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## THE PRESIDENT OF PERU.

Lima, Peru, April 27, 1898.

It was in company with Mr. Richard R. Neal, the secretary of our legation at Lima, that I called upon the president this afternoon. His excellency had appointed 2 p. m. for the audience, and at that hour we entered the vast, low, one-story building which forms the White House and government offices of this republic. Soldiers in uniforms of white duck, with guns at their sides, guarded the doors, and as we entered the hall we passed by a company of infantry ready for immediate action in case of revolution. Additional guns stood in racks against the walls, and my surroundings were those of a fortress rather than a country where the people are supposed to rule. This is, you know, a land of revolutions. President Pierola came in after many months of hard fighting, and in the houses and churches of Lima you may yet see the marks where cannon balls and bullets went crashing through. For days the president besieged the city. The opposing factions had Gatling guns trained upon one another, and they swept the streets. The dead were carried out each morning by the cartload, and there were so many dead horses that they were not buried, but were covered with coal oil, and a match having been applied, were thus consumed. With the new president, Pierola, in and the old president, Caceres, banished, there was peace and a new government, and there is peace today. The present administration has been in power for several years. It is more progressive than any administration Peru has had for a long period, and under it the country is steadily improving. There is an opposition party, however, and President Pierola is too good a soldier to sleep on his arms. He keeps his troops in good order, and you find soldiers almost everywhere present.

As we went further into the palace we passed a number of officers in uniform and then proceeded through one anti room after another, until we came into the office of the president's private secretary, the J. Addison Porter of Peru. This man was even more suave than our Mr. Porter. He told us that the palace, the president and himself were at my disposal that his excellency would receive me at once. He went out, and a moment later ushered Mr. Neal and myself into a large hall furnished not unlike one of our public reception rooms at Washington. In the center of the room as we entered stood a straight, handsome man with an eye as bright as that of an eagle. His features were striking, and his strong nose and mouth those of a leader or men. His forehead was very high, and the white curl which hung down upon it was twisted about after the style of our once American dictator, Roscoe Conkling, while his brown whiskers were trimmed after the fashion of Louis Napoleon. It was Nicholas Pierola, the famous South American statesman, general, patriot and revolu-

tionist, the president of Peru. He is now, I judge, between fifty and sixty years of age, probably nearer the latter year than the former. He is about five feet six inches in height, but his military bearing makes him look taller. He was dressed in a black broadcloth suit with a cameo medallion upon his white tie. He stepped toward us as we came in and shook hands with me upon my presentation. He asked me to take a seat on a sofa, and, with his own hands, brought a chair and sat down beside me. He chatted for some time with me as to my trip, and said he was glad to have an American journalist come to Peru, as he felt that his country was not properly known in North America. During the conversation, in which Secretary Neal acted as interpreter, his excellency referred to the wonderful mineral and agricultural possibilities of Peru. He said that its mineral regions had not been carefully prospected, that its surface was hardly scratched and that if it had the proper amount of capital and the right sort of immigration it would be one of the richest countries of the continent. Upon my asking his excellency how he regarded the introduction of American money, he replied that Peru would be glad to welcome any Americans that might come, and that there were many safe investments here which would yield a profitable return. He was anxious, he said, to see an increased trade between the sister republics of the United States and Peru, and hoped that one of the transisthmian canals would be pushed to its completion with that end in view.

During the audience I told his excellency of a chat I had with President McKinley just before leaving Washington, in which our President stated his anxiety that the two continents should have better trade relations and that the business between them should be greatly increased. In his talk with me President McKinley stated his position on this matter in strong terms, saying that the foundation for all such relations was peace and friendship, and that I might state his hope that peace would continue, for without it business could not endure. President Pierola heartily assented to this. He said he was able to state that Peru was in a safe and settled condition, and that he thought it would continue so. He referred to the Monroe doctrine, with which he said he was in thorough accord, saying that the republics of this hemisphere should support, aid and Balt at its head, and Pierola came defend one another in the protection of their rights as free governments. At this point the new minister from Bolivia, whose reception had been fixed to follow mine, was announced and our very pleasant talk was brought to a close.

The statesmen of South America have much more eventful lives than politicians of the United States. President Pierola's career has been one of romantic ups and downs. He is the son of a famous scientist and litterateur, his father having been president

of a university and a co-worker with Humboldt, Sir Humphrey Davy and Dr. Von Tschudi, the noted Austrian philosopher and traveler. President Pierola was educated in Europe, and while a student in Paris he married the daughter of the Emperor Iturbide of Mexico. He began his life's work as an editor here in Lima, but the president he supported was ousted by a revolution under Gen. Pardo, and Pierola was banished. Then there was another revolution with President Balt at its head and Pierola came back to Lima as secretary of the treasury. He was secretary at the time that Meiggs, the American, inaugurated a great system of railroads and public improvements, and together they made the money flow faster than the river Rimac, in trying to develop Peru. Ex-President Pardo now again appeared with another army and drove Balt and Pierola out. This was just twenty years ago. Several years later came the war with Chile, and Pierola was called back as one of the commanders of the Peruvian troops. His army was defeated and it was charged at the time that he had sold out to the Chileans. In the meantime President Pardo had fled the country and Pierola became dictator. The Chileans having conquered, refused to recognize him, as they knew he would not consent to give up the rich nitrate fields, which were the real cause of the war. They then put up one of their own tools as president and Pierola was banished a third time. He fled to France and did not return until Gen. Caceres was president, in 1886. Caceres was, I am told, a highway robber of the first magnitude. His wife, who was originally a rabona, a woman following the army, was with him in his speculations and concessions, and privileges were sold by them, the funds pocketed and the money sent to Paris to be deposited to Caceres' private account there. Such actions created a strong anti-Caceres party, and Pierola came back to run for president. Caceres was afraid of him, and having concealed some guns on Pierola's estate, sent soldiers to find them and charge Pierola with treason. This was done and Pierola was brought to Lima and here confined in the palace. One day a French lady friend called upon him. She was admitted. She changed clothes with Pierola in his cell, and when the guards came in later on they found that Pierola had passed out in her clothes, and that all that was left of him were his brown whiskers lying on the floor, where they had dropped when he had cut them off.

Pierola fled to the mountains, raised an army and declared war. He fought in the mountains for some time, and months later, in 1895, appeared before Lima with 2,800 men and dared President Caceres to come out and fight him. Caceres had 4,000 soldiers, but he fortified the city and remained inside. One morning at daybreak Pierola broke through the guards, and, with his troops, made his way right up to the front of the palace. There was an en-