nobody has made greater sacrifices for his country than I. In Colombia I am good for nothing, since any moment can involve me in party disputes. But abroad, at the head of the army, I am out of reach of that danger and hence have more power to threaten the criminal conflict inside the country. In any case

count on 20,000 men, who will hasten wherever the fatherland calls them. Caesar threatened Rome from Gaul. From Bolivia I threaten all the enemies of America and, by that, help all the republics. If I lose my position in the south, the whole Congress of Panama will be useless, and the Emperor of Brazil will eat up Rio de la Plata and Bolivia.

"They say 10-12,000 Spaniards are standing ready in Havana to invade Mexico. I hope they will commit some blunder. They will then lose Mexico and Havana both. Should that happen, I can offer 6000 South Colombians and 4000 Peruvians, whom I will at once lead into the danger. . . . It would only be if the worst came to the worst that we should defy the whole world and go to Spain."

This strange letter shows us Bolivar's feelings—for they are feelings rather than thoughts—in a state of acute agitation. He has left Washington's goal far behind him. For in the north, the commander of the fighting forces rose to the political leadership of a coherent, organic growth. Bolivar, on the other hand, who had had nothing to do with the struggles of the southern states, having never even set foot in them, who had to contend with the jealousy of others who thought themselves as good as he and, looked at from the outside, had achieved as much, was called to be Protector of a continent and proclaimed such haphazardly by individual bodies of troops and individual provinces. Bolivar at forty-two, considering the dispatch of whole armies to the Argentine, to Paraguay, or to Mexico, struggling to free himself from the "wet nurse" at home and, like Napoleon, revolving plans for which he would hold himself responsible only to his genius, left the solid ground of reality behind him, not knowing whether the end would be his fall.

Nothing came of all these plans; they were soap bubbles, dancing for a moment in the sun. Yet the imagination of the poet, in his quest of glory, was thrilled by them. Every major chord ringing through the music of his soul can be heard in these shifting world plans, and at moments we hope that the hero on the stage is really going to plunge into the hazard. It

was clearly the hour of triumph on the silver mountain which had exalted him thus.

For this was the only moment at which the far-flung dream of this man approached fulfillment. The moment was never repeated. The twenty-nine deputies in the little hall at Angostura understood him as little as the deputies of the new state who met not long afterwards at Sucre. Now, however, Bolivar had as his background a magnificent, symbolically living scene: beside him, the representatives of the American peoples; beneath, the mysterious mountain of riches; in front, the deep gorges of the Andes; and above him the sky, which he could people with his gods like a hero of antiquity.

To have died at that moment, had it been by the dagger already prepared for him, would have been a fitting end for all that was brilliant and dazzling in Bolivar's nature. That he did not die, that he had yet five years' descent from the silver mountain before him, shows how deeply fate had graven on his soul the features of Don Quixote. That too had to be lived through before the end came.

XIII

AT this summit of his life, memories of youth crowded in upon Bolivar. First came Fanny, hurling a dozen letters at him, for the time now seemed to her ripe to profit by a love affair twenty years old. With all the tactlessness bred in a woman by false romanticism, she reminded her now famous friend of the ideals which had made her release him. "You preferred glory to love. Do I not deserve a place in your thoughts for the noble feelings I cherished for you? I think with pride of the confidence you placed in me, especially as regards your plans, and of the profound thoughts on freedom you expressed to me. I was worth something then, since I was accounted worthy to share your secrets. Even today I believe that in all your triumphs, in all your dangers, you have thought that Fanny was guiding your thoughts and praying to Divine Providence for

you. Tell me that you are still my friend, but do so with your own hand. If you feel that, at the summit of your glory, tell me, and I shall be happy."

Bolivar, hearing the falseness of her tone, remained cool, wrote tardily and little, and was probably not surprised when this tender rhetoric soon turned to a request for money, which Fanny declared she needed to set up a brilliant salon to propagandize in Paris for Colombia.

At the same time Humboldt's friend Bonpland was a prisoner in Paraguay. The explorer had been accused of political designs and was not allowed to leave the country. Bolivar's letter to the dictator of Paraguay requesting the scientist's release began with flashing irony: "Your Excellency doubtless knows neither my name nor my achievements in the cause of America. Let your heart be moved by the voice of four million Americans, all of whom were liberated by us, and who now join me in requesting the release of M. Bonpland." At the same time he wrote several spontaneous letters to Bonpland's wife, and cordially offered both an asylum. When his letter led to nothing, Bolivar at once began to wonder whether he should not invade Paraguay to set Bonpland free. Political considerations, of course, connected with the Argentine, brought the possibility home to him. But the memory of Humboldt had remained so vivid in the mind of this naturally grateful man that, as his adjutant writes, he conceived a plan for Bonpland's release, only to drop it again.

At this epoch the man who had directed his education, and stirred in his heart the wholesome unrest whose dying waves had pulsed in his latest constitution, again crossed his path. Robinson—for that had been Rodriguez' name for many years past—had on his travels reached his pupil's country, but, in his superb independence, had not approached the all-powerful man. On the contrary, it was Bolivar who heard that Robinson had landed in Venezuela. Instead of sighing as great men are apt to do at the reappearance of the friends of their youth, Bolivar wrote home:

"I love that man like mad. He was my teacher, my traveling companion—a genius, a marvel of grace and talent for anyone capable of seeing and appreciating it. I would be happy to have him with me; we all have our weaknesses. Make him come! With him here, I could write my memoirs. He is a teacher who can interest as he teaches, a secretary from whom his employer can learn. He is all that for me. When I first knew him, I was good for nothing. I have changed very much. Give him money and send him here! I must satisfy the passion of my manhood, for the illusions of youth are at rest. Instead of a mistress, I want to have a philosopher by me, for today I prefer the wisdom of Socrates to the beauty of Aspasia." (A few months later he sent for Manuela.)

At the same time he wrote to Robinson himself: "My teacher, my friend, my Robinson! You are in Colombia, at Bogotá, and have not let me know, nor written to me. You are the strangest creature in the world. . . . Do you remember how we swore on the Holy Hill in Rome to bestow freedom on this holy land? You cannot have forgotten the glorious day when, so to speak, a prophetic promise led the way to an unfulfillable hope, which at the time we did not understand. You may have followed with curiosity my steps in the path you traced out for me. You opened my heart to freedom and justice. You never ceased to be my guide, even from far-distant Europe. You would hardly believe how deeply your teachings are graven in my heart. I have not blotted out a comma of the great principles you revealed to me; they were my infallible guide. And if you did read about my actions and deeds, you must have said again and again—all that comes from me; it was I who planted, watered, and cared for the tree when it was a mere sapling. Now it has grown strong and firm, it has borne fruit—and it all belongs to me! I bless the day you set foot in Colombia. If only I could hasten to your side, since you do not hasten to mine!" And after having expatiated on the beauties of Colombia, he concludes: "If all these charms, my friend, cannot induce you to hasten to me, I will use yet a stronger lure—I call you

in the name of our friendship. Show this letter to the Vice-President, ask for money, and come."

In its freshness and gratitude, this letter is overflowing with the memories of a time when ideals stood at their full value, before harsh reality had compelled the man of action to re-fashion or curb them. In its eagerness, we feel all Bolivar's loneliness at the height of his power, as he endeavors to bring to his side the last and only companion of his youth, so that he may refresh himself and return to the age of innocence. It glows with his finest qualities—gratitude, reverence, incorruptibility—which protected his heart from that hardening which has befallen every dictator before and after him. And through it all there rings the simple pride of the disciple who has kept his word.

Robinson, however, was not to be caught so easily. He was less blinded than the hero by the fantastic changes of history. His aim was to educate men, to found a new race in America, and so he merely wrote from Bogotá, asking for funds. How was the grotesque affair to end?

The dogmatic adventurer had brought another with him, a French carpenter who called himself Brutus. They sat about teaching their first twelve carefully selected pupils carpentry, in their own adaptation of Rousseau. But then the parents were not pleased; they took their children away and complained to the minister. Robinson wished to start on a big scale; for that he needed Bolivar, and thus, a year after his arrival, he set out to visit him in Lima.

The meeting of the two men after twenty years' absence was a scene from a great comedy, which means that it trembled on the brink of tragedy. They had parted not without weariness and disappointment on both sides, when the ever-fierce teacher had gone off to his Turks, leaving his ever-weary pupil behind in Rome with a promise on his lips which he seemed utterly incapable of fulfilling. The teacher had given up hope of the *Émile* he had dreamed of, the pupil had heard enough of the eternal and empty rhetoric of the teacher. There was no other

reason for their parting. Each had exhausted the other. It was like the end of the love story of a couple who know each other well and have gradually fathomed all each other's weaknesses. They had parted without any real wish to meet again.

But now the younger had achieved the utterly unexpected; rhetoric had turned to will, will had become action. One day, in some corner of the world, Robinson had read in the papers that his Émile had become the champion and prophet of those very ideals he had implanted in the overwealthy young Marqués, in spite of his heredity. Was it possible? Could there have sprung from this decadent heir to wealth the spark which the teacher had stirred, but had striven in vain to fan into a flame?

But what, he would often wonder, when books or journals published details of Bolivar's career—what if his pupil, now a man of action, in the petty warfare of parties, had descended to concessions, whittled down one ideal, interpreted another, betrayed a third, and thus belied his noble teachings? Such things had happened only too often with men of action. The Spaniards were conquered—so much was clear; and if Émile had forced his way across the Andes through storms and cold, the physical training given him by his teacher had proved its worth. But what kind of constitution was this descendant of revolution giving his liberated people? There had always been tales of an aristocracy and of the restriction of the franchise. Well, let us look into his aging face and see if he had stood by the truth!

Bolivar had already foreseen what his old teacher was thinking. He may have had the feeling of a pupil who, in age, has to give an account of his life to an old, revered master, and that for the first time after ten years when he had grown habituated to command, but had had to render account to nobody. The thought that he would, for once, be confronted with the ideas and culture of a perfectly independent mind may well have caused the immortal boy in Bolivar a moment's pause. The man of the world was to meet the philosopher, knowing that the philosopher had become something of a man of the world, while

he himself had remained something of a philosopher. What would stand between them when the teacher entered his room and embraced him was simply the enormous success which had made him world-famous, while the other had remained unknown. Only generosity could bridge that gulf. Robinson arrived. Bolivar embraced and made much of him. Since he realized within a few hours, however, the difficulties that were going to arise in the world of reality with this eccentric, he suddenly conceived the most amazingly romantic idea; they would climb Chimborazo together, the highest mountain in the world, which rose in Bolivar's new empire. "From its summit your eyes will sweep over heaven and earth. You will behold the marvels of creation and say—two infinities lie before me. You, a lover of nature, will come and probe this mountain for its age and nature. Here the earth is still virgin, pure as when it issued from the hands of its Creator." This was the effort he made to distract Robinson's attention. Robinson, however, at once refused; that would be mere play, he had come to work.

The adroit dictator forthwith changed his plans, so great was his desire to fulfill, for this one man in the world, every wish he could conceive. He appointed him Inspector General of Education and Social Welfare, took him into his entourage in that capacity, bestowed public honors on him on every possible occasion, and left him entirely free to live and work where he pleased. That quite suited the indomitable Robinson; he stayed somewhere in Bolivia, received state pay, and founded the model school he had had in mind for many years. The first thing he did was to draw up a summary of the qualities necessary in the staff:

"The headmaster must possess more qualities than the President of the Republic. Let us review them: morality, social sense, practical knowledge of arts and crafts, of exact science and national economy, knowledge of people acquired on extensive travels, good manners without affectation, the natural simplicity which can descend to the level of the ignorant and more especially of children, the sound judgment which can make its

superiority felt without wounding. He must further be sociable, equable, healthy, robust, active, skillful, wise, disinterested, and finally a man of the world."

Bolivar may well have chuckled a little as he read this, for Robinson's ideal schoolmaster was obviously a self-portrait.

It was, of course, a failure. When he defied prudery by using his own naked body for anatomy demonstrations, the Catholic mothers were horrified. And when he invited Marshal Sucre to dinner, and had all the dishes served in chambers, the soldiers laughed, but behind his back they jeered. Why should children begin with cobbling and carpentry, asked the parents. Why did he prohibit books, and tell the children, if they were asked, to answer: "We learn everything and nothing"? And above all, why no religion? The two hundred children were all sent to Mass by their parents. If they were to receive an anticlerical education, that would be contrary to Bolivar's constitution, which was neutral in matters of faith. "Ah!" complained Robinson, thinking of his master, Rousseau. "Why are my two hundred children not all orphans? What are parents in the world for, if they come disturbing my model school?"

Money he squandered, appointing subdirectors, inspectors, and teachers, who were all mere godless artisans. In the asylum he founded, he housed fifteen lunatics, intending to treat them there, and flew into a rage when Congress refused to vote funds for it. If there was a dictator in the country, it was assuredly Robinson. "Your Don Samuel," Sucre began a report to Bolivar with this covert jibe, "receives two thousand pesos a year for an asylum. He can only take in fifteen patients, yet he wants more money. In the asylum at Bogotá, a hundred patients are kept for fifteen hundred. He has quarreled with all the officials, argues with them all, and treats everybody like an idiot. You can see the consequences. The worst, however, is that Don Samuel has declared that within six months, he will either have fallen into disgrace or blotted out the Christian religion in Bolivia."

Called upon to report on his work, Robinson wrote to his

friend and chief an indignant letter. For a time Bolivar did not reply. Then Robinson wrote to his adjutant: "I am in the most horrible situation for a man of my character. I haven't a farthing and am living on debts. Tell Bolivar to write to me." Robinson was the last and only person to call him Bolivar, for Manuela called him Simon. In another fifteen-page letter to Bolivar, he compared himself to Columbus, whose discoveries were also laughed at. "Who knows whether another Vespucci will not come along and give his name to the new world I am building up." Bolivar saw to it that he wanted for nothing. But the war and travels separated them; they did not meet again.

When Robinson left the country, he would accept no money, and took nothing with him but his manuscripts. The government at Quito wished to publish them. A fire destroyed them all. "That fire," said Robinson, with his wonted revolutionary rhetoric, "destroyed the chest which contained the happy future of the New World." Only one volume of his work on the social structure of America appeared, since there was nobody to finance it after Bolivar's death and there were not enough subscribers. Undismayed, Robinson traveled throughout America, founding and recommending schools everywhere. If he had nothing else to do, he made powder, lights, or worked on the land. At an advanced age he wrote a *Defense of Simon Bolivar*, his famous pupil.

When Robinson died as a very old man, twenty-four years after Bolivar, a bright, bold, but undisciplined spirit went out. He certainly felt himself the prophet and educator of the Liberator, and had the right to do so, for he and he alone had impressed on the growing boy the ideals of freedom and equality, of chivalry and integrity, which Bolivar kept his life long.

He now strove to keep them intact in his fight for reality, like a swimmer holding the image of his idol high in his hand above the foaming water, to preserve it from the flood though it should cost him his life.

XIV

IN the very days which saw Bolivar on the summit both of the silver mountain and his life, several couriers left his own country with letters for him which could not but exalt him still more. It was perhaps a good thing that they only reached him three months later, for behind these remarkable letters, treachery already lurked.

The two most powerful, and at the same time most difficult, men in Colombia were then, and until Bolivar's death, Santander and Páez. The first was the focus of every intrigue. Both flattered Bolivar, both seem to have hated him, at times at any rate, both were aiming at overthrowing him and becoming his successor. They were, of course, themselves enemies and in the years before Bolivar's absence worked against each other, partly in public and partly by intrigues among the deputies and officers. While Santander had won the President's confidence, Páez was never on a really friendly footing with him. The relationship between them was determined by the consideration each had to have for the other, since Páez was, at times, all-powerful in Caracas.

One only has to compare their portraits in order to gauge the difference between their characters. Páez, a man of Indian blood, reveals the bully in his square head and strongly marked, brutal features, yet there is a taciturn, lowering, cautious look about him which might easily turn to malice. Santander, the typical civil official beside Páez the soldier, has that silent, waiting, even lurking look in common with him. But in contrast to him, his decidedly handsome face, which recalls Schiller's, shows in its thin-lipped mouth and hard expression the hungry look of a man devoured by ambition, yet lacking any expansive power. We can understand that he felt a double urge to avenge his own deficiencies on so radiantly active a type as Bolivar. Santander was unquestionably the more interesting, and hence the more dangerous, of the two.

It was relatively easy for him to win the Congress over to his side and to undermine its confidence in Bolivar during the chief's years of absence, just as, when the husband is always away, the lover, second best but persistent, is always there. His jealousy grew as he saw General Sucre enjoying the companionship and supreme favor of the President. Santander's treachery began as early as 1825; he persuaded the Congress to deprive Bolivar of his right to promote his officers, and by that so to weaken him that Bolivar wrote, deeply wounded: "I can no longer command the men. According to the new resolution, I am no longer even a Colombian."

Bolivar made things easy for such men as Santander by treating them on far too high a level. For that was what he did in writing, shortly after that first, insulting resolution had been passed, to the man responsible for it: "If I were capable of envy, I would envy you. I am the man for critical situations; you are the legislator. Sucre is the man of war. Each of us should be content in his own domain, and Colombia with all three." And to Sucre: "Nobody is more devoted to your good name than I. No chief has ever contributed more to the glory of his subordinates than I. I am just having an account of your life published which I wrote myself." The way the word "subordinate" slips in among the civilities, the way the whole breathes the conscious superiority of the man who, to all appearances, is putting himself on the other's level, could not but exasperate rather than mollify a character whose main motive was ambition.

The final complication was that Bolivar passed on to this faithless friend secret information he had received from the third rival, which had to travel two to three thousand miles; it took six months to receive an answer to a letter, so that there had been time in between for great changes to take place in Bolivar's home in the north. Páez, by an illegal levy of Venezuelans on his own account, had violated the constitution and had thus, in actual fact, begun the secession of Venezuela from the other countries. When he refused to appear before the Congress at Bogotá, Bolivar wrote advising him to do nothing without consulting him,

and to plead illness rather than refuse. Thus the founder of Colombia, given the great distance, chose to hold his hand when faced with a piece of flagrant treachery.

This caution becomes more explicable by the secret message Bolivar received from Páez in Bolivia some three months after his triumph on the silver mountain; it was obviously written by someone else. It ran: "The situation in Venezuela clearly resembles that of France when Napoleon the Great was in Egypt, and was called home by some of his best advisers to save the country. You might say now what he said then: 'Intrigues can ruin the country. Forward! We shall save it.' " Then follow descriptions of the general fear and greed. People were saying that Bolivar was trying to escape to Europe. If he came as he had gone, he would be insulted everywhere. The comparison with Napoleon is an open allusion to what had been said to him in person—that he should return home and seize the crown. Bolivar's sister says the same thing: "They are sending you a commission to offer you the crown. Remember Napoleon! Abhor all who come bringing you the crown." A third letter from his old friend Mendez, on the contrary, advises him to accept it, though in due legal form. People were already speaking of "Simon I, Emperor of America."

Páez' intentions in this affair were obscure. He clearly wished to lure Bolivar into a trap, in order to make himself master of an independent Venezuela after the fall of the only powerful man. These plans, however, are as uninteresting for history as the man himself, whose name is now unknown outside his own continent. The only thing that matters is Bolivar's behavior and answer, because a situation of the kind reveals a whole man. Whenever he takes up a political position, his statesmanship becomes evident, for he had seen through Páez, whose revolt had just come to his ears, and whom he had never trusted in any case, when he wrote to him:

"All your letters give the impression of complete sincerity, but that is not enough. Colombia is not France and I am not Napoleon. . . . Napoleon was great, unique, and also boundlessly ambitious. There is nothing of all that in the present situation. I

wish to emulate neither Caesar nor Iturbide, examples unworthy of my glory. The title of Liberator is greater than any which could feed a man's pride. It must not be dishonored. A throne would inspire terror by its remoteness and brilliance. The principle of equality would be betrayed, the Colombians would see their rights pass to a new aristocracy.

"But now let me advise you to do what you propose. If the people wish it, and you yield to their wish, I will send my fighting forces and all my influence to protect a supreme power of the kind."

These truths, however, carried to the point of irony, were yet not enough. Bolivar now had to act between two rivals who were intriguing against each other and himself thousands of miles away. He sent the original of this letter to Páez to Santander. "Seal it, when you have read it, with some seal that will not be recognized"—the surest way of letting all Colombia know of the letter, and at the same time of flattering Santander by letting him into the secret of what was, after all, a highly treasonable project. Bolivar, however, displays his real mastery in the covering letter to Santander:

"General Páez is the prime mover in these Napoleonic proposals, together with a few friends of demagogic leanings. A secretary and a rector came to me bringing the scheme with them. These gentlemen were first federalistic, then constitutionalistic, and are now Napoleonic. After all, they have nobody on their side but anarchists, colored leaders, and cutthroats. In any case, they are determined to conquer or die in the last battle, having lost the preceding one." There follow other reasons and proposals "for dissuading Páez from this disastrous idea, which would dishonor me in the eyes of the world and of history, and would bring upon us the hatred of the liberals and the contempt of tyrants, a plan which my principles, experience, and pride make repellent.

"This plan is a greater outrage than all the attacks of my enemies, for it presupposes in me a vulgar ambition and a soul degraded enough to resemble Iturbide and other pitiful upstarts.

In those men's minds, nobody can be great except after the fashion of Alexander, Caesar, or Napoleon. While I cannot rival them in their deeds, I will surpass them in self-sacrifice. My example can help the country, since moderation in the chief can be an example to the humblest man. Thus my life can give them a rule for theirs. The people will worship me, and I shall be their ark of the covenant."

Such were the passionate words in which the man who lived in glory and spent so much thought on posterity spurned the part played by the three most famous men in history. Behind the two questionable messengers offering him, in the name of a questionable general, a crown nobody had seen, Bolivar may have seen in his mind's eye that unforgettable scene when Napoleon crowned himself King of Italy in Milan, and behind it the whole phantasmagoria of the twelve years of that legendary career, and then again Paris, which meant for him the beauty of the world. But then his vivid imagination may have visualized the days of the Emperor's flight, and finally the lonely figure on the rocky shore of a desolate island, and the hatred the world had cast into his grave.

Many feelings made Bolivar dwell on those visions. In the last resort, the realization that he was not the equal of those three heroes in the scope of their achievements challenged him to surpass them in his behavior. These feelings are never clear and unambiguous in a man who began with the noblest intentions, but, after having gained a significant insight into the nature of his people, learned to modify certain of his principles.

And yet, in the critical moments which now succeeded each other in the course of a few months, Bolivar was strong enough to resist the lure of an obsolete romanticism. Just as he had, on the silver mountain, refused the protectorship, which meant a dictatorship in a mantle of ceremony and would have made him master of a continent, he here refused the crown whose glitter has at some time filled the dreams of all young idealists. Although he did not need to resort to force in refusing either, since the pro-

posal in both cases reached him in the form of doubtful allusions, he took no step to hasten, demand, or seize what was hesitatingly approaching him.

For above the crown, he saw freedom. Above the protectorate, Bolivar, the first modern ruler of his century, saw the League of Nations formed by the countries of his continent—Pan-America.

XV

THE Congress of the Pan-American states, the boldest and most advanced of Bolivar's ideas, had already figured in that great letter from Jamaica in which the powerless fugitive sketched his extravagant plans, resolved to bend fate to his will and to make his dreams come true. Now, possessed of a moral influence such as no single South American had possessed before him, at this time of fulfillment he took up this plan, among others, and spent two years in Peru preparing that first Congress on the "new Isthmus of Corinth." He began soon after his arrival in 1824.

For he had had to wait five years till he could conclude the treaties with some of the Central American states. America was only then on the point of overthrowing the last strongholds of Spain, with which its recognition coincided. The United States had declared its recognition two years before. Europe, however, meant so much to Bolivar that he was prepared to modify his new constitution according to England's wishes. Far away in the capital of Peru, powerful and powerless, he looked to Paris and London and wrote to Santander: "France must be told that I am ready to bring my plans into line with the Holy Alliance. America can be saved by four things, a big army, a navy, agreement with England, agreement with the United States. The union of our states, the Congress on the Isthmus is the fifth. We shall rescue the New World by a military and political alliance with England. That simple clause should say more to you than a couple of volumes." The ambassadors should be informed that he was going to form a mixed aristocratic and democratic government. At the same time he wrote to an English friend calling on Eng-

land to "attack the Russian colossus, which should be broken to pieces by the whole of Europe. And in the same sense to Sucre: "The United States is working together with France and Russia for our recognition. So that we only need to form the new regiments 600 strong, and not 1000, as I wrote you before."

Here the situation must be kept clearly in mind. The President of a foreign state, proclaimed dictator while leading the military forces of a disturbed country, uncertain whether he would be murdered on the morrow or opposed by some native general, pursued through ceaseless struggles the aim of uniting in one league the countries north and south of his center, while always taking account of the interests of states, of the whims of kings and czars who were pursuing their own devices thousands of miles away. A step taken by the Czar in Spain made the lonely thinker in Peru reduce the strength of his regiments. At the same time, most of the states he was endeavoring to unite were contesting his schemes.

In this unfavorable situation, Bolivar took the great step on his own account, supported neither by his own country nor his neighbors. On the other hand, it was the peculiar situation which drove him into it, and he even confessed that he was hoping to find in it a kind of reinsurance against the intrigues of his fellow-countrymen. "I am capable," he wrote to Santander, "of bearing the burden of the government of the whole world more easily than that of Venezuela, for it houses the worst of all Americans. Only an American congress could hold them in check; that is why I am so anxious to convene it." He even persuaded himself into believing that the congress alone kept him in America, for "if I go, the Congress will either not take place, or God knows how. The only thing which could keep me in America is that Congress. If I am successful, well and good. If not, then I shall lose all hope, for without a league, nothing can and will be done."

In a brilliantly written invitation to all the governments of both Americas, Bolivar sketched a program which remained unparalleled till Woodrow Wilson.

"The time has come to place our common interests on a safe

footing, and to guarantee the durability of your government. To found such a system with comprehensive power can only come about by the authority of plenipotentiaries and under the aegis of the victories our armies have won over Spain. The day on which our representatives exchange their credentials will inaugurate an immortal epoch in the politics of America. A hundred years after, when mankind seeks for the sources of international law, it will remember the resolutions which imparted a happier turn to its destiny, and think of them with admiration. What will the Isthmus of Corinth be in comparison to that of Panama." Such was the fiery tone of Bolivar's first invitation.

Dissension, however, was everywhere so great that not the foreseen six, but twenty, months passed before the Congress met. Bolivar was not present, as he had not been present at the opening of the first parliament of Bolivia. Distance alone cannot have kept this swift spirit from the realization of his dream. It was the foreboding, or rather the certainty, that his plan would come to grief. He had moved far from the *élan* with which he wrote: "Why should South America not stand under a single government? The bloody spectacle of Europe should be a political warning to us." A little later, in the letter from Jamaica of 1815, he repeated it, and in 1818 wrote in the same sense to the Argentine. Now, however, it was 1826, and in spite of his steady rise in the intervening years, Bolivar had grown older and more disillusioned.

When the first Congress was actually opened in Panama, only a handful of men sat in the hall; in addition to the representatives of his own two states, Colombia and Peru, only those of Mexico and Guatemala were present. Beside them, but rather with a watching brief, there sat those of England, Holland, and the too tardy United States. England's dread of a united, great America, the dissensions in the whole of the south, turned Bolivar's dreamed-of amphictyons into a wretched gathering representing only Bolivar's domestic power and two feeble friendly states. Even Bolivia was not represented, since revolt was just threatening there. The Argentine remained sulking in its tent

because Bolivar would not help it in its fight against Brazil. Chile was absent on the pretext that its Congress was not assembled at the moment. Brazil would only come if it could remain neutral between Spain and her former colonies. The United States only wished to treat isolated questions, such as shipping, maritime law, and so forth, but not the important issues; it also wished to refrain from overt action against Spain. The deepest obstacle lay in the jealousy felt by the heads of the various states for the success and the leadership of the most famous of them all, who had created the whole thing.

What Bolivar had in mind, and what he proposed, was partly left undecided and partly not even discussed. There were seven points: permanent neutrality, hence no war among members. The Monroe doctrine for all America against Europe. International law to be adopted in the separate codes. The abolition of slavery. Democratic organization within the states. Sanctions against any members infringing the principles of the league. A league army and navy. The whole directed against the reactionary spirit of the Holy Alliance, but in friendship with England and the United States, then the two pillars of the liberal principle.

This magnificent program was distinguished from the dreams of Sully and Saint-Pierre by the robust forthrightness with which the union was founded on power, namely the common armed forces, with punishments fixed for any aggressor. Everything which later led to the Pan-American Union was already contained in it, so that history has shown how much more far-sighted Bolivar was than Monroe. Bolivar's only mistake was to have been born a century too soon. The pitiful result after three weeks' talking was hence nothing but an alliance with an arbitration treaty between the four states represented, in which the others were to be invited to join, an agreement as to the strength of their armies, and the resolution to meet every two years. The next Congress met eighty-four years later. The United States even rejected the abolition of slavery. The main point, the creation of a big army to defend the league, was put forward without result.

Bolivar could foresee its failure in the meagerness of the attendance. Shortly before the Congress met, he called it the scenery of his theater and wrote: "The Congress could become a marvel if it became effective. But as it is, it is like that lunatic Greek who declared he could steer the ships at sea from a rock on the coast. Its power will be a shadow, its resolutions mere advice." Afterwards, however, he felt hurt all the same. "There are no treaties in America," he wrote, "whether between men or nations. The treaties are paper, the constitutions books, freedom is anarchy, and life a torment." He was so embittered that for the time being he would not even have the little that had been achieved ratified at home. Two years later with his confidential friends he poked fun at the whole enterprise, as if he had never taken it seriously. That was Bolivar's ironic, proud way of making little of a failure.

"The whole Congress was a piece of pure bravado which I needed to make the world speak of Colombia, I repeat, a flourish, just like my famous Angostura declaration of 1818. That it would lead to an alliance such as that of Vienna, I never believed. Mexico, Chile, and La Plata cannot help Colombia, nor it them. Except for freedom, their interests diverge. All we can do is to maintain diplomatic relations, not more. Perhaps in later times!"

That was the way Bolivar spoke of his own greatest ideas at moments of dejection. Such an ironic judgment is not interesting in itself, but only for the light it throws on character. The thing itself, we might rather call it the vision, remains great even in the light of his own skepticism. For those "later times" attempted to put into practice on the biggest scale everything the fugitive in Jamaica, the dictator in Peru, tried to achieve. This does not apply only to Pan-America; the League of Nations, as long as it had any authority, was based on those principles of arbitration, sanctions, and a common army which Bolivar had laid down, and will again be based on them should it come to life again. In 1926, exactly a hundred years after the failure of the Congress of Panama, the League of Nations at Geneva, by admitting Germany to its membership and Council, fulfilled its destiny and seemed

for a moment to turn into reality the dreams of a premature genius.

Immediately after the Congress, Bolivar made his plans and within a few weeks had left Peru. His own inward unrest grew with the unrest in his own country. After having repeatedly declared that he did not want re-election, he nevertheless accepted his election as President of Colombia, calling it all the same a grave breach of the constitution, while at the same time he wrote an official letter to Santander, again re-elected Vice-President, repudiating all responsibility for the threatening debacle. The failure of the Congress at Panama, the unrest in his new country of Bolivia, the irremediable anarchy in large parts of Peru, and the steadily growing menace in the news from Colombia made Bolivar relapse into a state of dejection bordering on despair, as profound as the exaltation of that supreme moment on the silver mountain only ten months before. His moods were certainly caused by his exaggeration of his circumstances in both cases, yet we cannot assume that they were less genuine because they went beyond the measure of ordinary hopes and fears. A letter he sent to Páez before his departure, an unusual and certainly unjustified sign of confidence in his rival, contains this moving retrospect:

“For sixteen years, men have been gathering to cause a general conflagration, and to blot out our victories, our glory, the happiness of the people, and the freedom of us all. I shall soon believe that nothing but ashes will remain of all we have done. The martial spirit has suffered more among our compatriots than among our enemies. Believe me, we are standing on a monstrous volcano; the portent is not imagined, nor is it a poetic image; it is only too true. By a kind of miracle, we kept a kind of hazardous balance, as happens when two great waves meet and, for a moment, create a fictitious calm. Navigators are familiar with the phenomenon. I was that point between Venezuela and New Granada; there was a point of rest, but it will vanish with the first waves. Everything will return to the womb of creation, will be reduced to primeval matter. Yes, matter, for everything re-

turns to the void. The hatred between classes will come galloping back, like all suppressed things. Every idea will claim supremacy, every hand will be stretched out to grasp the marshal's baton, every toga will be a cloak of confusion. Cries of despair will arise on all sides, and the terrible thing is that everything I say is true!"

When Bolivar, so profoundly discouraged, made ready to leave the Peru he had liberated and lived in for three years, all who had till then feared or envied him felt that their protector was leaving them and strove to hold him back. He cried to them: "My love is with you! You have a thousand claims on my affection. Your life and welfare are inseparable from my own fate."

Bolivar was moved by the almost sudden wave of feeling which surged round him, and by what he did with a wounded heart. When at last, after a wild night he and his men danced through with the most beautiful women in the country, he mounted his horse to ride away, the women and girls clung round him as though they would not let him go. A solitary horseman, besieged, as he loved to be, by a host of young women, he cried:

"When beauty commands, who shall resist? I have been the champion of beauty, for I have fought for freedom, which is beautiful and seductive. At her bosom she bears happiness, which in its turn bears the flowers of life. But my country—ah! my friends, Colombia!"

His voice broke.

CHAPTER FIVE

Don Quixote

“Only he who is most sensitive can be most severe. He must steel himself with tough armor to protect himself against the harsh blows; and very often this armor becomes too heavy for himself.”

GOETHE

I

WHEN Bolivar returned home after five years' absence in November, 1826, to play out the fifth and last act of his tragedy, the stage had already been fully set in the fourth. Yet it is not because the inevitable happened, but because he knew it must, that the whole turns to tragedy. Napoleon's case is different. There an unconquered soldier had been swept irresistibly forward by his own unbridled dreams, only to be overpowered by his enemies one day, after all. His power collapsed overnight, as palpably as it had been built up. It was only later, on Saint Helena, that the drama set in again.

Bolivar's character, far more reflective, and hence more poetic, had been deepened, if at times hampered, by his philosophic bent. A nature so strangely mixed could only subsist by virtue of its superb poise; in him the thinker was always swung back into action, while the man of action felt a constant challenge to interpret and judge his own deeds. When a mind of this kind is early shadowed by signs of physical weakness and the premonition of early death, it will tend to exaggerate the resistance of its epoch and all outward obstacles, and hence fall more quickly and more cruelly into despair of all it has achieved.

Bolivar's forebodings about his work had begun the day the liberation was accomplished. "My fears," he once wrote, "are premonitions of fate, oracles of fortune." His problem was by no means simple, for it did not, like Napoleon's, consist in making war on his neighbors in order to consolidate and maintain the power he had won at home by his victories. In Napoleon's case, power was the goal and glory the consequence. Bolivar had a more immediate, more urgent goal, namely to drive the op-

pressor of his people out of his own city and his own country. In this case, freedom and glory were the supreme aims, power a mere incident.

Nevertheless, with his growing success, the habit of command could not but grow on him. The more narrowly he watched the men about him, the higher rose his self-confidence in face of the intrigues in his entourage. Just as his way in the world from Liberator to dictator was foreordained by the inevitable anarchy of revolution, his inward growth must of necessity transform him in feeling from a Liberator into a dictator. As his power over his fellow citizens grew into the extreme jurisdiction over life and death, his feelings came to resemble those of Napoleon, although both their starting points and their goals were different. It took Bolivar's whole moral strength to abide by the ideals of his youth, of Rousseau and Robinson, which made his task of government more difficult day by day.

In such a state of mind, burdened by all the claims of a political morality which had never troubled Napoleon, Bolivar could not but realize the limits of his work, and indeed its futility, in the thing which seemed to him of cardinal importance once the Spaniards had been driven out of the country. If Napoleon had ever worked for the United States of Europe, of which he spoke from time to time, as passionately as Bolivar for the United State of Colombia, and for Pan-America beyond it, he would certainly have put that idea of his later life into practice, if only for a time, just as Bolivar reached the first of his goals. Napoleon, however, could only imagine Europe under the hegemony of France, while Bolivar wished to see neither Venezuela as the leader of Colombia nor Colombia as the leader of Pan-America.

These divergent conceptions of power and freedom led the one to conquer, the other to liberate, yet both to unite several countries, at times by force. While Napoleon's central idea was a personal union, Bolivar aimed at a *primus inter pares*. Napoleon's far less complicated career was beset by no philosophic pitfalls, since there was no law in his own heart to warn or impede him. In Goethe's words, he swept forward like a storm. As a

conqueror pure and simple Bolivar would have been balked by his philosophy; the shimmer radiating from his singular figure arises precisely from that inward conflict which gives him his place between Faust and Don Quixote, both of whom kept their power under the steady control of profound thoughts and feelings, and brought their moral idealism to bear on a world where Napoleon gave free rein to his amorality, calling it quite simply "the nature of things."

Most likely in these, the finer traits of his character, lay the deeper cause of Bolivar's failure in his second enterprise. His first he had been able to carry out without let or hindrance, even being able to drive the enemy, the Spaniard, out of the country without hating him. After all, he was himself of pure Spanish blood, and in that sense more akin to the conqueror than to the Incas. The hour of history had struck, and if an English nobleman had driven the English from North America without hating, why should not a Spaniard drive the Spaniards from the South?

But who was to take their place afterwards? Bolivar's confession that he dreaded nothing so much as the departure of the last Spaniard discloses such a mistrust of his countrymen, such a misanthropy, that it could only have been overcome if he had been prepared to sacrifice all his youthful dreams and exercise his personal power with cruelty. But Bolivar's ideals were too deeply graven on his soul. In the last act of his life, as he lost, step by step, everything he had established in the third, but had already questioned or even abandoned in the fourth, he became, like Don Quixote, a passive hero and so won the affection of posterity in proportion as he forfeited that of his contemporaries. Every one of his mistakes, which he knew he was making yet made nevertheless, endears him more. For Bolivar's path in life, after his departure from Peru, became romantic in proportion as it grew tangled.

II

"THE noise of your discord," he cried to the Colombians at his home-coming after five years' absence, "the noise of your discord reached my ears far away in the capital of Peru. I come bearing the olive branch. What has happened? Do you lack enemies? Have the Spaniards vanished from the world? And if they were all united against us, we must obey the law and close our ranks. Once again I offer you my services, the services of a brother. I do not know who is to blame, but I know that you are my blood brothers and comrades. There is only one guilty party in your quarrel—myself. I did not come home in time. Two friendly republics, the daughters of our victories, held me back with their gratitude and rewards. . . . The world of Columbus has ceased to be Spanish—that was the reason for my absence. Now let your blows rain on me! I have set foot on my native soil. Harm and dissension must cease."

Never, in all the rhetorical appeals he had pronounced, had Bolivar taken such a tone. It is the voice of a king and a father. Here is a pride so great that it melts into mildness, and, after unprecedented victories, declares its own guilt.

And yet, almost at the same time, he issued a warning which was really a threat and repudiated all responsibility for what was coming. On his way home, Páez had again sent a courier to offer him the crown. Even in Quito, the "cry for a kingdom" is said to have reached his ears. Bolivar replied in public:

"The voice of the nation has forced supreme power upon me. I shall abhor that office to my dying day, for it is the reason why I am reproached with aiming at the crown. Who can imagine me so blinded that I could desire to descend! Do these men not know that the name of Libertador is more glorious than any throne? Colombians! I have once more taken the yoke upon me, for in time of danger it would be hypocrisy, not modesty, to shirk it. But if it means anything else than to safeguard the rights of the people, let no man count on me!" Even these stirring words were

taken so amiss that somebody wrote: "He who was once a lion has become a snake."

What Bolivar found in the capital was not only the accustomed intrigue, but, to his horror, corruption too. His friend Santander had, in the meantime, not only become very rich but had enriched others. That was the most odious point to Bolivar, the heir to wealth and the impoverished founder of states. This discovery was obviously one of the reasons which shook Bolivar's too protracted confidence in Santander; they were soon to grow and deepen. Indeed, it seems to have been no personal affection which dictated the confessions in his letters, but his own need for a willing ear, an intelligent echo. For Bolivar had little choice of men of penetrating intelligence, as Santander was, and of the few faithful friends who stood by him in the last years of his life, Marino was, through no fault of his own, involved in a lawsuit which lasted for years, Mendez was not strong and distant enough, and Sucre was too exclusively a soldier, too susceptible, and most likely too young as well.

Santander was not the only one of his friends who had determined to turn traitor at his home-coming; Páez was preparing treachery in another way. While Santander had had five years' time to undermine the standing of the absentee dictator in the capital, that is, among the high officials and deputies, Páez, with his troops, was resolved upon the secession of Venezuela. In the one case an adroit diplomat, in the other a high-handed soldier, were at work against him, each with his own methods. Bolivar realized that he must rout each with his own petard. Nothing was more urgent than to avert a civil war in order to save Colombia, his creation. Páez had addressed the President of Colombia in a manifesto as "Citizen Bolivar." Instead of fighting the rebellious general, Bolivar first tried the effect of his pen at a distance. In three letters which fill a dozen big printed pages, he first attempted to bring Páez to his knees by a series of warnings combining persuasions and threats. They went from Bogotá to Caracas, from the new capital to his old native city, and the astonishing fact that it was not the new daughter country but his

own motherland which rose against the liberator of both may explain the profound emotion which bursts forth in these poetic letters to Páez:

“General! With me, you have always conquered. With me you have enjoyed glory and happiness, you may expect everything. Against me General Castillo fell, against me, Piar fell, against me, Marino fell. . . . It would seem that Providence has condemned my enemies to fall, Spaniards and Americans both. Look, on the other hand, how high my friends have risen. These examples are, of course, unnecessary to a friend like you. Your heart will give you better counsel than all this history. I trust as firmly as I trust to my sword that it will never turn against me. Both are with you in the frankness of a friend who loves you from his heart.”

A little later, without waiting for an answer:

“I am weary of this way of life and desire nothing but my release. I tremble lest I may descend from the heights to which fortune has raised my name. I never wished for power. It used to oppress me; now it is killing me. But Colombia moves my heart. I see our work being destroyed, and future centuries passing verdict upon us as the culprits. That is why I remain in the place to which the voice of the people has called me. Who can oust me from it? Your friends? You yourself? Ingratitude is worse than treachery. I refuse to believe in such cowardice. It is impossible, General, that you can have wished to have me humiliated by a gang of enemies whom we have never seen in battle. Do not dishonor Caracas by making it a center of infamy! Without my services, victories, and endurance, neither you, General, nor anyone else would still be in possession of his happiness and glory.

“You call me a simple citizen. In other circumstances, the name is flattering. But now I have returned from Peru to prevent civil war. Venezuela must recognize my power. The mandate you have received from the cities is the work of three murderers, and that is not a pretty business for a man like you. Are you willing to obey my orders or not? I am ready to convene a National Assembly and leave Colombia. The best proof of it is that I am hav-

ing my estates sold by my sister. God forbid that my power should be contested in the sight of my ancestors, like Mohammed's, whose country worshipped him while his countrymen fought him. In the end he triumphed, like me. For the sake of my renown, I shall make every sacrifice, but first I shall fight everybody. That would be the seventh civil war I have had to put down.

"I shall expect your answer at Puerto Cabello, which is still ringing with your glory."

Since Páez again made no reply, Bolivar declared a civil war, though he wrote again to the traitor:

"If I bring soldiers with me, it is for a good reason. Guzman, my friend and yours, has merely bungled his attempt this time. In Valencia, where you are now living, contemptible manifestoes have been circulated against me. I am coming to see that respect is paid me. If you fight against the Republic, so much the worse for you. . . . Let us unite for the salvation of our brothers! How can you, whom I loved as my best friend, succumb to such folly? Come to me. What have you to fear? If you will not come yourself, send a plenipotentiary. We must come to an understanding. The situation is dangerous and oppressive."

The hesitancy in this indictment, this cautious, half-deprecating exercise of power on the part of Bolivar, the Liberator and hero of the people, can only be explained by his fears for his life-work. As he had predicted for years, the whole structure was now tottering to its fall.

As, with horrified eyes, he saw the debacle so close ahead, he could not but wonder why he had stayed away those crucial five years, pursuing the phantom of the liberation of foreign countries. Quito and Peru were, of course, American too, and the men he had set out to liberate were his brothers. Moreover, by his victories, he had succeeded in finally overthrowing the ancient despotism after three centuries of rule.

But what had replaced it? What had become of the dream of a continent, if not united, then at least strengthened by treaties of arbitration? The news from Peru rang with the word anarchy. Buenos Aires was threatened by provincial leaders, Chile plunged

into fresh confusion. A thousand voices reached him from Quito, telling him that they would stand by him personally but not by Colombia. His whole creation seemed to be falling apart. Where Bolivar was not, anarchy reigned, where he was, his dictatorship was impugned. Corsairs from Colombia now carried the spirit of revolt to the coasts of Spain and Africa, the ports raised the standard of revolution in the very midst of the epoch of the Holy Alliance, the Canaries ceased sending goods, the ships from Europe failed to appear. Where, then, were the fruits of fifteen years of struggle ripening? In hours of gloom, all Bolivar's efforts must have seemed to him futile, the combats of Don Quixote, inspired by an ideal, but lacking the realization of the impotence of the individual, even though he should come at the head of an army. After all, had San Martín not been wiser to give up the struggle and seek the rest the ailing dictator now craved so often?

For the first time in his life Bolivar felt incapable of taking everything into his own hands again. That mature and skeptical insight he had used only too often as a weapon in the game of politics now turned into reality. The hitherto indeterminate character of his life drama now took that decisive turn toward tragedy which, in actual fact, sometimes appears only in the last act, or is only intelligible from that point. He no longer had the strength, he had aged too prematurely in the gallop of the last fifteen years, to conquer yet again.

That he nevertheless threw himself into the struggle anew, in order to rescue the glory with which his letters echo, invests him with the beauty of the tragic hero at the end of his story. We can hear it in an astonishing love letter he wrote at the time to Manuela.

Not long before he had actually climbed Chimborazo. Memories of Humboldt and Robinson accompanied him on his way, but, like a true dictator, he invests with a symbolic significance his path to the highest mountain in the world. The rhapsody he wrote afterwards would not have been worth the toil. Bolivar's

poetry was the ecstasy of which his deeds were born, not such occasional pages.

In a fresh crisis, he wrote to his mistress:

"My enchanting love, your letter transported me. Everything in you is love. I am a victim to the same fever, which is devouring us like two children. Old man as I am, I am suffering from the malady I should long since have overcome. You alone prevent my recovery. You demand that I should love nobody else. No, no! Your altar will never be usurped by another idol, not even by God. I am the worshiper of that wonderful creature, Manuela. Believe me, I love you alone and nobody else. Do not kill yourself. Live for yourself and for me. Live to console the sufferers and your lover, who is groaning for a sight of you. I am so tired from the journey and by the many complaints of your country that I am writing you letters in the small handwriting you love. But as a reward, my thoughts dwell day and night on your charms, on my love for you, my return, and what we shall do when we meet again. I can scarcely force my hand along the paper."

Even today, after the lapse of a century, the reader of such a letter knows as little as its writer or its recipient whether it gives more cause for laughter or for tears. The way he calls himself to his mistress an old man for whom love is past, defends himself in the same breath against her jealousy, which must have driven her to the threat of suicide, is obviously deceiving her with other women, yet all the same gives her the first and only place in his heart—it all reveals the perennial youth who will not give up his gallantry yet feels the decline of the strength which kept him on his horse's back as he rode conquering through the continent. These are the ecstasies of the consumptive whose hollow cheeks and cavernous eyes we see in Bolivar's portraits at this epoch. "My doctor," he wrote to a friend, "is of the opinion that I should protect my soul from dangers if I am going to keep my body alive. As God made me what I am, He planned this revolution to renew my vital spirits."

Such were the conclusions to which, at the end, his feverish nature led him. And at times his mind succumbed to the same fever when he surveyed the desperate plight before him. He was still addressing his confessions to Santander, for immediately after that mad love letter, he wrote him an equally mad dispatch:

“People have drained the body of Colombia of its lifeblood and driven it to its head; hence the country has become anemic and insane. To serve my fatherland, I must now destroy the marvelous fabric of our laws and the romantic ideal of our Utopia. The south is determined to have a dictatorship, and for a year it might serve. But it will only be a moratorium before bankruptcy. The malady is incurable, for it is not we who are ill, but principles, philosophy, the people itself. It is not our sword which is guilty! I have fought to give Colombia freedom. I have united it, so that it can defend itself. That is my torch. I cannot bear it—it afflicts me with remorse. The intrigues have destroyed our fatherland and we alone will suffer because we are the leaders of such blockheads.

“I have news from Peru and Bolivia that things are progressing there wonderfully under the Colombian constitution. A large number of Colombians are of the same opinion and are entirely in favor of a union with Peru. . . . The Páez affair is merely the first shock to a badly constructed machine which only held together so far because it never ran.”

Amid all the accusations in this letter, we can distinctly hear his self-accusation, as we heard his self-defense in the last. He speaks deliriously of remorse and a badly constructed machine. In one breath he speaks of the frailty of his state and of its multiplication, just as his reverses in earlier days inspired him with still-greater schemes. And then, in a postscript, he conjures his correspondent to keep the letter secret: “In Europe, a breach of such confidences is regarded as a crime.” This letter, therefore, is no longer a state dispatch in which a distant President lays down a course of action for his Vice-President at home. It is merely the outburst of an overworked, exhausted man, lashing himself into activity and dreading to break down before he reaches the goal.

And yet, side by side with that dread, we hear the same man devising new and bold schemes, and declaring: "The moment has come to take command of the sea, to carry the war on to Spanish territory, to take Puerto Rico from the Spaniards in order to reach Havana. In any case, I am determined on an expedition to Puerto Rico, which will bring us huge advantages, abroad and at home."

III

FOR Bolivar, in such a frame of mind, there was no issue but a dictatorship, and now the son of freedom even spoke of it in glowing terms:

"The dictatorship must bring a total reform with it," he wrote to Santander. "Our organization is an excess of ill-applied power, and hence harmful. You know that I find administration, sedentary work, tedious. Dictatorship is in vogue; it will be popular. The soldiers want coercion and the people provincial independence. In such confusion, a dictatorship unites the whole. If the nation would authorize me, I could do everything. You speak of a monarchy. I have not changed. Think of what I said when toasting myself as the despot of Colombia—that I would manage matters better than others. Liberator or death—my old motto. And now I am to descend to a throne? Your letter hurt me. If you want to see me again, never again speak of a crown."

A little later, also to Santander: "A congress never yet saved a republic. I repeat, this Congress will lead to the gravest consequences. I see the only way of salvation in the sovereignty of the people. You call that illegal? How can it be wrong to return to the sources of the law in order to alleviate the sufferings of the people? And if it is illegal, it is at any rate necessary, and hence stands above the law. Besides, it is extremely popular and therefore the right thing for such a democratic republic."

Such was the logical absurdity to which the disciple of the rights of man had come; what was necessary and popular was to happen, even though against the law. Dictatorship with the show

of a popular election—that is what he writes openly to his colleague. When the latter, however, speaks of the crown, Bolivar is affronted. His indignation, he imagines, will give a greater show of morality to his desire for a dictatorship, as though the world had not seen good kings and wicked tyrants in plenty. The confession of which he speaks, the toast he recalls, point, it is true, to a situation similar to that of France when Bonaparte returned from Egypt. In both cases, everything was possible provided that no conscience, no political morality, and no philosophy troubled the man of destiny.

Bolivar, who knew so much more about himself than most rulers, knew that and was perfectly clear in his mind about it. Even now, he was once more the modern Don Quixote watching himself and discerning quite clearly the safe way behind the visionary one, for he wrote immediately afterwards in confidence: "A monarch enjoys privileges which invest him with the authority to combat evil and bestow happiness on his subjects. In a republic, an official may be a slave of the people, he must be its victim. On the one hand he is bound by the law, on the other by circumstances. I could overcome all difficulties, but I am not going to figure as a tyrant in the eyes of the world."

Such was the clarity with which Bolivar realized the advantages of the crown, even when he had no eye for its attractions. But there always rose before his eyes that vision of Napoleon crowning himself which had caused such an upheaval in his youth. For the sake of his glory he renounced a form of power for which his solitary, autocratic, and aristocratic temperament had marked him out. The Platonic ideals of his education, the precocity which had robbed the jaded heir to wealth of the first impetus of youth, his philosophy—all restrained him. Announcing a visit to a friend, he wrote that he wished to be greeted without any ovation, "but just as in classical times, as a friend accepting the sacred hospitality of his countrymen."

In this subdued frame of mind, Bolivar marched to his last conflict to conquer or win over Páez. The latter had levied his own army in Venezuela, disregarding the impeachment of the

capital, Bogotá, and fought the cities which were ready to continue their obedience to the central power. A Constituyente which he summoned wished either to have the country recognized as a federal state or made independent. From being an army commander, Páez had risen to the dictatorship of Venezuela.

When, at the beginning of 1827, Bolivar entered Caracas for the last time, he recalled his first triumphal entry and that second, sinister void which had surprised him in the city long years before. This time he received a truly royal reception with wreaths of flowers, canopies, songs and poems, while a beautiful woman presented him with two diadems, one of silver and one of laurel. As he stood there with the two emblems in his hands, a sudden silence fell, people listened, and he said: "A muse has tendered me two crowns. The one signifies power. In Colombia, only the people have power. This crown belongs to the people." And he threw it into the crowd and went on: "The second, the crown of laurel, is due to the army of liberty. All of you have carried on the war. All are liberators. This crown belongs to the soldiers," and he threw it to the troops.

At such moments, Bolivar was incomparable. The delicacy with which, at the last moment, he invested the people with his own ideals of liberty, his charm, compounded of pride and modesty, his own poetic nature, and his gratitude render yet more beautiful ideas and gestures which would have occurred to no other man in the circumstances. It was all acting, yet real, just as it was with Don Quixote. Among the great men of history, Bolivar is the one genuine cavalier.

Even Páez, ungainly, dogged by his origin and his youth, and robbed of security as he was, was lured over by Bolivar with the urbanity of a Spanish cavalier. Páez was all the same afraid to beard the lion in his den. Bolivar, however, outwitted by seducing him. "If you are afraid I might give you a bad welcome, you must be mad. Could I be less generous to you than to my enemies? I will give you a box on the ears, then kiss you. Morillo came with a whole detachment and I was alone. Everybody will acclaim you. You will appear as a god of peace, a laurel richer

than Alexander's. You and I will save Venezuela together! Do you want still more guarantees? You can have anything."

How was an uncouth creature like Páez to resist such blandishments, such elegance and polish? Bolivar's skill lay precisely in the fact that he had calculated on that beforehand. Under these impressions, Páez yielded and issued a hypocritical proclamation in honor of the great Bolivar. Bolivar refused to put him on his trial, prohibited any word in public against Páez, and reinstated Páez' accomplices in their various offices.

What was the reason of this leniency, which favored an arch-traitor, exculpated him, and then invited him to table? Did Bolivar no longer possess the spirit with which, eight years before, he had had General Piar shot, and thus established his authority?

It was a fact that he no longer possessed it. Those eight years had not only robbed him of his physical suppleness, they had, above all, shaken his noble, simple faith in the ideal. Eight years before, at the beginning of his great victories, there was nothing he could not hope for; now they were behind him, and he had everything to fear, for eight years before, he saw glory ahead of him like a pillar of fire, and glory is easier to win than to keep. He knew, of course, that with this formal submission, the unity of Colombia was far from having been rescued. This provisional solution left both his rivals alive and in power—Páez, who was aiming at the secession of Venezuela for the simple reason that the hated Santander was ruling in Bogotá, Santander, who was aiming at the secession of Venezuela to prevent Bolivar, the Venezuelan, from remaining President at Bogotá.

Bolivar was well aware of all this when he celebrated the feast of reconciliation with the rebel. If, in spite of all, he did so, while making preparations for spending long months in his old home restoring order, his political aim was to keep both dangerous enemies in an equilibrium of hate and intrigue rather than strengthen the one by destroying the other. Thus it was neither inclination nor confidence, but their contrary which made him force a reconciliation.

On the next day at the banquet, however, when a general made an all-too-audible remark about the distribution of power between the two men, Bolivar's long-repressed pride suddenly broke out, and he cried to the speaker across the table: "There is no power here but mine! Among my officers, I am like the sun. If they shine, it is by my reflected light!"

There was a terrible pause. Bolivar rose and, as if to blot out the effect of his words, handed his own sword to Páez. His slow-moving, ponderous being shaken by two outbursts, Páez stood up and said with deep emotion: "Rather will I die a hundred deaths than give away this sword or shed with it the blood that has set us free. Bolivar's sword in my hands! I will use it for you and for him. I swear it on my oath."

Scenes of such kind, which Europe had not witnessed since the Middle Ages, show how young and how Spanish is the history of the countries to which Bolivar sacrificed his life.

IV

MEANWHILE, the man who regarded his hour as come was Santander. The man in power at Bogotá could conceive no more telling catchword than Bolivar, the Venezuelan, fraternizing with the archtraitor, to turn public opinion against him in his new home. In the very capital of the country which Bolivar had founded, his own friend and comrade published articles declaring him to be an enemy of his country. In Cartagena, where he had begun the struggle fifteen years before, Bolivar now read: "It would have been better to remain under the rule of Morillo than to fall victim to the despotism of Bolivar." Among the malcontents, the personal dispute soon expanded into a disagreement between the three countries, each of which wanted its independence back. Mutiny flickered up and down the country, troops deserted from one camp to the other, officials refused to serve, the waves of unrest rolled as far as Peru, where Granadan and Venezuelan troops were at each other's throats.

When Bolivar set out for the capital with his men, Santander

pronounced before the Congress the amazing warning: "He must not come! His influence and his secret power are so great that even I have yielded to him again and again, full of shame and admiration, when I saw and heard him. No man can so beguile others by his personal presence as General Bolivar. Woe to the man who feels his charm. In a moment he is as wax in his hands."

Bolivar may have smiled as he read the report of this speech. Nothing could be more flattering to him in his quest of glory than this helpless subjugation of his adversary. For a man of personal magnetism, there could hardly have been a greater satisfaction. Yet those very words must have made him realize why so many hated him. Only a woman or a philosopher can pardon a man who is subjugated by the presence of another. The men, however, who had for so many years followed the "seducer" could not help feeling that they had been his dupes when he was far away and, by some incomprehensible action, he had shaken their faith in him. For the second time, one of his enemies here discloses a hidden factor which facilitates the analysis of his character. Even after the reconciliation at Caracas, Bolivar proudly told Santander that he had forestalled a civil war, and recounted in all innocence the acts of homage Páez was preparing for him. One can but wonder at this display of hopes, which Bolivar expressed at the time to other friends in a large number of letters dealing with what actually amounted to the overthrow of Páez. Yet while he was calling Páez a mere provincial governor, he could hardly believe in the completeness of his own triumph, since news was coming in of a host of risings in every part of the country. When Santander's attack began from the other side, however, he lost heart again and wrote to Santander himself: "I doubt everything. I have a letter telling me that I have not two friends left in Bogotá, a sure proof that they are working against me there. Yet I am glad, for it will no longer cost me the least struggle to leave Colombia."

With these ambiguous words, Bolivar closed the longest and most important correspondence in his life. In a letter of fare-

well which has not been preserved, he merely informed Santander that he would not write to him again, since he no longer deserved the name of friend. He wrote telling another correspondent this "so that you may inform everybody concerned. A thousand times an ingrate!" Soon afterwards, he was saying: "Santander? An infidel or a blackamoor, a highway robber or a hangman. He does not possess one noble feeling. A patent scoundrel."

Nor could Bolivar gain any confidence in Santander's adversary Páez. It would almost seem as if he was taking his revenge on Páez for his submission when he wrote to him after the reconciliation: "We are living in a country where a man cannot breathe without stifling. We are surrounded by death. Forgive me, dear General, for this utterance of my candid heart. At Bogotá, a great many hold me responsible for the disorder in the Republic. What must they think of you in connection with Venezuela? If we lose now, nobody will defend you any longer."

Words such as these, the scene at the banquet, the Hydra-headed gossip of a little town—what could it all lead to if not to make Páez feel that he had been the dupe of the superior mind, of the captivating manners of his rival? It is only too easy to understand how more and more influential men in the country came to conceive a resentment of the one man whose actions and ideas, whose headlong rush of thoughts and feelings, exasperated them. Bolivar's great mistake was not to have been born a Frenchman.

Month by month his position grew more untenable, and he knew it. While he sent a formal resignation to the Congress at Bogotá, that was the place to which he felt most drawn, and he wrote: "From time to time I do not know what to do. I consider all day long what course to take, and every time I feel confusion growing worse confounded. I cannot abandon my friends in Venezuela. I cannot leave them in the hands of ingratitude and anarchy. . . . In very truth, I regard the Republic as a failure. If I desert, I shall be doing wrong, and if I stay, I shall have to pay for the funeral of Colombia. That is poor comfort! . . . If I were a hero and not a citizen, I would pounce down

on Lima and put the traitors there to death. Or do you seriously expect me to devote myself to a skeleton instead of a body? . . . Whatever I build with my hands is trampled underfoot. A man fighting on all sides can achieve nothing. My former struggles have exhausted my energy. Is an individual to restore order to half a world, especially a man like me? I feel utterly disheartened." He wrote similar confessions at that time to a large number of people, not indiscriminately, maybe, yet obviously moved by the craving of the solitary to give expression to his distress.

In this pass, Bolivar tried once more to make provision for his future, financially at any rate, so that he could leave the country. In a long correspondence he tried to sell his mines to England, but the English required better proofs that he was actually the owner and had inherited them from his brother, who had been lost at sea fifteen years before and had never returned. As it did not suit him to carry on the negotiations himself, he gave his sister detailed instructions as to the lowest price she could go to. At the same time, like all great gentlemen of imagination—Lord Byron, for instance—there were times when he would suddenly complain to his sister about a few piasters, the cost of new legal papers.⁴ And all the time he was at loggerheads with his wastrel nephew, and once again had to send a bill of exchange of 22,400 pesos to London "merely to safeguard the honor of my signature."

At this belated return to his native city, his family approached him with the mingled pride and embarrassment we often see among the relatives of genius. Material benefits, such as Napoleon had brought to his family, they had never received from his power; he himself had none. When he rode into Caracas, they all came to meet him with the exception of one old uncle who had remained loyal to Spain. But Bolivar rode out to his country seat, laughed, and exclaimed: "If the mountain won't come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain." His old nurse came to see him, and in recommending her for a situation, he wrote: "She nursed me. Is there any finer thought for a man who can love and be grateful?"

Then Miranda rose from the shadows again. His son sent the Liberator his portrait. "The portrait," he replied, "revived in me glorious and sad thoughts as I looked upon the features of your illustrious father." The son could come over whenever he liked. "You may always count on the friendship of your devoted Bolivar." This form of signature is exceedingly rare in his letters. Immediately afterwards, Iturbe reappeared, sending him a marshal's baton as a present. "I have," replied Bolivar, "received the baton with great pleasure. It is the emblem of power which I abhor. That is why I never made use of such a symbol. I received the handkerchiefs from your wife with great gratitude." The unerring instinct with which he waves aside the baton while holding the handkerchiefs to his delicate nose brings before our eyes the man who dictated a dozen letters a day, and certainly did not waste more than three minutes over this one, at the height of the comedy he was aware of at such moments.

A relative, now in possession of Bolivar's old home, invited him there together with a few old friends. He arrived dressed in black, in taciturn mood, looked at the tablet commemorating his birth in the house, and wandered about in the patio under the pomegranate trees which had seen his first awakening. At table, he raised his glass and spoke in poetic vein: "Brothers and friends! What happiness it is for me to be among you as one returned from the grave! Memories crowd in upon me at this moment. My mother rises from her grave and opens her arms. My brother, my sisters, my grandfather, my nurse, my childhood's play, my confirmation, the little presents—it all streams down upon me, rejuvenating and bewildering. Every human feeling awakes in gratitude to you. Where are our brothers, our fathers now? Where does Caracas stand? You have suffered greatly. Yours is the glory of having suffered for your loyalty. Our family has shown itself worthy of our country. Your blood has been avenged by one of you. I was the fortunate man who was chosen. I have represented my kin in the face of humanity. I will do so before eternity. My mother—"

He broke off and went out into the garden alone.

V

WHEN Bolivar returned to Bogotá after nine months of absence, a chill such as he had never before experienced seized his heart. There may have been a similar feeling on the Champ de Mars in March, 1815, when Napoleon presented himself to the people in an all-too-brilliant uniform as their returning leader. Both men had come back without having been called by the interim rulers, yet without having been expelled by them. Their state of mind too was the same, for both were girding up their loins for a last expedition in the forlorn hope of turning fortune back in its tracks as it fled remorselessly ahead.

A rude reminder of Napoleon was dealt to Bolivar himself, for a newspaper in his capital wrote brazenly that he had come to imitate Bonaparte's Versailles *coup d'état*. Aware in advance of the coolness in his capital, he had, with a brusqueness quite alien to him, asked beforehand that a public reception and all invitations should be waived. He wrote to a friend asking him to provide food; he would refund the expense, but he wished to remain alone. He received with courtesy a visit from Santander, the ministers, and the deputies, and reported the situation to a general the following day in the curious words: "I arrived in the capital yesterday, and today I am in possession of the presidency." Yet at the same time his attitude in public was resolute and challenging, and while he gave notice of a general election for a new Colombian National Assembly, and wrote long letters bringing pressure to bear on the choice of candidates man by man, he wrote: "I declare aloud: either the Republic will invest me with a vast authority or it will perish. I have not the slightest confidence either in the traitors of Bogotá or in those of the south. The National Assembly will never meet unless I destroy the traitors beforehand. The devil rules this Congress."

Thus we can see him, in the ensuing nine months, preserving the forms of the liberty which was his goal, safe-guarding himself in every way by his own constitution, yet analyzing that lib-

erty with steadily growing skepticism. "Civilization," he wrote at the time in a magnificent metaphor, "produces indigestion in our minds, which are not strong enough to assimilate the food of liberty." And he would suddenly yield to strange expressions of ecstasy, for instance when, in an impulsive postscript to a letter to a man he hardly knew, he added under his formal signature: "May you be happy," or when he wrote: "I alone in the world have no interest but the general good." He would pile up high-flown comparisons and magnify his situation into historical and mythological dimensions, writing: "The role of Brutus is my delirium. The role of Sulla, though he was the savior of the Roman constitution seems to me horrible." Or another time: "After seventeen years of appalling labor, our mother has given birth to a sister more cruel than the Megara, more parricidal than Jupiter, more bloodthirsty than Bellona. Her name is Anarchy."

This lack of inward balance reflects Bolivar's struggle with despair, with physical weakness, with all the blows his fiery, once trusting soul had latterly received. At quieter moments he would reckon up all the sympathies that still remained to him, and would seem to err on the side of exaggeration in writing: "There are few friends, but the lethargy of the many is counterbalanced by the energy of the few. The troops are sufficiently devoted to me, the lower classes, the church, and the landowners still more so." And he calculated that in the National Assembly of the following year, there would be sixty votes for him and only twenty for Santander. Thus on principle he continued to play the old electioneering game while in his mind he had long since seen a dictatorship as the only means of salvation. It would seem as if he hardly noticed the paradox—the fact that the very elements which at first opposed him were now becoming his support. While Bolivar never was and never became a believer, he now dissolved lodges he had once belonged to, because the spirit of separatism was fostered in them, purged the universities as the Spaniards had done before him, and promoted the study of theology. "The instruments to be used for the suppression of

abuses," he wrote, "and for the calming of passions are the press, the pulpit, and the bayonet. Principles are all very well for times of peace. In general unrest, any theory becomes absurd."

It would be just as absurd for us to weigh in the balance to-day how far Bolivar should have maintained his principles. His whole life as a statesman and army commander was one uninterrupted time of troubles, and if, in his passion for posthumous glory, he reverted to democracy again and again, that fact is far more astonishing than that he should have at times abandoned it.

In this dilemma, shocks from without came welcome to him, for he could counter them with force. Or can we call it an inward shock when fresh risings broke out at Quito, the object of which was to force on the separation from Colombia? He put them down, returned refreshed from the campaign, felt freer and happier, and recorded his triumphs in Caesar's vein: "You know, my proclamation has done away with the rebellions in Colombia. It left, arrived, and conquered more swiftly than Caesar, first at Bogotá on the eve of a conspiracy, then at Quito on the eve of a second, where I put down a rebellion within twenty days of my arrival." Here is the characteristic exaggeration of the man who feels his fortunes on the wane and hence casts a double brilliance over his victories, foreknowing them to be the last.

Far away in his new state, he knew that his best and last friends were in similar straits. Hardly had Sucre, under pressure from Bolivar, been elected President of Bolivia in perpetuity when the factions there and in Peru began their work of disaffection. Why should a young man be put into power in a country where every native lawyer was set on becoming President? In a mutiny, Sucre, riding along into the barracks, was twice wounded, and as his gentle nature lacked everything which goes to make a dictator, he flinched and soon afterwards prepared to leave the country. Bolivar restrained him with the finest notes in his scale: "Bolivia is our adopted daughter. It was our deserts which gave her to us, not fate. As she sprang from our heads like Pallas Athene, we cannot go back on her, big, beautiful, and all armed as she is. I have put only one stipulation before the Congress,

namely that the country shall love you so that you can continue to govern it. A man without sin—that is the opinion I have formed of your noble heart.”

But when revolts multiplied, when Peru demanded the abolition of the constitution of Bolivia, in order to exclude forever the possibility of a President for life, Bolivar wrote, a few months after that heartfelt appeal: “I have nothing to do with the constitution of Bolivia. If they do not want it, let them burn it.” At the same time, he wrote to Sucre: “In your place I would not remain there long, for in the long run, we shall always bear the blemish of being Venezuelans. If we can do no more here—the world is big, and we are so small that we shall come to rest in some part of it. Come and share my fate! Everything has gone to unite us, fate will hardly part us. Friendship is preferable to glory.”

VI

FROM this turmoil of conflicting emotions, Bolivar was restored to his own inward schism when the National Assembly actually met in a little town to the north of Bogotá. He had been at Ocaña on his first march of liberation; when he saw it again after a lapse of fifteen years, he could not but wonder whether his path had led steadily upward all that time. Then he had been a young, bold adventurer, without power, without orders, and practically without arms, yet spurred by his faith in his mission, in freedom, in glory. Now, to the prematurely aged misanthrope, for all his power and all his arms, his mission could not but seem questionable and freedom dangerous. Glory alone glowed on undimmed in the mountain of his heart.

In his pride and obstinacy, he had first made up his mind to refrain from exercising any influence in the Congress and to withhold a message drafted in his own hand, which said: “If the revolution is not at an end after sixteen years, that is our mistake. In France, the tumult only subsided on the day when the principles of the government were brought into unison with the

nature of things and the spirit of the people. Even the most cultured nation of ancient and modern times could not withstand the storms stirred up by pure theory. If independent France could not support the burden of unlimited freedom, how was Colombia to put into practice the ecstasies of Robespierre and Marat? Can one dream in political visions? Beware, gentlemen of the legislature, of being compared with France by the incorruptible judgment of posterity." This draft contains so many counterrevolutionary allusions, even to the point of quoting verbatim Napoleon's phrase "the nature of things," that it was far better withheld by a ruler with a care for the judgment of posterity.

Politically, moreover, it could only have led to confusion. For among the 108 deputies, there were primarily two parties—Bolívar's and Santander's. The latter had organized the elections and had greater hopes, in the new Congress, of the fall of his more powerful rival than of the dissolution of Colombia into its three component countries, which he proposed in public. Bolívar's adherents were aiming at centro-federalism. They had the majority among all classes of the people, but not in the Congress, which had been packed by Santander's electioneering skill.

Such was the situation from which Bolívar found a strange issue; he refused to go to Ocaña, where the Congress was sitting, in order to influence nobody and, as he said, not to smirch his public career at its end. During the two months of the sittings, however, he settled in a little neighboring place where he was kept in touch continuously with its progress by two tried friends, O'Leary and Mendez. There he sat, like Carmen at the entrance to the bullfight, the only one among all the thousands cut off from watching the combat while her cavalier was fighting for the prize within. But, like Carmen, he had his ear to the chinks, and strove to forecast the issue from situations and symptoms. While, in the Congress, the men whose fortunes he had founded united against the tyrant under the leadership of his old friend,

he spent his days in a country house at Bucaramanga, discussing philosophy and politics with a few intimates.

All the time he was trying to make his enemies believe that "he would in no case continue to govern, in whatever form and by whatever authority. I would sooner be buried alive in the ruins of this country." He even wrote to the President of the Congress: "Despair counsels me to remain passive and to submit to fate. If I hear the words of courage and boldness, I feel reborn for my country and for glory. But I will retire and live with the beasts of the field rather than devote myself anew to the establishment of order in this Republic. Rather hunt and fish, far from all those agitations." In a confidential letter written at the same time: "I look upon the New World as half a globe which has run mad and whose inhabitants are in their period of mania. To drown their ravings, a keeper stands in their midst with a book in his hand reading them their duties aloud. . . . How often do I rue the fact that I am an American! For there is no great cause we do not degrade."

The passion with which he proclaimed his nihilism during these weeks, the utter void he worshiped in the place of what he once created and was now collapsing, show a disillusionment so acute that it can be paralleled by the end of no other ruler's life in modern history. What were Bismarck's nightmares in age compared to this?

Now and then the spirit would move him to take a hand again in the wonted game; he would collect all the echoes in the country in his favor, declare that he was being called for on all sides, and at times expect a direct summons from the Congress which never came. Then again he would make up his mind to leave the country, and wrote that "he would assuredly not return for a fifth time to a country from which I have been so ignominiously expelled. May the wretches who speak ill of me stifle in their own morass. I gave them even the air they breathe. And now I am suspected and my relatives scorned—a pretty pass!" The next day: "If we are beaten, we must fight. We must not run away.

Triumph or annihilation, that is the watchword. If we are beaten in one item of our program, the Republic will lie derelict, or rather, it will be ruined." He even went so far as to say: "You think that is my business? What use is Colombia to me? Till the end, they will have to magnify my glory. The Colombians will enter history covered with shame. Not I—perhaps, perhaps! If I leave one day, and the country of Colombia depends on my return, I will let it founder rather than be forced to govern it and condemn it to annihilation to show that I wanted nothing for myself. So deeply has my pride been wounded in its most sensitive spot."

In this last sentence, Bolivar reveals the deepest cause of his agitation, which he intensifies to the point of hybris. I shall allow Colombia to founder! It is the inaction forced upon him which he prefers to regard as self-chosen, it is the intolerable strain, the anxiety of the slowly drowning man for his lifework. The whole arsenal of tragic motives unites to cast this Don Quixote, once an enthusiast, now an outcast, into the depths of those torments in which, exhausted by superhuman efforts, he hears a voice whispering: in vain!

The strangest thing is that he sends such confessions to quite uneducated people, like his own enemy Páez:

"Just as an enslaved people has never known a change of heart, no people can maintain itself without conquerors and liberators, as Montesquieu has shown. Therefore this is an eternal struggle, and in the quest of the unattainable, our afflictions are prolonged. To live under an absolutely free government, we should have to be dematerialized; our clothes, our habits, would have to be changed, we should have to be released from our passions or renounce forever the chimera of our schemes. I have been more held up to scorn than other men; it took more than forty years of disappointment for me to reach this tragic conclusion."

That stands in a letter to Páez, whom he was at the time privately denouncing as the most dangerous man in Colombia, and one capable of getting the supreme power into his hands, with

the help of the colored men and the rabble. What was Páez, a mestizo who had neither had the time nor felt the vocation for any kind of mental development, to think of the writer of such a letter, whom he could not follow, whom he always distrusted, and from whom he was receiving philosophical letters and marks of friendship at the very time when that same man rescinded one of his decrees. It could not but happen that the whisper uttered by the officer in the bamboo thicket on the Orinoco should spread among his friends: "Now the Liberator has gone mad."

When an old acquaintance addressed Bolivar as "Excellency" in a letter, he received the reply: "The title of friend is in itself worth a hymn of praise. As for the title of Excellency, I do not deserve it. I am satisfied with the attempt to be just, and lay no claim to superlatives. Call me 'you.' If we were Romans, 'thou' would sound still better." Utterances so touching in their incongruousness might be taken from Don Quixote as they stand.

All this time 108 deputies were passionately debating questions of the constitution, while in their heart of hearts, or perhaps even unwittingly, all were weary of trying and convinced that the long years of constitutional chaos must come to an end. The cry for a king had not subsided, it had become more urgent, and Bolivar, waiting in his solitary retreat, heard and read on many different sides the call for a *coup d'état*. The very man who wrote to his sister that he was now coming to Venezuela, but she was not to put herself to the least expense, for she did not know the straits they were in, the same practically destitute President who had, a few years ago, rejected a presentation of a million pesos, now read in confidential reports from all three countries that he could now, if he wished, put an end to it all. But he attached more importance to what Benjamin Constant was writing in Paris: "If Bolivar dies without putting the crown on his head, he will be admired by coming centuries as a man without his peer. He has more power in his hands than Washington ever possessed."

Tangible proposals came to cut across these strange ideals. An officer suggested to him that he should dispose of Santander

and his henchmen by main force. He returned a sarcastic refusal. Not long afterwards, however, he said that ten years before, the shooting of Piar had been sufficient to restore order; today the death of many hundreds would not suffice. Very soon signs appeared that Santander was planning something of the kind on his side, and was out to have Bolivar assassinated. Bolivar paid no heed to the news; as a nobleman, he regarded such things as impossible. He merely laughed and said he was not going to the Congress because there were too many Brutuses in it, and it would be too easy for him to find himself cast for the role of Caesar. He remained quite incredulous of Santander's sinister plans, however; "he would find no hands to carry out such a murder." Then he related how one of his friends in Jamaica had been killed, and how he himself was once to have been assassinated in a battle. He had only been saved by luck. "Let the superstitious believe that Providence made a Liberator of me. In reality, it was my character, my ambition, my passion, which set my feet on that path. Tenacity and imagination led me and kept me in it.

"I do not attribute to the soul the capacity of reading the future and warning us. All the same, I confess that in certain cases our mind can judge whether we should do this or that. That is not the same thing as an inward sense which would be able to predict the future with certainty. If, for instance, I were to find death or disease awaiting me at Bogotá, that would have nothing to do with any foreboding of mine. Socrates' Damon and other wise men had less contempt of premonitions, so that they often left undone things they would otherwise have done. I would call that weakness, cowardice, or excess of prudence. They say that Napoleon believed in fate and in his star. He tried to exculpate himself from the ludicrous statement in order to prove that he was no fatalist. He would speak of his star, but did not believe blindly in a concatenation of happy events reserved to himself. The man who stands high in the world's eyes must endeavor to dispel the effect on superstitious men, namely their fear, like Scipio embracing Africa. . . . There. We have philosophized enough. To bed!"

VII

IN the course of these weeks, Bolivar was visited by a Frenchman who understood him better and gave a more subtle portrait of him than his year-long aide-de-camp or whoever else was writing memoirs at the time. A platonically minded stranger, provided he is a genuine psychologist and hunter of men, can obtain, and if he is a writer, transmit, a keener insight into the nature of so complicated a being than any collaborator or relative. What Bolivar confided to de la Croix as he philosophized in the tedium of his idleness is as significant as the insight he gained by silent observation.

This Frenchman saw Bolivar, two years before his death, at times thoughtful and silent, at others in a state of exuberance, abrupt in his questions, easily mollified after an outburst, but brooding for long intervals in sullen anger. When he went riding or walking with his suite, he would suddenly set off at a gallop or a run. "Then he looked like a madman. He clearly wanted to tire us out. Afterwards he would laugh at us." Nor could he even bear anyone to drink more than he, although he was by habit temperate. "Only good stomachs can digest butter," he would say, helping himself copiously to demonstrate his own. He could not suffer anyone to outdo him, to win more praise, even in the most trivial things. At a swimming race he spoke of, he swore to swim the Orinoco with his hands tied, and actually succeeded, his aide-de-camp carefully providing him with an escort of two other swimmers.

At table he would look round first to see that nobody lacked anything; now and then he would invite an officer of humble birth so that he might learn better manners. The quondam dandy boasted of his skill in making salads, which he had learned from the ladies in Paris. He ate a great deal of pepper and garlic, but drank little coffee and did not smoke. He indulged very moderately in wine because it increased a man's courage, dissipated his cares, and strengthened the whole system. It was but

rarely that he allowed wine to influence his judgment, for instance, when, by a sudden change of plans, he began the battle of Ibarra because the last remaining bottle of Madeira had put him in the mood. "Wine, of course, can make a man lose battles. In any case, it is better to fight after a meal than before, although true courage only comes from a sense of honor. But both body and mind work better if the stomach is strengthened."

His meticulous personal cleanliness did not extend to his room, which is described as dirty and almost bare, not only here but elsewhere. There he would dictate, swinging to and fro in his hammock, or whistling a French march as he clicked his riding boots together. If rain kept him indoors, he would stride round and round the house, singing and rhapsodizing. "At such times he looked as if there was nothing steady in him. When he is sitting with his staff, he is the wildest of all." Yet at the same time he kept his staff under such a perpetual strain that his secretary, when the Liberator left for a couple of days, heaved a sigh of relief and said: "How sweet is freedom."

Then again he would suddenly begin to talk about America at table in quite a general way and in a kind of happy, godlike vein:

"What am I to do with this continent? On what basis am I to establish this spacious scene, where future humanity will meet to renew its youth and parade its greatness and its victories? How can my will and my thought hasten or retard that inevitable future? The powerful nations which destroy each other, the proud states in ruin, the peoples which infect and corrupt each other, will all come here. I hold this beautiful part of the world in my hands. What am I to do with it? How will those into whose hands it comes after me judge me?"

Compared with the desperate nihilism of but an hour before, it sounds like the bliss of a dying man.

To pass the time, they began to play cards, which he had abjured after his losses in Paris twenty-five years before. When luck was on his side, he was in high spirits, and would laugh at the losers. If he lost, he would complain of bad play and bad

cards, stand up, and continue the game standing. Once when he had lost heavily, he threw his cards on the table, then the money, and went away, but returned, saying: "Such is a game. I have lost battles and a fortune, I have been duped and betrayed, but nothing has so agitated me as this stupid game. A thing like that, for which we have no passion, can demoralize us simply because fate is against us. If I lose again tomorrow, I promise you to be more patient." The next day: "The game last night left me thoughtful. Playing dice, I often wanted to lose. But here each one of us stakes part of his own strength, he thinks he can play better than the others, and so must win. But that does not happen with pure hazard. And now for my revenge."

On festival days he would go to church, yet never crossed himself, nor knew when to stand and when to kneel, but read an amusing book all the time. Even when a woman fainted and there was a general commotion, he read calmly on. But when his doctor sat with his legs crossed, he reprimanded him. Bolivar always preferred a dance to church, and although at this time he was ailing, he confessed: "Many people need quiet for thought. I could think in society, when dancing, and all the same always remained in the crowd alone with my thoughts."

About his collaborators, past and present, he would speak in detail, and more often with appreciation than criticism. To officers coming for orders, he would often say: "I recommend" rather than "I order." His desire to guide men was so great even at this time that he dictated political letters to an Englishman, read the answers, dictated further letters, and all the time as if he had nothing to do with them.

The tension of the situation often led him to speak of the constitution, pleading, of course, his own cause. "Nations often prefer us to do ill by them. Everything depends on how it is done. Jesuitism, bad faith, the arts of fraud and lying, which are social crimes, are, in politics, high qualities and the best diplomacy. The best thing is to make use of them without showing it." Yet all the time Don Quixote was bearing his immortal

ideal before him like a sacred banner, and if he declared that Colombia could only be ruled by a despot, he would add hastily: "I am not one and never will be, although that is the name my enemies give me. Whoever writes an impartial history of me or Colombia will have to say: 'He was a dictator, the supreme leader chosen by the people, but neither a tyrant nor a despot.'" Again and again he would reiterate that his name must not be mentioned together with that of Monteverde, Morillo, or Boves. He was certainly telling the truth when he declared that he had not looked at Machiavelli for fifteen years. Instead, he read at this time the adventures of the most nimble-witted of all diplomats—the *Odyssey*.

Bolívar's library contained not only everything he could lay hands on about Napoleon and Caesar, Frederick the Great, Washington, and South America, but also Madame de Staël and de Pradt, to whom he even awarded a pension in token of his admiration. It also contained more or less tattered volumes in Spanish, French, and English—Ossian and Tasso for his romantic side, Voltaire and Hobbes for the skeptic, Humboldt and the exploitation of the mines for the Venezuelan, and, unexpectedly, Chinese geography and the principles of strategy.

Bolívar was perfectly well aware at the time that the French stranger was making notes of everything, and seemed to wish him to do so. From time to time he would play Mephisto to him, which means to posterity, and betray his own stratagems. But his tone, which had always had a strain of Spanish grandiloquence, took on no new accents, and he shows his profound desire for justice in no finer way than in his struggle for his place in history, the object of his keenest endeavors. For that reason he rejected a book on the revolution which was favorable to himself and whose author glorified his deeds indiscriminately, "because I am alive and in power. A man cannot write impartially when he is dependent on the hero of his book. Posterity needs considerable time after the death of a hero."

In one of his realistic retrospects, in which he would scoff at

Thales and other philosophers, Bolivar came to speak significantly of his youth. It was at table.

"Such is life, gentlemen. If I had not become a widower, my life would have taken another course. I would not have become a general, nor a Liberator, although to remain Mayor of San Mateo would hardly have suited me. If it had not been for the death of my wife, I would not have gone to Europe a second time, and San Mateo is hardly the place to beget such ideas. They came to me on the voyage. Nor should I have been able to make in America the studies of men and things which were so useful to me in later life. Now you can judge whether my wife's death influenced my fate." This explanation, which he often repeated, shows the form in which he saw his destiny. Indeed, the poet in him made him suspect that his glory had taken the place of his first love, and that is the reason why he resolved never to remarry, and abode by that resolve.

He traced an important connection between this interpretation of the earliest events in his life and other ideas—glory and Napoleon. Both occur in the middle of his explanation. Everything else he said about Napoleon, moreover, in the course of these weeks is in the same tone and forms perhaps the most important source we have for the knowledge of his character in later life. As always happens, his most vital confessions were spoken and not written.

In all things, big and little, his sole reflection and criterion was Napoleon. From Napoleon he learned not to give high places to his relatives. Since Napoleon, in his plain uniform among his brilliant staff, had made such an impression on him in Milan, he would have gladly done the same thing if it had not looked like imitation. "People would have said that I wanted to copy him in everything." He would compare his own aides-de-camp with Berthier and others. Yet if he came to speak of the social situation, it was an immediate pretext for him to revert to his ideals. "Those men were the first subjects of a mighty monarch; here they are the free citizens of a free state. There they were the

favorites of the Emperor, here they are the friends of the Liberator. The sybarites of the century would certainly prefer the former status, the modern Lycurguses and Catos the latter."

And yet at the last, Bolivar twice admitted to the Frenchman that his heart had always been with Napoleon. It was not the crown which impressed him, "but the general enthusiasm and interest his person aroused. That, I must admit, made me think of the enslavement of my country and the glory its liberator might win. Yet I was far from believing that that happiness was awaiting me. Later I began to flatter myself that I could play the title role." One day when he was glancing through one of the books on Napoleon, all of which he read, he threw it on the table and exclaimed: "How unjust! How wrong!" Then, after a pause: "You will have noticed that I never praise Napoleon to my entourage, but rather criticize him and call him a despot. That must be, although I have quite a different notion of him. I must conceal it, to prevent my policy from being interpreted as an imitation of his, or my aims and plans from being put on the same footing as his. People might believe that I wish to make myself King and Emperor, and rule South America as he ruled Europe. That would all have been said if I had revealed my admiration. 'He is out to create a new aristocracy, privileges and honors,' my friends would have said if I had publicly proclaimed my reverence for the hero, praised his policy, spoken with enthusiasm of his victories, if I had lauded him as the first captain of the world, as a statesman, a philosopher, and a sage. Great caution compelled and still compels me to conceal all that. The diary on St. Helena, his campaigns, were my best reading. In them I could study the art of war, politics, and government."

These words, the authenticity of which has never been called in question, are so true that a dramatist could not have conceived any more telling lines to put in Bolivar's mouth. They throw a profound light on his secret impulses and inhibitions. The great conflict in which this born ruler constantly turned toward freedom, had turned out, two years before his death, entirely in favor of a benevolent tyranny. If there had not lived in Bolivar the

eternal thought of glory, he would long since have established it. And in spite of his glory, he was yet to do so.

VIII

THE Congress was drawing to its close, that is, a third of the deputies had suddenly taken their leave in order to deprive the rest of the power to act. This third comprised Bolivar's adherents. He knew about it, but did not summon them to him in order to keep up the show of impartiality. He had won a kind of passive victory; in any case Santander met a defeat. Then his lofty scorn soared again. "The gentlemen in the Congress," he said, "will not realize that I hold their political life in my hands, and it is only by my generosity that they are still in possession of it. A sign would be enough to dissolve it. Not one of them would hesitate to give that sign in order to murder or overthrow the others. Such are our liberals, cruel, bloodthirsty, fanatical. They conceal all their crimes under the word freedom."

To the deputies, however, he spoke in quite another tone, for he nevertheless issued a proclamation. "In the name of Colombia, I implore law and justice for the people and the army. Give us a steadfast government." Once again Santander made an attempt to turn this cry for a dictatorship against his great enemy. It was too late; the rump of the Congress dissolved itself as no longer empowered to act, retaining, however, by 22 votes to 4, the old constitution, and resolved that the Libertador should be placed at its head. And while the movement for a dictatorship rose throughout the country, so that even Páez had to pronounce in its favor, Bolivar lay low, playing the innocent in truly Voltairean fashion. "Yes, my friend," he wrote, "I have set out on the road to heaven. I regret my profane behavior, am tired of imitating Alexander, and am following Diogenes, to fill his jar, his barrel, or his house. In the end, everything palls. That is the way of nature, which we can neither disapprove nor change. It is time that other heroes appear on the scene! My part is played out. For fortune, as you know, is fickle, like all light women, and since she

is determined to abandon me, I am already weary of her company."

A week after this letter, Bolivar took over the dictatorship and carried it on for a year and a half.

In actual fact, a large part of the country in its desperate plight was calling for Bolivar. The deputies who came to see him, and his triumphal entry into Bogotá, fanned his feelings into hope, but the disciple of Rousseau, who was well aware that revolutions cannot be brought to an end by the principles on which they are set going, insisted on a general election, and also at once set about preparing a new Congress for 1830. To his London ambassador, he even wrote: "Providence, which refused to abandon us, inspired the people to proclaim me dictator on the 13th." He flattered General Páez in letters telling him that the victory was due to him, and added the significant sentence: "My plan is to base my reform on the solid foundation of religion, and to approximate as far as possible to the old, less complicated, safe, and effective laws."

In another connection, he called religion the charm "I intend to make use of against all passions and demagogy." He ordered the return to canon law and relief for the monasteries, and appointed the Archbishop a Privy Councilor. He renewed the old Catholic missions he had once suppressed, because they taught the people religion and handicrafts, wrote himself to the Pope asking for more priests and made good his early encroachments in other ways. The natives, whom he had released from their tribute to the Spanish government, were now taxed so heavily that they sent a deputation with a plea to be allowed to go back to their regular taxes under the Spaniards. Thousands of Indians, since the state taxed them and put them into the army, had fled to their savannas and relapsed into uncivilized life. Bolivar was not only aware of all this; he recognized in the change the law of irony and his own tragedy.

For in the midst of this fresh bout of activity, he was visited by his old doubts and his old dreams. Napoleon was still his cri-

terion for all his deeds, and he wrote to a confidential friend: "One man and eight years were enough to destroy a native revolution in France. If we require twice that time and more, it is because . . . [*sic*] is so much smaller than the Frenchman and takes ten times as long to achieve much less. Yet I believe he will make something which looks like Colombia's fortune. And yet not entirely, for there is one great difficulty in our way. Do you know what? Have you guessed? I think you have. Colombia is perishing because its leader is not ambitious enough. I am afraid he had too little love for power and only a slight bias toward glory. He abhors the name of ambition more than that of death or tyranny. You may feel that this avowal is too frank, and bombastic into the bargain. But what am I to do? I am like that. I cannot be reserved with my friends."

Even if these remarkable words, written a few days after he had taken over the dictatorship, were addressed to posterity, for that very reason they contain profoundest truth. He seems hardly to notice that he is drawing a jealous comparison between himself and the man who destroyed the revolution, but had not, like Bolivar, created it himself beforehand. And the poetic dictum on the fortunes of Colombia blossoms amid the negatives like a flower in ice. So much wisdom and so much doubt, so little passion in the survey of his own part, could not, in the long run, fail to hamper the man of action. Nobody can be a dandy in youth with impunity, for a dandy is a man who knows neither reverence nor effort, but, as a precocious darling of fortune, contemns everything because nothing is out of his reach. The millionaire of thirty, who had nothing to work for, encountered power too late to be able to desire it, but the youth in the Roman ruins encountered glory just early enough to love it forever.

We can recognize this state of mind again in his forbearance with Santander. If he made much of Páez, there were plenty of reasons in favor of a collaborator who was far away, powerful in his own place, and officially devoted to him. But why did he not now arrest Santander, whose machinations in the Congress might

have been fatal to his work, as the plot of which he had been informed might have been to his life? The public prosecutor had demanded his arrest. "As soon as possible, the demand will be quashed. I have made up my mind in that case to carry out the pronouncement of the court." If Bolivar here made a mistake, he could no longer be excused on the grounds of leniency or the doctrines of Rousseau, even though he raised the question of immunity. These were the weaknesses of an ailing, aging man who carried his skepticism to the point of questioning his own rights.

Bolivar did still more—one is tempted to say still less. He appointed Santander Ambassador to Washington. Santander had gathered together all the malcontents who, having received no office, were accusing Bolivar of corruption. He had prevailed upon the Freemasons, who had declared their member a renegade for his return to the church, to issue a protest against his dictatorship and declare their will to democracy; at the same time he had staged army revolts in various regiments in the country. Even before his departure, everything was prepared for him to return as though from exile at the crucial moment, in the guise of liberator.

The only being in Bolivar's entourage who did right by him, at any rate in the symbolic sense, was Manuela. At a public festival in Bogotá, she had a figure representing Santander burned.

In these last years, she once more lived a great deal, and clearly on more intimate terms than before, with the lonely, sick man. Among the few who remained faithful to him, she was the only one who could understand him. His love affairs had obviously ceased, yet there were frequent clashes between these two proud beings. There is no better proof of the vitality of their love, now more than six years old. He wrote: "Good news! I have received your letters, my good Manuela. They gave me happiness a thousandfold. Each contains its thought and thanks. The first is very tender; it filled me with tenderness. The second was humorous; it entertained and amused me. And the third avenged me

for the undeserved slight. I reply to all with a saying by Héloïse, your example. I am going to Bogotá, not to Venezuela. Most likely we shall see each other again soon. Are you not glad? I love you from my heart." These few lines contain everything that had been and could still be between them, the eternal attraction and repulsion of which the love between two proud and lonely creatures consists, the elegance with which he expresses his feelings. Then again, he writes to her:

"The ice of my years melts under your goodness and grace. Your love revives a life already sere, creates a world in which I can breathe. I cannot live without you, nor of my own free will, deprive myself of Manuela. I have not as much strength as you to bear our parting. Distance makes no difference. I see you from afar. Come quickly! Yours, from my heart."

When he was away, she gave receptions in Bogotá, taught her friends the language of the Incas, and once, when someone wanted to make her a present of jewelry, she refused it, "as she did not like the emeralds." A diplomat describes her at the time "riding a cream-colored horse in Turkish costume, her curls escaping from under a tawny hat with a cockade. Little riding boots with gold spurs." In his letters, Bolivar often called her "my wife," another time, to a friend, "the lovely madcap." Yet once when, in his presence, she was speaking of the beautiful lace made in her country, and raised her skirt a little to show it inside the hem, he lost his temper and they were at loggerheads again.

When danger was afoot, however, she was in her element. In the first months of the dictatorship, there was a masked ball, which Bolivar was enjoying thoroughly. Suddenly, in an ante-room, a mask came up to him and told him that Dr. Gonzales, dancing in the ballroom, had a weapon hidden on him. It all happened so quickly that Bolivar was not sure whether his warner was Manuela, who does not appear to have gone to the ball. His aide-de-camp confirmed the warning. "This is intolerable," Bolivar exclaimed, and left the ball.

IX

FOUR weeks later, the coup planned for the ball came off all the same. A plot was hatched to capture Bolivar; Santander being away, nothing could happen to him if it failed. He may not have aimed at murder, but that could not but follow on capture. What happened on that September night can be reconstructed pretty clearly from the various accounts.

Bolivar was lying asleep in his official residence at Bogotá. Manuela was awake. An officer was on duty outside, but there was no watch. At midnight, Manuela heard steps, the barking of dogs, the thud of a body in the street, followed by the splintering of doors and shouts: "Death to the tyrant! Freedom! Santander!" Bolivar awoke, threw on his clothes, picked up the pistol he always had lying beside him, and made to open the door. She prevented him, and persuaded him to jump out of the low window, since the rioters were after him, not her. When the conspirators entered the bedroom through the broken door, they found themselves confronted with a woman holding a drawn sword. At the same time an officer sleeping in the house appeared, and was surrounded and killed by the men. They closed round the woman. "Where is the General?" the conspirators were shouting. "Over there, in the Council Hall," she replied with perfect composure. After having searched her room they rushed downstairs to reach the other entrance which led to the Council Hall. She was saved and Bolivar had gained time.

Meanwhile he had hidden under a bridge; two or three hours of tense, humiliating waiting. Not until he heard troops marching with the cry: "Long live Bolivar!" did he emerge, take a horse, and ride with them to the Cathedral square. There he heard that a mutiny had broken out. He had the barracks occupied by a troop of cavalry, and all its inmates arrested. Soon O'Leary arrived with the others who had been set free by the loyal cavalymen. The great square was re-echoing to the cry: "Long live the Libertador!" With the jubilant mob crowding

in upon him, he cried: "Do you want to kill me with pure rejoicing, now that I have escaped the daggers?" When he saw Manuela again later, he said to her: "Today you have become the Libertadora of the Libertador." With these names the man who had so often lapsed into emotionalism in his public utterances tried to make light of the emotion of a tragic hour.

That hour proved the strength of Manuela's character. In the moment of danger, she cast aside fear, gathered all her courage together, and not for herself, but for him. As she wrote in her own account of the incident, she remembered having heard somebody say that that particular window was easy to negotiate. She held him back because people were passing below, and only let him go when the lock was already forced, acting throughout with supreme coolness. One of the conspirators who escaped and later became Prime Minister of Peru wrote: "When we had broken open his bedroom door, Bolivar had already fled. A beautiful woman with a sword in her hand came toward us and asked with admirable presence of mind what we wanted."

Bolivar's love stood as little in need of such a rescue as Goethe's. But this act of daring on her part set a fiery seal on their union. She restored to the man disillusioned by his friends the conviction that there was still a friend in the world for him. For he saw that the woman he had loved longest and best was ready to give her life for his.

Bolivar then proceeded to deal with the conspirators. He had fourteen men, including a general, a colonel, and a professor, whose names figured on a secret list, tried by court-martial and shot, and exposed the bodies in public. Moreover, he had the sentence confirmed by the Council of State. Santander, however, who, whether by intention or chance, had not yet left the country, was arrested, charged with complicity in the treason, and sentenced to death. Bolivar commuted this sentence into banishment.

The shock to his feelings was far deeper than when he had had General Piar shot. For in this case the guilty man was a friend whom he had trusted too long, and whom he had still believed in-

capable of such an act even after their breach, only a few months before. He must have recalled that first altercation at the beginning of their acquaintance and of his campaign of liberation fifteen years before, when he had shouted, "Now you must either shoot me or I you." At that time he had added: "It is more likely that I will shoot you." Now that power, justice, and morality had put his adversary into his hands, he flinched, but said: "I have actually been murdered. Their daggers have struck deep into my heart. That is my reward for everything I have done for Colombia and America. Santander is at the bottom of it all. But I will be generous because he was my personal enemy." To O'Leary: "The blood of the guilty weighs upon me. I am devoured by their penalty and my own." Here we can discern the thought for posterity, the sense of honor, and a general grief for mankind as the motives of Bolivar's noblest and greatest mistake.

Or was it weakness? It took long for Bolivar to settle that question. Not that his own conscience troubled him. He was troubled by the conscience of his murderers. The lack of conclusive proof of Santander's complicity hurt him, for his common sense told him that Santander could not be guilty of a crime undertaken solely on his own behalf. Before the sentence he even declared himself determined to pardon all if the court would take up Santander's cause. After the sentence he wrote to General Montilla in his own hand:

"What must have been your feelings on receiving the news of the reprieve of Santander and his accomplices! First my clever friends said we had no proof positive and then that it would be impolitic to execute them. In the end they proved to me that my good name was more precious than our country. I have preserved my reputation, but our country is lost. That grieves me profoundly, but I could not help it. I am in such a state that I am going into the country for a few months to save myself from despair. I am not a saint and have no desire to be a martyr. Nothing but the fate of a few friends keeps me still in chains."

At the same time to his friend Mendez: "I am at odds with myself. This amnesty has left my life hanging in the air while that of

Colombia is lost forever. I have to take the Council's advice, since punishment would have looked like a cruel revenge. I begin to repent the execution of Piar and Padillo and the others who lost their lives for the same reason. People will say, and rightly, that I was never weak except on behalf of these scoundrels who had not served their country as those other famous men had done. That is what makes me desperate."

Months later, the amnesty was still cropping up in his correspondence; Santander, we read, would be the ruin of his country one day, his life was a scandal, and the English government had expressed to his ambassador its skepticism of a country whose President was attacked in his bed. The impression was so deep and lasting that Bolivar gave as his reason for changing the curriculum at the universities the fact that students had had a hand in the plot. Their reading should be supervised, more time should be spent on classics and church history, while the lectures on public law and politics were to be suppressed.

Such were the contradictions, the torments of conscience, which afflicted a great character so violently divided between vigor and leniency, between warfare and philosophy, that he attributed the pardon born of his own finest feelings to friends and councilors of state, as though he himself had not always been the master and defender of his own actions. And while he blamed himself and those about him for a leniency which, he said, would be the ruin of his country, Manuela had, on Bolivar's orders, to conceal certain men who were implicated and whom he nevertheless wished to spare.

X

"I AM resolved to march a week today, in one hand an olive branch, in the other my sword." Once more we hear the voice of the young man who set out, twenty-five years before, with two hundred men, to overthrow the world power of Spain. One last time, the Liberator's sun breaks through the clouds in his shadowed soul.

Yet who was Bolivar's enemy on his last campaign? Save for a few sporadic appearances, the Spaniards had vanished from the continent. He had driven them all out. The riders and troops he had to fight were Americans, like those who had tried to murder him in his bed a few months before this campaign. The man who had liberated not only his fellow countrymen, but the Americans of five countries stretching far away to the silver mountains of Potosí, finally set out to turn his fire on those Americans for the first time in his life. In this last turn of fate, the story of the new Don Quixote followed the course of that great tragedy.

The Peruvians had marched on Ecuador, that is, had invaded the south of Colombia, laying waste villages and towns there, obviously as a revenge for their liberation. In the despairing letters which multiply to volumes in these last years, Bolivar had long since realized and described this reversal of all his desires and predictions, of all his exploits and victories, and the social ruin born of his achievement. When, however, he learned that his own brothers, the Peruvians, had invaded the country in which he had once defeated and expelled the Spaniards, he again felt himself the soldier, made ready to drag his suffering body to the south, again mounted his horse and led his men.

Sucre had hurried on ahead. Having resigned his presidency in Bolivia in disillusionment or even horror, he beat the invader in Quito at the battle of Tarqui and offered him a far too generous capitulation. Even Bolivar had first attempted negotiations. Shortly after, he had intervened with a firm hand in the everlasting risings at Pasto. He wrote: "I am quite mad over these happy events! You have restored my health."

At the same time, however, there was a rebellion in Lima. Soon afterwards, General Córdoba, who had once fought for Bolivar in Peru, had publicly declared that the Liberator was too old; he should be deprived of the supreme command, and at the same time the countries should again be separated; this was all in secret agreement with Páez and Marino in the north. Bolivar sent out his friend O'Leary with troops, who met and beat the general in a battle in which he lost his life. Meanwhile other ele-

ments in Ecuador were urging him to accept the crown at last, to put an end to this time of troubles.

The whole continent was in revolt, and everybody realized that peace could only be restored by firmness and unity in Colombia. For the past year, anarchy had prevailed in Mexico and Guatemala. In Bolivar's own words, there were several revolutions going on at once in Buenos Aires, Bolivia had had three Presidents in five days, and two of them had been murdered, Chile was in the hands of rebels, in La Plata, an insurrectionist had captured and killed the legitimate President and was ruling *libéral à la tartare*.

In the midst of these struggles and tidings of struggle, Bolivar found once more a friend on his last campaign; he was the last, or at any rate the only one, who was both loyal and strong. When he met Marshal Sucre at Quito after a separation of five years, eyewitnesses saw how he threw himself weeping on his neck.

This scene was unique in Bolivar's life and reveals the loneliness of an aging man who, in youth, had been condemned to inward solitude in the crowd of his boon companions and hangers-on. The curse of money, which had cast a pall of tedium and idleness over Bolivar's youth because he had no love for it, had been dispelled by ten years of energy, power, and unprecedented success. In the midst of his comrades and subordinates, the tide of his vitality, too long damned up, had broken into wild and headlong movement, carrying with it the men and women by whom he turned his visions into reality. Now the curse of power came upon him because he had no love for it and therefore did not defend it. It made rivals and murderers of the impatient and cast him back into that solitude which is the only soil on which glory blooms. Thus, at the end, all that were left to him were his mistress and this one friend he loved.

The present, however, and above all the urgency of the situation, fired Bolivar's spirits afresh, and while he realized that "the whole of America is but a framework for bloody struggles, that everybody is demoralized," while in letter after letter he demanded ships in order to conquer Peru from the coast, he wrote

at the same time: "The League of Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia is becoming more necessary every day in order to heal the malady of revolution. We shall save America from shipwreck!" The dangers which had inspired Bolivar all his life once more enhanced his self-confidence, and he went so far as to write: "My enemies are pitiable madmen. Everybody who fights against me goes mad. There seems to be a special Providence over me."

Yet hardly was the enemy overcome, so far as that was possible by force of arms, when Bolivar relapsed into the depths of his misanthropy, which grew into despair. His letters are mostly dispatches written from Ecuador in summer to the ministers in charge, to his aide-de-camp, or even to Páez. In all there is an undertone of fatigue; in none is there a sign of fear for his power. They are epilogues, pure and simple.

"I have been called a tyrant, and the sons of our capital tried to punish me as such. Nobody in New Granada loves me and nearly all the soldiers abhor me. A few hundred decent men regard me as necessary to the Republic—a necessary evil rather than a positive good. Who is there for whose sake I should go on serving? In countries like these, no liberator can arise—only a tyrant. I expressly authorize you to communicate that idea to everybody whom it may concern, adding that I shall never change it. . . . Jesus bore his life for thirty-three years. Mine has lasted forty-six already. I am, unfortunately, not a god, otherwise I would hold out to all eternity. This is my general confession. This wearisome letter is due to a bilious complaint which is devouring me. I look like a man of sixty. . . . Consider the life of a man who has served twenty years, when the greater part of his youth was already past, and who sees little or nothing remain. At the end of such a life of agitations and premature age, burdened with all sorts of sufferings, the four or six years which remain can avail little for his service; to himself they are pure torment." That was written by a dictator who could command any public acclamation of himself.

When his glory was impugned, however, when Benjamin Constant, thousands of miles away in Paris, called him a usurper,

maintaining his power by fire and sword, the article put him in such a state of excitement that he went on vindicating himself for weeks in letter after letter. "A man like Constant cannot be punished by contempt. It all upsets me for it wounds one's pride to be blamed in the eyes of the whole world. . . . It is insufferable to me to have to be exposed to this insulting distrust of all the liberals in the world." In order to refute Constant, he decided to publish all the documentary evidence of the plot, and instructed his ambassador in London to take up his defense. At the same time he wrote to one of his own supporters: "My name already belongs to history; there I shall find justice. In my love for the glory of my country I am no whit inferior to Camillus, nor in my love for freedom to Washington. No one can rob me of the honor of having humiliated the Castilian lion from the Orinoco to Potosí."

This passion for writing or guiding his own history in advance led him to instruct his London ambassador that the story of his flight from Ocumana, twelve years before, which was current everywhere, was pure calumny. He had never taken a step out of cowardice. Calculation had been his guide, and boldness still more. At Ocumana he had been deceived by a traitor, cheated by foreign sailors, and in the end prevented from shooting himself by a man who had come to rescue him with his boat. "This requires precise explanation."

At the same time the politician in Bolivar, seeking a last issue, was as wide awake as the poet thinking of posterity and the Platonic philosopher. He found that issue in the permanence of his own power. Since, however, he was determined not to seize it himself, he laid his plans for the reform proposed in his own constitution, for the Congress which soon had to be prepared, and decided to resign a few months later with Sucre as his successor. By thus giving up his power and position of his own free will, he completely abandoned his lifework. Officially he repeatedly advised his foreign minister to partition Colombia again, since he, as a Venezuelan, could not command the obedience of the Granadans. "If the Congress will not admit this, the

only other possibility is a lifelong government as in Colombia. . . . If you appoint another President, I will even act as executioner; if not, I will never act as God. I want nothing but my freedom, like the soldier and the slave."

Suddenly another solution occurred to him, which cast a beautiful light on Bolivar's sinking figure. One would imagine he was a youth striving to save his ideals, if it were not for the undertone of Mephistophelean laughter when he suddenly writes to his adjutant:

"I have a new idea which you ought to think over and spread abroad. Would it not be better for Colombia to nominate a President, leaving me as simple generalissimo? I would gambol about in the government like a bull in a herd of cows. Then the government could sit in peace and security, since I could set up walls all round it to safeguard order and civil peace. If this suggestion is declined, you will lose either me or Colombia, and in both cases we shall perish. For God's sake, O'Leary, for Colombia's sake and mine, spread this idea about, hammer it into the heads of the legislators. Write an article in favor of this solution!"

This solution, impracticable owing to the circumstances, to Bolivar's past and his character, stands witness to the sleepless nights he spent, in which, like a gambler holding his last cards and last coin, he would turn over every possibility in his mind for the hundredth time. One of them was still the crown, which was again being offered to him by certain circles in Ecuador. In addition to all the other reasons, he was by now far too tired to fall back on it. Even the foreign prince who figured in millions of American dreams at the time seemed to him an impossibility. His reasons are weighty:

"Who is there to become King of Colombia? No prince will come from abroad to take over a country in this state of anarchy as a hereditary monarchy without guarantees. Debts and poverty cannot support princes and courts. Further, the lowest class would fall into destitution, and dread inequality, while the generals and ambitious men in all classes will not be prepared to lose their power. A country dependent on an individual runs a

gambler's risk every day. . . . No European prince will mount these royal gallows." He wrote this and a great deal more against the crown.

Still deeper, however, was the realization that came over him again and again that it had all been in vain. He was shaken by fear. "Europe will unite with Spain, together they will conquer our entire continent, and our old patriots will be unable to resist them." At the end he actually believed that not only the jealousy and disputes among his rivals, but that he himself was at fault, since he had imposed on his people a form of state they did not want. "More than twenty revolutions have attacked my constitutions and my authority. That means that my ideas run counter to the inclinations of the people, my government drives them to such despair that they struggle to free themselves by acts of violence. My friends deceived me or themselves in declaring every hostile act as a maneuver on the part of my personal opponents. At the time I believed them. I can no longer do so."

When, however, toward the end of the year, insurrections broke out in the country, he once more recognized the hand of sedition. When Páez declared in public that these risings were the consequence of Bolivar's decision to have himself crowned, and Venezuela declared him an exile, the cavalier in Bolivar flashed out again, and he exclaimed: "This movement robs me of the honor of relinquishing the government of my own free will. The infamy of my country reminds me of the crimes of Athens. It is that thought which, together with the disaster which I fear, rends my heart. Never have I suffered as I am suffering now. I wish that the moment of despair had come which will put an end to a life which fills me with loathing."

XI

BOLIVAR began the year 1830, at the end of which he was to die, by appearing before the Congress at Bogotá and renouncing forever his power as President and generalissimo, having been dictator for the previous year and a half. Sucre took the chair at the

Congress, lending it a last faint warmth, at least in the presidential seat. For the rest, there was little show of friendship or emotion; most of those present must have listened with curiosity and a certain satisfaction at the physical collapse of the great man when he spoke to them for the last time. His speech has perhaps no parallel in modern history for its inexorable, icy truth, for its cruelly clear presentation of the situation, though it contained not the shadow of an attack on his opponents. It was as cold and glittering as an ice field.

"The teachings of history," he said among other things, "the examples of the old and the new world, the experiences of twenty years of revolution, must shine before you like torches in the darkness. . . . Release me from the curse that is awaiting me if I remain at this post, which no man can occupy without being exposed to the suspicion of despotism. A new leader is an absolute necessity to the Republic. America turns troubled eyes on me, and there are even voices in Europe saying that I would damage the cause of freedom in remaining. The Republic will be happy if you accept my resignation and place at its head a citizen beloved of the people. It cannot but perish if you force me to continue as its leader. Save the Republic, save my honor, which is one with that of Colombia! From today on I am a citizen and nothing more, armed to defend my fatherland and to exact obedience to its government. My public activity is over forever. To you, gentlemen of the legislature, I return my supreme power, which was forced upon me by the will of the people."

With supreme skill, he suppresses every word of reproach, yet all the anger, the profound disappointment, of the first man in the Republic are proclaimed between the words for all the world to hear. With supreme manliness, he places upon the people the responsibility for his election, for his resignation, and for his replacement by a man it loves. With supreme chivalry, the officer alludes to his sword, which he will not sheathe, even as a mere citizen. The rhetorical flourishes with which Bolivar was wont to overload his state speeches, and which today jar on non-Spanish ears, have vanished. The facile blessings of a departing minister

have no place here; the whole is cold and true. Even in his appeal to the people, which proclaims peace in the country and the popularity of the ministers, the voice of his heart only breaks out at the end. "Fellow citizens! Listen to the last word of my political career. In the name of Colombia, I conjure you to remain united, so that you may not become the murderers of your country and yourselves."

In the three months Bolivar still remained at Bogotá, the last supports of Colombia collapsed. The boycott first pronounced by Valencia was taken up by other parts of Venezuela. The Venezuelan Congress went so far as to declare that it could not transact business with Bogotá as long as General Bolivar remained in the country. Thus the greatest son of that country was, like Themistocles, banished at the last from his own homeland and became an interloper in the capital of his crumbling state. From Ecuador alone there came a warmhearted voice, inviting him to take up his residence there. Yet at the same time that territory formally seceded and created out of Quito and Guayaquil the province of Ecuador as it exists today.

Nevertheless, there was a movement in Bogotá to retain Bolivar. He even seems to have had some hope of remaining. For in private, he declared the major part of the people, and the best part, to be on his side, complained of the intrigues, and wrote as late as April that he was undecided, but inclined to leave the revolution at this point, since he would otherwise forfeit his good name irretrievably.

Bolivar now saw that there was nothing left for him to do but to leave his country forever; he was merely uncertain whether he should first go to the Antilles, where he had spent three periods of exile, or direct to Europe. When he evacuated the palace for his successor, Mosquera, who had been appointed for want of a better man, thousands followed him for miles. He was accompanied by speeches of thanks and farewell, yet by the feeling of relief which always arises at the departure of superior statesmen after long periods of power. From Cartagena, where he intended to embark, a fresh offer of the presidency was made to him.

Yet there was darkness in his soul, for he realized the tragic outcome. "I am resolved," he wrote from the capital before his departure, "to die an exile in want and sorrow. O, my friend, my grief is boundless, for calumny is strangling me as the serpent strangled Laocoön. . . . A few wretches among the 'coronation men' thought they could destroy me to save themselves. But I shall maintain my dignity, honor, and renown in the teeth of their schemes." To his ambassador in London he wrote: "You are a poet and will understand this image. A ship buffeted by wind and waves, without rudder, sails, or masts. What is the pilot to do? He will seek another ship to tow her into harbor. I am that almighty pilot." When he left, he said to a friend who had been present at his first entry into Caracas: "Do you remember? And today we are going away, beaten. Everything in this world is transitory."

The citizen Bolivar now driving in a carriage to the coast to seek safety on board ship bore no resemblance to the citizen Bolivar who had at that time galloped to the coast to seek safety on board ship. Nearly twenty years had elapsed between his first banishment and his last. Two others lay between, but even they were a dozen years old. It was not that he had aged by twenty years, or perhaps by forty, which was the astonishing thing. The fact that he had come to know men, victory, and sorrow had naturally changed his outlook.

That times had changed, however, was brought cruelly home to him by material necessity. The heir to wealth, the millionaire who had always despised money, the army commander and President who had never needed it, now stood suddenly a broken being, a poor man in the world, and took his destiny all the more grievously to heart because, at forty-seven, he was financially without support for the first time in his life. In the last two years, when he had seen the crisis coming, he had written more than a hundred letters to England about the sale of his mines.

Even at that time, the great gentleman with the habit of largess had suddenly found himself hampered by poverty, and when he gave surety for a comrade and general, he coined the poetic

phrases: "I wish I were rich so that I might shower gifts on every Colombian. But as things are, I have nothing but a heart to love them and a sword to defend them with."

Now, however, these financial matters made him speak with a violence he would never have wasted on money, whether as an heir to wealth, as an aristocrat, or as a general. The impulses of the two halves of his life united in one tragic coil at its end, for his poverty was directly due to his exploits, to which, on the other hand, he owed his enemies. He now received only part of a large pension from the state which he had always refused. He knew, however, that his enemies would deprive him of everything after his departure, and hence showed real passion in his attempt to save a fraction of his patrimony and take it with him into exile.

"They tell me," he had written in a fury some time before, "that there are in Venezuela no laws to protect the property of such a man. That means that I am a blackguard, they are robbing me of my grandparents' heritage, they are dishonoring me. Am I right or not in trying at last to get out of this infamous life of politics. It is enough. . . . Abandon my defense! Let my enemy and my judge take my property. I know those accursed Goths. Do nothing more. I shall die as I was born, naked. They will give me something to eat when I have nothing left."

After this mighty outburst—it might have been uttered by Timon—reason returned. He could not live as a beggar in England, he wrote to his ambassador, if only because people there knew he had been rich. Hence everything depended on the sale of his copper mines. The lack of documentary evidence of his brother's death now stood him in good stead, for as it was not certain that they belonged to him, Páez could not sequester them.

"I myself need little or nothing, since I am used to a soldier's life. But as I am the first official of three republics, the honor of my country and my character oblige me to keep up a decent appearance. Since I renounced my power, and thereby prevented a civil war, I can demand from the head of the Venezuelan state the protection accorded to the meanest citizen. I have done Venezuela great service; its sons are deeply in my debt, and the head

of the government still more so. It would be a crying scandal to persecute me now as an enemy of the people. I do not believe they will do so. That is why I ask you to lay all this before General Páez." He would not, he wrote, go to Europe before his affairs were in order. "Only despair makes me resolve to see myself a renegade, persecuted and robbed by the very men to whom I have devoted twenty years of dangers."

After the lapse of a generation, his ancestral copper mines reappeared, his brother's aniline works, farms, herds, coffee and banana plantations. And behind them rose the shades of his ancestors, raising warning fingers. Why had he not remained loyal? Why had he set his heart on becoming the Libertador? With their dignity and their slaves they had led the spacious lives of gentlemen. His sisters and all his relatives could have enjoyed their portion if it had not been for this ambitious heir, who set out to astound the world and conquer the Spaniards.

Thus the lines of life crossed, and the ruined soldier and founder of states, as he approached the sea, let his thoughts wander now and then across to the coast of France, to the nights of the Palais Royal, to the rides in the Bois de Boulogne, to Humboldt, Robinson, and Napoleon and the hat which now bore his name.

XII

HIS two friends, the man and the woman, remained faithful to him, though they were not with him. Manuela, a true Spaniard, found her full strength in vengeance and probably rejoiced in the semiprivate position which left her every freedom. For the moment she did not join him; after his departure from Bogotá he did not see her again. Shortly afterwards, at a firework display in the capital, a group entitled "Despotism and Tyranny" was shown caricaturing herself and Bolivar. She rushed on the workmen and attempted to shoot them. She was just prevented in time, but articles against her appeared in the papers. Not long afterwards, when there was a new rising in Venezuela demanding

Bolívar's banishment from America, she went there and wrote and spoke in public against Páez, who was almighty in the country. At that time she was still only in her early thirties, in her full bloom, and exposed to the more violent abuse by jealous men, having no wedding ring to shield her.

Páez, who was officially praising Bolívar's services to the country, now carried on the war of Venezuela against General Bolívar on his own ground, still wearing the sword of Bolívar, for whom he had sworn to die. Venezuela would rather submit to the Spaniards than to Bolívar! But Bolívar would not and could not continue the struggle. On the contrary, his last official act was the reprieve of the men condemned for the attempt on his life. Santander was one of them. He now regarded negotiations with Páez as beneath him, and sent Sucre to the frontier, whence the party returned without result. Thus at the end the friend and the mistress were the last to work together for Bolívar in his country.

Bolívar sent for neither. It is uncertain whether he wished to take Manuela to Europe with him. Sucre went to Ecuador, where he too renounced forever the power his soul abhorred. He wished to live in peace with his wife and child. The words the friends exchanged at parting showed how certain they were that they would never meet again. Yet they could not discern the tragedy immediately ahead; like officers who, on the morning of battle, know that the enemy is before them in the dense fog, but cannot ascertain his position. Their two last letters belong to the history of great friendships and fully reveal how different their inward attitudes were.

Sucre wrote: "My heart is oppressed. I do not know what to say to you. Words cannot express my feelings. You know that; you know my plight and you know that my most tender feelings for you were not born of your power, but of your friendship. I shall always bear in my heart something of the fate that unites us, and flatter myself that you will continue to keep your esteem for me. I shall always endeavor to win it afresh. Farewell, my General. Receive as a pledge of friendship the tears I am shed-

ding at this moment. Be happy wherever you are and count on the service and the gratitude of your most true and passionate friend, Sucre."

Bolivar replied: "Your beautiful, undated letter of farewell filled me with tenderness, and if you found it hard to write to me, what am I to do, seeing that I am bidding farewell, not only to a friend but to my country? Forgive my want of words, and accept my heartfelt wishes for your future happiness. I shall never forget you, no more than the glory-loving Pichincha can forget Ayacucho. My sincere wishes to your wife. I assure you that nothing is more sincere than the love with which I repeat I remain, my dear friend, Your Bolivar."

We can only explain Bolivar's far cooler, almost listless tone by the intolerable strain under which he was still laboring at this time, six months before his death, for he wrote to Mosquera immediately afterwards in connection with a false rumor.

"I have just learned with some surprise that you have accepted the presidency. I am glad for the country's sake, I shall always be sorry for yours. You may have been told that I was against your nomination. Do not believe it! Do not believe it! It is a lie! And there is just as little truth in the rumor that I had something to do with the rising of the troops. I have all the proofs of my innocence in my hands. I have preached order and unity and even tried to give an example. I am the man you have known since 1814, and at all times an upright and loyal friend to my President, as I was to the others when I was at the head of state. I have not yet left because I have not yet received my passport. As soon as it comes I shall leave."

These curious protestations of his "innocence," which appear at the time in several letters, disclose something of the mental agony which Bolivar suffered in his decline. His whole life is a proof that it was not a case of qualms of conscience. What he was struggling for was his glory, his good name, which he had striven to set up as a monument, and which he now saw endangered. His lack of power showed him more clearly than his lack of love for power how far his glory was in peril.

A few weeks after this letter he received the news of Sucre's murder. On his way to Ecuador he had been shot from ambush in a lonely part of the mountains. He was not yet forty. His groom buried him hurriedly next day where he had fallen. The assassins had been hired by Bolivar's own enemies who looked upon Sucre as his hated successor.

Sucre was the finest figure Venezuela ever produced.

The news shattered Bolivar. In a kind of clairvoyance, he had, at the end, given his friend a last warning against his country, though fearing that he himself might be accused of a senseless jealousy. Now he had been cruelly proved right. He knew that he himself had been the intended victim of the assassination, which had been frustrated two years before only by the courage of his mistress. His friend died; his mistress had saved him.

Thus he wrote to another friend that he "could not possibly breathe in a country which murders the noblest soldiers who have liberated America. Our enemies either die a natural death or end on the gallows as convicted criminals. But the loyal, the heroes, are sacrificed to the vengeance of the demagogues. What will happen to them all, to Montilla, and still more to Urdaneta? I am afraid for all who have served the country and are capable of restoring it. Sucre, utterly blameless, could not escape the vengeance of the monsters. They have robbed the country of my successor." And after a prolonged execration of those men, he concludes, "Defend yourself as if you were a beautiful girl."

In the midst of this despair over his country, he was nevertheless held fast in it as if by magic powers. It may have been because Colombia was not his country by birth but by spirit. He constantly sought pretexts for not carrying out his old decision to leave. Once he was waiting for his passport, another time, money; or again, the next ship was full of women leaving the country and he could not crowd them out. The slowness of his approach to the coast was a concession to his ailing body, but still more a consequence of the fevered state of his mind. As the distance between him and his capital grew, he listened intensely for the voice which would recall him. To a nephew in Paris he sent a detailed

list of all the men in the country who were on his side. "Thus it is that a revolution against the government is expected daily. They will not let me go, and so I do not know what to do when it actually breaks out. Meanwhile the blackguards in Venezuela have been despicable enough to outlaw me, although six days before the motion was rejected by 30 votes to 7." At the same time, in answer to a letter from the long-forgotten Fanny, he sent her his portrait, as if to renew the link with Paris, with the scenes of his youth, and the haven of his age.

Immediately afterwards, in September, 1830, the expected rising broke out in Bogotá, the President fled, the hated ministers fled, and Bolivar's name rang again above the fighting in the streets. Even more, without his knowledge the insurgents proclaimed him President. A few days later he received the news. He had reached the sea, and was in Cartagena, where he had set out on his career. What was Bolivar to do?

His end was not far off, and he had a presentiment of it. He had solemnly resigned out of disgust and anxiety. Across the sea, even if it were only on the islands, there awaited him the rest he had so long craved. He had struggled on for two more years, and all in vain. He had turned the whole thing over in his mind again and again, both from the practical and philosophical standpoints, and had given it up. Now, with the voice of his capital again crying his name, with messengers arriving to invite him to return and resume the power, it was like the old military march which even a jaded horse will turn and follow, even though it can no longer gallop.

But Bolivar was a thinker and a great moralist. In his last struggle, Don Quixote cannot betray the ideals for the sake of which he rode forth on his adventures, and even he, who had fathomed their vanity, was still, at the last moment, to raise the flag whose folds he had once seen waving in the winds of freedom.

When, in the general confusion, the leadership of the country was entrusted to his friend and old comrade Urdaneta, Bolivar flashed out: "Religion and the liberators are victorious! The final triumph will stand revealed. They want to draw me back

into affairs, but I refuse, and that has checked all progress till now." One can hear him holding himself back by main force. Every instinct in him united to keep him in the country, the more so as he received news at the same time from his native city depriving him of his estates, and he saw before him "nothing but misery, age, and beggary, things to which I was never used."

Yet one last time the old ideals rang out. He sent O'Leary to Bogotá to insist on the unconstitutional character of it all, and wrote the fine sentence: "Between me and the presidency there stands a wall of brass—the law!" And he went on: "The source of law is the free will of the people, not the violence of mutiny, nor even the votes of friends. If there is any useful or seasonable service I can render to the country, I will render it at once. It could only consist in acting as mediator between the parties. But before I come, both sides must call me." And since his hesitation was called weak and cowardly, he wrote to Mendez: "Now those men are trying to rob me of my personal honor. You know very well that I am the only man of energy in the country. And I am to sacrifice my good name as a decent citizen merely to bring four refugees back home? A pretty pass! I shall not do so. I shall never govern again, I swear it, so that my friends can never again call me an ingrate and my enemies a coward."

Thus for a few weeks Bolivar waited, partly for his ship and partly for the call from his people. For the old revolutionary in him was quite dead. What he had created in youth was the revolution against the foreign conqueror; his goal was liberty. But when he had driven the Spaniard from the country, Bolivar became the servant of order, and in three great crises repudiated the violence of his beginnings. This great theme, which once more raised Bolivar's spirit high above the sword, was at the end modified by the multiplicity of motives in his life, for he was again confronted with the question of whether he was to rule or to take up arms. The latter was easier and he began his preparations; only a few more orders and the fight could begin. The former he refused obstinately, separating law from force with the utmost clarity. Above both he saw glory and honor illuminating

this darkness like immortal stars, but beneath there lived his shattered body, which rebelled. His letters in September and October are a perfect reflection of this state of mind, of the calvary of a man in the thick of the conflict between his sublime contradictions.

"In this anarchy, it is incumbent on me, as on all citizens and soldiers, to do what I can to save the country. I shall offer my services as a soldier. With that I shall restore order, support the government, and render no small service till the elections can proceed in due form. We must all obey General Urdaneta. I shall give an example of that obedience. Within a fortnight I shall be at Ocaña, ready to march wherever it is necessary. It is, believe me, a great sacrifice, for I am very tired. I am marching at the head of 2000 men."

On the other hand, he steadfastly refused to resume the business of government and wrote at the same time to Urdaneta: "Mosquera can establish himself tomorrow in another part of the country as the legitimate President. Then he will be legitimate and I the usurper. I cannot put myself into such a position. We must wait for the new elections. Then either I or another will be legitimate. Until the country has been purged again by force of arms, it cannot very well be governed. I offer my services in this most dangerous domain. Then nobody will be able to call me an egoist. I am marching on the capital; that might look as if I wished to govern. If I should set foot in Bogotá, I still do not know what I shall do. I am committed on all hands, to the church, the army, the people. I can very well lose my head there, my friend, and I take no responsibility for myself. I regard it as an absolute necessity to send a first-class officer into the Valley of Cauca. [A list of names follows.] I repeat that we at Cúcuta need money. We are very cheerful, though not as much as people down there imagine, for it is the misfortune of men that they are never content."

To Mendez at the same time: "If I am constitutionally elected by the majority I shall accept, provided that my election is popular. Only a miraculous constellation of favorable circumstances

can change my mind. You will say that a man must live. I, for my part, say that I must live. I may be mistaken, but I believe that I am as good as anybody else, and must defend my honor, my peace, and my life. I am old, ill, disappointed, slandered, and ill-paid. . . . I have never approved revolution, and in the end I even regretted our revolution against Spain. I am an outlaw, and have no country to which to sacrifice myself."

These are the shrillest notes Bolivar ever uttered, but when he declares that, once he is master of the capital again, he will take no responsibility for himself, they sound as if they came from a wounded young heart and not from an old one. He has not yet given himself up, indeed he has found himself again—as a soldier.

In October, still waiting at Cartagena on the coast, he sent a plan of operations to Urdaneta, who was to command where certain battalions were to be sent. At the same time, however, he wrote: "If I treat one complaint, another returns. Heat is bad for my liver, damp gives me rheumatism. It is impossible to walk without terrible pain, let alone going upstairs. I have no doctor and the climate is bad for me. I should like to go to sea. Perhaps seasickness will do me good. You will understand that I cannot keep my word. It is impossible for me to resume power. How is a man to help a people when he cannot hold himself upright? Remain President in my place or nominate a capable man. I hope to go to Santa Marta next week. The waters might do me good. But I do not know. They may be injurious. I have no doctor. Farewell, my dear General. I cannot dictate any longer."

While from time to time he gave himself up for lost and addressed his letters "from a deathbed, that is, a place of prophecy," he was still alive to any sign of popular favor and wrote that Cartagena had elected him President by twenty-four votes. He learned that Ecuador had conferred on him the title of Father of the Fatherland, and Bolivia had even proposed him as ambassador to the Vatican. When he heard that he had again been declared an outlaw, he wrote to an old friend: "I promise not to accept the presidency, but to live and die a common citizen. That

is the counsel of my dreary pillow. . . . But if my health improves and the time comes, and if there are troops with which to defend the country, I shall come to Cúcuta. Have good and well-trained troops ready. Otherwise I shall do nothing."

Immediately afterwards: "I urgently need a doctor if I am not to leave this world prematurely, which would not cost me much. For I remained in the country quite against my will, and am not sure if it would be very painful to me to quit it by death." In September, he could not go to Santa Marta because the place was in revolt. While believing his death at hand, he gave military advice in very long letters. This horrible struggle with sickness, poverty, and banishment kept him, by a concatenation of circumstances, where he did not want to be and away from the place to which he looked for healing. At the same time his old desires and duties reawakened in him the habit of command, and the great, unfaded ideals still guided, though they harassed him. The many letters which were his refuge in his solitude read like the final pages of a diary and reveal the last quivers of a mortally wounded heart. Owing to the lack of other documents, this self-analysis of a character struggling with itself to the very end takes on still more the character of a soliloquy. Suddenly the cruel truth about these letters would flash across his mind, and he wrote to their chief recipient, Urdaneta:

"Moods and sufferings have implanted in me more gloomy thoughts than expressions of courtesy. Therefore give all my letters of this last period to the colonel . . . for in the revolution they might produce a bad effect on my enemies, although in all of them I have a thousand times repudiated power and declared I should have no hand in the rising." The colonel was to send the letters to him. "Tear up all the letters I now write to you. They are only written to let you know what I think."

While preoccupied with his political situation, his glory, and his ailing body, accompanied only by one or two officers, dictating letter after letter on military subjects between sudden fainting fits, he wrote to a neighbor: "I have sent for some

food. We have neither bread nor wine—nothing but what the earth brings forth. I am sending for dry . . . and ale. You say there is not much, but I only need a bottle or two. You could ask a friend. That is why I am taking the liberty of asking you, if it cannot be found in the town.” On the same day, in testamentary style, to a general: “In twenty years of government, I have arrived at some few certainties. (1) America is ungovernable for us. (2) To serve a revolution is to plow the sea. (3) The only thing a man can do in America is to emigrate. (4) This country is sure to fall into the hands of an unchained mob, to relapse into little tyrannies of all colors and races. (5) Devoured by all crimes and destroyed by chaos, we shall be reconquered by Europe. (6) If any part of the world could return to primeval chaos, that would be the latter end of America.”

From Ecuador there came a messenger with a letter from Sucre's widow returning the sword Bolivar had once given him. He refused it, but his thoughts turned back to the murdered man, and the old aristocrat in him blazed out. “*Carthago est delenda*, said old Cato. We must avenge Sucre! We must avenge Colombia which possessed Sucre, the world which admired him, the glory of the army and the holiness of humanity, which has been outraged in the most innocent of men!”

These were the last utterances of a poetic mind, of a nobleman and an officer, yet at the same time they are the phantom combats of a Don Quixote in his physical and political impotence. He knew it, and the only warmth his dying breath could yield was reconciliation. “Do not believe,” he wrote at the end of two printed pages of military orders to Montilla, “that I am a visionary, that my predictions are the ravings of a sick man. They are the final calculations of a clear understanding. Unless God comes, nothing can now avert the catastrophe.”

Then a quarrel broke out between the two generals who were leading the good cause. With his last authority he threw himself between them. “I am not going to have another quarrel like that between Páez and Santander, which was, in the end, the

ruin of us all. Better a good settlement than a thousand lawsuits won!" It is a royal tone, though he was lying powerless, distant, and unasked. At the same time he cordially thanked his neighbor, who had offered him a house, for wine and beer. His doctor decided to get him on board ship. He longed only for Jamaica, for the blue mountains in whose shadow he had sketched his plan of liberation as a fugitive. That is where he wished to recover or to die. "The climate in Jamaica is excellent. Please send me a passport. But what kind of figure shall I cut when I arrive? I shall provoke the pity of my enemies, and that is the most painful of all feelings."

On December 1 he at last reached Santa Marta, hoping to go on board from there. None of his friends was with him. By the irony of fate, the house in which he was to die had been lent to him by a Spaniard, de Mier. It was a Spaniard, too, who had procured him a passport in the supreme crisis of his life. Were the spirits of his ancestors returning with whispered reminders of the blood that flowed pure in his veins, in spite of his name of Creole? Not even the doctor was a Colombian, but he was at least a Frenchman, and so inspired confidence in the old disciple of France.

There is a little, bare white house on the shore where the sick man was carried to seek cooling breezes, "without hope of recovery, except in a cooler country." Where was Manuela? He had left her behind at Bogotá, clearly against her will. Persecuted by the new government, she had suddenly turned back on her way into exile when she read attacks in the papers. "They can do what they like to me," she wrote in answer, "they can kill me, but no one shall shake my love and gratitude to General Bolivar." His last letter, written in his last months, runs: "*Mi amor*, I am glad to say that I am better. I only suffer from your grief and mine over our parting. I love you dearly, my beloved, but I shall love you still more if you keep a yet firmer hold on yourself. Be careful what you do, so that you may not injure us both and ruin yourself. I am ever your most faithful lover."

He followed with satisfaction the news of the civil war, which was favorable to his friends. What he had most at heart was the settlement of the dispute between the two generals. In long letters he gave Urdaneta advice which was tantamount to commands; new regulations for the pay of certain officers, promotion of another officer, one general to remain prefect, another to be promoted commandant. In a general way he felt better and hoped to recover. At the same time to a minister: "If my illness means the end, we should be clear about our situation. My behavior was dictated by reason. But those men insisted on seeing things otherwise. My sufferings have relaxed a little. That was enough for me to change my mind. For I thought I would get better in Jamaica, but an improvement set in here yesterday. My friendship for you is purer than the sunlight."

His last letter, written six days before his death, was addressed to Urdaneta's rival: "In the last moments of my life, I am writing to you to beg you, as the sole proof of your esteem, to be reconciled to General Urdaneta in good faith, and to agree to support the government. My heart tells me, my dear General, that you will not refuse me this last homage of friendship and duty. Only if you overcome your feelings will our friends be able to save themselves and Colombia from the horrors of anarchy. The bearer of this letter, who is your friend, will tell you of my desire for union and order. Receive, my dear General, the last farewell and the heart of your friend—Bolívar."

Never has a statesman ended his life so nobly as Bolívar in this letter. The supreme courage of the first six words is so magnificently counterbalanced by its imploring tone and the plea it contains that this last cry of a man of action is worthy of being placed beside the last words of the Athenian sage.

Suddenly Bolívar asked his French doctor: "What do you really want in this country?" "Freedom." "Have you found it?" "Yes, General, I have." "Then you are more fortunate than I. I never met it. But go back to your beautiful France, where the glorious tricolor is flying again. A man cannot live here. Here there are nothing but blackguards! Would you like to go back?"

"Passionately." "Then cure me, Doctor, and we will go together." To a general: "Sit farther off—still farther—still farther. Why? You have a devilish stink of tobacco about you. But I remember that you did not abhor smoking, like Doña Manuela. Those were better times."

At night he grew delirious. "Joseph! Pack—we're going. Those fellows are driving us away. Away, my men! My luggage to the frigate." In these days Bolivar made a will in his relatives' favor, full of ecclesiastical turns of speech. He asked that he be buried in his native city, for he already foresaw his rehabilitation. At the end, the chaplain of the little town appeared, bringing extreme unction to the disciple of Voltaire, as though nothing had happened since his confirmation in the cold palace of his fathers. So far Bolivar in dying followed the traditions of his race.

The manifesto to his people, however, which he dictated at the time, has none of the habitual humility about it. It is in a manly, combative, aggressive tone.

"Colombians! I have given my strength to establish freedom where once tyrants ruled. I have worked unselfishly, sacrificed my patrimony and my peace. When I saw that you suspected my selflessness, I went away. My enemies have abused your credulity and trampled under foot what was to me most sacred—my good name and my love of freedom. I have fallen victim to my persecutors, who have pursued me to the brink of the grave. I forgive them. On the point of leaving you, the love I bear you moves me to reveal my last wishes. I seek no glory save the union of Colombia. Let all unite in this great task—the people by obedience toward the present government for the suppression of anarchy, the priests by the prayers they raise to heaven, the soldiers by their defense of the principles of the state. Colombians! My last wishes are for the happiness of my country. If my death helps to heal dissension and restore union, I shall go in peace to my grave. Simon Bolivar."

A vigorous farewell. No palliation, whether of his fate or of his fears, and only one first sentence in allusion to the cru-

cial exploit to which he owed his name. When he had finished, taking up the last word, he said: "To my grave. Yes. That is what my countrymen have brought me to. Well, I forgive them. If, with God's help, I could only take with me the assurance that they will remain united!"

On that question, Bolivar died. A few days before, he had summed up his life in the monumental sentence: "There have been three great fools in history: Jesus, Don Quixote, and I."

To bury the man who was born with five millions and died with five republics, a clean shirt had to be borrowed from a neighbor. Another townsman borrowed the money for the funeral.

A few months later, Colombia fell apart forever. But the Spaniards never returned. Páez, the faithless, became President of Venezuela, Santander, the would-be assassin, President of Colombia, which today comprises New Granada. Bolivar's tomb in Caracas has become a center of national reverence. Beside him there stands the coffin of the other liberator, Miranda. It is empty.

Manuela survived her lover for a generation. Banished to Jamaica, and later refused entrance to her own country of Ecuador by its President, she spent the last fifteen years of her life in a little town in Peru. When in the end her English husband committed suicide, leaving her his sole heiress, she refused the legacy and earned her living as before, "by making sweets, fruit drinks, and medicines." Toward the end of her life, Rodriguez-Robinson, over eighty, a failure and destitute, arrived at the little port where she was living. The conversation between these two beings, twenty years after the death of the man they loved above all others, cast a glory on his age and on hers.

In the end she sat paralyzed in her invalid chair "with the majesty of a queen on her throne," as a visitor wrote. Garibaldi came to kiss her hand. She educated a number of poor but clever boys and called them all Simon. She was interred in a common grave, so that her ashes vanished like those of Miranda,

of Sucre, and of Rodriguez. A great tragedy shrouds the memory of these four beings whom death engulfed entirely.

Bolivar's life, however, had become an example. Since he loved glory above all things, fate granted him a glimpse of it. A few days before he died, his doctor read him from the new French newspapers a song which the Parisians had sung as they stormed the Hôtel de Ville in the July Revolution. It contained these lines:

*America, to cheer us,
Looks on us from afar.
Her fire ring of republics
Was lit by Bolivar.*

Then the Liberator knew that his spirit had returned to the city which had given the jaded millionaire his great example. In that song, the dying man heard the wingbeats of the two immortal things for which he had struggled his life long—freedom and glory.

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