# THE AGE OF THE CAUDILLOS: A CHAPTER IN HISPANIC AMERICAN HISTORY

A little over a century ago the Spanish and Portuguese colonies of the western hemisphere, except Cuba and Puerto Rico, broke away from the mother countries, and set up independent governments of their own. Portuguese Brazil chose an imperial form of government, which continued until 1889, when a revolution established the republic. The Spanish colonies split up into a number of countries, all of which have been self-styled "republics" from the beginning of their independent life, and they were joined in 1903 by Panama and in 1902 by Cuba, separated from Spain in 1898, in which last-named year Puerto Rico was annexed to the United States. One of the dominant facts—one might almost dare to say *the* dominant fact—in the political history of Hispanic America in this era has been the existence of the institution of "caudillism", based on the rule of individuals commonly called "caudillos". Somewhat weaker terms occasionally employed to imply the same thing are the words "caciquism" and "caciques". There is a vast literature on this subject in the writings of Hispanic Americans, with whom it is a favorite topic for study, especially on the part of some of the more distinguished intellectual leaders in the southern republics. Yet, strange to say, there is an almost complete lack of intelligent discussion of this factor in the books of Anglo-American writers—hardly a word about it in the various text-books and broad surveys of Hispanic American history thus far published, except occasional chapters in works of Hispanic American writers which have been translated into English.[1] The story, indeed, is worth at least a volume, but for the present this outline must suffice.

[1] The power of the "cacique" has been very potent also in the Philippines.—Ed.



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It would seem that two preliminary questions might well be asked. In the first place, just what are, or were, caudillos? And secondly, what are the dates for the era of their importance? The precise answer to each of these questions would have to be "I don't know, and neither does anybody else". However, an attempt will be made to give at least a hazy answer to the two questions just propounded.

One normally thinks of a caudillo as a military man, almost literally a man on horseback, who is at the same time the political boss and absolute ruler of a country, or perhaps a district within a country, despite the democratic and republican provisions of constitutions and laws to the contrary. And yet there have been civilians in power whose rule was of the same sort as that of the more numerous soldier-caudillos, and they should not be excluded from the group—García Moreno of Ecuador is an example. Usually the word caudillo carries with it some idea of opprobrium, since the great majority of the caudillos were evil and violent men, little worthy of praise, but in some cases their merits far outweighed their defects, and a few were among the outstanding meritorious figures their countries have produced—as witness Artigas of Uruguay and the above mentioned García Moreno and perhaps Porfirio Díaz of Mexico. Some of the caudillos were extraordinarily cruel and employed the element of terror as their principal method for maintaining themselves in power, while others, though brooking no opposition, joined hands with the capitalists and the church in order to rule in an outwardly respectable and benevolent manner.

Generally, the more violent of the caudillos appeared in the early years of the republican era, while those of later years were somewhat less crude and barbarous. On a smaller scale, much the same sort of evolution manifested itself in the careers of individual caudillos, whose measures were much harsher during the years when they were insecure in their power than they were after they had established control. In

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other words, the caudillos changed, just as did the people whom they ruled, and tended to adapt themselves to public opinion in so far as it did not conflict with their own interests. They persistently vociferated their own alleged "patriotism", and conformed to the letter of the law and the constitution, or if some paragraph in the "fundamental document" interfered with their desires, despite their control over all branches of the government in fact, they simply wrote a new constitution and "obeyed" that. In any event, by whatever device, their rule was military and despotic, though often to the accompaniment of pomp and pageantry, display and etiquette, in order to produce the glamor as of royalty to impress the crowd.

Once in office, the caudillos ruled permanently, or until defeat overcame them. Periodical "elections" would be held, but as the henchmen of the caudillos made up the voting lists and counted the votes, these "manifestations of the popular will" were an overwhelming mandate in favor of the existing government, not infrequently to the extent of a nearly unanimous vote. In rare instances, a caudillo was able to pass on his power to a favorite of his own, but the usual route to retirement was through the rise of another caudillo, who eventually took violent possession of the government. Such a successor might come from one of two classes. He might be one of a number of exiled opponents, several of whom aspired to take the place of the man in power. Often, however, the new caudillo was a one-time henchman of the old, who had gone over to the opposition in exchange for the assurance of succession to office. Such a man was Urquiza, who overthrew Rosas in Buenos Aires. The fact that Urquiza did not make selfish use of his opportunities does not prevent his case from being cited in order to show how a caudillo might be swept from power. Rosas had his Urquiza, but his nemesis might have been a Quiroga, a López, or a Reinafé.

These names call to mind another and very important point, namely, that in very disturbed times there might be

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caudillos in different regions of some one country, each of whom might be as despotic in his locality as were the greater caudillos who represented the nation. Many names of the greater caudillos are comparatively well known, but one must not forget the hundreds, perhaps thousands, of lesser lights out in the provinces. In comparatively recent times, Mexico had its Pancho Villa. Hispanic America has known many a Pancho Villa.

Let this suffice for the moment for an answer to the question: What is a caudillo? And now, when were the caudillos in power? It is generally agreed that the caudillos were already in the field from the very moment of independence; indeed, it would be more accurate to say that the wars of independence against the mother country were contemporaneous with local conflicts among those who aspired to be caudillos. The strife of the Carreras and O'Higginses in Chile furnishes a perfect illustration of this point. Even Bolívar, San Martín, and the first Brazilian emperor, Pedro I., were in a sense caudillos, although one dislikes to associate them with a status which has fallen into such general disrepute.

The determination of the duration of the era is not so easy. It is customary to date the emergence of Chile from the age of the caudillos with the appearance of Portales in 1830, and yet, for a generation thereafter, Chile was ruled by more or less autocratic presidents who, indeed, went out of office at the end of ten-year presidencies, but who nevertheless chose their own successors. In the case of Argentina, some name 1852, the year when Rosas fell, and others, 1862, when Mitre ascended to power. Uruguay's emergence is dated from the 40's of the past century, but there has been a great deal of turbulence in Uruguay ever since. Colombia can hardly be said to have stepped into the clear until early in the present century. Cuba is not ordinarily considered to have entered the caudillo stage at all, but the governments of Gómez, Menocal, Zayas, and Machado have varied from those of some of the worst of the

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caudillos of Central and South America only in so far as they have been held in check by the threat of United States intervention. Costa Rica is often cited as an example differing from the caudillo-managed republics of the rest of Central America, but the claims of Costa Rica will not bear too close inspection; the difference is one of degree only.

The Andean countries of Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador, and possibly Paraguay as well, had at least evolved out of the worst phases of caudillism by the close of the nineteenth century, but the presidents of these countries, if infinitely more decent than some of their predecessors and even devoted to some extent to constructive projects for national betterment, have exercised the power and employed some of the methods of the earlier caudillos in keeping themselves in office. What, for example, was Leguía of Peru, lately evicted from the presidency after some eleven years in office, if not a caudillo? As for Mexico, the Central American republics, the Dominican Republic, and its pseudo-French neighbor Haiti, not one of them has ever really graduated from the caudillo class. There may have been moments when they seemed on the point of doing so. With respect to Mexico, for example, the English writer Percy Martin once wrote a book in which he said that the institutions of Mexico were as sound and as little likely to upset through the medium of a revolution as those of the United States.[2] His book was hardly off the press before the revolutions beginning in 1910 were under way. So it is not safe to count too much on a few years of comparative peace. Even in the best of the Hispanic American countries, one finds something of the shadow of the man on horseback. In 1930, there were successful revolutions or *coups d'états* in Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, and Brazil, and in 1931 another in Chile. In these same years, too, there have been a number of revolutions in Caribbean countries, such as those in Guatemala, Panama, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Salvador. Surely

[2] *Mexico of the Twentieth Century* (London, 1907).

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the generals are not dead. And each of these revolutions represents at least the alleged illegal exercise of power on the part of those in office, after the pattern of the old caudillos.

In the light of these facts, who will dare to set dates for the age of the caudillos? At a venture, one might say that the earlier and more violent forms of caudillism had passed away in Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, and Argentina, perhaps in that order, by 1862; that they had spent the greater part of their force in the larger and more important of the other countries by the close of the past century, but continued in modified form from that time to the present, with the possible exception of Colombia, which may deserve a better rating; that Cuba probably belongs in this group; that all of the other countries have advanced very little from old-fashioned caudillism, except as outside influence is brought to bear; and that over all Hispanic American countries, without exception, there hovers a possibility of a return to some phase or other of the institution of caudillism.

So much for brief definition. The rest of this paper will discuss the question in greater detail and, perhaps, more convincingly. At the outset a new query naturally arises: "Just why should this, to us, strange institution have developed and taken such a strong grip in Hispanic America"? The question is not easy to answer in a few words. Many Hispanic Americans have written at great length in an effort to explain its origins. At this time, only a few observations, which can hardly be dignified by the title of a summary, can be offered, but they may in some measure make clear the situation.

It is hardly necessary to say that caudillism grew naturally out of conditions as they existed in Hispanic America; institutions do not have the habit of springing full-blown and without warning into life. One of the essential antecedents of caudillism is to be found in the character of the Hispanic races which effected the conquest of the Americas. Spaniards and Portuguese, then as now, were individualists, at the same time

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that they were accustomed to absolutism as a leading principle of political life. *"Del rey abajo ninguno"* is a familiar Spanish refrain, which may be rendered freely "No person below the king is any better than I am". It is precisely because of the strength of this feeling that absolutism has become a necessary part of Hispanic practice, because usually only some form of strong dictatorship has been able to hold Hispanic peoples in check. Otherwise, in a truly democratic country of ten million Hispanic persons there would be ten million republics. Furthermore, it was the most adventurous and least conservative elements among the Spaniards and Portuguese who first came to America. Even some of their illustrious leaders were men of comparatively low origin in the mother country—men such as Pizarro, Almagro, Irala, and Garay, for example. In America, the conquerors were a dominant minority among inferior races, and their individualism was accentuated by the chances now afforded to do as they pleased amidst subjugated peoples. It must be remembered, too, that they did not bring their families, and in consequence not only was there an admixture of blood on a tremendous scale with the native Indians and even the negroes, but also tendencies developed toward loose and turbulent habits beyond anything which was customary in the home land. In other words, Hispanic society deteriorated in the Americas. To make matters worse, there were no compensating advantages in the way of political freedom, for the monarchy was successful in establishing its absolutist system in the colonies, a system which in practice was a corrupt, militaristic control, with scant interest in, or attention to, the needs of the people over whom it ruled. The Anglo-American colonies were settlements of *families* in search of new homes. They did not decline in quality, as there was no such association with the Indians as there was in Spanish America and Brazil. In Hispanic America, society was constituted on the basis of a union of white soldiery with Indian or negro elements. It tended to become *mestizo* or mu-

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latto, with a resulting loss of white culture and the native simplicity of life. Soon the half-castes far surpassed the whites in numbers, and, especially in the cases of the *mestizos,* added to the prevailing turbulence in their quest for the rights of white men. Even in the eighteenth century it was the custom in Buenos Aires for men to go about armed with swords and muskets, for the protection of both life and property depended more upon one's self than upon the law. As for the Indians and negroes, they were usually submissive, but shared one feeling with castes and native-born whites—for, largely through the process of mendelism, there was a native-born white class—that of abomination for the government. Most persons in colonial days knew no patriotism beyond that of the village or city in which they lived. For this, in keeping with the individualistic traits of their character, they came to have an exaggerated regard. Spending most of their lives in the one locality and shut off by the restrictive policies of the mother country from contacts with the outside world they looked upon the "cackle of their bourg as the murmur of the world".

In course of time, the "creoles", as the native-born whites were called, became more conservative and less turbulent in the towns, as they developed something of wealth and social prestige, even if on a lower plane than that of the "peninsulars", as the Hispanic political overlords were often called. They were ready, therefore, to place themselves on the side of authority against the disturbing elements, even on the side of the overseas Hispanic ruling class, until such time as they themselves could supplant them. One result of this social change was to push the adventurous characters into the rural districts, especially in the cattle countries. Thus for example, there developed the Argentinian *gaucho,* or cowboy,

> filled with violent pride, quick in reply, impulsive in aggression, exaggeratedly grand and gallant, with an Arabic passion for mad pursuits, for ballad singing, for trinkets and gems, with the conceit of the

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hidalgo and a Castilian disdain of work, taciturn and astute, malicious and reticent, with great nobility of manner and generosity of spirit, as of one who was not subject to the servility of daily tasks.

Even here, however, the creole master was a necessary factor in society, and he took advantage of his position to become the absolute lord of the district, at the same time that he descended in habits to the level of the *gauchos* upon whom he depended. Thus was created, for example, what Ayarragaray has called the *gauchocracia,* or "cowboyocracy", of Argentina, which produced Rosas and other far-famed caudillos of the Río de La Plata countries. To these forces in the colonial era must be added one more: that of hatred for anything foreign, with hatred for the peninsulars and their system taking first place among detested persons and practices. It was natural, therefore, that the overthrow of the rule of the mother countries would result in as great a departure as possible from the *form* of government of colonial days, especially in the Spanish American countries, because of the bitterness generated by the long and cruel wars of independence, but it was equally certain that the new régime would continue the essence of the old. Republics might be set up after the pattern of the then much admired United States, but there was no law or constitution which could save Hispanic Americans from themselves.

Without taking too much space for argument, a few words might be added in order to emphasize the existence of the factor of a favorable atmosphere in colonial days for the eventual development of caudillism. Indeed, the institution really existed throughout the pre-independence era. What were the conquistadores and adelantados and even the viceroys but absolute military and political bosses, except for the somewhat faintly exercised royal control? Not infrequently colonial officials continued to wield power despite higher orders to the contrary. An example of this, one out of many it would be possible to cite, was the case of Antequera in Paraguay, who

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held his position for ten years against royally named successors, claiming that the king's signature was a forgery. Among the aborigines, too, the chief had been accustomed to exercise absolute sway, until somebody else should surpass him in influence. For the latter, it was a natural transition from native caciques by way of Hispanic officialdom to the caudillos of the early republics. The social keynote was one of individualistic absolutism in all classes, instead of that love of, and subjection to, the law which were such marked characteristics of the Anglo-American colonists. In consequence, with the disappearance of the mother country governments at the time of the revolutions, all authority fell with them, and there was no legal consciousness or political capacity ready at hand to cope with the turbulence which was to facilitate the emergence of the caudillos. When the citizens of Buenos Aires met together on May 25, 1810, to begin the movement for the overthrow of Spanish control, it was the first time that the people of that part of the Americas had exercised civic functions. Only the absolutism of the mother country had existed before, and in the bitter war period after 1810 it became a habit to denounce that dominance in exaggerated fashion as a tyranny of which the last vestige should be destroyed. There was no desire for a continuance of the institutions of the mother country such as there was in Anglo America. There was little in the way of political liberty worth preserving in either Spain or Portugal anyway. So institutions were adopted which were as far removed as possible from those of their former rulers, with the result that they did not fit the peoples of Hispanic America; in particular, an attempt was made to pass immediately from colonial absolutism to pure democracy. Naturally, the effort failed. It was possible to tear down the outward forms—one might say the nomenclature—of the old system, but its inner spirit remained, for it was ingrained in the habits of the people. As Alejandro Deústua, former rector of the University of San Marcos in Lima, once said to me:

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"There was no abrupt change from the colonial period with the winning of independence. The colonial period lived on". Indeed, according to Deústua, to a marked degree it "still lives".

According to one of the Spanish viceroys, three centuries of Spanish rule had converted the inhabitants of the Indies "either into irreconcilable rebels or into men who were born to vegetate in obscurity or abject submission". That continued to be the case in the era of independence. The masses accepted their new rulers as easily as they had the viceroys, but the rebellious elements fought the new governments as they had the old. Indeed, it became, and has remained, a form of patriotism to inveigh against "the government", whatever it might happen to be. The wealthy creoles always favored those most likely to offer peace and security, and easily veered over to the winning side of any caudillo who might establish himself. Revolutions were fought in the name of various alleged principles, but only persons and ritual were overthrown; the social constitution remained the same, or changed but slowly. The wars against the mother country, in themselves, contributed to the development of caudillism. The reaction against the far-reaching centralism of the mother country inevitably drove the peoples of Hispanic America toward a localism which was in keeping with their individualistic character, but did not engender a patriotism as for a Virginia or a Massachusetts as in Anglo America. In Hispanic America provincial divisions were mere administrative units, with boundaries which were not precisely fixed and in which few persons were interested. Thus, only a few years prior to the outbreak of the wars of independence in 1810, it was possible for the Spanish government to transfer the vast province of Cuyo from Chile to the viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata, without any thought of protest from anyone. With Cuyo, which includes a number of present-day Argentinian provinces, as a part of Chile, it would be Chile, not Argentina,

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which would be the most important country of southern South America today. But in independence times, the people rallied, not to an administrative division, but rather to a *leader* against the mother country—a leader who very easily evolved into a caudillo.

Ignorance, turbulence, and what proved to be their great ally, universal suffrage, combined to assure the rise and overlordship of the caudillos. The overwhelming majority of the people of Hispanic America were illiterate. Certainly, it would be a generous estimate to assert that as many as ten per cent of the inhabitants could read and write. With this impossible background, democratic institutions were attempted. The meetings of the cabildos became demagogic tumults, with the masses sitting in the galleries and cheering the most radical and violent. It was on this account that new institutions were adopted by law which did not fit actual conditions, a prime cause of the failure of the early independence governments. The turbulence of the new alleged democracy could accept nothing less than universal suffrage, which of course was duly proclaimed. That meant the demagogue in the city. Much more important, it meant the caudillo in the rural districts, for the "sacred right of voting" became the principal legal basis of the power of the caudillos. Out of this there developed that curious phenomenon, the Hispanic American election. Elections were habitually fraudulent. The only question about them was whether the fraud should be tame or violent. If there were no resistance, various devices were employed to obtain the vote desired. But if there were opposition, the caudillo nevertheless won, but to the accompaniment of an orgy of blood. In the beginning the masses supported the demagogue of the city or the country caudillo. In these leaders, with their prating about the "rights of man", they found the vindication of their claims for political recognition. The conservative classes acquiesced. It was better to suffer the mob and grotesque usurpers than to lose one's life

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and property through any genuine participation in elections. All that remained for the caudillos to do was to conquer the demagogues. Then at last the work was complete. The cast-out and wandering spirit of Hispanic absolutism had found a new home in the personality of the caudillos. The "cowboyocracy" of the Río de La Plata and its parallels elsewhere in Hispanic America had established themselves in the seat of power.

The typical caudillo of the early independence era has been described in these terms:

> Tenacious and astute, capable of converting himself into a dictator by means of his cynicism of temperament and his systematic cruelty, he was part cowboy, part actor, avaricious of omnipotence, manufacturer of the terror, without any uneasiness of conscience, and with an obstinate contempt for human nature.

Under the caudillos there was no hierarchy, no division of powers. They themselves were absolute. Their will was the law. Caudillism became the real constitution, despite imported "fundamental documents". The caudillos ruled on behalf of themselves and their following, and protected such others among the wealthy as made fitting arrangements with them. Their government was rudimentary and military. The chief of state and chief of the army were one and the same person. At times they permitted others to carry on the government in name, but the caudillos were the real power. Government was purely opportunist, the exercise of power for its own sake and the profits accruing therefrom. The most successful caudillos were those who combined audacity and an animal-like courage with the methods of the braggart and bully.

The violent caudillos of early days usually observed the forms of the constitution and the laws, but did not hesitate to over-ride them if they proved annoying. As between acquiescence in the "sacred codes" to the accompaniment of delay on the one hand and usurpations and extortions on the other, they chose the latter. They employed fraud, terror, and cor-

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ruption to reduce opponents to their control. The sword was never in the scabbard. The caudillos used it to get into power and to stay there. Those who resisted could expect no quarter, for cruelty was one of the fine arts of caudillism. Each of the caudillos might have his band of killers to assist him in his civic functions. Most notorious among such groups was the "Mazorca", or "Ear of Corn"—so-called because of the cohesion of its members—of Rosas, an organized body of assassins. Naturally, all political jobs, all graft, and all the fruits of office generally were the sole perquisite of the friends of the caudillo. From president, down through members of congress, to janitors and street-sweepers, all government was homogeneous.

Nevertheless, the caudillos did not forget the great outnumbering masses of the people. As already set forth, public opinion counted for something. So they made a practice of using the vocabulary of freedom and party principle. The documents of those days are filled to overflowing with terms like the following: the "liberator"; "restorer of liberty"—or "the constitution"—or "the laws"; the "pacificator"; "the only man capable of saving the country"; the "holy cause"; "the protector of the people from oppression"; "the deliverer of the people from chains"; "liberty"; "regeneration"; "restoration"; "purification"; "the voice of the people"; "the public interest"; "the honor of the country"; "the reign of public felicity"; and the opposites of these terms in such words as the following: "tyranny", which would certainly be "ominous" or "barbarous" or "funereal" or "execrable"; and the "monsters who dishonor humanity". Both sides shouted their party cries from the housetops at all hours —among others, "Federalism or death" or "Unitarism or death"—always nothing less than death! Rosas insisted that his adherents should display the party color, which was red, and so red bands and rosettes, red-painted interiors, everywhere something red, were the unfailing fashion in Buenos

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Aires. To wear blue, the Unitarist color, was to court disaster, even death itself. One even had to wear a mustache and by no means to have side-whiskers, the hirsute adornment of the Unitarists, to be a good Rosas Federalist. And denunciations of the opposition were in extreme form. Rosas once wrote to a subordinate always to use the word "savage" when referring to the Unitarists. "Repeat the word 'savage'," he commanded; "repeat it to satiety, to boredom, to exhaustion." Thus did Rosas manifest his understanding of the psychological value of a phrase. And yet Federalist or Unitarist, or any party by whatever name, governed, once in power, in precisely the same fashion as the other party had done before it, in the absolute manner of the caudillos. The different leaders in no respect represented any real political or social conflict, but just different leaders. Government reduced itself to dominating and to resisting the efforts of others to dominate.

In point of fact this practice of exaggerated expression fitted in with the customs of the people. It was a Hispanic-American habit to conceive of causes in the name of persons. There have been far more "Miguelistas" or "Porfiristas" in Hispanic America than "Progressives" or men of other party names, at least in popular parlance. The leader, which meant the caudillo, was party, flag, principle, and objective, all in his own person. If conditions were bad, it was because another leader was needed, and for that matter each group had its "liberator" or "savior" of the country. Indeed, hyperbole of civic phrase makes its appearance in all the documentation of Hispanic-American history. All prominent men are national heroes or tyrants, according to whatever person happens to be writing. Thus Barrios of Guatemala is the god of Central American unity or he is what might be called the very devil of a caudillo. It makes research in this field a matter requiring great discrimination and critical appreciation, for hyperbole, I repeat, was and still is a Hispanic-American disease. The following is a prose translation of a poem which illustrates this tendency:

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> No longer resound the terms Thermopylae and the plains of Marathon. Plataea and Salamis are as if they never were, and Leonidas and Themistocles are not now famous in the world. These illustrious names have been eclipsed by those of Alvear and Brown.

One Buenos Aires writer of the same period pronounced in favor of a government "under a system which should be free and at the same time heroic", and thought that it would then be easy for the newly-born nation to "surpass all others". Even a notable statesman like Rivadavia expected an immediate realization politically of all those benefits to which even France and England had not yet attained.

The caudillos did perform one real service for the regions over which they ruled, and that was to replace turbulence with order. They were the only curb as against the prevailing anarchy. In so much at least they fulfilled the desires of conservatives and ignorant mass alike. The price of peace was great, but perhaps not too high; for example, in Buenos Aires alone, there were twelve revolutions in the one year 1820. That is not to say there was no more fighting, for aspirants to the place of power schemed against the caudillo in office, and a neighboring caudillo might war against the caudillo in the next province. Insecurity was still a keynote of the times. One caudillo is said to have erected a scaffold before his quarters upon which he placed the inscription: "For them or for me". And, indeed, even at the height of their power the caudillos were generally prepared for flight.

Eventually, the age of the violent or "muscular" caudillos, as they are sometimes called, came to an end, although there was a Zelaya in Nicaragua and an Estrada Cabrera in Guatemala in the present century, and there would be others like them were it not for the influence, rather faintly exercised at times, of the United States. In most parts of Hispanic America there continued to be caudillos, but they were now of the "tame" and "semi-cultivated" variety. A few countries, notably Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, banished the caudillos

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altogether, but their ghosts remained in the offing, ready to materialize in a political emergency. Several broad forces were back of the disappearance of the muscular caudillo. Chronologically first were the pronouncements of the great leaders in the wars of independence, Bolívar and San Martín. Both of these men believed in strong government and centralization, or unitarism, and in this respect did not differ from the caudillos, but they stood for great countries rather than sectionalism, and for at least a little something of political liberty, with the idea that the masses might in the future develop capacity to work free institutions. In a sense the political history of Hispanic America has been an evolution toward the ideals of Bolívar and San Martín, and these great heroes, rejected at first, came at length to be accepted for what they represented. This was in accord, too, with the influence effected by liberal movements in Europe in the middle and later years of the nineteenth century.

Within Hispanic America itself several other factors contributed to bring about the change. Wealth began to be more prominent and in some measure to rival or surpass the generals. Intellectual leaders were no longer despised, and almost to a man they cast in their lot against the violent caudillos. And the provincial caudillos, who at one time ruled little more than a district which could be encompassed by a hard day's ride on horseback, expanded their power until they controlled the destinies of a country. The railways and telegraphs and other developments in the field of communications were a great aid in bringing about this change. The local caudillos remained in existence, but they were now distinctly subordinates of the great caudillo, so long as they retained his favor, or until they might become strong enough to supplant him. To some extent, too, the masses were less easy to deceive than they had been before. Experience had taught, though none too thoroughly, that something more than a phrase, a ribbon, or a moustache was necessary for a good government and that the promised millennium never came.



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So outwardly the caudillo changed. All legal forms were now carefully observed. If the constitution stood in the way, great pains were taken *to make a new constitution,* instead of an open departure from the old. The "tame" caudillo preferred intrigue to violence, or if violence were necessary sought to place the burden of guilt upon others. A José Miguel Gómez of Cuba could invite Pino Guerra for a friendly game of billiards at the presidential palace, and then have assassins await him as he took his departure, afterward denouncing the crime to high heaven—and making no attempt to apprehend the would-be killers (for Pino escaped), who were well known henchmen of the president. Indeed, one of the outstanding traits of the tame caudillos was a certain feline duplicity. They were now afraid or ashamed of being thought to be caudillos. Nevertheless, caudillos they still were, with perhaps a little opposition tolerated now, though not always, but with the same absolutism as that of their predecessors, if in a new ambient. They no longer brandished the sword, but carried on organized pillage through the law courts.

Many of the caudillos, on the whole, deserve well in the verdict of history, even including some of the violent caudillos. Artigas, García Moreno, and Juárez are to this day great national heroes in Uruguay, Ecuador, and Mexico respectively. And many of those who attained to the presidency of a republic, even when they are greatly disapproved, merit at least some praise. In this group might be included such names as Francia of Paraguay, Rosas of Argentina, Páez, Guzmán Blanco and Gómez of Venezuela, Iturbide, Díaz, and Carranza of Mexico, Carrera and Barrios of Guatemala, Castilla of Peru, and Gómez and Menocal of Cuba. Santa Anna of Mexico, López of Paraguay, and the now "reigning" Machado of Cuba may belong on the border-line of at least a little decency and thorough-going badness. In Central America and Ecuador there have been many a Zelaya and Estrada

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Cabrera, and even in countries a grade higher there have been utterly bad caudillos such as Castro of Venezuela, Marroquín of Colombia, and Melgarejo of Bolivia—to mention only a few, for a complete list would take up considerable space. Still many more names would be required to make up the roll of provincial caudillos, among whom there would be found few muscular caudillos deserving of praise, and only a scant minority of the tame variety with any claims to virtue. Quiroga of Argentina, immortalized by the "Facundo" of Sarmiento, and Pancho Villa of Mexico are examples of this class.

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It might be fitting, in closing this paper, to refer very briefly to Mariano Melgarejo, the most notorious of all the violent caudillos of Bolivia. An illegitimate child, and reared in poverty and neglect, he developed into a rude, ignorant, violent, and quarrelsome ruffian, and he was notoriously sensual and a confirmed drunkard. Joined to his magnificent physique, which his many excesses failed to break down, he combined personal courage, boldness, and a readiness in action which carried him far. Becoming a soldier at an early age, he had already distinguished himself on the field of battle by the time he was eighteen. In 1840, by a sensational escape from imprisonment in Peru, he became a national hero. By a still bolder and sensational coup, he seized the presidency in 1864 and held it until 1871. Revolutions against him he put down with boldness and ruthlessness. If policy he had any, it was to keep his soldiers well paid and satisfied.

As president he gave himself up to continual debauchery, and his personal vanity was so great that he was susceptible to the grossest of flattery. It is said that this trait led him to give unduly favorable rights in the Atacama Desert to Chile, and to cede to Brazil a large extent of territory. His vanity led him to make a mock of religious ceremonies, for he insisted in intervening therein in a sensational manner.

By revolution he gained his power. By revolution he lost

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it—fleeing rather ignominiously from La Paz when it seemed that he had a chance of gaining the day, and barely escaping into Peru. This flight, so at variance with his whole life, seems to have been caused partly because of his fears for his mistress to whom he was devotedly attached. In Peru and in Chile he lived for a few months in poverty, trying vainly to see his mistress who had escaped to Lima and was living with her brother, José Aurelio Sánchez, who had himself married Melgarejo's daughter. His mistress had declared that she would no longer live with him, and while trying to force an entrance into the house, he was shot to death by José. It was the typical end of a typical caudillo. In Bolivia he was succeeded in the presidency by General Morales, himself a notorious caudillo.[3]

The following theses, written as partial requirement for the Ph.D. degree in the University of California at Berkeley, none of which have been published, may be consulted in the library of the University:

Altman, Ida Mae: Juan Facundo Quiroga: The Tiger of the Argentine Pampas. 1930.

Bealer, Lewis Winkler. Artigas and the Beginnings of Uruguay, 1810-1820. 1930.

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Leal, Clarence Anthony: Gabriel García Moreno: Life and Works of Ecuador's Most Famous President. 1931.

Neasham, Vernon Aubrey: Juan Bautista Alberdi: Argentina Thinker of the Nineteenth Century. 1932.

Pylman, Alice Sarah: Carlos de Alvear: A Study in the Origins of the Argentine Republic. 1930.

CHARLES E. CHAPMAN.
University of California, Berkeley.

[3] The writer has a list of several hundred items which would have to be considered in a thorough study of caudillism. The topic has been ably and amply discussed by Argentinian authors, although there are other countries which have witnessed a more vicious and certainly more prolonged form of caudillism than Argentina. It is expected that at least a partial list of titles will be published in a future number of this REVIEW.

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