

REVIEW ARTICLE

The Venezuelan Sesquicentennial Publications,  
Part II

JANE DE GRUMMOND\*

*Gazeta de Caracas*. Vol. I: 1808-1810. Introduction by MARIANO PICÓN SALAS. Caracas, 1960. Academia Nacional de la Historia. Sesquicentenario de la Independencia. No. XXI. Facsimile. Nos. 1-131.

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*Gazeta de Caracas*. Vol. II: 1811-1812. Introduction by PEDRO GRASES. Caracas, 1960. Academia Nacional de la Historia. Sesquicentenario de la Independencia. No. XXII. Facsimile. Nos. 13-?. Index for Vols. I and II.

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*Memoriales sobre la independencia de Venezuela*. By NARCISO COLL Y PRAT. Introduction by MANUEL PÉREZ VILA. Caracas, 1960. Academia Nacional de la Historia. Sesquicentenario de la Independencia. No. XXIII. Pp. 403.

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*Proceso político*. By FRANCISCO ISNARDI. Caracas, 1960. Academia Nacional de la Historia. Sesquicentenario de la Independencia. No. XXIV. Index. Pp. 383.

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*Mercurio Venezolano*. 1811. Introduction by COMISIÓN EDITORA. Caracas, 1960. Academia Nacional de la Historia. Sesquicentenario de la Independencia. No. XXV. Facsimile in pp. 203. Index.

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*Historia de Venezuela*. 2 Vols. By FELICIANO MONTENEGRO Y COLÓN. Introduction by ALFREDO BOULTON. Caracas, 1960. Academia Nacional de la Historia. Sesquicentenario de la Independencia. Nos. 26, 27. Pp. 421, 377.

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*Bosquejo histórico de la revolución de Venezuela*. By JOSÉ FÉLIX BLANCO. Introduction by LINO IRIBARREN-CELIS. Caracas, 1960.

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Academia Nacional de la Historia. Sesquicentenario de la Independencia. No. XXVIII. Pp. 277.

*Bosquejo de la historia de Venezuela.* 2 vols. By JOSÉ DE AUSTRIA. Introduction by HÉCTOR GARCÍA CHUECOS. Caracas, 1960. Academia Nacional de la Historia. Sesquicentenario de la Independencia. Nos. XXIX, 30. Pp. 382, 508.

*Causas de infidencia.* 2 vols. By COMISIÓN EDITORA. Introduction by MARIO BRICEÑO PEROZO. Caracas, 1960. Academia Nacional de la Historia. Sesquicentenario de la Independencia. Nos. XXXI, XXXII. Pp. 696. 638.

*La iglesia y su doctrina en la independencia de América.* By GUILLERMO FIGUERA. Caracas, 1960. Academia Nacional de la Historia. Sesquicentenario de la Independencia. No. XXIII. Bibliography. Pp. 550.

IN AN AGE "when God proposed and England disposed," the British governor of Trinidad permitted two subjects to transport their printing press to Caracas and start Venezuela's first newspaper. Mariano Picón Salas, in the prologue to the reproduction of *Gazeta de Caracas 1808-1810* (volume XXI) reminds us that Baron Alexandre von Humboldt in the early 1800's had found far greater political curiosity in Caracas than in any other American community; so that, even though Matthew Gallagher and James Lamb thought they had founded a discrete British enterprise, it was bound to become an organ through which the *conciencia venezolana* would find expression. During the first year of its existence it did seem to be a foreign paper that happened to be edited in Caracas. It was filled with letters from Spain, extracts from Spanish and English gazettes, and accounts of the Napoleonic wars in Europe. The editors, in political expression, went no farther than to execrate Napoleon and reiterate their loyalty to the Mother Country.

In the October 27, 1809, issue appeared a prospectus of Andrés Bello's *Guide for Strangers* which began, "The province of Venezuela should be elevated to the rank in America for which nature has destined it. . . ." From this time on revolutionary notices and theories appeared. What seemed to be a harmless account of the way the viceroy had suppressed the August, 1809, uprising in Quito

turned out to be a catalyst in that it presented an example, a course of procedure, that might be successful in another American colony.

The meticulous researcher, Pedro Grases, in his introduction to *Gazeta de Caracas 1811-1812* (volume XXII) begins by giving us Juan Vicente González' brief but exact definition of what the *Gazeta* was during its existence of almost fourteen years: "Nadie habría adivinado en su cuna su futuro destino de tempestades y borrascas."

In its columns an ideology found expression that transformed the political life of a continent. Under successive changes of government in Caracas, letters which were published to soothe had the opposite effect. They agitated violent and open conflict between two irreconcilable positions that did not end until the new nation was victorious. When in 1821 the military issue was determined on the field of battle at Carabobo, the *Gazeta* was exhausted and passed on the torch to new periodicals. It had fulfilled its mission.

Today its pages are the most precious source of information for the heroic period of emancipation. The present volumes, XXI and XXII, begin with the first issue when Venezuela was still a colony, and end with the collapse of the First Republic. The *Academia Nacional de la Historia* hopes soon to publish the numbers in the rest of its collection. This would illuminate our understanding of successive periods in Venezuela's national history. From October of 1812 until the first months of 1813, the *Gazeta* was royalist; from August of 1813 until June of 1814, it was an organ of Bolívar's government; after that it was a royalist vehicle until the Battle of Carabobo in June, 1821, except for a few numbers published by General José Francisco Bermúdez during his brief occupation of Caracas in May, 1821; and in its final numbers it was a patriot periodical for the Republic of Colombia. The *Gazeta de Caracas* began October 24, 1808, and ended January 3, 1822.

While the *Gazeta* was the first periodical in Venezuela, there soon were many others. In Caracas alone four others appeared during the twenty-seven months of the First Republic (two periods: until the Declaration of Independence the government was known as the *Junta Suprema Conservadora de los Derechos de Fernando VII*, and after the Declaration as *Gobierno de Venezuela Independiente*). These periodicals were in chronological order: *Seminario de Caracas*, 30 numbers, November 4, 1810—July 21, 1811, editors Miguel José Sanz and José Domingo Díaz (volume IX in this series, with an excellent *estudio preliminar* by Pedro José Muñoz); *El Patriota de Venezuela*, 7 numbers, January (?), 1810—January 18, 1812, editors Vicente

Salías and Antonio Muñoz Tébar; *Mercurio Venezolano*, 3 numbers, January—March 1811, editor Francisco Isnardy (volume XXV in this series with a well-organized estudio preliminar by the *Comisión Editora*); and *El Publicista de Venezuela*, 22 numbers, July 4, 1811—November 28, 1811, editor Francisco Isnardy (volume VIII, and again the estudio preliminar is fine, written by Joaquín Gabaldón Márquez).

The *Gazeta* and *Publicista* were official organs of the government; the *Patriota* was the organ of private societies—the *Sociedades Patrióticas* installed throughout the country; the *Seminario* and *Mercurio* expressed the ideas of their editors.

The Comisión Editora believes the *Mercurio Venezolano* to be the best conceived of the five publications; in fact it rates as one of the best national periodicals of all time—"a review worthy of the moment in which the country was living." Only three numbers were published: Number 1, of 60 pages and dated January, 1811, probably appeared during that month; Number 2, of 48 pages and dated March, 1811, appeared in April of that year; and Number 3, also 48 pages and dated March, 1811, appeared at the end of May, 1811.

The *Mercurio* was divided into four sections: *Política nacional*, *Continente americano*, *Resumen político*, and *Variedades*. The first section is the most important. It contains the political thought of its editor, Isnardy, who was also secretary of the constituent congress. To inform other nations of the revolution in Venezuela, Isnardy included valuable documents of the current congress. The second section contains information about the emancipation movement in New Granada, Peru, and Mexico. Part three has European news—the rivalry between England and France; the Napoleonic threat; and especially interesting, the activities of the *Cortes* on the island of León.

The fourth section, *Variedades*, seems almost as significant as the first since historians attach a great deal of importance to the intellectual and artistic contributions of the newly independent Venezuela. Only a hint of these appear in other periodicals while the *Mercurio* dedicated a whole section to literature and the fine arts under the following headings: painting, music, engraving, poetry and industry or "Ciencias útiles."

It is logical at this point to consider volume XXIV, *Francisco Isnardi* (sic), *Proceso Político*, contributed to the present series by the *Comité de Orígenes de la Emancipación del INSTITUTO PAN-AMERICANO DE GEOGRAFÍA Y DE HISTORIA*. This volume contains a

biography of Isnardy and all the papers of a political lawsuit prosecuted against him in 1801-1802 before the Royal Audiencia in Caracas. He was charged with "the horrible crime" of trying to arouse the inhabitants to become independent. The last few pages contain documents from the *Archivo General de Indias*, dated March, 1818. These deal with Isnardy's imprisonment in Ceuta, 1812-1818.

Isnardy was a native of Turin, Italy, and a Roman Catholic. When quite young he went to Amsterdam and from there as secretary to the India Company, he went to Demerara (Dutch at that time) where he remained four years and acquired a large plot of land on which he cultivated sugar and coffee. In 1796, when a French fleet threatened to capture Demerara, Isnardy fled with his slaves and went to Trinidad (Spanish) where he became a merchant and obtained naturalization papers from the Spanish governor. There he learned about the fertility of the coast of Golfo Triste, so with his slaves he went to Güiria, in the province of Cumaná. He found the land wild, a desert; but with his knowledge of science, medicine, and engineering, and his interest in developing agriculture and public works he became the most important person in the area. At that time he was about thirty-six years old.

Isnardy prospered, made many business trips to Trinidad (now English and involved in war against Spain) and found himself in jail in Caracas in the fall of 1801 accused of trying to overthrow the power of Spain in Venezuela. By 1803 Isnardy was in Spain under the jurisdiction of the Council of the Indies. On June 18 the king granted him his freedom but he was not to return to Güiria or any other Spanish dominion overseas.

Spanish legal authorities probably did not know that in a letter written in London, April 6, 1798, Miranda revealed that Isnardy was one of his agents in Trinidad.<sup>1</sup> This was the year of the abortive revolution of Gual y España. "Caro," a correspondent of Miranda, in a letter dated June 10, 1799, described Isnardy as "an Italian with a Machiavelian heart, by profession an engineer, and author or originator of a scheme whereby Caracas and Cumaná would place themselves under the English Government."<sup>2</sup>

When Miranda attempted to invade Venezuela in 1806, Isnardy was living on the island of Margarita, teaching Latin to young creoles and studying English and German.

In November, 1810, the government and people of Caracas held

<sup>1</sup> *Archivo del General Miranda*, 24 vols., Caracas, 1929-38; La Habana, 1950, XV, 233.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 363.

a memorial service for those who had been victims of Spanish tyranny. Don Francisco Isnardy was mentor of the funeral monument which was covered with patriotic symbols. When the first elected congress of Venezuela met on March 2, 1811, Francisco Isnardy was designated as its secretary. In that capacity this Italian wielded a mighty influence. He prepared the agenda, elaborated on acts of congress and edited its documents—including the Declaration of Independence. This is the man who was editor of the *Mercurio* and *El Publicista de Venezuela*.

When the First Republic was overthrown and Monteverde entered Caracas, Isnardy was made prisoner. One more definite fact we know, he was still a prisoner at Ceuta in 1818.

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In Venezuela and other former colonies of Spain, *Causas de Infidencia* is understood to be penal processes that representatives of the Crown began against those who dared take up arms against Spain or commit acts of disobedience or hostility against Spanish authority. In lexicological exegesis *infidente* is not the same as "criminal." One who is classed as "infidente" has failed only in lack of faith and loyalty which he owes to another. "Infidencia" was not expressly declared a crime in Spanish colonial legislation but is mentioned as an error: "yerro que face ome contra la persona del Rey."

Mario Briceño Perozo, in the estudio preliminar to volumes XXXI and XXXII, *Causas de Infidencia*, points out that those accused of infidencia in Venezuela were those who did not bridle their yearnings for freedom but constituted themselves a separate nation and fought against those who did not wish to be independent. Proceedings were begun against "un buen grupo de criollos" who later would become "fathers" of the new nation. It is this which gives enormous importance to the *expedientes* in the *Archivo General de la Nación*. They gather together all the peripeteia of a strong power trying to crush the revolutionary impulse of a people tired of living under its despotism and finding the way to independence and dignity.

Briceño Perozo, Director of the *Archivo*, gives a concise history of the *Real Audiencia de Caracas*. It was installed July 19, 1787, and disappeared during the first days of May, 1821. Its crucial test came during the months that followed the collapse of the First Republic when power returned to the Spanish and the war for independence followed a zig-zag course. After Bolívar's forces were installed at Angostura and began driving Royalists to the coast, the

president of the Audiencia became alarmed, called the Audiencia into session to decide what should be done with documents which might give aid and comfort to the enemy. February 19, 1818, the Audiencia unanimously resolved to burn such papers. They were able to reduce to ashes more than 400 expedientes.

Publication of those that survived began with Laureano Vallenilla Lanz, *Causas de Infidencia*, Caracas, 1917. This work contains six expedientes and an account of the *visita* of José Francisco Velasco, *Comisionado General*, in 1813. A second volume, Héctor García Chuecos, *Causas de Infidencia*, Caracas, 1952, contains sixteen expedientes. The two volumes of the sesquicentennial series (XXXI, XXXII) contain nineteen expedientes. Briceño Perozo has arranged these in chronological order from 1812 to 1820. He begins with the proceedings against Simón Bolívar and Don Feliciano Palacios in 1812 who at that time were considered the greatest enemies of Don Fernando VII and the most "exaltados patriotas." The judges finally embargoed some possessions of Bolívar but in general in this case the judgment was inconclusive.

There was one case against a woman, Teresa Heredia. This spitfire so befuddled the judges that they finally decreed she should be expelled to the United States of America so that this incorrigible woman could there be independent and learn to live in society.

In 1812 Francisco Espejo was on trial. Since he was a doctor of civil law and lawyer to the Real Audiencia, his case is most voluminous. An imposing number of witnesses testified that at the beginning of the revolution he was loyal to the royalist cause but that he was slowly converted into a demoniac opponent.

The expediente of 1814 was against more than sixty priests among which were as many regulars as seculars. The depositions against them stated that they had embraced the republican cause, preached that those who defended the Spanish Government would be condemned, no longer mentioned the king in the Mass, said odious things about the king, that Padre Lindo had given the gold calix to the rebels to help with expenses—and so on, through a long list of accusations. The papers of this expediente give eloquent testimony to the fact that a large percentage of the patriot fathers came from the clergy.

Briceño Perozo makes a real contribution in pointing out the importance of two royal orders not previously cited which Fernando VII dictated and sent to the captain general and president of the

audiencia of Caracas, Juan Bautista Pardo. The one is dated July 28, 1817; the other September 10, 1817.

The first evolved from the royalist reconquest of Cartagena. Pablo Morillo, commander of the royalist army, and Francisco de Montalvo, Viceroy of New Granada, began proceedings February 7, 1816, against nine prisoners who were considered ringleaders in resistance to Spain. A serious difference developed as to how these should be punished. Morillo wanted capital punishment. Montalvo, who had lived in that area for twenty years, was convinced that the prisoners were not perverse, and he did not want to be an accomplice to their execution.

A council of war finally passed judgment. Some of the prisoners were hanged and some were shot, in spite of the opinion of the *Asesor General del Reino y Auditor de Guerra* that for political crimes the death sentence should not be imposed. The viceroy then requested that definite norms be established for such cases. Out of this came the royal order of July 28, 1817, which defined eight categories in one or more of which a mover or sustainer of a revolution might be placed. The order stated the type of trial and punishment for each class.

The second order, that of September 10, 1817, the king sent to the royal audiencia and to archbishops and bishops in both Americas. It provided for depriving clergy of their benefices when charged with "infidencia."

In the meantime, charges had been made against the Archbishop of Caracas, Narciso Coll y Prat, who answered the charges in his *Memoriales sobre la independencia de Venezuela* (volume XXIII). In the estudio preliminar Manuel Pérez Vila presents a lucid and sympathetic account of the archbishop and his problems.

Coll y Prat was born in 1754 in a little town near Gerona in northeast Spain. He graduated as doctor of both laws from the University of Cervera. Then he taught law, served as attorney for the Church Court of Gerona and became known for his historical studies. Pope Pius VII appointed him Archbishop of Caracas and the Council of the Indies confirmed the appointment early in 1808, but Coll y Prat did not arrive in Venezuela until the middle of July, 1810. He had no way of knowing what had happened in Caracas since April 19, so he completely ignored the changes that had taken place. He intended to stay in Venezuela, no matter what the situation, so that he could fulfill his duties as pastor. He remained at his post six and a half years as one government succeeded another:



first the Junta Conservadora de los Derechos de Fernando VII, then the First Republic, the dictatorship of Miranda, the rule of Monteverde, Bolívar and the Second Republic, the predominance of Boves, Morillo, and Moxó. When necessary he spoke out against both patriots and royalists. This gained him the sympathy and gratitude of his flock, but patriots reproached him for his loyalty to Ferdinand and royalists threw in his face the fact that he had remained at his post when republicans were in power and had even had dealings with them.

Charges were presented to the Regency against him early in his career as archbishop. Enrique Ortega had accompanied him to Venezuela as provisor, but Venezuelans would have nothing to do with him so he had to return to Spain. He lodged complaints that Coll y Prat had remained in rebel Caracas without making himself leader of the royalist reaction. This and later charges were directed against him as a vassal of Ferdinand, not as a vicar of Christ.

General Morillo made the second and stronger accusation on May 24, 1815—that good Spaniards were scandalized at seeing this holy prelate fraternizing with his infamous friend Bolívar; moreover, Coll y Prat had acquired power over *la gente de color* and he had committed such *nimiedades* as appointing a stuttering priest to give the sermon when Morillo attended mass, and this made him very uncomfortable.

Coll y Prat refuted these charges in two *memorias*: the first dated Caracas, August 25, 1815, and the second dated Seville, June 23, 1818. In these he demonstrated that his constant preoccupation was to alleviate the evils of war and that he had always conducted himself as a faithful vassal of the king.

To the historian these *memorias* are more important for another reason. They are an eyewitness account of the epoch of independence written by an intelligent, educated, clear-sighted observer. Some of the major themes are (1) the role of the church during this period—for example, why the archbishop and most of his priests took the loyalty oath to independent Venezuela; (2) the earthquake and its fatal consequences; (3) the ever-present possibility of a slave uprising—which was the main cause, as Coll y Prat saw it, for Miranda's capitulation in 1812; and (4) the cause of Miranda's imprisonment.

This last exonerates Bolívar and the others who imprisoned Miranda. It was not their intention to ingratiate themselves with

Monteverde, but to reject the capitulation and continue fighting against him.

Pérez Vila points out that the archbishop could not approve the political actions of the *próceres*, but his version of their actions is true and impartial. Even though he directed his memorial as a loyal vassal to the king, he could still say of Boves that he was "un héroe para destruir, no era un hombre para edificar."

The greatest eulogy of Archbishop Coll y Prat lies in the fact that while he was in Spain presenting his memorias, the king recommended him to the pope as candidate for the miter of Palencia and Bolívar's commissioners in Madrid tried to persuade him to return to Caracas, going so far as to issue him a passport.

One other memoria appears in Volume XXIII. It is dated Madrid, November 11, 1822—a few weeks before the death of the Archbishop—and is his answer to an inquiry concerning the state of his diocese and the church in general in Spanish America.

A much more colorful clergyman, the priest-colonel José Félix Blanco, also left behind a memoria, *Bosequejo histórico de la revolución de Venezuela*, volume XXVIII. In the estudio preliminar Lino Iribarren-Celis deals with the legends that make José Félix Blanco a close relative of Bolívar and concludes that his parentage is still uncertain. One day in 1782 a free Negro servant, Bartola Madrid, claimed the abandoned child and persuaded Dr. José Domingo Blanco to be its godfather, so the child was christened José Félix Blanco.

His childhood could not have been other than miserable in the Caracas of the latter part of the eighteenth century. He was able to enter the Royal Seminary but the university refused to grant him a degree because of his illegitimacy. He did become a priest. When the April 19 movement was born, he was firm in his conviction that sovereignty was in the people and that Venezuela should be independent. He put aside his priestly robes and joined the army.

Iribarren-Celis traces his military campaigns from 1811 to 1824. These at times were interrupted by other services such as director of the Caroni Missions for nine months in 1817 and serving as a delegate to the Congress of Cúcuta in 1821. In the years following the death of Bolívar, Colonel Blanco was active politically. He served as governor of Maracaibo, minister of war and marine, representative of Carabobo in congress, vice presidential candidate in 1844, presidential candidate in 1846, minister of hacienda briefly in 1847.

This ended his political career except for the January, 1862, interlude when Páez again became dictator.

Meanwhile Colonel Blanco petitioned the pope to let him become a layman and Gregory XVI granted his secularization in 1832. Thirty years later he petitioned to be reinstated as a priest and this Pope Pius IX granted.

The monumental achievement of José Félix Blanco was not military nor political nor religious but historical. It was the result of years of labor and patient accumulating and editing *Documentos para la historia de la vida pública del Libertador de Colombia, Perú y Bolivia*, 14 volumes. Fearing that death would overtake him and his work remain unfinished, he asked his friend Ramón Azpurúa to be co-editor. Eight years later Padre Blanco died at the age of ninety.

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The extensive bibliography, profane and sacred, of volume XXXIII indicates the historical sweep of the scholastic doctrine of popular sovereignty which unobtrusively through schools and universities drives through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and gathers momentum during the next century of decadent monarchy. In the nineteenth century the thesis is confirmed and finds no better expression than in the political confessions of Juan Germán Roscio. These show that American independence is not incompatible with Holy Writ nor with the dogmas of the Catholic Church. Political action of the cabildo (*Capítulo*) survived with independence as an organ of the community (republic) because the cabildo considered that the Junta de Gobierno should act within the limitations which "the people" imposed on it the day it was installed. Therefore, the new government could not, for example, decree new taxes without the consent of the cabildo, because even the kings of Castile had not enjoyed this privilege. This is part of the philosophical-juridical tradition (which also matured during the colonial period) which limits sovereignty; that is, that authority comes from God. Guillermo Figuera, the author of Volume XXXIII, *La iglesia y su doctrina en la independencia de América*, gives the reader plenty to think about.

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Feliciano Ramón de la Merced Montenegro y Colón was born in Caracas, June 9, 1781. His father, from Galicia, was a lawyer of the royal audiencia; his mother was a *caraqueña*. In Montenegro, as in many others in Venezuela, bonds of the Old World and the New were equally strong. The time would come when he would have to choose one birthright or the other. This man wrote a four-volume *Geografía*

*general para el uso de la juventud de Venezuela*, published in Caracas, Imprenta de Damiron y Dupouy, 1833-1837. The fourth volume appears in the sesquicentennial series as *Historia de Venezuela*, volumes XXVI and XXVII.

Alfredo Boulton wrote the estudio preliminar in which the reader begins to feel, after a few pages, the tensions which made Montenegro an irascible teacher. Páez wrote of him: "If my country were to erect statues to her great men, I would vote that one be erected to this man who after the weariness of war and the uncovered deceptions of a tormented life, still had the strength left to struggle with headstrong youths whose parents do not comprehend how valuable to themselves and the country is the service the teacher is trying to perform."

Montenegro was not quite sixteen when he graduated from the University of Caracas as *Bachiller en Filosofía*. The next year he began his military career as a cadet in the *Batallón Veterano de Caracas* and was soon promoted to the *Regimiento de la Reina*. The military sent this young caraqueño to Spain in 1803. He took part against the English in the siege of Gibraltar, completed missions connected with the Spanish troops destined for Denmark, commanded guerrillas in the expedition against Bailén where the French surrendered in 1808 and where Montenegro gained his distinguished service medal. His record was such that in 1810 he was chosen to carry dispatches and act as commissioner to the *Muy ilustre Ayuntamiento de Caracas*.

It was January of 1811 when Montenegro returned to Caracas. He had been in Spain too long. He had not witnessed in quiet little Caracas the capture of Vicente Emparán, or the tumult in front of the cathedral and the balcony of the cabildo. He underestimated his native land.

The moment of decision came for Montenegro while the glory of war in Spain and the pomp of court still held him. He failed, as did many others, to diagnose the travail he saw in Caracas as the birthpangs of a new nation. He compromised between his mission and the situation in Venezuela—and ran away, to Curaçao. This was his hamartia. Nemesis followed. He was accused of stealing important documents from the secretary of war. Evidence seems to indicate that he was not guilty of this charge, but it was believed.

From Curaçao he went to Puerto Rico, and then to Spain. He returned to Venezuela in 1816 when it had been "pacified" by Morillo. Later he went to Mexico where he became one of the

principal instigators of independence for Cuba. In 1831 he returned to Venezuela and began writing his defense. By this time a marked persecution complex was evident. Still his peculiar abilities had to find an outlet. On an important anniversary, April 19, he founded in 1836 his *Colegio de la Independencia*. He was the first educator of Venezuela, an irritable one but persistent and impoverished. We do not know when he died, probably in 1853.

He merits the title of *Ilustre Hijo de Caracas*, but he is remembered as a "deserter." The estudio preliminar of Alfredo Boulton can be called "The Tragedy of Montenegro."

A younger caraqueño, untroubled by divided loyalty, fought in the Venezuelan army and toward the end of an honorable life published *Bosquejo de la historia militar de Venezuela* (volumes XXIX and XXX). This was José de Austria, born in Caracas in 1791. His history covers the years 1810-1816.

Colonel Austria flatly affirms that the failure of the 1812 campaign was due to Miranda's errors; and that the imprisonment of Miranda was not exclusively Bolívar's idea, but that all the patriots wanted to question Miranda about the capitulation and why he was in such a hurry to leave Venezuela.

Héctor García Chuecos, in the estudio preliminar, as he deals with the documents included in the *Bosquejo*, gives credence to the claim of Don Vicente Lecuna that Bolívar's famous Jamaica letter was never published until it appeared in the *Bosquejo* in 1855; and that Daniel O'Leary was mistaken when he said he had copied it from a Jamaica daily.

Bolívar's letter was published not once but twice in Jamaica. One day in February, 1962, in the Institute of Jamaica, I copied the following from the *Kingston Chronicle* of Monday, July 18, 1825:

To the Editor of the *Jamaica Journal* and *Kingston Chronicle*  
Mr. Editor

The extraordinary events which have transpired in the South American Continent, within these few years past, give very considerable interest to a letter you inserted in No. I, Vol. III of the *Jamaica Quarterly Journal*, and the republication at this period, of so valuable a paper from the pen of the President of Colombia, can hardly fail to be highly acceptable to your readers—events having, in some respects, given to it the dignity and importance of a STATE PAPER. It may be said to afford an insight into the *Arcana* of the great *Hero of South America*; it is in some instances, singularly prophetic. His career in Colombia and Peru, having been equally rapid with the progress of the first conquerors; the presage of his friend, to whom he addressed his letter—and his own opinion has been realized—Success will crown our efforts—doubt it not. The destiny of America is

irrevocably fixed. As respects the South American and Mexican Continents, that prediction has been fulfilled; and if the intelligence we have lately received may be relied upon, the destiny of Cuba and Puerto Rico is also about to be placed upon a permanent basis—the occupation of either of these Islands, by the troops of France, will doubtless tend to *hasten* the *epoch* of their independence.

Whatever might have been the doubts of the results, at an earlier stage of this contest—the development of the cause, has been such, that it is manifest the period is now arrived, when all further perseverance in the Contest must be hopeless, and can be productive of no benefit to Spain; and if it be not the duty, it certainly is in the power of EUROPE to explain to her her true interests. A termination of the contest by the declaration of the Independence of South America at this moment would in all probability secure to the Mother Country very considerable ultra marine sources for her commerce. It is with nations as with individuals, no easy task to relinquish favorite objects, whether of interest or ambition, and yet it is but too true, that one sacrifice to pride often effectually preserves both from many mortifications and much misery.

If you agree with me in opinion as to the importance and interest with which recent events have stamped the letter of the Liberator of South America, you will, I doubt not, readily republish it—and it may not be here unimportant to add that precaution was taken from its first publication, to ascertain the correctness of the translation, and for that purpose, it was submitted to the revision of a gentleman then here, well acquainted with the sentiments and policy of General Bolívar, and who now fills the important situation of Secretary of State for the Foreign Affairs of Colombia.

I am, Mr. Editor, your obdt servant,

Vetus

Kingston, July 12, 1825.

The editor of the *Kingston Chronicle*, did agree with “Vetus” that the Jamaican letter was important. He re-published the first third on Monday, July 18; the second third, Tuesday, July 19; and the remaining third, Thursday, July 21, in the year 1825.