

Independence Day in South American Republics

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SAN MARTIN.

South Americans go wild over national holidays. They have processions and parades and the cities are alive with the noise of firecrackers and cannon. Every house is decorated with flags and bunting. There are more flags displayed in Chili, the Argentine and Brazil than in the United States. One of the funny things about a South American city is the flagpoles. They jut out from every house and every story. No one would think of putting up a business block without flagpoles. In the main streets the flagpoles from the buildings opposite each other almost meet and when the streets are narrow, as in the case of the Ovidor, the main thoroughfare of Rio de Janeiro, the flags form a canopy or arbor over the people below.

Many of the cities arch their principal streets with iron gaspipes, upon which are globes of different colors. On Independence night these globes are ablaze with lights and the national colors show out everywhere. The decoration of Montevideo, Rosario and Rio de Janeiro is remarkable as to its gaslights.

Independence day in Venezuela is on the 5th of July. I speak of it first, for Venezuela was the birthplace of South American independence. It was in Caracas that Simon Bolivar, the chief of the George Washington of South America, was born. He came of a good family, and was sent to Europe to be educated. He went to school in Madrid, and after a tour of France returned there to be married. He was then 19 and his bride was 16. He brought her with him to America, but had hardly arrived in Venezuela before she died of yellow fever.

Upon her coffin Bolivar took an oath that he would not marry again. He consecrated his life to American independence, and from then on devoted himself to the raising of revolutions to free the country from Spain. The declaration of independence was made on July 5, 1811, and that declaration was the death knell of Spanish authority all over South America. After many ups and downs Bolivar finally triumphed and made Venezuela free. He then crossed the mountains to New Grenada, or Colombia, and was instrumental in freeing that country, and also Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru.

You will find statues of him in nearly all the great cities of South America, and streets are named for him in every country.

Spaniards Versus the British.

The Spanish oppressed their subjects far more than the British ever oppressed us. They held South America in servitude for 300 years. They would not allow the people to be educated. One of the Spanish kings, upon receiving a petition for the establishment of a school in one of the towns, said: "I do not consider learning proper in America." The South Americans were not allowed to read certain histories of the United States, and the sale of books of any kind without the sanction of the council of the West Indies was prohibited. All of the officials during the Spanish regime were appointed from Spain. Out of 150 viceroys there were only four who were not Spanish, and of 600 captains general only fourteen were born in America.

The cruelties of the Spanish were beyond conception. The Argentines after they had announced their declaration of independence issued a manifesto describing them. This was on October 25, 1817. The manifesto was addressed to the nations of the earth, and is a terrible arraignment of Spain. It is too long to quote here, but I can give a few of its items: It charges the Spaniards with wiping out the native populations. It says that entire towns have disappeared and their inhabitants destroyed by compulsive labor. It states that Spain has systematically tried to degrade her people in America; that she has done all she could to kill off the surplus and to keep the population down. "Men have been indiscriminately killed in order to diminish the number." In some of the countries the non-combatants were taken in groups into the squares and shot. One instance is mentioned where the Spanish soldiers cut off the ears of the inhabitants of one of the towns and sent a basket of them as a present to their general. After this the troops burned the town, first shutting up people in their houses in order that they might be burned to death. They charged the Spaniards with whipping old religious persons in the open squares and also whipping women whom they had first stripped and bound to cannon, thus exposing them to shame and derision.

After a number of more charges of this kind, including the brutal killing of old men, women and children, detailing the poisoning of the water and food, the blowing up of the soldiers' quarters, the Argentines declared their independence. They soon succeeded in establishing it, and they then crossed the mountains to give freedom to Chili.

The man who led this revolution was

General San Martin. He had the place in lower South America that Bolivar had in the north and he was an equally noble character. Born in the Argentine, he was educated in Europe. He served there in the Spanish army and at the age of 20 was fighting Moors in Africa. After he returned to South America he became the commander of the army and was in charge of it on that march over the Andes to Chili. This expedition was a greater one than that of Napoleon over the Alps into Italy. It was successful, although it lasted for some time and included a number of battles. Having freed Chili, San Martin went north and aided in the freedom of Peru, himself and Bolivar meeting in 1822 at Guayaquil.

There is no doubt as to the honesty of these two men. Either could have been rich beyond the dreams of avarice, but each died poor. Chili offered to make San Martin a present of 10,000 ounces of gold, or about \$200,000, but he refused it. After the struggle was over he left the Argentine for Europe, having with him only \$3,000. He died there after years of poverty and neglect.

It was through Bolivar that Bolivia became an independent nation. The new country was called Bolivia after Bolivar and its assembly voted him \$1,000,000. Bolivar accepted the gift only on the condition that the money should be used for the emancipation of the slaves of Bolivia. The congress

said that he thought the slaves should be freed there and then, and as for him he proposed to liberate his at once. The speech created a sensation and resulted soon after in the emancipation of the slaves. President Campo Salles is, I judge, about 50 years of age. He is a bright-eyed, dark-faced man of medium height and good appearance. He is well educated, has traveled widely and is a man of practical business judgment and ideas. I am told he is making a good president.

Among the excitements of the average South American Fourth of July are the revolutions. The people often choose the anniversary of their independence as the day for changing rulers, and the opposition party captures the army and marches with it to the executive mansion and demands a change in the government. There is often firing, and now and then a president is killed. It was only a couple of years ago that President Borda of Uruguay was shot by an assassin when he was coming out of the cathedral after such a celebration. There was an attempt to assassinate the former president, Moraes of Brazil, and Alfaro, the president of Ecuador, has been assaulted several times by those who hoped to kill him.

The man who is now president of Peru got there through revolution, and the president of Uruguay holds to his position largely through the Gatling guns on his roof. The night before a great holiday is always an unrestful one to a South American president. He knows that when day breaks the streets will be filled with excitable people, and he does not know what the conspirators of the opposing party have planned for the occasion.



MISA CAMPAL.

INDEPENDENCE DAY IN MONTEVIDEO.

of Lima elected him perpetual dictator and he was later on made president of Colombia. He served several terms and then retired from public life.

Notwithstanding his resignation, he was re-elected, but the opposition party which controlled congress voted to accept his resignation and to give him a pension of \$3,000 a year on condition that he would live abroad. He started for Caracas with the intention of going to England, but died before he left Venezuela. He was much hurt by this congressional action and the slight is said to have hastened his death. His last words were: "My wishes are for the happiness of the people. If my death should unite them I will go to the tomb content—yes, to the tomb! The people send me there, but I forgive them."

I am often asked as to the honesty of South American politics and whether it is true that the republics are republics only in name. The questions are hard to answer. In most of the countries there is no political liberty such as we have and men like Bolivar and San Martin are few.

The families of the rich control the republic of Peru. The common people have no rights that the politicians are bound to respect and there is undoubtedly much stealing in high places. In Chili about 200 families manage the politics and government. They practically own the country, they control the elections and put up and put down whom they please. There are, it is true, two parties, but the leaders belong to these families and the members of the families get the fat offices.

It is not far different to the Argentine republic. The ordinary citizen knows that it would be foolish to go to the polls. Buenos Ayres is a city of 800,000 people. During my stay there there was an election and only 25,000 votes were cast. There should have been something like 200,000. The men who own the lands usually vote their employes as they please and managers of the elections decide how many votes each candidate is to have before the votes are put into the ballot boxes.

It is the same in Uruguay and Paraguay and not very much different in Brazil.

The President of Brazil.

During my stay in Rio I met the new president of Brazil. His name is Campo Salles and he is a man of much more than ordinary ability. He came into prominence some years ago at the time they were talking of the emancipation of the slaves. A gradual liberation had been planned, but Campo Salles got up in the convention and

Since my return from South America I have been frequently asked how the South Americans regard the people of the United States. My answer is that they both admire and fear us. The war with Spain was a great eye-opener to them. They rather thought that the Spaniards were stronger than we. After the battle at Manila they changed their expressions of contempt to the words:

"Los Yankees son diablos!" which, being translated, means: "Those Yankees are devils."

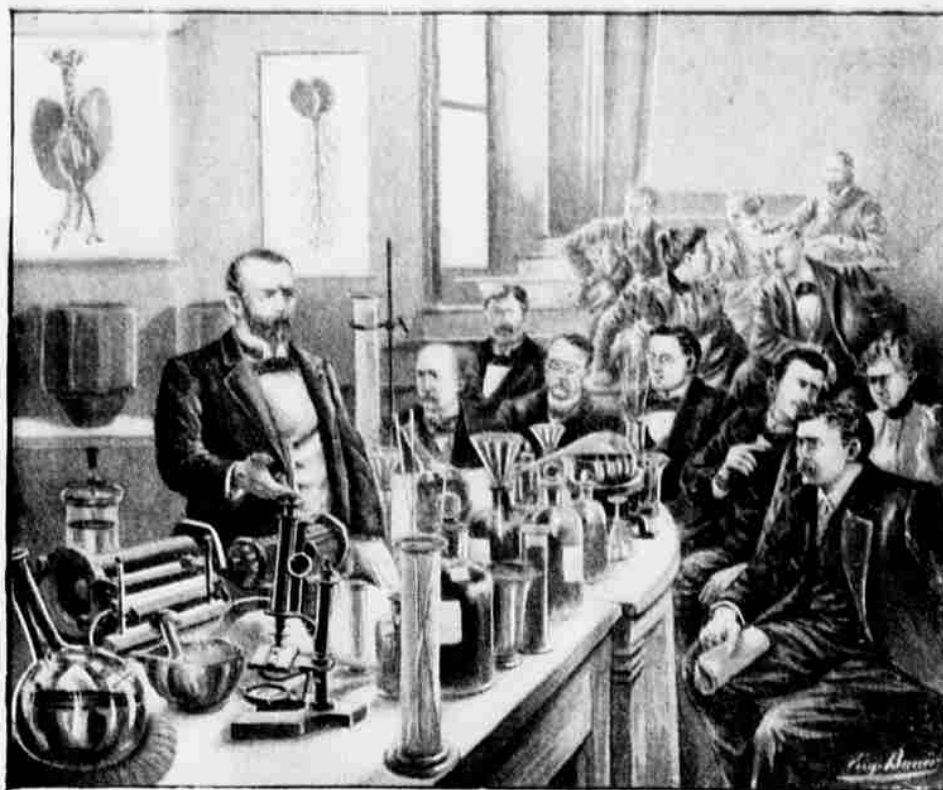
They fear us, for they imagine that, sooner or later, we expect to take the whole of South America and make it subject to our country. You may tell them that we would not have the continent as a gift. They will smile at the statement and say: "Si, senor!" but in their hearts they believe you are lying. This is so of every country of South America, from little Paraguay to Brazil. It is especially so of the Chilians and very much so with the Argentines.

On the other hand, the South Americans admire our government. They have modeled their constitutions after ours and nearly all the politicians have large libraries of Americana. They know our leading men and will talk to you of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. There is a statue of George Washington in Caracas, put up as one of the heroes of human liberty. In the White House of the Argentine I found a library which contained several thousand books relating to the United States. I saw hundreds of books relating to our country and government in the library of the secretary of state of Paraguay and also a fine collection of Americana in the library of Senor Rodrigues, the able editor of *Do Comercio*, the leading paper of Brazil.

How Our Americans Celebrate.

The Fourth of July is usually celebrated by our consuls and diplomats abroad by receptions and dinners. Last year the consul at Paraguay, a colored statesman from Tennessee, John L. Ruffin, was serenaded by the government band. He held a reception at the consulate and the leading Paraguayan officials paid their respects to Uncle Sam. Colonel Bryan, the minister to Brazil, gave a big dinner that day to the Americans in Rio, taking a hotel there for the purpose, and the ministers at Buenos Ayres, Santiago and Lima also held receptions.

There is one class of our people in South America who hardly know whether to celebrate the Fourth or not. They would like to, but they do not think it consistent with their conduct in fleeing from the arms of Uncle Sam at the close of the civil war. I refer to the several colonies who left the United States for South America because the north was victorious over the south. There are two such colonies in Brazil, one about 500 miles or more up the Amazon, near



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