

Cipriano Castro, Man Without a Country

Deposed Venezuelan, Regarded as the Greatest International Joke, and Not Wanted Anywhere, Seeks Admittance to America's Metropolis

Cipriano Castro, self-styled "Napoleon of the Andes," defender of the faith, liberator of his country, international scoundrel and all-around public nuisance, is once more before the public eye. A man without a country, jostled from pillar to post, ousted from one city and hustled unceremoniously to the next, the millionaire ex-president of Venezuela is now at the door of the United States seeking admission. He arrived several days ago from France and attempted to gain admittance at the New York harbor. But his plans were frustrated by the immigration officials and he was sent back to Ellis Island to await the decision of the government in his case. His attorneys are putting up a strong fight, but the government is obdurate.

The story of Castro's life reads like the tale of the buccaners of old. His career as the "liberator of his people" began on the borderland of Venezuela and Colombia. Here the great statesman, whose education was nil, followed the cattle-rustling business to such a degree of success that his herds numbered stacks of every conceivable variety of brand. Vigilant to the utmost degree, he so timed his pasturage that, when the Colombian assessors appeared in his vicinity, he was comfortably feeding his flocks in Venezuelan territory. So, too, when the Venezuelan tax commission sought him out, the fields of Colombia were found greener, the grass longer and the water purer.

But this condition of affairs was due for a change. On one particularly bright and auspicious morning, appraisers from both countries appeared simultaneously on the scene and the industrious cattleman was put to his craftiest resources to dodge the consequences. He failed to make his bluff count and the herd was discovered. It was found to contain cattle with brands of such varied description that the entire herd was taken and confiscated to the governments.

Now, to a man of Castro's temperament, this action on the part of the authorities was intolerable. His liberty had been imposed upon, his wealth had been ruthlessly stolen, his means of

livelihood had been taken from him and he must find redress. The government of Venezuela was at the time in the hands of weaklings. Deprived of his herd, he determined to overthrow the government that had so flagrantly trampled on the rights of its citizens. He would take upon himself the responsibility of emancipating his country from the tyranny of such unscrupulous and dishonest rulers. He would break the bonds of his people and liberate them from such overlords. Gathering together a few frontiersmen, as daring and lawless as himself, but less powerful, he depended upon the plains and began a triumphal march upon the capital that ended in his election to the presidency of the emancipated country. Opposition was listless. His dash and courage struck terror to the hearts of all opposition. Wounded and ragged, he sat down before Valencia with his little army of 500 men and the garrison of 5000 surrendered to him without opposition, joined his forces and assisted him in the capture of the capital.

For years his iron hand knew no defeat. He placed in responsible positions men who had supported him in his revolution—men equally as unscrupulous, but less courageous than himself. Through fear of him, they worked in entire accord with his wishes. When the interests of the state interfered with the interests of the statesmen, the former was relegated to the background and the coffers of the latter swelled. In his travels over the country, every town was taxed to the utmost to satisfy the demand of the ruler for an elaborate reception for himself and his expensive retinue. So misery came upon the villages, but the president grew rich. His career smacked of the freebooters of old, even after his election to the presidency.

His high handed methods might have been excused on indefinitely had he not become involved with the powers. So inflated was he with the sense of his strength in Venezuela that he regarded the world as waiting to bow at his feet. Here he was mistaken, for when he began to interfere with com-

merce he suddenly found himself up against a stone wall and the arrogant braggart came in for a sound spanking at the hands of the United States, Eng-

standing malady. Vice-president Gomez succeeded to the presidency, enemies of Castro were placed in public positions and the reign of the "bad

command. Apparently recovered from his malady, he left the continent for Martinique, there to lay plans for a new revolution. But the powers were now thoroughly awakened. Great Britain came in for a sound denunciation at the hands of the belligerent Castro because she refused to allow the tyrant to land in the British West Indies. Uncle Sam kept a weather eye out for an attempt to sneak across to American territory, thus to gain a foothold for an invasion of Central America. France, watchful of her interests, decided that the now thoroughly infuriated impostor would be better off in France than in the vicinity of Venezuela, and sent a ship to convey him home. When he was apprised of this intention he fumed and swore and fussed until he fumed himself into a return of his malady and had to be borne on a stretcher, between two rows of jeering spectators, not in state, but with only a corporal's guard, to the waiting ship in the harbor.

Such is the story of the checkered career of Cipriano Castro. Regarded among the powers as the one supreme international joke, the great brainless statesman, the great circus curio of the age, his mock popularity, however, drew about him a following that gave him the prominence he most desired abroad. When he landed in France, a curious mob met him at the pier and followed him to his elaborate state-rooms at the hotel. Newspaper men settled themselves in suites adjoining him and catered to his desires for publicity by taking photographs and spreading abroad his recitations of the deeds of Venezuela's great, though wronged, liberator. His wealth was somewhat of an enigma, some declaring that he had deposited \$20,000,000 in foreign banks, while others maintained that he was a poor and honest statesman, who, by frugal means and strictest economy, had been able to save only a couple of millions.

Cipriano Castro is at America's door. The case now before the federal authorities bids fair to be one of the most interesting in the life-history of this undesirable quantity. The state

department is chiefly interested in keeping Castro out of the country for fear he will use it as a base from which to foment another revolution in Venezuela. The department of commerce and labor sees it otherwise, and it is likely the matter will be referred eventually to the supreme court for settlement.

Poor Castro! The most undesired man on the face of the earth. Sans friends, sans influence, sans country, he stands before the world very much in the same light as did Philip Nolan, the soldier who said at his trial he wished never again to see or hear of his native land. Nolan spent the balance of his life thereafter on the sea and never saw or heard the mention of the United States again. The sentence meted out to him was the one he had asked. No hook or newspaper bearing the name of America ever reached his hands without first being carefully scrutinized and those parts bearing on his country clipped out. No photograph ever brought before his longing eyes the picture of his home. His friends were dead to him. Transferred from vessel to vessel, he coursed the seas with never a sight of American shores, until a kind Providence relieved him of his broken heart.

Yet the cases are different. Nolan's sentence came as the result of a hasty remark made in a moment of impatience. He had the sympathy of his guards and much sentiment in this country went out to him during his imprisonment on board ship. Castro's predicament, however, is the result of a career of deliberate chicanery. He has made himself a joke among the nations, a laughing stock for the whole world. He has done nothing to excite sympathy and occupies the position of an international felon, whose presence anywhere is a menace to the public welfare. He is an international surplus whom the nations cannot decide where to place. There seems no shelf to put him on. He is an international nuisance, regarding the abating of which there seems no understanding. This seems to be the final decision of his identity.



Cipriano Castro, Political Buccaneer

land and France. He became an international outcast, a world nuisance, and suddenly found it to his welfare to go to France for an operation for a long-

man of Venezuela' came to an end. But Castro was unsatisfied. A few months later this intolerant disturber of the peace aspired again for his old

Convict Leasing Given Hard Jolt President-Elect Is a Busy Man

Recent Pardoning of Prisoners by Arkansas Governor Sounds Knell of Practice that Began in the South Immediately After the Civil War

Democratic Control of the Senate and the Personnel of the Next Cabinet Are Subjects of Deep Concern in Camp of Victorious Party

Not all the barbaric customs of the country have been abolished. In three of the Southern states there still exists an abuse that stands in need of stringent anti-legislation. This is the practice of leasing convicts to private corporations at so much per head. The story of the system makes one of the black pages of our national history, all the sordid facts of which have never been made public. The chain gang of former days was duplicated and the cruelties and inhumanities perpetrated on defenseless convicts of both sexes, and even children, furnished some of the most revolting recitations imaginable. Devices were employed to keep the prisoner a convict. When his time was out, a new and false charge would be pressed against him and he would be resentenced. Thus the unscrupulous employer of convict labor retained the services of his most profitable workers. The lash was frequently employed, illness and wounds were not regarded as sufficient excuse for rest, scant clothing upon women and children exposed their bodies to the ribaldry of lewd men and the moral welfare of the convicts received little or no attention. Children were beaten to death, women were ravished, stubborn men were subjected to third-degree methods of torture that would shame the inquisition, while the contractor got rich and the state received its pittance from the outrages.

With the advance of education and the publicity given the system in the papers, conditions attending it improved. Today the evils are considerably less, in some cases being reduced to a minimum. Yet the fight against it is on and the days of its existence are numbered. Georgia abolished it in 1908, after an investigation that revealed atrocities undreamed of. It is related that a negro convict who refused to work was wrapped in blankets and placed in a box close to a red-hot stove. He was literally sweated to death, his tormentors having exceeded the limit in trying to bring him into submission. Numerous instances are told of sick convicts being beaten to death, and these in cases where the period of punishment was but a few weeks and the offense almost nothing. This investigation caused an improve-

ment in conditions in the states where it still exists, but the days of the system in those states are numbered.

Governor Donaghey, of Arkansas, has taken the matter into his own hands and declares he will force the issue. He is determined that the system of leasing convicts to private parties shall cease in his state. With his characteristic fearlessness, he last month pardoned and freed 360 convicts as a protest against the system, with the result that three convict camps were wiped out of existence. Immediately opponents of the governor and supporters of the system set up a howl against the wholesale pardoning, denouncing the act as a gross abuse of power and a blow at the judges and juries. This criticism may be just, but the act of the chief executive will doubtless be justified by results. Governor Donaghey says his drastic action is in the nature of a last resort. He recounts his fight against the practice, both in his speeches and as a member of the penitentiary board. His messages to the legislatures have brought no action and he says he was driven to the extreme in order to bring about an abolition of the system that no civilized country ought to tolerate. While the step was indeed a drastic one, it will nevertheless have the support of humane and law-respecting people of his state.

Tennessee and South Carolina still cling to the system. Yet in these states sentiment is already working on the legislative and executive branches of the government to bring about its abolition. Governor Rouse, of South Carolina, who has pardoned 500 convicts in the past two years, declares that unless the present assembly abolishes a hosiery mill in the penitentiary that has been condemned by the board of health, a repetition of the Arkansas case may be looked for in South Carolina. Newspapers within the state of Arkansas are divided in their opinion of the governor's course, but the majority of the outside papers seem to feel that results will be for the best. It is a significant fact that the supporters of the convict-leasing system are, for the most part, persons who have a pecuniary interest in it.

A problem that is closely interlocked

with the convict problem in the South is that of the negro. The fact that most of the convicts are negroes is probably responsible in a measure for the support that has been accorded the leasing system. Also the prevalence of negroes among convicts has made easier the perpetuation of the prison sentence, the negro being more easily imposed upon.

The convict-leasing system was the outgrowth of conditions resulting from the Civil War. Without a sufficient number of jails, with treasuries depleted, and the vagrant negro thrown upon the South without the means or the disposition to support himself, the states of the South found themselves totally unable to handle the crime problem. Designing contractors, encouraged and assisted by equally designing politicians, saw in the convict-leasing system immense profits for themselves.

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The matter of increasing the narrow margin of control which the Democrats are conceded to have in the coming congress, is the subject of frequent conferences between prominent Democratic senators and President-elect Wilson. As the situation now stands, the membership of the upper body is evenly divided between the Democrats on the one hand and the combined forces of Republicans and Progressives on the other. This is the general concession of the Republicans, the Senate numbering 29 holdover Democrats, five newly elected and fourteen regarded as certain of election. If the fight in Tennessee, which has developed since the primary endorsement of Ex-governor Patterson, terminates in favor of the Democrats, the slight margin of two votes will be the signal for many a heated contest in that body. The vote will then stand 49 to 47.

Just what effect the progressive ele-

ment will have in the future contests is causing considerable concern in Democratic ranks. It seems evident that the purpose of Mr. Wilson is to so shape his policy that he will capture the support of a number of the progressives and thereby increase the Democratic hold on the Senate. The states of Maine, New Hampshire, Illinois and South Dakota, where the progressives hold the balance of power, are the subjects of much consideration, the hope being to capture from these states additional Democratic senators. The probable outcome in Tennessee is in favor of the Democrats. Here ex-governor Patterson, Democrat, received the primary support, but a fight against him has been precipitated recently which may result in his being defeated.

On January 7 an important conference was held at Trenton in which the senatorial situation was discussed and also the proposed special session at which the tariff and a new currency system will be considered. Democratic leaders realize that they have an opportunity to bring about radical changes in government policies. With the lower house in complete control and senate control a possibility, it should not be difficult for the party to fulfill its pledges. President-elect Wilson is more than anxious to make good and his pre-inauguration conferences are being held with the view to making more secure the hold the Democrats now have on the situation. While the results of this conference have not been made public it is said to have been one of great importance to the party. Many more will be held between now and the inauguration ceremonies.

The selection of the best timber for cabinet positions is another of the important matters that are discussed in these frequent conferences. It is the desire of the president-elect to secure for his associates the very best men the nation affords. While he refuses to make any announcement it is generally felt that Mr. Bryan will be secretary of state. Other positions are very much in the dark.

The interest of the West is centered in the selection of a secretary of the interior. The past few years have engendered much dissatisfaction in the

coast states because of the conservation policy of the interior department. Millions of acres of timber lands have been withdrawn from entry and placed in government reserves. The supply of lumber in the East is rapidly being depleted and the country must look to the forests of the West for its building material. Eastern men who have seen the misuse of their forests and have followed the effects of deforestation, cry aloud for a retention of the bulk of the remaining timber against future needs. Not understanding fully the conditions of the West, they are supporting a policy that is, in effect, more stagnation than conservation, while the West demands development, and that immediately.

Because of this wide divergence of opinion on a vital subject, pressure is being brought to bear on Mr. Wilson from Eastern sources to place in the interior department a man who will carry out the present policy, which means the withholding from settlement of millions of acres in the Northwest. Equally urgent, but with less force because unsupported by the wealth that backs the Eastern demand, the West is clamoring for the appointment of a Western man who will adopt a policy more in accordance with the desires of the West for development.

The fear of the East is that a man from the public land states of the West will be too susceptible to local influences of the West. The fear of the West is that a man from the East will have no sympathy at all with conditions of the West, for the reason that he will carry out the policies of the office from a purely theoretical standpoint. A man selected from one of the public lands states would not necessarily be possessed of less theoretical knowledge than the Easterner, but he would have a practical knowledge of conditions prevailing in his states that would supplement his theories and greatly enhance his value to the country at large. The Western states should have a greater population than they now have. They can only get it by a policy affecting public lands that will induce the settler to seek a home in this section. That is why the West is so deeply interested in the selection of the next secretary of the interior.

