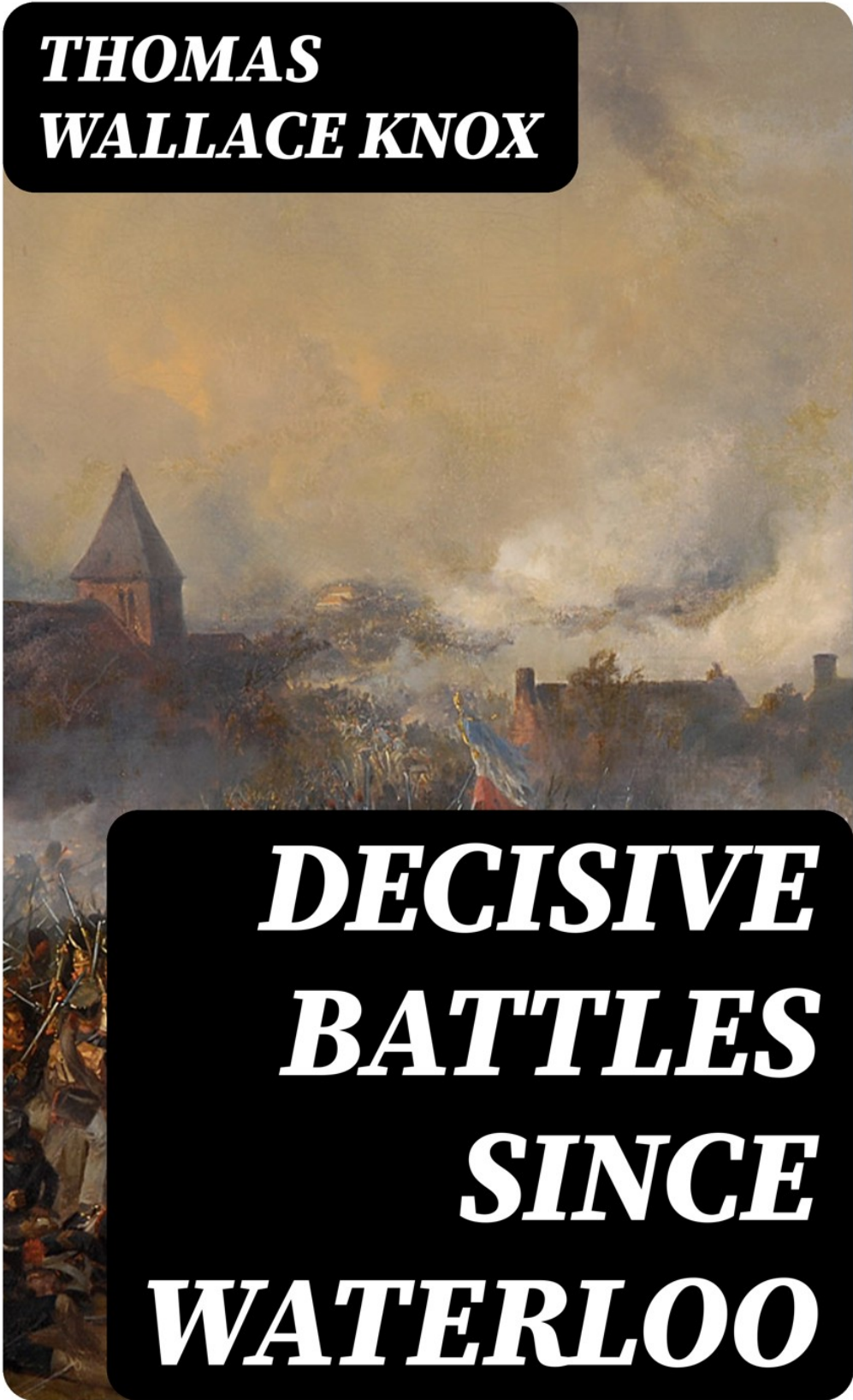


***THOMAS
WALLACE KNOX***



***DECISIVE
BATTLES
SINCE
WATERLOO***

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Thomas Wallace Knox

Decisive Battles Since Waterloo

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DECISIVE BATTLES SINCE WATERLOO.



CHAPTER I.

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BATTLE OF AYACUCHO—1824.

THE Napoleonic wars that terminated with the battle of Waterloo reduced the nations of Europe to a state of exhaustion, and for a considerable period thereafter there was little occupation for the soldier. England, France, Spain, Germany, and Russia were engaged in repairing the ravages of war, and by common consent there was a truce to arms and a halt in the work of organized destruction. But the wings of Peace, outstretched over Europe, were folded on the other side of the Atlantic, throughout all the vast region known as Spanish America. Mexico, Peru, Chili, and the other trans-Atlantic provinces of Spain sought to sever their connection with the Old World; one by one they achieved their independence through a series of wars that deluged the land with blood and threatened to leave it an uninhabited waste.

The final battle of the South American wars of independence was fought at Ayacucho, Peru, December 9, 1824. Let us first glance at the events which led up to that sanguinary conflict, and then consider the occurrences of the day which saw the Spanish power in America broken forever.

It is a curious circumstance that the South American revolutions had their beginning in the intense loyalty of the people of the Spanish-American colonies, and particularly of the United States of Colombia, for their king. In 1808 the armies of Napoleon were overrunning Spain; Ferdinand VII. was compelled to abdicate the throne, and Joseph

Bonaparte, brother of Napoleon, was proclaimed King of Spain and the Indies. Agents were immediately sent, in the name of the new king, to announce to the American colonies the abdication of Ferdinand and the elevation of Joseph to the throne. Joseph shrewdly promised to the viceroys and captains-general throughout the colonies, that they should retain their places, provided they acquiesced in the new order of things and induced the people to accept it. But though the officials were resigned to the situation, the people were not; they publicly burned the proclamations of King Joseph, expelled his agents, and insulted all Frenchmen then living in the colonies, so that most of them fled for safety.

In July, 1808, a French brig arrived at La Guayra, the port of Caraccas, with intelligence of recent events in France and Spain, including the abdication of Ferdinand and the accession of Joseph Bonaparte. The captain of the brig proceeded to Caraccas with despatches to the captain-general, and soon after his arrival the news from the Old World became known among the people. An English officer who was there at the time writes as follows:

The city was immediately in arms, 10,000 of its inhabitants surrounded the residence of the captain-general and demanded the proclamation of Ferdinand the Seventh as their king, which he promised the next day. But this would not satisfy them; they proclaimed him that evening by heralds, in form, throughout the city, and placed his portrait, illuminated, in the gallery of the town-house. The French were first publicly insulted in the coffee-house from which they were obliged to withdraw, and the French captain left Caraccas, privately, about eight o'clock that night, escorted by a detachment of soldiers, and so saved his life, for, about ten o'clock, his person was demanded of the governor by the populace, and when they learned that he was gone, three hundred men followed him to put him to death.

About the same time a French brig arrived at Buenos Ayres with an envoy from Napoleon carrying despatches to

Liniers, the viceroy, who issued a proclamation announcing the events which had occurred in Spain, and advising the people to submit to the authority of Joseph Bonaparte. The proclamation was coldly received by the people; the governor of Monte Video accused Liniers of disloyalty, disregarded his proclamation, established a *junta*^[1] or governing body for his province, and withdrew it altogether from the authority of Liniers.

In spite of the efforts of the viceroys and other officials to convince the colonies that every thing was quiet in Spain, it became known among the people that the peninsula was in a state of insurrection against the authority of Joseph Bonaparte, that in some provinces he was openly defied, and provincial juntas had assumed the management of affairs. The one at Seville proclaimed itself the supreme junta of Spain and the Indies, and sent deputies to the colonies requiring an acknowledgment of its authority. In order to secure this acknowledgment it announced that it was recognized and obeyed throughout Spain, which was far from being the case. At the same time the junta of the Asturias opposed that of Seville; the regency of Ferdinand claimed to have supreme authority; and to complicate matters still further Joseph Bonaparte had been proclaimed king. There were therefore four kinds of authorities to which the colonies were required to give allegiance; they were ready to recognize any proper authority of Spanish origin, and while they differed as to their proper course between the various juntas, they were all agreed in their hatred for the French.

The efforts of the viceroys and their subordinates to secure colonial allegiance to Joseph Bonaparte led to collisions between the populace and the authorities in several cities, and finally to open warfare. Owing to the disorders in Spain there was no central power which the colonies could respect, and this circumstance led to the formation of juntas of their own. The first was in Quito in 1809, but it was suppressed by the viceroy; the second was at Santa Fé de Bogota in the same year, and many of its members were imprisoned and afterwards massacred in cold blood. Similar scenes were enacted in other parts of the colonies, and tended greatly to weaken the authority of the mother country. Naturally the colonists asked the question, "What will become of us if Spain falls completely under the domination of France?" The discussion of the question naturally led to independence, and it is easy to see how a struggle which began in extreme loyalty to Ferdinand VII. and the government he represented, could develop into a battle for complete independence. From 1808 to 1812 the French armies gained ground in Spain. There was little hope of a restoration of the Spanish power and the expulsion of the Bonapartes, and long before the disasters of Napoleon in Russia, and the consequent retreat of the French from Spain, the colonies were on the high road to absolute freedom from the yoke of their mother country.

The government of Joseph Bonaparte adopted repressive measures towards the colonies; troops were sent to awe the people into submission, the province of Caraccas was declared in blockade, and the colonial rulers were ordered to enforce obedience at whatever cost. After the retirement of

the French from Spain, the regency, which succeeded to Joseph Bonaparte, and after it the restored king, Ferdinand VII., continued the same measures, totally ignoring the loyalty which the colonies had originally displayed at the beginning of the French occupation. Nothing remained for the colonies but a war for independence, a war which terminated, as already mentioned, with the battle of Ayacucho, sixteen years after the first outbreak at Caraccas.

The story of the South American war of independence would fill many volumes. Juntas were established in Caraccas, Buenos Ayres, Santiago, and other South American cities widely separated from each other, during 1810, and the repressive measures adopted by the colonial authorities only added to the vigor of the movement. In Buenos Ayres the viceroy was deposed, and the powers of government were assumed by a junta acting in the name of the deposed and captive king, Ferdinand VII. From Buenos Ayres the disturbance extended to Chili, where another junta deposed the viceroy and assumed the reins of government; about the same time there was an insurrection in Upper Peru (now called Bolivia) and later another in Peru. From a state of tranquillity, in 1808, the whole of South America was in a condition of open or partial revolt in less than four years, with the single exception of Brazil.

Brazil was a colony of Portugal, not of Spain. In 1807, when Napoleon declared war against Portugal, its king, John VI., fled to Brazil, accompanied by many courtiers and followed by numerous emigrants. After the fall of Napoleon in 1815, Brazil was raised to the rank of a kingdom; John assumed the title of King of Portugal, Algarve, and Brazil,

and on the 26th of February, 1821, he proclaimed the constitution. A revolutionary movement took place in the following April; Brazil was proclaimed an independent empire; it adopted a constitution in 1824, and its independence was acknowledged in 1825. Its transition from a colony of a European government to an independent state was far less turbulent than that of its neighbors.

The revolution continued with varying success for more than a decade, but with the advantages decidedly in favor of the revolutionists. The progress towards independence was retarded by dissensions among the revolutionists, which frequently threatened to restore the royalist power; ambitions and jealousies too often obscured patriotism, and in many instances they led to open or secret assassination. This was the case in Buenos Ayres, Chili, and Peru to a very marked degree, and only to a minor extent in other parts of the revolted country. On several occasions assistance to beleaguered garrisons or to armies in the field was deliberately refused or withheld, for no other reason than personal ill-feeling between general and other officers who were engaged in a common cause of patriotism.

West of the Andes the progress of the revolution was less encouraging than in the countries to the eastward. The royalists were practically in full control of Peru and Chili in the early years of the insurrection, and in the latter country they had banished many of the leading patriots to the island of Juan Fernandez, and were exercising extreme tyranny over all the people. Early in 1817 General San Martin, Governor of Mendoza, and an active patriot of Buenos Ayres, conceived the design of crossing the Andes with an army of

liberation to assist the Chilian patriots. Nearly a year was spent in organizing the army and collecting the necessary materials and transportation. The passage of the Andes by San Martin was a more difficult matter than that of Napoleon over the Alps; it was accomplished in thirteen days, with a loss of a few men and of five thousand horses and mules, and was followed by the battle of Chacabuco, in which the royalists were completely defeated. A junta was immediately formed at Santiago, and the dictatorship was offered to San Martin, who declined it.

The royalist army of Chili fled to Talcahuano, and after receiving reinforcements from the viceroy at Lima, resumed the offensive. It encountered the patriot army on the plains of Maypu, April 5, 1818, and the encounter resulted in one of the most sanguinary battles on record, when the number of men engaged is considered. Out of eight thousand men comprising the Spanish army, two thousand were killed or wounded, and three thousand captured. The general escaped with a portion of his cavalry, but all the baggage, artillery, military chests, and supplies fell into the hands of the patriots. The loss of the latter was one thousand killed and wounded, out of an aggregate of about seven thousand. The victory gave independence to Chili, and turned attention towards Peru. Steps were immediately taken to aid the Peruvians to gain their independence, and for this purpose an army and a naval force was organized.

Lord Cochrane, an English naval officer, arrived in Chili in November, 1818, and was immediately appointed to the command of the Chilian squadron. Great exertions were made, and in the course of a year many captures were

effected, though not without some losses by the Chilian squadron. On the 20th of August, 1820, a combined land and naval expedition left Valparaiso for Pisco, about one hundred miles south of Peru, where the land forces were disembarked. The squadron proceeded to Callao, where a Spanish frigate of forty guns with two sloops-of-war and fourteen gun-boats were lying under the protection of the batteries. On the night of November 5th, Lord Cochrane succeeded in capturing the frigate, and this exploit was practically the termination of the Spanish naval power in the Pacific, so far as offensive measures were concerned.

An armistice of the land forces was made by request of the viceroy, but nothing came of it. The independent army moved leisurely to the north of Lima, remaining for weeks and sometimes months in camp engaged in recruiting and in the dissemination of liberal ideas, and also in cutting off the supplies of the royalists in Lima, Later there was another abortive armistice, and early in July, 1821, San Martin threatened to move against Lima. Thereupon the viceroy abandoned it, and on the 12th of the month San Martin entered and was joyously received. The independence of Peru was solemnly proclaimed on the 28th of July, and on the 3d of August San Martin assumed the title of Protector of Peru and issued a proclamation.

The liberating army remained inactive till the following May, but the work of recruiting and making ready for the field was actively continued. In July, 1822, San Martin went to Guayaquil for an interview with Simon Bolivar, the liberator of Colombia, and returned in August with a contingent of Colombian troops.

On the 20th of September, 1822, the constitutional congress of Peru was assembled and San Martin surrendered his dictatorship which he had held for little more than a year. The congress unanimously named him general and commander-in-chief of the armies of Peru; he accepted the title, but declined the appointment on the ground that such a position would be inconsistent with the authority of congress. Shortly afterward he returned to Chili, and the affairs of Peru were placed in the hands of a junta of three prominent citizens. In November, 1822, an expedition left Lima for the southern coast but it was defeated and dispersed by the royalists in the following January. Thereupon the royalist army reoccupied Lima and the patriot cause was in great danger.

About this time the United States of Colombia achieved independence, after a long and devastating war which was brought to a triumphal end by the genius and patriotism of Simon Bolivar. Foreseeing that if the royalists obtained control in Peru the independence of Colombia would be endangered, and being invited by the Peruvians, Bolivar proceeded to Lima at the head of a considerable force; he was joyfully welcomed and appointed dictator of Peru, until such time as the Spaniards should be conquered or driven out. The royalist army retired to the interior at the approach of Bolivar and his army.

The royalists were in such numbers that Bolivar did not dare to risk a battle until the arrival of reinforcements from Colombia, and when threatened with an attack he retired to Truxillo. In February, 1824, the royalists again occupied Lima and Callao; by the following June Bolivar's forces were

sufficiently strong to enable him to resume the offensive, which resulted in a battle on the plains of Junin, on the 6th of August, where the royalists were defeated with heavy loss, especially in cavalry, on which great reliance was placed. From this time until the 9th of December no important action was fought but there was much skilful manoeuvring on both sides. The liberating army, consisting of the united forces of Peru and Colombia, was under the command of General Anton Jose de Sucre, who had previously distinguished himself on the battlefield and especially at Pichincha in 1822, where he defeated the Spaniards in a fiercely fought conflict.

Early in December General Sucre took a position at Ayacucho in sight of the royalist army, which was posted on a height. General Bolivar was not present; he had given full power to Sucre to do as he thought best, either to give battle to the royalists or refuse it. In a letter written a short time before the battle of Ayacucho Bolivar cautioned Sucre in the following words:

"Remember, that on your army corps depends the fate of Peru, perhaps forever; and with it, that of the whole of America, perhaps for years. Considering the terrible consequences which a battle lost may entail upon us, every means of foresight and strategy is to be exerted so as not to make a move without gaining a decided and absolute success."

Acting on this advice Sucre had advanced with great caution. Several times the enemy offered battle, which Sucre declined, as he was waiting the arrival of reinforcements which were hurrying forward. There were

several skirmishes in which no decided advantage was gained by either side, but the movements of the patriots frustrated some of the plans of the viceroy and compelled him to make many changes of position.

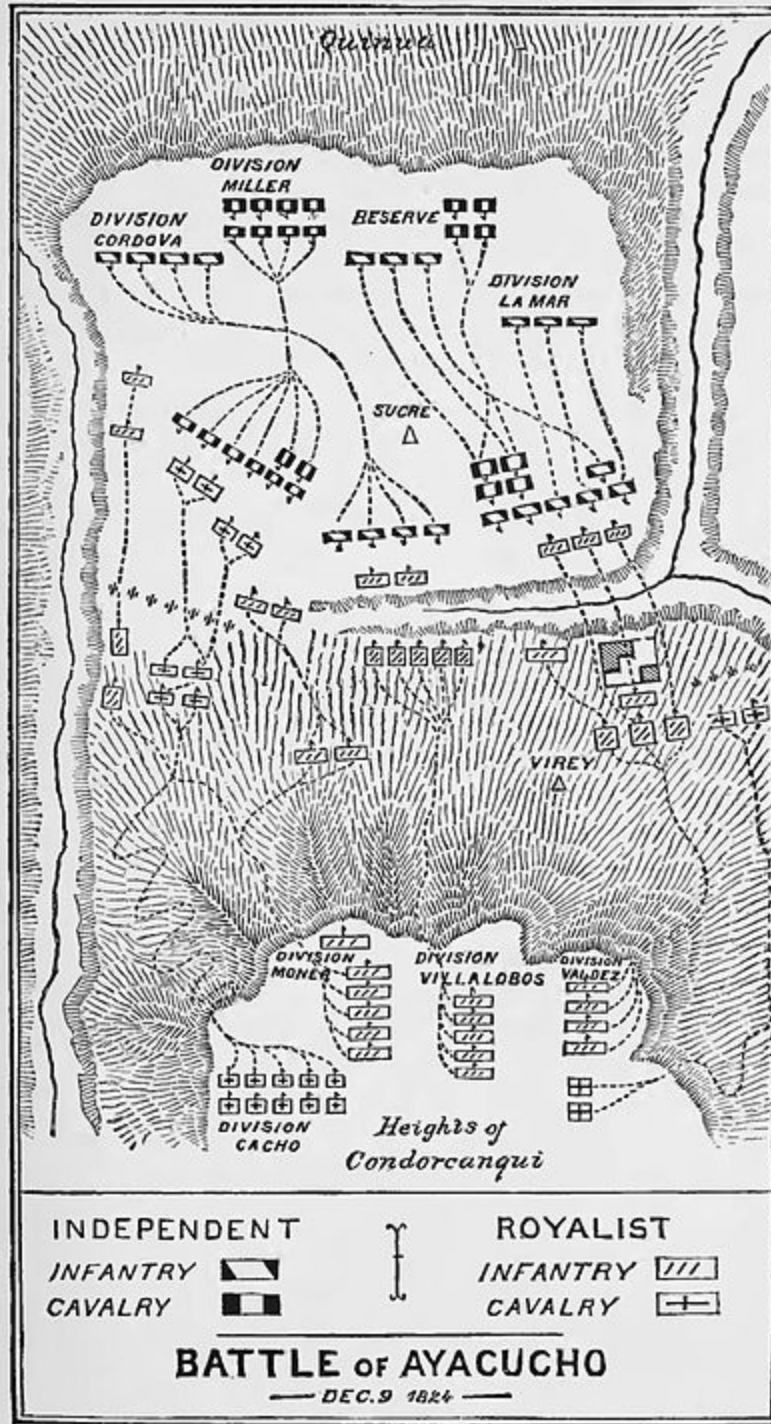
On the 4th of December, Lieutenant Colonel Medina, adjutant of the liberator, Bolivar, came into Sucre's camp with a final order that a decisive battle was to be ventured. It was offered on that very day in the plain of Tambo, but the Spaniards declined.

On December 8th both armies stood face to face. Every thing told that they were on the eve of a great battle, which neither could avoid by means of a retreat without the risk of destruction. Sucre's position was at a considerable distance from the friendly villages, and he was opposed by an army accustomed to quick marches; the roads were rough, and his supplies were giving out. Scarcely could he muster 5,780 men, and he had only one small piece of artillery.

On the other hand the Spaniards were obliged to force the fight. A retreat would have been tantamount to a rout, and their rations were alarmingly short. But they were superior in numbers, as they counted 9,310 men of all arms, with fourteen pieces of artillery.

The Spanish army was on the hills round about Condorcanqui; its right and left wings were protected by a deep ravine, its rear-guard stood against the steep mountain range, and its front was towards a plain half a mile in width and a mile in length.

General Miller of the liberating army thus describes the battle-field:



Quinua, an Indian village, is located on the farther side, to the west of Ayacucho, almost square in shape and about a mile in circuit, bordered right and left by deep and rugged

ravines. Back of the plain, or towards the east, it slopes off gradually for two miles towards the high road from Guamanga to Ananta, which runs right up to a perpendicular rock and ends there. On the eastern side of the plain is Condorcanqui, on a huge ledge of rock which runs from north to south. On this ledge the royalist army was encamped.

The army of liberation formed in the plain, in front of the Spaniards, about a half a mile away. They were drawn up in close columns and awaited the onset of the royalists. The corps of the independents were stationed in the following manner:

Cordova's Division, (on the right wing)
Consisting of the regiment of Bogota,
" " " " " Pichincha,
" " " " " Skirmishers.

Miller's Division (in the centre)
Consisted of the Hussars of Junin,
" " " Grenadiers of Colombia,
" " " Hussars of "
" " " Mounted Grenadiers of Buenos Ayres.

In La Mar's Division (on the left)
Was the Peruvian Legion,
Battalion No. 1.
" " 2.
" " 3.

Lara's Division, (reserve)
Was made up of Camp-followers,
" " "" Deserters,
" " "" Riflemen,

Artillery one four-pounder.

The following account of the battle is abridged from "Historia del Peru Independiente." On the memorable day, Thursday December 9, 1824, the morning was clear and the sun brilliantly lighted the scene. The trumpets and drums sounded. The officers moved in all directions to take their orders: on the right, the young and brave general of division, Cordova, a general of division at twenty-five; on the left the Peruvian body, sent by brave and honest old La Mar; the centre the gallant Lara commanded, together with the remaining Colombian section. The cavalry formed in the rear about the centre of the division; it had been moved up by orders of the famous Miller. Sucre, the head of all, went to inspect the troops with a coolness that never forsook him, leaving nothing undone that his genius and experience suggested. Down the whole line he rode, exhorting the men with stirring words. Halting near the centre, he said with deep emotion: "*By you, soldiers, present here, the fate of South America is to be decided*"; and noticing the hostile forces descending to meet them he added: "*This day will crown your prowess.*"

On the royalist side General Canterac, chief in command, called up the generals and commanders of divisions and gave out the orders of the day. General Valdez held the right of the line, Monet the left, and Villalobos the centre, while the cavalry was formed in the rear.

It was ten in the morning when the fire opened, and the action fairly began. At first the advantage was on the side of the Spaniards, but General Cordova brought up his division within a hundred yards of the enemy, where he ordered a

volley and followed it with a bayonet charge. The attack was successful, and the enemy fled in disorder. Charge followed charge, and by one o'clock in the afternoon, victory was practically assured to the patriots.

The enemy rallied again on the heights of Condorcanqui, and owing to the exertions of Canterac, Valdez, and other officers, somewhere near a thousand men were collected. A council of war was called for by Canterac, who stated that Peru was irretrievably lost since Olaneta, their only hope, had gone over to the enemy, and was making terms for capitulation. This fact was accepted by nearly all the royalist officers, and then Canterac asked for a truce of arms. Very soon General La Mar came over, and assured them that Sucre would accept an honorable capitulation.

The time was precious; the sun had just gone down after having shone upon the grandest day of America, and the routed Spaniards would have had to perish in their flight or starve for want of food. Canterac explained the straits in which they were, and assured the Spanish commanders that there was no other means of safety. It was decided that General Canterac should convey the resolution, and settle the conditions of capitulation.

Sucre's greatness and generosity were shown in the conditions of surrender. He might have imposed harsh or humiliating terms, but his way was not to crush his brave opponents. Canterac handed over the minutes, consisting of eighteen articles, and they were ratified with slight modifications. According to the terms of capitulation, all troops, baggage, and ammunition in Peru were handed over to the patriots; all the men of the Spanish army could freely

go home at the expense of Peru, and while they marched along with the Peruvians, they would receive their pay; those preferring the Peruvian service might enter it. No one should be molested in person or property for his former opinions, and all were free to leave the country whenever they chose. Peru would take up the national debt contracted by the Spanish government in the country. The fortresses of Callao were to surrender within twenty days, handing over formally their public parks, warehouses, archives, etc. Vessels of war and tenders belonging to Spain might remain for six months, to ship their provisions and get ready for quitting the Pacific.

The prisoners taken in the battle included the Viceroy La Serna, General Canterac, chief in command, fourteen other generals, with numbers of subordinate officers, in addition to the soldiers; in short, those that were not killed on the battlefield were captured. There were 1,400 dead, and 700 wounded, on the Spanish side; of the patriots, 300 were killed, and 609 wounded; in all, about 3,016 *hors de combat*, almost the fourth part of those engaged, which shows how fiercely the battle was contested. After burying the dead, the victorious army moved southward from Ayacucho. Cuzco, Arequipa, and other points were surrendered, but General Rodel, commanding the fortress of Callao, refused to accept the terms of capitulation. The fortress was immediately invested by the Colombian and Peruvian troops, and blockaded by a naval force which was lent to Bolivar by Chili. The fortress held out for more than a year, and was not surrendered until the garrison of five hundred men was at the point of starvation. General Rodel embarked

for Europe with the soldiers that chose to accompany him, and the fall of Callao was the final event of the war.

As soon as the news of the victory at Ayacucho reached Lima, Bolivar issued the following proclamation:

To the Soldiers of the Conquering Army at Ayacucho:

SOLDIERS—You have carried liberty to South America, and a quarter of the globe bears witness to your glory. Who could have beaten you off?

South America is full of the marks of your valor, but Ayacucho, Chimborazo-like, rises above all.

Soldiers—Colombia owes you the laurels you have won, and Peru its life, liberty, and peace, not to forget what La Pensa and Chili owe you. The good cause, the cause of the rights of men, has been vindicated by you, in a terrible battle against the oppressors. See, then, the benefit you have conferred upon the human race by your heroic sacrifices.

Soldiers—Accept the undying gratitude which I pronounce in the name of Peru. You shall be rewarded before you return to your beautiful home. No, no, never could an adequate reward be found; your services are beyond any price.

Peruvian soldiers—Your country will ever hold you among the chief saviors of Peru.

Colombian soldiers—Hundreds of victories immortalize you.

BOLIVAR.

Head-quarters at Lima, Dec. 25, 1824.

Honors and rewards were showered upon the liberator's army. Each corps carried the adjunct of "*Glorious Liberators*

of Peru," with the further addition of "*Well Deserved in the Highest Degree.*" Commanders, officers, and men received medals, the widows and families of those fallen in the field were amply provided for; the wounded continued to receive full pay for life, and Sucre became Grand Marshal of Ayacucho. Many generals and other officers were promoted, and a monument on the field of Ayacucho reminds the visitor of the battle that terminated the Spanish rule in South America.





1. ↑ *Junta* in Spanish means an association, and is usually applied to a body of persons combined for any civil or political object. It formerly referred more particularly to assemblies of representatives of the people meeting without authority of the sovereign, but has latterly been extended to those of the most strictly legal character.



CHAPTER II.

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BATTLE OF PROME—1825.

FROM America we will pass nearly half way around the globe in our search for the next decisive battle after that of Ayacucho.

All students of history are well aware that the British power in India in the first half of the present century was represented by the East India Company. From an association of merchants trading to the East Indies in A. D. 1600, the Honorable East India Company grew to a colony of national importance. It possessed an army and a navy, it had the right of eminent domain, it had a commercial monopoly the greatest ever known, and the people under its control numbered many millions. It possessed the powers of a state and likewise its ambitions; it conquered territories neighboring to its own and then looked for more territories to conquer. Kingdoms and principalities of India were brought under its sway, and there was hardly a decade in the two hundred and fifty years of its existence in which it was not at war with neighboring powers. It generally came off victorious, thanks to the splendid fighting qualities which British soldiers have displayed through many ages, backed by the well-known British policy of never submitting to temporary defeat at the hands of Asiatics.

While the British in the early part of the present century were extending their boundaries in the northwest provinces of India, the kingdom of Burmah displayed a desire to aggrandize some of the region lying to the south of the company's territories. About 1798 some 30,000 Mugs,

inhabitants of Arracan, in Burmah, fled from the oppression of their Burmese masters and sought refuge in Chittagong, a possession of the British. Several attempts were made by the Burmese to secure the return of these fugitives, but without avail; between 1800 and 1813 five or six embassies were sent by the Burmese government to that of India with this object in view, but all failed of their purpose. Then all was quiet for a time, save that there were occasional raids of very little consequence along the frontier. In 1822 the Burmese adopted bellicose measures; they seized the island of Shahporee, at the entrance of the arm of the sea dividing Chittagong from Arracan, overpowering the British by a night attack and taking possession in the name of the Burmese government. When asked to explain his action, the governor of Arracan announced that his government had annexed the island, and unless the right of the Burmese to its possessions were admitted, the king of Burmah would send an army to invade the British territory. This plan of proceeding was not unlike that of more civilized countries, Great Britain among them, in carrying on the work of annexation, but when tried against the British it was certain to be resented.

The governor-general of India was not ready to assume the offensive at once; the Burmese mistook delay for timidity and proceeded to invade British territory. Large bodies of Burmese troops crossed the frontier from Assam and Munnipore and established themselves in bamboo stockades; they were driven out by the British, but not without considerable loss to the latter. These operations took place in 1823 and '24; while the British were preparing