

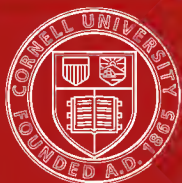


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**PORFIRIO DÍAZ**







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Benjamin Dix



# PORFIRIO DÍAZ

BY

RAFAEL DE ZAYAS ENRÍQUEZ



D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

NEW YORK

1908



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## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

It may interest the reader to know something of the author of this book, and of his motive in writing it. Señor de Zayas is the Poet Laureate of Mexico, and has written, besides poems, a considerable number of historic and other works. He was educated as a lawyer, has been an officer in the army, and is now a member of the Mexican Congress. He has been a lifelong friend of President Díaz, but has lately begun to differ with him on certain points regarding the policy of government, as the reader of this book will notice, especially in the last chapters. Señor de Zayas is an ardent patriot and thoroughly in earnest; he is so desirous that his exact feeling and opinion should be given to the public, that he has gone over with the translator every word of the American edition. The book consequently represents the author's

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

precise expression down to the turn of a phrase and the use of a simile. Though this may in some instances detract from the fluency of the English and not sufficiently take into account the difference in taste and habits of thought of the American and the Mexican public, it has seemed to be of paramount importance in a book of this kind to reproduce faithfully the thought of the author and the atmosphere of his country. The chief value of such a work is historical, and, as it stands, this biography is a page from current history, hot from the author's brain, and replete with the spirit of Mexico.

T. QUINCY BROWNE, JR.

MORRISTOWN SCHOOL, MORRISTOWN, N. J.

January 15, 1908.

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# PORFIRIO DÍAZ

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## CHAPTER I

### PRELIMINARY REFLECTIONS

**T**O judge a public man fairly, we must consider first of all the objects of his ambition, and secondly the means he has used to gain these objects; nor should we lose sight of the resources at his command, the character of his time, and all the surrounding conditions. Although in the maelstrom of politics the means employed may count for little, and only the results be considered, it is a very different matter before the tribunal of history. There everything must be examined with the most relentless and impartial scrutiny; the maxim that the end justifies the means will not pass muster, and only that which is good in purpose, as well as good in result, is deemed worthy.

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When in politics the desired end is obtained, whether through the use of reprehensible methods or not, society gladly appropriates the fruits; for the public cannot be expected to renounce its blessings, even if they come from tainted sources. But the historian is obliged to analyze men and deeds, motives and results; and, although he may admire the achievement, he must censure the man and never on any account represent him as worthy of imitation, under pain of being considered an accomplice of evil, without gaining the credit of participation in the advancement of society.

There is in the success of genius, however, a quality which compels universal admiration; perhaps because his brilliancy dazzles his contemporaries and prevents them from seeing his faults. This effect is enhanced by the work of the poet, who, carried away by his own inspiration, makes a god of his hero, presenting him before us endowed with every perfection, without weaknesses or doubts, im-

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peccable, irresistible, the very incarnation of omnipotent will, hallowed by his origin, and deserving blind worship for the sake of his mission. For this reason Plutarch in his celebrated work, entitled "How a Young Man Should Listen to Poetry," says, "As long as a young man admires only that which poets say and do rightly, there will be no ill effects; but if he admires indiscriminately, his moral standards will insensibly deteriorate."

In history, we do not find the material necessary for the formation of accurate estimates of the leaders of humanity, the creators of nations, and the real makers of history, because historians give greater prominence to battles and events than to men, and always follow a preconceived and pretentious philosophy, to which everything is subordinated, whether in the name of Providence or Fate, Evolution or Chance. In so doing, they fail to give due weight to the effect of the personality and genius of individuals; forgetful of the fact that the true study of mankind is

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man, and that history represents the eternal ebb and flow of the tide of thought and action. History, to be of positive profit, should give an insight into the springs of action of the great leaders of humanity, such as Moses or Christ, Alexander or Cæsar, Leo X or Luther, Charles V or Philip II, Frederick the Great or Napoleon, Richelieu or Voltaire, Washington or Benito Juárez. We should have placed before us all the resources and difficulties surrounding the life of each, the environment which molds from without and the character of the man which modifies the circumstances from within. For every action, no matter what its nature, is the direct result of this double operation of the environment from without and the man from within.

Contrary to the opinion of many noteworthy authors, I attach as much importance to the hero in a history as I should in a dramatic poem; because I believe that history, far from being impersonal, is supreme-

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ly personal; each epoch takes the character impressed upon it by its greatest figure. For this reason, I think that biography is of the greatest value; it really furnishes the key to history. It also fills the countless gaps which are always apparent when one studies a period critically and with a desire to understand something more than the sequence of names, dates, and events. But, in order that biography may fulfill this mission, it is necessary that the biographer should proceed with caution, with perfect understanding of causes and effects, and with irreproachable impartiality. This last is a point of honor with any one who devotes himself to a work of this kind. Still he must not exclude enthusiasm, nor, on the other hand, withhold censure when it is deserved.

I believe the old custom of converting one's hero into a demigod is as false and pernicious as that, which many modern authors follow, of undervaluing the subject of their biography to the point of making him common-

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place and without distinction. I agree with Oscar Wilde that "cheap editions of great books may be delightful, but cheap editions of great men are absolutely detestable."

Carlyle was right, I think, in saying that to form a just estimate of a man one should consider first his virtues and afterwards his defects. But, admitting, as I am sure we must, that every character is made up of a mixture of both, to present the former all at one time, and the latter, catalogued separately, afterwards, would make the work of little value to the student. For to him the thing of importance is the delineation of the character resulting from the combination of these two elements in a human being. Analysis is therefore necessary, but only on condition that the personality should also be synthetically reconstructed.

If biography is a sea filled with reefs, when its subject is a man who from the beginning of his career has followed a single course,

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consecrated to science or art, or has distinguished himself only as a soldier or as a statesman, how much greater is the difficulty, when the subject of one's study unites to an exceptional degree, as in the case of Porfirio Díaz, the traits of both the soldier and the statesman; figuring in the history of his country as a great military genius, who is at the same time and most of all honored as the statesman who brought peace and progress to his people. In such a case, it is most difficult to decide which side of his character is most worthy of the admiration and appreciation of his fellow citizens and of the world. And the admiration is so much the more justified, when we realize that diametrically opposed, if not mutually exclusive, qualities are necessary to create a military genius of the first order and a statesman of sufficient power to modify the national character and establish peace from the very elements which he had previously used for carrying on war.

History furnishes examples of great war-

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riors, who were also great statesmen; we must notice, too, that not one of these ever made any attempt to bring about peace, or had any idea of laying aside the sword, with which he had cut his way to power and renown. Proof of this assertion will be found in the cases of Julius Cæsar and Napoleon, in both of whom we see united the great qualities above mentioned. Cæsar, who was assassinated when at the height of his power and glory, was at that very moment planning a great expedition against the Parthians, counting upon their defeat in order to return through Scythia and Germania, and thus extend the limits of his empire to the shores of the ocean. Napoleon fell in the struggle, and died a prisoner. "My power will fall," he declared, "unless I maintain it by new victories. Conquest has made me what I am and conquest must sustain me." Such was his profession of faith. Washington was a great statesman and a mediocre general. Grant was a great general and a mediocre



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statesman. But in Porfirio Díaz we find both qualities developed to the highest degree.

In the first part of his career, we see the soldier, subordinating everything to the art of war, his life devoted exclusively to the triumph, through arms, of those political principles which he had espoused, and to the maintenance of national existence in the face of the French invasion. He was the most successful and renowned upholder of his country's cause on the field of battle. In the second part of his career, when he had reached the presidency, we find the statesman studying the great problems of peace and handling them with consummate skill, eliminating all seeds of discord, restraining unwholesome passions and dangerous impatience, and banishing war, which at that time seemed the natural condition of Mexico.

I believe that this apparent contradiction in his career has its logical explanation. For, although Porfirio Díaz had from the first warlike instincts, a very natural thing

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in one who was born and brought up in the midst of constant political and foreign wars, his education fitted him for a civil career, that of a lawyer; furthermore, in his preparation for college, he acquired the rudiments of science, which time and experience matured into that practical statesmanship which has transformed Mexico. Thus we see that he was well fitted by nature, and well prepared by study, for the double rôle which he was destined to play.

Although Porfirio Díaz entered the career of arms unexpectedly, he was not a half-trained soldier; he had studied the science of war practically, in the field, and was promoted grade by grade in rapid succession, but without any favoritism. He became general of a division at the point of the sword; through war he also gained reputation and popularity, and with his sword, his reputation, and his popularity, he won the Presidency of the Republic.

Once in that position, he turned his back

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upon the past, and concentrated all his power upon the study of the present and the molding of the future. His motto as a soldier was, "Small resources and great effectiveness"; his motto as a statesman was, "Little politics and much administration."

As a military chieftain, on the eve of battle, he thought less about what he would do after gaining the victory than of what he would do in case of defeat. As chief executive, on the other hand, he followed exactly the opposite principle; he always made up his mind what he would do after he had obtained the victory. This seems logical, because, in a system that was almost entirely administrative, the part played by chance, which corresponds to politics, is almost a negligible quantity.

In waging war, he adopted the principle of continually engaging the enemy, without giving him respite or repose; and no matter what might be the odds against him, he neutralized them by skill and strategy.

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In order to insure tranquillity, he followed the system of making those who wished to disturb the peace powerless and those who had the power to do so his friends.

But that which is sufficient to bring about mechanical peace is not sufficient to establish organic peace; and the most serious charge made against President Díaz is that he did not realize this in time; or that, if he did realize it, he made no effort to change his method of procedure. It has been said by way of explanation that the indefinite prolongation of his power has weakened his judgment, and converted into personal ambition the patriotism, of which he had given such striking proofs during the period of his heroic struggles and during the first three periods of his tenure of office. These critics further assert that, his only object being to govern as long as he lives, he has subordinated all his knowledge and experience to this ambition, and has permitted his admirable policy of national education to degenerate into what has been

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called "a policy of conciliation": compromise with all parties, in the attempt to convert into accomplices both friends and enemies.

To my way of thinking, there is a different explanation, as I shall show at the proper time. For the present, I shall simply say that, in general, the foregoing explanation would conform perfectly with human nature. When it is apparent that a system is producing the desired results, few men dare to introduce modifications, either because they are restrained by the conservatism, which all who govern long acquire, or for fear that any innovation may bring about a catastrophe. But, even if we admit that the above explanation is the only logical one and maintain that the charge is justified by the facts, the fault would lie more with the people than with President Díaz; for, if it be true that he has been oblivious of the public, it is equally true that the public has been oblivious of itself.

It is said that at this point in his career

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the last and final evolution of President Díaz began, namely, his conversion into a tyrant; but those who say this fail to take into account the scientific axiom that there is no such thing as spontaneous generation, either in the natural or the political world. A tyranny can be only the logical result of a combination of contributing elements, such as the preponderating will of an all-powerful ruler and the tacit consent of a public, whose character has been gradually weakened, until its weakness has degenerated into cowardice.

If President Díaz has been a tyrant, his tyranny has been less the work of the governor than that of the governed. It was for their own security that the people of Mexico concurred with foreign nations in making his tenure of office permanent.

We have all helped to bring about this peculiar situation, first by considering President Díaz a useful instrument, then a necessity, and, finally, a Providential Being. Have we not all shamelessly, and without excuses, pro-

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claimed him as unique in history, turning gratitude into fanaticism, praise into adoration, and even tried to convince General Díaz himself of the truth of these extravagances? There never was a man with sufficient strength of character or modesty to resist for thirty years the skillful flattery, which all, through self-interest, have heaped upon him. Lack of virility in a people fosters presumption in its rulers.

Some one has said, "Happy the nation that has no history!" I say, "Unhappy the nation that is not making history!" Because, as soon as public interest in politics ends, slavery begins.

In General Díaz we see two men, one a real individual, forceful and self-made; the other created by the imagination, a figure reared by our own flattery and lying, and by the money-seeking foreign writers, who know neither what Mexico was nor is. These last have been courteously received by the Pres-

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ident and by the officials of the country. They have been paid good money for bad information. They have spread broadcast false impressions about Mexico! The list of writers is long: from Hurbert Howe Bancroft, the American historian, to Mrs. Alec Tweedy, an English writer.

The first to discountenance such exaggerations was General Díaz himself, who well understood that publications of this kind would in the long run do harm. I think it is now high time to destroy the misconceptions, to correct the mistakes, and to represent General Díaz as he is, in his full stature of a man, with human passions, and human actions; a remarkable character, very remarkable, extraordinary, if you are of my opinion, but not superhuman, nor infallible.

I have admired him, followed him, and served him. I believe I know him as thoroughly and intimately as it is given one man to know another, and I appreciate him at his full value.



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In this work, the reader will find a lively account of General Díaz, written with scrupulous fidelity to the facts, and without misrepresentations of any kind. My work is neither the work of a partisan, nor that of an enemy, but the frank and loyal statement of a witness before the Tribunal of History; a kind of deposition "ad perpetuum," which I wish to bequeath to posterity before death claims me. I do not say "surprises me," because death could not now surprise me, as I have been for some time prepared for its summons.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PHYSICAL AND MORAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PRESIDENT DÍAZ

**E**THNICALLY, Porfirio Díaz is a product of the mingling of the two principal races which inhabit Mexico. In his veins there courses the mixed blood of the Spaniard and the Indian, as is the case with all the men who have distinguished themselves in any career whatsoever in Mexico; his character is a combination of the reflectiveness of the "Misteca" and the tenacity of the Asturian.

Men considered eminently practical are usually hands without brains, and men called idealists are apt to be brains without hands. But Díaz, properly speaking, does not belong to either of these two classes; for in him these qualities are so evenly balanced that they offset one another. Furthermore, natu-

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ral ingenuity and acquired intellectual power make up his character in almost equal proportions. He is a man of definite aims, rather than an idealist; a man of action, rather than a practical man; and he might well say with Napoleon, "My iron hand was not placed at the end of my arm, but connected directly with my brain."

Díaz first conceives a purpose, then reflects upon the means of accomplishing it, carefully estimates its magnitude and considers the obstacles in its way, and finally gathers his forces to win the victory. He never measures the power of his personality; he has blind faith in himself, knowing that there always remain in reserve ideas and resources with which to meet the unexpected. He does not trust in his star, as Napoleon did; he has no superstitions, as Cæsar had; he never leaves anything to chance. Being an inflexible logician, a mathematical calculator, he expects everything to turn out according to his deductions and calculations. That is to

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say, he has absolute confidence in his own genius.

From the race commingling already mentioned, he has inherited neither the fatalism of the Indian, nor the superstition of the Latin; or, if these factors have entered into his make-up, they have neutralized each other so perfectly that they have disappeared.

As a soldier, we see him always working with the certainty and the inexhaustible energy of the forces of nature. As a statesman, we see him acting with the firmness of profound conviction and with the precision of a mathematical formula. His self-command is so perfect that he always succeeds in whatever he undertakes, whether the task is that of cutting his way through the armed ranks of an enemy or through political vicissitudes and obstructions. In military history, he appears as a thunderbolt in attack, as a rock in defense. But anyone who studies this biography deeply and becomes intimately acquainted with its hero will be convinced that

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even those actions which seem most violent and hasty, such as the assault of Puebla on April 2, 1867, were never actuated by a sudden inspiration, but were the result of cold calculation. One can see also that, if his conception of defense was that of a rock for stability, it in no way implied inactivity; for whenever he found himself in the mountains, pursued and surrounded by enemies, or shut up within the walls of a fortification, he always tried to assume the offensive.

As a ruler we find in him traces of audacity identical with those which are conspicuous in his military career; audacity in execution, never in resolution; for his plans are always made with calm reflection. For instance, at the commencement of his second term of office as President, in December, 1884, he was confronted by an empty treasury, a country with all its resources mortgaged, and a people overwhelmed with debt. In this situation, which would have disheartened a man of the utmost courage, Porfirio Díaz remained im-

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perturbable yet daring; for he promulgated the edicts of June 22, 1885, which placed all the creditors of the state on an equal footing, temporarily suspended the payment of debts, reduced the salaries of public officials and employees, and converted the claims against the treasury into notes at six per cent, a rate which represented a just compensation in view of the arrangement to defer payment.

I do not find in Porfirio Díaz, either as a general or as a statesman, that fiery rashness or ill-considered bravery which has been attributed to him. Indeed, such qualities appear to me serious defects, rather than virtues, in a general or a statesman; for a good soldier does nothing by chance, and a good statesman knows that rashness hardly ever results favorably. But what is more to the point, it is strictly in accordance with the facts to consider Porfirio Díaz a man of prudence in council and courage in action. His prudence is not to be mistaken for mere com-

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mon sense, which makes men choose the safest means in order to keep out of danger; nor yet that which in reality is nothing more than the instinct of self-preservation; nor even that of the higher order, which employs the means most effective for achieving the desired results. His prudence is of the highest type, that which distinguishes the true hero, impelling him to follow resolutely the promptings of his own nature, accepting its advantages and disadvantages, conveniences and inconveniences, and always remaining true to his own individuality. In fact, the chief secret of Porfirio Díaz's success is that he has never falsified his own nature.

There are many points of similarity between Díaz and Napoleon, but one must, of course, always bear in mind the difference in period and in general conditions. Porfirio Díaz has a profound contempt for men in general, although he has always tried to hide it. And, after all, could there be anything more natural for a man in his position,

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who has constantly before his eyes all the wretchedness of human nature: perfidious envy, mean-spirited calumny, abject flattery, groundless pretensions, barefaced ambitions, infamous hypocrisy, and who is obliged to contend against all these passions, and against that horde of wonder-workers who, whether they wear frock coats or uniforms or the Sunday best of the middle class, are all animated by a common self-interest. Anyone who sees all this will, I repeat, almost of necessity feel a profound disgust for the human race. This helps us to understand the skepticism of Richelieu, Cromwell, Charles V, Philip II, Frederick the Great, and Napoleon. For Díaz, as for these other great figures in history, men are simply factors in an equation, to be added or subtracted with the same indifference to secondary considerations that a mathematician would feel. But if the factor eliminated has the power to become a dangerous enemy in the event of his falling into abject desper-



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tion, the statesman must keep him at a certain level without permitting him to rise too high or fall too low, until death removes the man altogether.

Death has been a most powerful ally of General Díaz. Every man who has crossed his path or had the power to oppose him, has fallen by death. I do not now refer to those whom he has had shot as revolutionists, but to all those others: Juárez, Corona, Pacheco, Dublán, Romero, Rubio, etc., whether enemies or dangerous friends. This does not mean that I suspect General Díaz of having aided in the disappearance of those men; for I am not capable of making such cowardly insinuations, and calumny is the last thing I wish to be guilty of. Death has come of its own accord, as an intelligent and opportune ally; that is all. Napoleon was less scrupulous; he aided death.

Napoleon said that he had "made his generals of common clay." Porfirio Díaz may well say that he has done the same in the case

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of practically all his satellites. For with the exception of Don Matías Romero, and of Don Ignacio Mariscal, the President has never utilized the services or the talents of any man who had reached eminence before the Díaz *régime*. All those who have figured in high positions since 1878 owe everything to him; therefore it may well be said of President Díaz, as it was of the great Corsican, that he knows the capacity and the quality of every one of the men whom he manipulates.

Díaz has always had an exalted opinion of the press, not because of its usefulness to the public, but because of the injury which it might do to his plans. Not daring to destroy it directly, he subjugated it. Following the maxim that the press can only be combated by the press, he started partisan papers and aided them generously, in order to make independent competition impossible. Napoleon said that if he had granted liberty to the press, his power would not have lasted three

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days. President Díaz was of the same opinion, and for that reason armed himself with the printing law, which fetters all those who write or print. This he did in good faith; for in order to carry out his plans, it was necessary that neither his aims nor his methods should be discussed. It was also necessary to avoid opposition, which is always passionate with us, and leads to the revolutionary impulse. This it was General Díaz's purpose to kill once and for all.

Another aphorism of Napoleon is that a great reputation makes a great noise, and that the greater the noise, the farther off it will be heard; on the other hand, laws, institutions, monuments, even nations, come to an end, while the noise continues reverberating down through the ages. Porfirio Díaz thought the same, but with this difference: what in Napoleon's case was simply a question of vanity, with Díaz was a political creed. At first his natural modesty made him shun notoriety, but when he understood how use-

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ful it was, he accepted it and perpetuated it, not in order to satisfy his own vanity, but that of his countrymen; for he found that it helped to keep them united to him through their national pride. It also had the effect of making it seem necessary that he should continue in power. Nevertheless, I repeat that President Díaz hates exaggeration and dislikes a Wagnerian blast of trumpets.

Napoleon was jealous of his best generals, and some people say that Porfirio Díaz also was jealous of those who were prominent in serving their country during the time of the French invasion. To prove the charge, they cite Escobedo and Corona, who, they say, never enjoyed the favor of President Díaz. I think that those who hold this opinion are mistaken. In the first place, Díaz is unquestionably far superior in military genius to the two captains just mentioned; there never was any danger of their eclipsing him. In the second place, Escobedo was a political enemy of President Díaz, and Corona was

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never truly one of his party. Finally, the President *did* honor both of these men, and, if he did not elevate them to the highest positions, it was, as I have already said, because he never used any men except those whom he himself had molded and raised to office. With Corona, furthermore, there was a peculiar circumstance: he figured as one of the possible successors of President Díaz. Corona himself expected this honor, and not without reason, for he had already been made governor of the powerful State of Jalisco. This post he held until he came to a tragic death at the hands of a crazy fanatic, who committed suicide immediately afterwards. The family of General Corona enjoyed and still enjoys the firm protection of President Díaz.

As a diplomat, President Díaz stands in the highest rank. Some writers have maintained that he belongs to the school of Machiavelli, amended and brought up to date by Napoleon; that he is not afraid of either truth or

falsehood, but uses both as circumstances require. The above assertion is another grave error. President Díaz is original in diplomacy as in everything else. His diplomacy is his own; no one so well knows how to steer between Scylla and Charybdis, without allowing either to so much as suspect which course he has made up his mind to follow. He can give out a false scent without falsehood; just as an expert swordsman tells no lies when he makes a feint with his blade. Certain it is that when he concedes anything, he does it on the same principle as the fisherman, who risks his worthless bait in order to catch a fish.

Pope Leo XIII, who was reputed a most skillful diplomat, tried to make a concordat with President Díaz, and sent as his agent Monsignor Seraffini, an exceptionally gifted man for the undertaking. After many visits and frequent conferences with the President, the Italian diplomat acknowledged himself outgeneraled. In conversation with a friend

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of mine, who had become intimate with Monsignor Seraffini, the latter confessed that he had never encountered such a man as President Díaz. When he thought he had him cornered, with no way of escape except that of a direct answer, Díaz slipped through his fingers with the agility of an eel. In spite of skillful cross-questioning, Seraffini failed to discover what the President thought regarding the concordat. He never succeeded in eliciting any kind of a promise, a "Perhaps," a "We will see," or even a refusal.

General Díaz is head of the Freemasons in Mexico. He is of the thirty-third degree and Grand Commander for life. At the same time he is the invisible head of the Catholic Church, its arch protector and its director, influencing indirectly the appointment of bishops and archbishops and the creation of new dioceses and archbishoprics. In this way he has managed to prevent Mexican Freemasonry, which has always been Jacobin, and the clergy, which has always been

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revolutionary and retrogressive, from making a single move. He presides at the chief masonic functions, his wife presides at important religious ceremonies; thus, both Jacobins and Ultramontanes have been satisfied, and each party claims a victory, which in reality is nothing more than a defeat for them both.

This is another instance, some people say, of what they call "the policy of conciliation." But in reality it is another indication of the subordination and pacification, to which I have already referred, each body revolving in the plane of its own orbit and having for its center the President of the Republic.

In politics it has been the chief aim of President Díaz to obtain the friendship of the United States. This once gained, he has increased and strengthened it to the utmost. To maintain these ties, he has been willing to make every kind of sacrifice; to such a



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point has he carried his policy, that there are those who say that to-day there is nothing in Mexico worth so much as citizenship papers of the United States. Others assert that the President has no real sympathy with the United States, but is acting like a child seeking the protection of a stronger and more formidable comrade against the aggression of his schoolfellows. To this big boy he gives in return his best toys and most tempting dainties.

The fact is that President Díaz has a sincere admiration for the Government and people of the United States. It has always been his policy to strengthen the friendly relations between the two countries and to make the relationship evident to all the world. Moreover, it is quite possible that, if he had not realized this aim, his achievements for Mexico would not have reached the magnitude which they have actually attained.

The friendship of the United States means to President Díaz the security of his north-

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ern frontier, the elimination from politics of any question of international friction with his powerful neighbor, a cloud which loomed upon the horizon several times during his first two presidential terms. Friendship with the United States means also the security of our southern frontier, which has been threatened by Guatemala every time that country has succeeded in securing the moral support of the United States, as she did when Mr. Blaine was Secretary of State. Friendly relations with the United States means the introduction into Mexico of American capital, and of great business undertakings by Americans. This of itself has been one of the most important elements in the development of the country, because it has increased the reputation of Mexico, inspired confidence in European nations, and made it possible to organize the public debt and to raise loans. It has served also as a powerful check upon the turbulent elements of the interior, by making them understand that anyone who

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conspires against the Government might thereby precipitate American intervention, thus endangering the nationality of Mexico itself. This has been in reality one of the principal factors in the pacification of the country and the maintenance of permanent peace.

It has been conclusively proved that there is in men a constant tendency to consider as inseparable an efficient cause and its results. The idea of power and the idea of greatness have been evolved in the mind with such close analogy that they appear at first sight as identical, or, at least, as so closely related that they have become inseparable. It is this misconception, which makes it impossible to conceive Alexander or Cæsar or Napoleon as men of ordinary stature, and justifies the saying of the sculptor Bouchardon that when he reads Homer, he beholds men ten feet high.

The same thing has happened in the case

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of General Díaz: imagination represents him as a Colossus and in all his pictures he appears as a man of great height. On horseback he does actually carry out the illusion, because he has the habit, so common among military chiefs, of riding very tall horses. When sitting he produces the same impression, because he is long of body and a trifle short of leg. Even on foot he appears taller than he really is, because of a certain erectness of carriage, acquired during the last twenty-five years; a sort of personal impressiveness, perhaps the outward expression of the evolution which has been taking place in his character and position. One might almost say that since he left off being a soldier, he has acquired the military carriage.

To any one of us, who has known him during the last forty years, this is evident; to others a glance at his photographs, taken at different periods, would demonstrate this evolution.

As a young man he looked somewhat timid,

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certainly far from self-confident. He was awkward, thin, with something of a stoop, and careless in his dress. The change in him really commenced after his second presidency in 1884. Contact with the best society, the influence of his second wife, his relations with the diplomatic corps, the exigencies of his high political position, the culture which he was insensibly acquiring, and his genius, have all contributed to transform him in appearance from a guerrilla chief to an accomplished man of the world, grave and with an air of unaffected elegance and dignity.

This athletic pose has been by some people attributed to senile vanity. The truth is that, as he has grown older, General Díaz has seen fit to exhibit more and more the physical force and agility, which were always in him; but to my mind it has been brought out not by vanity, but for political purposes. It is a manner assumed to inspire public confidence and a belief in his remarkable energy and lasting

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ability to remain in power and to carry all the cares of state upon his ample shoulders.

General Díaz is a little above medium height, and one might well say that he is of the model size for an active man; he makes one conscious of his power. He has broad shoulders, large chest, well-developed and prominent muscles, with no sign of *embonpoint*; his figure has a muscular contour, which in spite of his age is not obscured with fat; in short, he has a Herculean constitution and shows it in every line. His head is of good size; his forehead is moderately high, broad and open; his eyes are dark and symmetrically placed; his glance is firm and a little severe when he is speaking, and extraordinarily penetrating when he listens; his nose is regular, somewhat broad at the end, with rather open nostrils, as if his well-developed lungs needed to breathe a great quantity of air; his mouth is neither large nor small, covered with a gray, military mustache; his lips are firm

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without compression, and look as if they knew how to keep silent, even under torture, and as evidently could speak fluently when occasion demanded, without ever falling into garrulousness; his chin is somewhat fleshy but well shaped; his ears are large rather than small; his neck is broad and a trifle short, like that of a man descended from a race accustomed through many generations to carry the weight of a steel helmet; his color is high, as that of a full-blooded man should be, but without a trace of plethoric lividness; his hair is short, stiff and thick; in its time it was black, but to-day it is gray; his hands are of medium size, somewhat broad and nervous; his legs are short compared with his body; his feet well proportioned.

In walking he carries his head high without stiffness or haughtiness; breathes deeply and easily; has a look of confidence, as normally developed men should have; a firm, resolute step, light without precipitation.

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These outward signs correspond to those of a man who has full confidence in himself, boundless energy, and is destined to long life. His attitude is one of easy activity; just what one would expect of a dominant nature which acts without effort. Apparently he has not a single muscle held forcibly in restraint, and his firm, free movements indicate a person with a will always ready to assert itself.

His moral make-up corresponds to his physical. His is a soul of steel within a body of iron. The body is unbreakable, the soul has the temper of a Toledo blade, rigid in cutting, flexible only in the thrust; not with the flexibility of the subdued, but of the conqueror, and it immediately returns to the attack with greater force than before, and never breaks nor twists.

In General Díaz memory, intellect, and will are all equally well developed. His memory is astounding; he remembers the face and name of everyone whom he has ever seen, even if only once; he recalls the circum-



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stances and place of meeting. He also has a good memory for events, dates, and places.

He is a great character reader. It seems to be instinctive with him when anyone speaks to him upon a matter of importance, even if it is entirely new to him and very complex, to concentrate all his attention upon it; and hardly has one time to sketch the outline, before he has grasped its connection and its details, as if by intuition.

He enters into the business of administration down to its minutest details, without becoming petty. He takes up each day, at great length, his immense private correspondence, and dictates the answers. He keeps in touch with the affairs of the whole world, and keeps pace with science and literature as well; he reads and studies, who knows when! His voice is low, strong and somewhat hoarse; his speech is deliberate, but always has the ring of command.

Among his intimates, especially when he leaves the Capital for a visit to the country,

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or for a hunt, he shows traces of the boy after school is dismissed. He has a veritable passion for hunting and is a first-rate shot. On trips of this kind his spirits break out into something very like joviality, though he never quite reaches that point; he is, however, what one would call extremely good company, and at such times he does not want to talk shop.

He is to-day, as always, extremely temperate in his eating and drinking, and very much averse to late hours, although he is amply able to stand them. He gets up at sunrise, takes a cold bath, goes through some gymnastic exercises, and then has a walk. His life is as regular as clockwork, and for that reason he has time for everything and does everything at the proper time.

When he finds it necessary to speak in public, he expresses himself with restrained eloquence, interspersed with felicitous phrases. He always goes straight to the heart of the question, handling it with tact, yet in a

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straightforward manner. As a rule, under the excitement of inspiration, however calm he may be outwardly, a certain softening, almost sadness, comes over him and tears dim his eyes.

In his private life he is, perhaps, even a finer man than in his public character. He commands the greatest respect and admiration of his friends, and might be called a perfect model in his family. In fact, his supremely well-ordered private life has been one of the chief causes of his popularity, as well as of his success and his inexhaustible energy. This has been a blessing to Mexico, for if General Díaz had been a libertine, the corruption of Mexico would have surpassed that of Rome at the time of the Cæsars.

Plutarch, in his work entitled "How to Reap Benefit from our Enemies," asserts that among the benefits which these may confer upon us, one of the greatest is that of obliging us to live always on our guard against plots; another consists in forcing us

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to live honestly in order to outdo our rivals, not by combat, but by obliging them to be secretly jealous of our good qualities.

Had Porfirio Díaz read these words of wisdom, or did he know them by instinct? I cannot say; but the fact is that from his early youth he has been what he is to-day at seventy-seven years. Those who have known him longest, those who have lived with him in the intimate association of the military camp, those who have seen him at short range in all the phases of his existence, agree that he has not changed an atom in his habits.

Temperate both by nature and by training, he has never given himself up to the dissipations so common among the young men of the army, especially when they are in the field; he never has taken the least advantage of the halo of glory, which surrounded him when he was still quite young, to enter upon any of those romantic adventures, for the indulgence of which he might well have been

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pardoned on account of his youth and his position.

Strict with others, he has always been particularly strict with himself, and his private conduct has served as a constant example to his equals and to his subordinates. He has always taken duty for his standard—duty fulfilled to the letter.

This athlete of countless struggles, this gladiator of countless victories, has had the forethought and the ability to create a refuge in which to rest, when he laid down his arms, or set aside the cares of administration—a refuge where he might convert himself into an everyday man, refresh his body by repose, and renew the temper of his soul through the affections of his family.

When we consider the home life of Napoleon, we find that this monopolizer of all the glories committed grave errors, upon which, perhaps, the ultimate disaster of his portentous labors turned. These errors consisted in never having known how to make

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a true friend, nor to love and be loved by a woman. He was a consummate egotist; he had no notion what the give and take of love meant; he succeeded in making himself admired and feared, but not loved, nor respected. There was in him brain without heart, force without feeling. In short, he was a monster, in whom was nothing human but the form.

General Díaz, as we have seen, did not make these mistakes; he well knew how to make friends who should be, as it were, the completion of his own being on its material, intellectual, and emotional sides. General Díaz attracted to his circle companions, who came because of their avarice, and he took care that their greed should never be satiated; he well understood how to keep them attached to the ruler who dispensed favors. He inspired the affection of two women, who became identified with him, and who suited admirably the two rôles which he played one after another in public life. His first wife

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followed him during the years in which he was acquiring fame, and died at the very hour of his triumph. His second wife was by his side while he was making an immortal name for himself, and shared in his deification. Both were the completion of his moral self, bringing to him that feminine quality which is necessary for the perfection of the soul of man, for it is that which humanizes him.

Such is President Díaz, roughly sketched, physically and morally. He has a bodily frame well calculated to resist the wear and tear of life, and ready to perform all its activities with the agility of the gymnast and the strength of the athlete. He is the type of the soldier and the gentleman, he cuts a good figure on horseback in his military uniform, resplendent with magnificent decorations, both national and foreign; he makes an equally good appearance in the drawing-room, in the severe dress of the civilian, only relieved

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by a simple boutonnière. He looks like a man who can withstand the strain of long days in the saddle or on foot without over-fatigue and pass nights on the watch, or sleeping under the light military tent, without injuring his health; who would be quite unaffected by exposure to deluges of rain or the tropical sun, or the winter snows of our high mountains; he is proof as well against the cares of administration, the disappointments of politics, and the rubs of everyday life.

I do not dare to maintain that the appearance which we all note is a reality. No one knows what General Díaz really is physically, or how he may look to his valet, when he is not on parade. His seventy-seven years of constant struggle and stress of mind must have made internal ravages, which he carefully conceals.

The effort on behalf of Minister Limantour, which President Díaz has been making for some time past, is considered by many





PRESIDENT DÍAZ IN THE UNIFORM OF MAJOR GENERAL.



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people as a sure sign of his decadence. I do not believe it! In this, as in everything else, the President is following a political motive, perhaps that of making ready a remote successor, watching him and trying to make him popular little by little, without regard for the fact that he can never become a successful candidate; for Mr. Limantour, notwithstanding all his prestige, can never become President of Mexico, because the constitution forbids it.<sup>1</sup>

To sum up the whole life of President Díaz in a word, one might say that his most striking bodily characteristic is force, his most striking mental characteristics compelling will and irresistible energy. Even the poorest character reader, seeing President Díaz

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<sup>1</sup>The Mexican Constitution requires that the President of the Republic shall be a native Mexican; it is not enough that he should have been born within the national territory, for, as we follow the *jus sanguinis* not the *jus solis*, his parents also must be Mexican citizens. Señor Limantour's father and mother were French, and he remained of their nationality, until he was twenty-one. At that time, he chose to become a Mexican citizen. He is, therefore, a citizen by naturalization only.

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for the first time, without having the slightest previous knowledge of his personality, could not fail to perceive at once that the man before him amounted to something and was a distinct character.

## CHAPTER III

### PERIOD OF FORMATION

**J**ULIUS CÆSAR, in his eulogy at the funeral services of his Aunt Julia, wife of Marius the Elder, spoke of his own genealogy. "My maternal grandfather," said he, "was descended from Ancus Martius, one of the first kings of Rome, and my father belonged to the Julian family, which was descended from Venus. There is, therefore, in my blood, the sanctity of kings, the masters of men, and the majesty of gods, the masters of kings." In this respect, Porfirio Díaz did not resemble the conqueror of all Gaul. Neither kings nor goddesses were among his ancestry. His origin is much more humble, and for this reason his elevation to the supreme power is all the more to his credit.

Porfirio Díaz was born in the city of Oax-

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aca, capital of the state of the same name, in the "Mesón de la Soledad," so called because of its proximity to the church which bears that name. The house has disappeared, and in its place stands to-day the public school "Porfirio Díaz."

His father was José de la Cruz Díaz and his mother Petrona Mori, both descendants of the Spanish and native Indian races. Señora Mori's father was of Asturian stock, and her mother, Tecla Cortés, of the pure Mexican-Indian race.

José Díaz and Petrona Mori had already had five children, when a boy was born who, on September 15, 1830, was baptized with the name of JOSÉ DE LA CRUZ PORFIRIO DÍAZ. His godfather, José Agustín Domínguez, was a man of college education, and at that time curate of Nochixtlán; later he became Bishop of Oaxaca. In the baptismal record the date of the birth of the child is omitted, but September 15th has been generally considered as the birth-

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day of the President of the Mexican Republic.

Don José had been farrier of a regiment, and on taking up his quarters in Oaxaca, he installed in a part of his house a blacksmith's forge and a veterinary hospital. In the midst of these poor surroundings, Señor and Señora Díaz lived, free from actual want, and brought up their numerous family, which was further augmented by a seventh child, Félix, who was the last.

In 1833, hard-working Don José died a victim to the epidemic of cholera, and Doña Petrona remained a widow, poor, and under the necessity of vigorous struggle in order to live and support her children. This she succeeded in doing, because of her character and energy.

Porfirio Díaz came into the world under very unfavorable circumstances, according to the common opinion on such matters, but under the most favorable circumstances, according to my judgment. Poverty, border-

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ing on misery, makes the best mold in which to cast great characters. History proves this in a manner quite irrefutable. As far as Mexico is concerned, the three greatest men she has produced, Morelos, Juárez, and Porfirio Díaz were turned out of this mold.

Adulation represents Porfirio Díaz as a prodigy from his very infancy. Nothing could be more untrue; he was not precocious in childhood, nor distinguished as a student in college. His education was not better than the average. The best proof of this (in spite of all published statements to the contrary) is that General Díaz read badly and wrote worse—in a hand which rivaled Napoleon's for illegibility. Napoleon is said to have been unable to read his own handwriting; no expert could decipher his scrawls, and, furthermore, his knowledge of grammar was conspicuous by its absence. I have no wish to detract from either general's reputation, but to state matters just as they are. However, it is not necessary to know grammar in order



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to win battles and elevate one's self to the rank of a hero; nor is it necessary to know Latin in order to achieve fame as a statesman. On the contrary, a first-rate university education is, in my opinion, apt to be a grave impediment in the way of either achievement.

Porfirio Díaz did not owe his success to his schooling, but to his genius. He was neither precocious nor backward, but normally developed.

Almost before he had mastered the rudiments, he began to learn his chosen trade, that of carpentry. In 1845, when he was only fifteen years old, his mother made up her mind to enter him in the Oaxaca Seminary, in order that he might take the preliminary course necessary to prepare him for the priesthood.

In pursuance of this object, he continued his studies till 1849, when, at the suggestion of his godfather, Don José Agustín Domínguez, the Church was decided upon as his

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career. This decision was made to please his mother and to take advantage of his godfather's offer of a chaplaincy. In those days, a chaplaincy opened the way to a life of broad opportunities.

If Porfirio Díaz did not show any great disposition for his books, he did, like Bertrand Duquesclin, reveal excellent qualifications as a fighter with clubs, fists, rocks, or any weapon which came to hand. In those days of riot and revolution, Porfirio's fighting tendencies found ready means for their development, and he was made captain of a company of boys who were learning to drill in the squares and open places of Oaxaca. At that time a battalion of National Guards was being organized in Oaxaca to resist the American invasion. It never saw actual service, for it was composed of boys, a fact which gave it the nickname of "Better-than-Nothing." In this way, Porfirio learned how to handle a rifle, and according to some biographers, took his first lessons in tactics and

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strategy at the same time under Lieutenant Colonel Ignacio Uria.

Thus it happened that in 1850 Porfirio gave up the idea of becoming a priest, to the great disgust of his family, and entered the Institute of Oaxaca to study law, a career much more to his taste. In the institute he was irresistibly drawn toward a group of young men who were affiliated with the Liberal Party. He advanced regularly in his course, and, at the end of 1853, took his first examination in the law, and in January, 1854, his second.

But Destiny evidently did not intend Porfirio Díaz either for the priesthood or the law. The ominous dictatorship of Santa-Anna had become insupportable. In those days there was public spirit in Mexico, and men of courage and sound principles who were ready to fight against tyranny!

On March 1, 1854, in the State of Guerrero, the revolutionary Declaration of Ayutla was proclaimed, and on March 11th the

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garrison of Acapulco re-affirmed the Declaration, with some changes.

Santa-Anna, baleful president for Mexico, was both a knave and a fool, however contradictory this may seem, for the first requisite of a rascal is intelligence. He was anxious to smother the revolution in blood, and marched toward the State of Guerrero; but at the same time, wishing to deceive the public, he hit upon the idea of requesting the people to decide by vote whether he should continue to exercise the dictatorial power, which he now stood ready to surrender.

On October 20, 1854, this bombastic tyrant declared to the nation, through the medium of the Secretary of State, Don Ignacio Aguilar, his conviction that it was impossible to govern without dictatorial power, but that *he did not desire to retain this power except with the full confidence of the Mexican people*; he was, therefore, anxious to consult their wishes. With this end in view he de-

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creed that, on December 1st, the presidents of the local boards should hold in all centers of population of Mexico mass meetings, in which every Mexican, of whatever class or condition, should participate, in order to express with *perfect freedom and inviolability his opinion upon this grave question*. He further directed the people to express their will only upon the following points: "1st, Whether Santa-Anna, President of the Republic, shall continue to hold the supreme power with the same unrestricted authority which he to-day exercises; 2d, In case he is not to continue to exercise these unlimited powers, to whom shall he delegate this authority at once and forthwith?"

In Oaxaca more than six thousand persons voted to continue him in his tyrannical powers; only two had sufficient courage to express their true opinion—Miguel Ruiz, who voted against the first clause, and named as president Don Juan Bautista Ceballos, and Porfirio Díaz, who did the same, but gave his

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vote in favor of General Juan Álvarez, leader of the revolution then in progress. In spite of all his promises of liberty and guarantees to respect individual opinion, all who voted for General Álvarez were arrested and convicted of conspiracy.

Santa-Anna's perfidious action, and the order of arrest, determined Porfirio Díaz's future; he immediately decided to flee from Oaxaca and join one of the revolutionary bands. Thought and action being one with him, he proceeded at once to Mixteca, and joined the force of one Captain Herrera, composed of two hundred men, badly armed, and without organization.

This force was pursued and put to flight. Porfirio Díaz remained in hiding until July, 1855, when the Santa-Anna government was overthrown in Oaxaca by a popular insurrection. At that time, Porfirio Díaz was made sub-prefect of Ixtlán, and there organized shortly afterwards a force of one hundred and fifty men, with whom he participated in

the triumph of the Revolution of Ayutla. After that, he became commander of a battalion of the National Guard. This position he soon resigned and returned to his sub-prefecture of Ixtlán. Here he remained only a short time, as the Reactionary Party had appealed to arms to overthrow the government, which had been set up according to the "Declaration of Ayutla."

At that time, the government of Oaxaca was reorganizing the National Guards to fight against the guerrilla bands of revolutionists which had invaded the state, and Porfirio Díaz was made captain of the "Second Battalion of the State." This was the real beginning of his military career; from that time on he followed this calling continuously and with distinction.

Many of the biographies of President Díaz represent him at this time as a military genius, and as actual director of his superiors. In fact, nothing of the sort was the case; I have General Díaz's own statement on this

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point. During the first period of his military career, he made up his mind to observe, study, and obey. There was, of course, within him the material for a great captain, and this material was slowly developing, favored by circumstances.

Díaz's first position was that of a subaltern who understood orders and knew how to carry them out. He was well disciplined, a good organizer, and brave. He took naturally to the art of war, acquired experience, and afterwards transformed the art into a science.

On August 13, 1857, he was seriously wounded in the battle of Ixcapa. It took four months to heal this wound, but he pulled through, thanks to his sound constitution. He returned to the fight before he had completely recovered, in order to coöperate in the defense of the city of Oaxaca, which was menaced from December, 1857, to January, 1858, by the Reactionary leader of unsavory memory, José María Cobos.



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President Comonfort launched his baleful *coup d'état*; after this came General Félix Zuloaga's declaration of support, in which he explained the plan of Tacubaya, ignoring the Constitution of 1857, and proclaiming "Religion and Privileges."

Díaz's work in the Constitutional Party showed him to be a true Liberal, and he continued fighting for this noble cause. He figured with some distinction in the so-called "Three Years' War," having taken part in the capture of Jalapa (Oaxaca) on February 25, 1858, and in the battle of Las Jícaras on April 13th of the same year, as commander-in-chief. This action resulted in his promotion to the rank of major on July 22d. At that time, he was both political head and military commander of Tehuantepec.

Díaz still suffered from the wound he had received at Ixcapa, as the surgeons had not been able to find the bullet. But by good fortune, some American surgeons, who happened to be at Tehuantepec, undertook the

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operation and succeeded in removing the bullet. After this, the young soldier recovered all his strength and energy.

In the year 1859 (June 17th) occurred the battle of Mixtequilla against Lieutenant Colonel Espinosa. In this battle the above-mentioned commander of the Reactionary forces was killed. On account of this successful action Díaz was promoted, on July 6th, to the rank of lieutenant colonel of infantry. On November 25th he attacked the city of Tehuantepec, which had been occupied by the Reactionaries during the time which Díaz had employed in going to Coatzacoalcos to receive and dispatch a convoy of war, brought from the United States and destined for the Liberal forces in the southern part of the Republic. This commission was discharged admirably by Díaz; it secured him promotion to colonel of infantry, and his commission was dated back to November 25th.

In referring to this period, General Ig-

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nacio Escudero says that Porfirio Díaz, who was then hardly twenty-seven, had sustained for two years, with a mere handful of men, an unequal contest in the midst of a hostile population, without receiving a dollar in money or a single militiaman from either the State or the Federal government. In spite of the poverty of the region in which he was operating, its unhealthful condition, and the reactionary sentiment prevailing there, which caused them to refuse him all kinds of supplies and munitions of war, clothing and the like, he paid his forces and settled all expenses of public administration, and, in addition, succeeded in gaining the confidence of the people and the credit of the merchants.

On January 21, 1860, occurred the battle of Mitla, against Marcelino Cobos, a victory like that of Pyrrhus, which was in reality a disaster. On February 2d was fought the action of Fortín de la Soledad against the same rebel chief; on March 9th that of Marquesado against Casimiro Acebal; on May

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15th that of Ixtepeji against Anastasio Trejo.

The Liberal commanders operating in the State of Oaxaca, decided to attack Oaxaca city, at that time held by José María Cobos, who was strongly entrenched; accordingly they began to organize their respective forces with this end in view. On July 31st, Porfirio Díaz marched out of Ixtlán with his contingent, and on August 3d arrived before Oaxaca, Colonel Salinas with him.

The forces of the Liberals amounted to barely 700 men, with 2 pieces of mounted artillery; those of Cobos reached 2,000 men, and he had in addition 6 field pieces and 6 pieces of mounted artillery. The undertaking could not have been more audacious on the part of the Liberals, for they were attacking a fortification with forces inferior to those of their entrenched adversaries. Nevertheless, the place was taken in a series of open attacks.

Porfirio Díaz was wounded in the leg, but

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did not leave the field for a single moment. As a mark of reward for these achievements, President Juárez raised him, on August 22d, to the rank of a colonel of the regular army, and arranged that he should proceed immediately as chief of staff of the brigade, which was about to leave Oaxaca to commence operations in the central part of the country. In that region the decisive battles against the Reactionary Party were about to take place.

This brigade made a junction with the division of General Ampudia, and the "Three Years' War" was virtually ended on December 22, 1860, by the defeat of the Reactionary Party at Calpulálpam. On the 11th of the following January Juárez made his triumphal entry into the Capital of the Republic.

Upon the reëstablishment of the constitutional *régime*, young Colonel Díaz was elected a deputy from Oaxaca to the Union Congress, and he relinquished the command

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of his troops in order to take up his new responsibilities.

But the Reactionaries, although vanquished, were not yet crushed, and commenced guerrilla warfare, pillaging villages and committing all sorts of crimes. General Leonardo Márquez, the most conspicuous of these chiefs, after Miranón, organized a considerable force and attempted to attack the Capital, but the plan was frustrated, and Porfirio Díaz was one of the principal heroes of that memorable day, June 24, 1861.

At the same time, President Juárez organized a division for the purpose of annihilating Márquez. He placed the division under the command of González Ortega, the victor of Calpulálpam.

One of the brigades in this division was that of Oaxaca, the one of which Porfirio Díaz had been Chief of Staff (Mayor de Ordenes), and by a mere chance—the illness of General Ignacio Mejía, who was its real com-

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mander—it actually took the field under Porfirio Díaz.

The campaign was vigorous and short. Márquez had more than 5,000 men and 8 pieces of artillery, and moved with extreme rapidity. But his pursuers did not lose track of him, for Colonel Díaz moved with even greater rapidity, and in the early morning of August 13, 1861, surprised Márquez in Jalatlaco.

Díaz had orders to hold Márquez in check, cut off his retreat, and await the arrival of González Ortega with the main body of the army. But the young Colonel could not resist the chance so propitiously offered him. He penetrated with his forces to the center of the camp of the Reactionaries, without being perceived, until he came to the porch of the parish church, in which the headquarters of the army was located.

Díaz made his attack with his usual dash and daring, his soldiers performed prodigies of valor, and when the sun rose Díaz saw with

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surprise that the number of his prisoners was seven times as great as that of their conquerors. Nevertheless, Márquez, Zuloaga, and others of the principal chiefs succeeded in making their escape.

González Ortega felt great admiration for this bold stroke, and asked the President to promote forthwith the young and daring Oaxacan Colonel. But he added that, if the outcome had been different, Díaz would have been subjected to a court martial for having acted contrary to the orders from headquarters. Was this charge justified? Díaz understood that as soon as day broke the enemy would become aware of his presence, and either retire, which would frustrate the plan of following up Márquez, or fight, which, in view of the smallness of the forces under Díaz's command, would oblige him to retreat, in order to give General Ortega time enough to come up. Díaz understood that night surprises not infrequently turn out unfavorably for those who undertake them;



## PERIOD OF FORMATION

but at the same time he reasoned with good ground that the enemy would be tired out and unprepared, and he determined to risk all for the sake of all, judging that the preponderance of chance was on his side, and knowing also that Márquez, as soon as he perceived the attack, would think that the whole Liberal army was upon him—and so it turned out.

Some people have thought that they saw in this attack the evidence of ambition. They are mistaken. At that time Porfirio Díaz was one of the least ambitious men in Mexico. He acted in obedience to his inner conviction that, considering the circumstances, there was no other wise course to pursue. General Ortega understood this well enough.

President Juárez acted upon the recommendation and promoted Colonel Díaz at once to the rank of brigadier. This happened on August 25, 1861, and in the above capacity Díaz took part in the battle of Pa-

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chuca, on October 20th, under the orders of General Tapia.

At this point ends the first period of the military career of our hero: his time of initiation, of study, and of probation. The subaltern had been promoted grade by grade until, at barely thirty-one, he had become brigadier, and achieved a reputation. Only one place remained between him and the highest position in the army—that of general of division. This he was soon destined to reach through the French intervention, which was already at our doors, and would furnish ample opportunity for promotion.

## CHAPTER IV

### PERIOD OF DEVELOPMENT

**T**HIS is not an appropriate place to discuss the causes which brought about the French intervention, nor to mention the dishonorable conduct of the representatives of France in Mexico, for the reader will find all this, elaborated with full details, in works of another kind. I am at present concerned only with what affects the military life of Porfirio Díaz, and I am glad to say that it fell to the lot of his forces to fire the first shot in this disastrous campaign, and also to fire the last in the final siege and occupation of the Capital of the Republic.

In truth the French, in violation of the Treaty of Soledad, instead of retiring to a line back of Chiquihuite, as had been agreed upon, treacherously attacked a Mexican out-

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post. This consisted of a company of forty men belonging to the Second Brigade of Oaxaca, the one which Porfirio Díaz commanded. The brave Colonel Félix Díaz, younger brother of the general, commanded the outpost, which fought heroically against 400 French soldiers. Colonel Díaz, after being wounded and taken prisoner, was overpowered, but escaped that very night from the clutches of his enemies. By this attack, which took place on April 19, 1862, hostilities were opened.

Porfirio Díaz was in command of the advance guard of the Mexican army, and held a position on the plains of Escamela, about six miles from the place in which his brother had been set upon. He at once took the necessary steps to resist the enemy. Zaragoza, who was the general in chief, ordered a retreat; General Díaz's contingent became the rear guard, and covered the retrograde movement with bravery and faultless maneuvering.

In the action of April 28th, on the heights

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of Acultzingo, it fell to the lot of General Díaz's forces to check the advance of the French while the main army was retreating. General Zaragoza ordered him to defend the position, at any cost, for an hour after the last of the national troops had passed over Colorado Bridge. Díaz, with a handful of men, blocked the French advance until night had fallen. Then he quietly retired.

On the memorable day of May 5th, General Díaz figured among the principal heroes. His defense of the outpost of "La Ladrillera," his fight in the open field against the best soldiers of the French army, the boldness with which he obstructed the advance of these troops, and the defeat which made them flee in disorder to their camp, constituted one of the most glorious episodes of that never-to-be-forgotten day. General Zaragoza was obliged to send most peremptory orders to Porfirio Díaz to induce him to relinquish his pursuit of the enemy and return to the city.

After this defeat, the French retired

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toward Orizaba with General Zaragoza following them, and the French intervention would certainly have been ended at that city in the State of Vera Cruz, had it not been for the disaster which befell General Ortega's forces at Borrego Hill, at daybreak, on July 14th. This disaster frustrated the admirable plan of the Chief of the Army of the East.

On the same day the French attacked Zaragoza. This battle, generally known under the name of "Accion de la Ceiba," was unfavorable to the French, whose forces were driven back and obliged to take refuge in the trenches of Orizaba, pursued by Berriozábal and Porfirio Díaz.

In spite of this success, Zaragoza considered it prudent to fall back toward Puebla. He appointed Porfirio Díaz provisional commander of the division of General Llave, who had been wounded in Borrego, and this made Díaz Governor and Military Commander of the State of Vera Cruz, which had already been placed under martial law. But

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General Díaz succeeded in obtaining his release from this civil command and returned to the Army of the East as Chief of the Second Brigade of the First Division.

Zaragoza died a victim of typhus, and was succeeded by General González Ortega, who defended Puebla during the memorable siege maintained by Forey from March 16th to May 17, 1863.

In this siege, so full of instances of heroism and so glorious for the Mexican forces, Porfirio Díaz stood out as one of the most eminent figures in the defense of his country. His principal achievements were the defense of the barracks of San Márcos and of the Square of San Agustín, which won him honorable mention in the report of the actions of April 3d and 4th. He also gained distinction for his share in the day's fighting which took place on the 19th of the same month. His brilliant conduct on these occasions gained him promotion to the rank of general, under date of May 29, 1863.

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Díaz was taken prisoner in Puebla with the entire garrison, which surrendered unconditionally. But he was one of the first to escape and make application to Juárez to be allowed to continue serving his country.

Juárez left the Capital and confided to Díaz the command of the Central Army, whose duty it was to cover the retreat of the president.

On October 14, 1863, Juárez made Díaz general of division, and entrusted to him as his field of action the Eastern Section, beginning with the State of Oaxaca.

Díaz accepted the responsibility, and with a small army moved from San Juan del Río by the mountain road toward the southeast. He was obliged to traverse a region occupied by the French and by an army composed of those Mexicans who had betrayed their country and allied themselves with the French. This was the beginning of Porfirio Díaz's period of great military achievement. He arrived at Tasco, and on October 26th, 27th,



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and 28th engaged in his first battle as General of Division, which resulted in the defeat of the garrison, the capture of its defenders, and the appropriation of a considerable quantity of arms and ammunition.

After this, he marched rapidly toward Oaxaca, which was destined to become his base of operations. During this period he had under his exclusive command the States of Oaxaca, Puebla, Taxcala, and Vera Cruz; he succeeded not only in administering, as far as possible, these State governments, but also managed to give aid to the patriots, who were struggling for the cause of national independence in Tabasco and Chiapas.

But the great plans which this intrepid captain had conceived could not be realized, because of treason in the ranks of the defenders of their country and the consequent disaffection of many of its sons.

General Bazaine, commander of the French army, was greatly disturbed when he per-

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ceived the progress that Díaz was making, and decided to attack him personally with the best forces he had under his command. He ordered General Brincourt, who was operating in the State of Puebla, to advance upon the frontier of Oaxaca. This Brincourt did at once, marching with 2,000 men against Huajuápam de León at the same time that Colonel Giraud, with the Seventh of line, directed his march toward San Antonio Nanahuatípam.

At this point Díaz conceived one of his admirable plans. He started ostensibly for Huajuápam, and, on reaching Tejúpam, turned suddenly to the right to attack the rear guard of the French at La Cañada. At Nanahuatípam, Colonel Espinosa had been posted with one battalion to oppose the forces of Brincourt. Díaz ordered Espinosa to maintain his position, at all costs, until further notice, in order that he might support Díaz, when he should attack the rear guard of the French. Unfortunately, Es-

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pinosa gave way before the time; but, in spite of this, Díaz attacked the enemy and dislodged him, and would have obtained a complete victory, if Espinosa had attacked the French in the front. But this was not to be! The French had time to re-form, thanks to their discipline and courage, and turned into a disaster what had already been a victory for our army. This action took place on August 10, 1864. Díaz fell back upon Espinosa, and both countermarched to Oaxaca, in which place General Díaz made the mistake of shutting himself up.

General Mariano Escobedo, the general who afterwards became the conqueror of Maximilian, and Rafael Benavides separated from General Díaz on account of a disagreement. The French general, Courtois d'Hurbal, who was directing the campaign until the arrival of General Bazaine, marched upon Oaxaca, and inflicted disaster after disaster upon our troops, until they were obliged to shut themselves behind the ill-

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defended walls of Oaxaca, which was now formally besieged.

The besieging army numbered 10,000 men, well disciplined and well equipped, the besieged barely 2000, most of whom had been reduced to a state of demoralization by their continued defeats. Desertions were of daily occurrence, and at last there was no alternative but surrender. General Díaz presented himself entirely alone before Bazaine's camp, saying that he gave himself up a prisoner and asked no guarantees of any kind for himself, only for his troops. Why did he take this step, which has been so much criticised by his enemies? Because he no longer had sufficient resources to continue resistance; because his forces were demoralized and ready to rebel against him. He knew that they were plotting to assassinate him in order to put an end to the siege, and that they were disposed to go over to the enemy. This was undoubtedly the actual state of affairs at that time.

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Bazaine took possession of Oaxaca on February 9, 1865, and General Díaz was sent to Puebla, where he was imprisoned in the Convent of La Compañía, until the night of September 20th, during which he escaped in a bold and truly romantic fashion, if one may be permitted to use this phrase. The fugitive fled from Puebla, accompanied only by a single individual, and proceeded with the greatest possible speed to Coayuca, where the guerrilla chief, Bernardino García, awaited him with fourteen men.

At this point in his life, the period of Díaz's wonderful success begins. On the following day (September 22d), he surprised, with his fourteen men, the garrison of Tehuitzingo, took away their arms, reorganized into a company of forty men, and started for Piaxtla. There he defeated a squadron of cavalry (September 23d), which was dispatched against him from Acatlán. He took their arms and horses, and proceeded rapidly in the direction of the State of Guerrero. In

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Tlapa, Colonels Cano and Segura joined him with a picket of sixty men.

Bazaine dispatched a party of 200 infantry and fifty cavalry in pursuit of Díaz, under the command of Visoso. Díaz surprised his pursuers on October 1st and defeated them completely, killing forty men and taking many prisoners and a considerable number of arms, besides a large sum of money, which he used as a nucleus for the commissariat of the Army of the East. On December 2d he again encountered Visoso at Comitlipa, and completely annihilated his forces.

Díaz began the year of 1866 with the victory of Tlaxiaco against Triujeque (January 6th). On February 25th he fought General José María Ortega in "Lo de Soto"; on April 14th he again defeated Triujeque in Putla; on September 5th he put Virikar to flight in the battle of Huajuápam; on the 23d of the same month, he routed a column of Austrians at Nochixtlán, in which fight the Austrian commander, Count Ganz, was killed.

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On October 13th occurred the first of his great victories, that of "Miahuatlán," in which Oronoz and Testard were defeated; on the 18th occurred the second, even more brilliant and glorious for Mexico, that of "La Carbonera"; and on the 31st he took the city of Oaxaca, which for some time he had been besieging.

All this he accomplished with the nucleus of fourteen men of Bernardino García, to which he had added daily. His force consisted of 700 men when he fought the battle of Miahuatlán. He began to organize his army in Oaxaca with the first-class munitions of war which he had captured, and closed the year 1866 by defeating Remigio Toledo in the action of "La Chitova."

The year 1867 was destined to bring great renown to Díaz. Already the French army was retiring after four years of bloody and useless struggle. Porfirio Díaz commenced his advance toward the center of the country during the first fortnight of February, and

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had his headquarters established in the Villa de Acatlán when Mr. E. Burnouf, Maximilian's emissary, presented himself and made tempting proposals, looking toward the arrangement of a truce, by which a cessation of hostilities might be arranged during the retreat of the Archduke Maximilian from the Capital to Vera Cruz, where he intended to embark. The Republican commander, however, refused to make any such arrangement on the ground that, as commander-in-chief of the army, which had been entrusted to him by the government of the Republic, he could have no other relations with the Archduke than those which the code of military laws permitted with a leader of the enemy.

Mariscal Bazaine, now converted into an implacable enemy of Maximilian, also approached Díaz, through the mediation of Don Carlos Fiel, who proposed that arrangements be made by which Díaz should occupy the Capital. He further offered to sell him arms, equipment, and munitions of war. But Díaz



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also refused to enter into negotiations with Bazaine.

The Republican leader continued his march, constantly increasing his ranks with the various parties which he met on the way. On March 8th he arrived before Puebla with 3,000 men under his command. The place was well fortified, and it seemed unheard-of rashness to attempt to take it with such meagre resources.

At that time the Republican General Mariano Escobedo was besieging Querétaro, the place in which Maximilian had shut himself with his best generals. President Juárez thought, apparently with good reason, that the *dénouement* of the Imperial drama depended upon the capture of Querétaro, and he tried to concentrate upon the place the greatest possible number of forces. With this in view, he ordered General Díaz to send troops to Querétaro. This order the young commander obeyed immediately, dispatching the forces of the Second District

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of the State of Mexico and a brigade from Puebla, under the command of General Juan N. Mendez; he further arranged that General Riva Palacio, who was then in Toluca, should join this division with the troops under his command.

Fortunately, a few days after this, the Division of the South formed a junction with the Army of the East, and General Escobedo detached General Guadarrama with the cavalry, as he considered it unnecessary in the siege of Querétaro.

Díaz at once undertook to capture Puebla by means of minor engagements. He succeeded in occupying successively the following points: Santiago, Molino de Huitzotitla, the barracks of San Marcos, the Hospicio and the Convent of "La Merced." By March 13th, he held possession of all these places, but, in the meantime, General Leonardo Márquez, Viceroy of the Empire, had succeeded in making a *sortie* from Querétaro, with orders from Maximilian to reach the

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Capital, there raise an army, return to his aid, and inaugurate a counter-siege. Márquez is a man of coarse antecedents and cruel nature, but a bold and intelligent soldier. He reached the Capital, and in a few days organized an army of 5,000 men and a large contingent of artillery. Márquez has been much criticised for his conduct on this occasion. It has been maintained that his duty as a soldier was to start at once for Querétaro to aid his sovereign, as he had been ordered to do. But Márquez was not merely a soldier: he was also a general, and he thought that the forces he had raised were not sufficient for the business in hand, and, furthermore, that there was in Puebla plenty of war material; that the continuous advance of Porfirio Díaz, his military genius, his dash and drive, assured his triumph over the besieged; that Díaz would then strengthen his army by the war material which Puebla would furnish; that he would march with all speed upon the city of Mexico, which he would find ungar-

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risoned; that he would take the Capital without resistance and proceed afterwards upon Querétaro. Therefore the resourceful Viceroy decided with much prudence and faultless military judgment, to fall upon the forces of Díaz, which were decimated and worn out by daily combats, defeat them, and force them to give up the siege, increase his army in Puebla, and then hasten to the aid of Querétaro, with a great army, at the same time leaving his rear covered. Consequently, Márquez started for Puebla, and the news struck consternation into the hearts of the principal Republican leaders.

General Díaz called a council of war to decide what should be done. Several officers were of the opinion that it would be better to retreat than to expose the army to certain defeat. Others wished to go out to meet Márquez, and, if they defeated him, to return to Puebla. Justo Benitez, General Díaz's secretary, made it evident that retreat would be worse than a defeat, because it would de-

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moralize their forces, and make it necessary to again reorganize them; that to go out to fight Márquez would be pure rashness, because in an open field the superiority would lie entirely with the Viceroy; therefore the only remaining recourse was to stake all upon the immediate assault of Puebla, before the arrival of Márquez; that if the city fell, as was to be expected, they might then march out to engage Márquez in the open; if, on the other hand, they did not take Puebla, there would still be time to gain the mountains. These ideas of Justo Benítez really emanated from General Díaz. Benítez was merely the expounder of the carefully matured plan of the brave General.

The plan was adopted and the necessary preparations for the attack were made at once and with the greatest secrecy, for it was considered better that the troops should not know what was to take place, until the moment for action arrived. A feint at breaking camp was made, the baggage being moved

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to the rear of San Juan Hill, and measures to secure the retreat were ordered. It must have been about twelve o'clock at night, on April 1st, when General Ignacio Alatorre, commander of the First Division of Infantry, by an arrangement of General Díaz, ordered the maneuvering for the assault. Thirteen columns were formed. At three o'clock on the morning of the 2d, there arose upon San Juan Hill the flames of an enormous bonfire. This was the signal for the attack. The commanders of the thirteen columns threw themselves with the courage of desperation upon the entrenchments of the enemy, and in the darkness performed the most sublime acts of heroism which our historians have ever recorded.

When day broke, the streets were strewn with corpses, and among the dead were several officers of the attacking columns; the trenches were deserted, the enemy vanquished, and the forces of the Republicans were converging upon the principal square

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of Puebla, cheering the leader of the Army of the East, acclaiming him the reigning hero of that superb day, without equal in the annals of our history.

Díaz did not lose an instant. The forts "Guadalupe" and "Loretto," which commanded the city, still remained in the hands of the enemy. It was necessary to capture them forthwith before the arrival of Márquez. "Loreto" surrendered on the night of the 3d, and a few hours later "Guadalupe" capitulated unconditionally.

On the 3d, Díaz had given orders that the cavalry should be kept on the march, watching for Márquez. General Díaz now rapidly reorganized his army, incorporating in it the soldiers whom he had just conquered, a very common practice in Mexico; he then moved forward in the direction of Apizaco, to meet the Imperialist General, who was closely followed by General Guadarrama, with the 4,000 dragoons sent by General Escobedo from Querétaro; this saved the situation; for

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even with the addition of the forces which General Díaz had recruited from Puebla, his numbers were inferior to those of Márquez.

Díaz ordered Colonel Lalanne to engage Márquez from the front until he himself should come up and be able to act in conjunction with Guadarrama. Lalanne, who is to-day almost forgotten, though he deserves an epic poem, fought with the utmost heroism; was repeatedly routed, but as frequently reformed and continued the struggle, not with any hope of winning, but simply to carry out orders. Márquez continued to advance until he reached the ranch of San Pedro Notario, where some squadrons of cavalry from the Valley of Mexico opposed him. The afternoon of the 8th closed with Márquez at the ranch of San Lorenzo, where General Díaz attacked him on the 9th, but, unfortunately, a terrible storm prevented him from following up his victory. Márquez took advantage of the darkness to fall back, but the retreat



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soon degenerated into a rout, as the Republican cavalry followed him up indefatigably from San Cristóbal to Texcoco. The Imperialists, however, fought bravely and fell without asking quarter. Márquez immediately took refuge in the city of Mexico, and on April 12th General Díaz laid siege to the place. On June 20th, the Capital surrendered, at the moment when the Republican columns were preparing for the attack, twenty-four hours after the execution of Maximilian, Miramón, and Mejía, in Querétaro, which had been in the possession of General Escobedo since May 15th.

Such is the history of the glorious campaign which placed General Díaz on the very pinnacle of fame. It might be said of the young commander that from the day he escaped from Puebla to that on which he took possession of the Capital, his country's boundaries were extended at every step of his horse, to paraphrase the words of Fernández González regarding the Cid Campeador.

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Whatever envy and party hatred may say to the contrary, this campaign was a great one, and the assault of Puebla on April 2d was sublime. It may not have been in accordance with military *science*, but it certainly exemplified to the highest degree the *art* of war, and it was not *science* that won the victory, but *courage*. Furthermore, in spite of all assertions to the contrary, this really was the decisive action of the whole campaign; for if General Díaz had been defeated, or if he had retreated, Márquez would have brought aid to Querétaro, and the war would have been prolonged indefinitely. I do not believe that the cause of the Empire would ever have triumphed, but its existence would have been prolonged, and the anxiety and drain upon the vital energies of the country would have continued. This was the culminating act of heroism of the honest Oaxacan, and it demonstrated clearly his extraordinary energy, resourcefulness, persistence, bravery, and disinterestedness.

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On June 22d, the day after the occupation of the Capital, Díaz sent a communication to the Minister of War, placing the city at his disposition, and stating that, as he no longer considered it necessary to retain the plenary powers with which he had been invested, he tendered his resignation from the office of General in Chief of the Army of the East. General Díaz paid over to the government \$315,000, which remained in the treasury of the army after all expenses had been paid; an example of honorable dealing unparalleled in Mexico up to that time, and a proof of the ability he had shown in raising and disbursing the funds.

General Díaz retired alone to a small country estate called "La Noria," in the State of Oaxaca, which had been presented to him by his countrymen. It was at this time that he received the title of Cincinnatus. "Little remains to the greatest of men if virtue forsakes them," says Plutarch. Porfirio Díaz, as soldier, administrator, and citizen, and as

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a private individual, united all the requisites demanded by the Roman historian for the full measure of a hero. In modestly withdrawing into seclusion, he stood out in relief all the more.

## CHAPTER V

### DÍAZ AS A REVOLUTIONARY LEADER

**G**ENERAL DÍAZ'S character, the renown which he had acquired as a brave, loyal, and intelligent soldier; the modesty which he showed after the triumph of the Republic over the Empire; his proverbial honesty and consummate skill in administering the government of the Eastern states, entrusted to him by President Juárez during the long campaign through which they were under his exclusive control; the popularity which his generous conduct had won for him, his youth, his political principles, his patriotism, his prudence and energy, all combined to make him the natural head of the party, which I will call "Progressive." Around him were grouped the younger and more ambitious men, the impatient Liberals, the soldiers who had served under him, both

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the professional Revolutionaries and those who in good faith desired active progress, and even many Imperialists, who could not brook Juárez. They formed a heterogeneous party, as far as the number of its groups was concerned, but a homogeneous one, in the common aspirations which it saw personified in the person of its leader.

When the first general elections took place, after the restoration of the Republic, the Liberal party was already divided into three groups, made up of the personal followers of Juárez, Lerdo de Tejada, and Porfirio Díaz. Beyond a doubt, all the prominent men in these groups believed that patriotism demanded the reëlection of Juárez, in order to give him, by this action, a vote of thanks, and to show their appreciation of his devoted labors in the defense of the country and its institutions. But apparently they considered that their moral obligation ended there; for, immediately after his reëlection, their political passions broke forth in Congress, in the

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press, and in public utterance, making deeper than ever the division between the before-mentioned groups, which now began to take on the nature of separate organizations.

The group under Juárez became conservative in the literal sense of the term; that is, its members put forth all their energies to maintain the new order of things unchanged and to see that the existing system was perpetuated with Juárez permanently in power.

Lerdo de Tejada's group decided upon evolution, believing in the existing order as a basis, but holding the opinion that it must be amplified, and, above all, that the power should change hands and an entirely new administration be elected. This group, however, conspired in a manner more or less covert.

The group under Díaz was radical. It wished to change everything, and became known as "The Party of Regeneration." Naturally, it was the most active, the most

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impatient, the most fiery of the three, and ended by becoming revolutionary.

In 1871, the time for the next elections, the three parties threw themselves into the struggle with determination, each one putting forth a perfectly definite programme. Juárez won, but did not obtain an absolute majority at the polls.

Lerdo de Tejada used all his diplomacy to convince Juárez that it was his duty, in the interest of public tranquillity, to resign the presidency before Congress assembled as the Electoral College, to decide in the last appeal which candidate should be proclaimed elected.<sup>1</sup>

Juárez answered him with firmness that the law and his duty prohibited such a step,

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<sup>1</sup> In Mexico, the election of a president is indirect and of the second grade. In the first grade, the citizens choose electors; in the second grade, the electors constituting the Electoral College of each district vote for their candidate. In due time, Congress makes a count of the votes cast in all parts of the country and declares elected president the candidate who has obtained an absolute majority, that is, more than half of the total number of electoral votes.

If no candidate has received an absolute majority, Con-



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and that, if Congress proclaimed him president, he would maintain the office with resoluteness and honor as long as life remained, respecting in this juncture, as he always had, the public wish, expressed through legitimate channels. Lerdo de Tejada abandoned diplomacy and plotted in Congress.

The Díaz party did not wish to await the result of the vote in Congress, for they had discounted it in advance, and decided that, in view of the wire-pulling that would be done, they possessed neither the numbers nor the political experience necessary for victory in a struggle of this kind. Therefore they started, on October 1, 1871, the ill-advised revolution of "La Ciudadela" (the citadel of the city of Mexico), which was instantly crushed by Juárez.

This revolution, suppressed in blood by General Rocha, the state of excitement, the

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gress then makes an election (of the third grade) by vote of an absolute majority of the Deputies present, but their choice is restricted to those candidates who have obtained the largest number of votes in the elections by districts.

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urgent appeals of the Díaz party, and the obligations already entered into by General Díaz with his partisans, forced him to emerge from retirement, and assume the rôle of leader. Díaz made public, on November 10th, the "Plan de la Noria," in which he maintained that a call to arms was necessitated by the danger to the national institutions caused by the repeated reëlections, accomplished through the violent and unlawful action of the Federal Executive; by the horrible massacres of Mérida, Atexcatl, Tampico, Barranca del Diablo, and La Ciudadela; by the incompetence of some, the favoritism of others, and the corruption of all. In General Díaz's Revolutionary proclamation, the reëlection of a president was absolutely forbidden and other reforms to the Constitution were proposed.

All revolutionary proclamations are exaggerated. This must of necessity be so from their very nature; they are conceived and brought forth by unrestrained passions, when

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the minds of their authors have reached the highest point of excitement, and the public is carried away by extremes of opinion. It follows, therefore, that such plans, although put forth in the utmost good faith, exaggerate the defects of the Government which they are designed to overthrow, and make it appear an insupportable disgrace for the country to tolerate, without taking into account the difficulties which these very Revolutionaries themselves have created in the time of conspiracy which always precedes revolution. This state of affairs makes the acts of the Government, which are prompted merely by the instinct of self-preservation, seem violent and tyrannical, although they may be necessary for the maintenance of order or more or less justifiable as acts of reprisal. The revolutionists also put into their programme of improvement alluring promises, almost always impossible of fulfillment; not with deliberate intention to deceive, but because they really hope to carry out the high

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ideals which an aspiring spirit holds before their eyes, thus preventing them from seeing the difficulty, nay, even the impossibility of carrying out at all fully the promises which they have made.

The task of the revolutionary party always elicits more sympathy than that of the government. The former makes use of the eloquence of passion, which finds a response in all classes, even the lowest; while the latter finds itself confined to the language of reason, which is only appreciated by the educated classes.

Moreover, in politics, accusation is easier than justification. The former always masquerades under the guise of Liberty, and makes an appeal to the sentiments of civil courage and exalted altruism, or at least to the spirit of solidarity. The party in power always appears open to suspicion and tainted by selfish interests, which they are striving to defend with cunning and sophistry. A candidate, as a revolutionary leader, can

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make a boast of radical and extreme opinions, because he is without responsibility and speaks to a party whose desires he knows and is willing to flatter. But such artifices are not open to a government, because its responsibilities are fixed and binding. It must appeal to the entire nation; it is the representative of law and order.

The revolution of "La Noria" suffered serious disasters because of lack of preparation, organization, and cohesion. There were too many leaders, and each one acted independently. In war, nothing is so prejudicial as too many commanders.

Upon an exhaustive examination of the life of General Díaz, moreover, it is evident that the favorable outcome of his projects has been entirely due to his own individual power of accomplishment. His officers have rarely been successful when operating at a distance from him. His presence alone, like that of Cæsar and Napoleon, was worth an army; and, like Frederick the Great, he has shown

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himself so rich in resources that he has astounded everyone by rising from the deepest abyss of apparently insurmountable difficulties to the topmost pinnacle of success.

The issue between the Revolutionary Party and the Government was decided by the death of Juárez, on July 14, 1872. Lerdo de Tejada, who was at that time President of the Supreme Court, took upon himself the office of Vice-President of the Republic, and thus assumed the inheritance of the "Great Patriot."<sup>1</sup>

In several of my works upon this period of Mexican history, I have sketched the character of Don Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada. He was a man of great talent, of extraordinary learning, possessed of all the qualities necessary to make a great minister, such as Richelieu, Cavour, or Bismarck, but quite lacking in those which a chief executive must have. History is full of such examples.

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<sup>1</sup>At that time the position of President of the Supreme Court carried with it that of Vice-President of the Republic.

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In order that my readers may better understand the incidents to which I am about to refer, I must here sketch again the characteristics of this distinguished statesman. Lerdo de Tejada was a man who had been irritated rather than disciplined by the vicissitudes of life. He looked at everything with skepticism, and always held the attitude of uncertainty toward the outcome of everything. To him, principles were only the artifices under which ambition lurked. He did not sympathize with the aspirations of his time, as the genuine political leader must. He gave no place to sentiment or ideals, and persistently refused to see in men anything but acts of self-interest, never theories nor convictions. He was a mixture, strange as it may seem, of persistence and changeableness.

On assuming power, he committed two grave errors through his failure to recognize the significance of the actual position of affairs from the historic and sociological stand-

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point; he did not pay any attention to the aspirations of the nation, and he failed to appreciate the strength of the Díaz party. He did not understand the value of General Díaz as an ally, nor what it would mean to have him as an enemy. He did not know how to preserve, much less to augment, his party. He made no approach to the opposition party, and no attempt to attract it to his side. He persisted in surrounding himself with the officers of the Juárez administration, in spite of the fact that he considered them incapable, and was afraid of them, even though he held a low estimation of their powers. He was an eminent logician of the fatalistic school, a school which makes the irreparable mistake of ignoring the logic of facts; and, most serious of all, he failed to understand that in politics conditions are more dangerous than doctrines, because they are possessed of a more irresistible logic.

Lerdo was like Juárez, in that he was a most vigorous advocate of civil administra-



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tion as opposed to militarism. But Juárez, a better judge of men and things, and of the tendencies of the times, instead of opposing directly and openly the military faction, drew it to him, and controlled it. Thus it happened that he numbered among his most devoted followers such leaders as Ignacio Mejía, Rocha, Alatorre, Ceballos, Alejandro García, and others. Lerdo, less practical, did not understand how to hide his aversions, and soon found himself without a single leader identified with him. It is true that some men served him loyally, but Juárez was served with enthusiasm as well as loyalty.

When Lerdo came into power, through the death of Juárez, he of necessity accepted a double mission: first, to allay the nation's irritation, and quench the smoking torches of revolution; second, to guide the country into the paths of progress, and to develop its riches. I thought for a considerable time that the situation which Lerdo found when he became president was too great for his

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powers, and that the Government was more despotic than he himself wished it to be. But I was mistaken. The situation was simply this: his peculiar traits of character made him unfitted to govern.

Lerdo inaugurated his administration by proclaiming amnesty to the Revolutionarists, who thought that patriotism impelled them to lay down their arms. General Díaz himself accepted this amnesty as a sacrifice to his country's welfare. Lerdo thought this act conclusive, and eliminated the Díaz party as a factor in his political problem, instead of regarding it as an important element. Juárez could not bring about peace for reasons which I have fully explained in my book, dedicated to "The Great Republican,"<sup>1</sup> but Lerdo might soon have done so, if he had conciliated the opposing groups of Liberals.

When the presidential elections took place, Lerdo was the only candidate, and won an

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<sup>1</sup> Principally because we Porfirists, with our continual revolutions, would not permit him to do so.

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easy victory. Even the Reactionaries voted for him, though they acted upon a vain hope, as the future showed. Thus it was that Lerdo, elevated to the presidency by the death of Juárez, and confirmed in that position by the popular vote, found himself without enemies; the Juárez party, having lost its leader, had no further reason for existence; force of circumstances obliged them to dissolve, and its scattered members were under the necessity of making new party affiliations or raising a new standard. But Lerdo committed the blunder of retaining to a man the ministers of Juárez's cabinet.

The Lerdist party took their leader's triumph for their own, and were disposed to make liberal concessions to the Porfirists<sup>1</sup> and to take in the orphaned Juárezists, in order to strengthen themselves and become a na-

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<sup>1</sup>The Díaz party is called in Mexico the Porfirist party, but I have more frequently used the former phrase, because it more nearly conforms to Anglo-Saxon usage. It is more convenient, however, to use "Porfirist" when referring to individuals, as "Díazist" would be an impossible word.

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tional party; but Lerdo soon gave them to understand that it was one thing to be a candidate and another thing to be a president. He made it evident that he was going to have his own way, because he considered the victory his, and in no sense due to the efforts of his partisans.

The Díaz party, in spite of the impatience which characterized it, was disposed to bide its time, and support Lerdo in his undertaking, on the assumption that he was patriotic, progressive, and honorable, and, therefore, would not put forth any pretensions to a reelection when the next term came round. But Lerdo undervalued his supporters, individually and collectively, and gave them no share in his administration; yet, when the time for election again approached, he put himself forward as a candidate.

The Reactionary Party and the Imperialists had remained without leaders and without a platform; many of them were buried in Querétaro, under the ruins of the Empire.

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They thought that Lerdo would accept them as one of the national contingents, and as a counterpoise to Jacobinism; but Lerdo repulsed them, and showed himself more of a reformer than Juárez himself, thus blotting out every shadow of hope for the Reactionaries, and giving the vestiges of the Imperialist party to understand that there was no possible chance of their again coming into power. It is asserted that Lerdo had no thought of reëlection; that this was suggested by his friends, and that he let them have their way. The most fatal of all policies is that of *laissez faire*, for it is usually taken to mean that the leader does not know his own mind.

Lerdo, at the beginning of his term, as has already been said, did not have a single opponent; at the end he did not have a single follower; he was not even himself his own partisan. It is certainly a fact that as president he was his own worst enemy.

The Díaz party, disgusted by the tactless conduct of Lerdo, and cognizant of the stren-

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uous efforts that his party was making for his reëlection, decided again to take up arms, and on January 5, 1876, in the town of Ojitlán, district of Tuxtepec, and State of Oaxaca, the "Plan of Tuxtepec" (Revolutionary Declaration) was proclaimed by Colonel H. Sarmiento and his associates, disavowing Lerdo de Tejada as president, and, consequently, all the officers of his administration. This plan was seconded on the 21st by Generals Fidencio Hernández and Juan N. Ramírez, and by the district of Ixtlán, also of the State of Oaxaca, and soon the Revolution had spread over the whole country. Lerdo resisted in his usual half-hearted manner, and his troops fought without enthusiasm.

In spite of the disturbed state of the country, a pretended election was held—which deceived no one—and Lerdo was declared elected. Following his usual custom, Lerdo let things take their course. At the eleventh hour, he wished to retrace his steps. He separated himself from the Juárez party,

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and endeavored to resurrect the Lerdist party, pure and simple. He changed his cabinet, but not his methods. This cabinet was derisively called the "Carmelite Brotherhood," because all that it could do was to comfort the President during the last days of his expiring term.

José María Iglesias, at that time President of the Supreme Court, and, therefore, also Vice-President of the Republic, did with Lerdo what Lerdo had done with Juárez. He foresaw clearly the approaching downfall of President Lerdo de Tejada, either through the Revolution against him, or through the expiration of his legal term of office, on December 1, 1876.

It was a notorious fact that there had been no legal election, and that the pretended re-election of Lerdo was therefore farcical. Not even the officers who were fighting for him in the field took it seriously. Among them the prevailing opinion was that their allegiance to President Lerdo terminated at one minute

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past twelve on December 1st, and on this account they were called "The Decemberists."

Meanwhile the Revolution gained ground, and finally, on November 15th, a decisive battle took place on the field of Tecuac between the Revolutionaries, under the command of General Díaz, and the Lerdist, under General Ignacio Alatorre. Díaz won, and the war was virtually at an end.

Iglesias had been mistaken. He thought that the question at stake was between him and Lerdo, and that the latter, in making a *coup d'état*, and claiming reëlection, when it was notorious that there had been no voting at the polls, had put himself in the same position as Comonfort; that in consequence Iglesias himself would play the part which Juárez had played during the so-called "Three Years' War." But he did not realize that the circumstances were not the same; that he had neither the power nor the reputation of Juárez, "the Reformer"; that pub-



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lic sympathy was with General Díaz; that his own party was principally composed of estimable youths and lawyers, who were very talented, it is true, but consummate idealists, little fitted for practical action, and quite without followers.

Iglesias abandoned the Capital, fearful that Lerdo would imprison him, and thus incapacitate him from taking up the executive power. He set up a migratory government; that is, one which changed its location every time danger threatened. He thought that he could restrain the victorious Revolutionaries by merely invoking the Constitution; that the men who had fought so many years to gain possession of the Government would again temporarily relinquish it, and recognize the rights of Iglesias, which were founded on an order which had just been overthrown. He ignored the fact that a constitutional revolution is an impossibility; that the moment a revolution is started, even though it be with the object of again putting the Constitution

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into force, it is, by the mere use of arms, placed outside the Constitution. In my judgment, Iglesias's recourse to arms to overthrow Lerdo, invoking a law, which had not yet been infringed, put him into the category of a Revolutionist, just as much as General Díaz, who was fighting in the field to prevent the accomplishment of Lerdo's design; in other words, his standing before the Constitution had been invalidated by his own act.

I do not deny that Iglesias was acting in good faith and without personal ambition. He wished to constitutionalize the Revolution.

If Iglesias had remained President of the Supreme Court, accepting all its consequences as Juárez did, if he had from this position protested against the decree which declared Lerdo reëlected, and if, when Lerdo fled from the Capital, he had remained there, taken up the executive power, and in this character met the Revolution as it invaded

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the Capital, his position would unquestionably have been impressive, strong, and compelling; and then, perhaps, the Díaz Revolutionists would have had to go over to him, uniting in one the two causes, and appealing to the public to solve the problem by its vote.

But this was not what happened. Lerdo fled, Iglesias moved his position, and General Díaz entered the Capital with the laurels of victory, organized a provisional Government, and again took the field to fight the Lerdist and Iglesias parties, and thus complete his work. He established a Government in fact. The force which sustained Iglesias went over with arms and baggage to General Díaz or disbanded. Lerdo sailed for New York by way of Panama, and Iglesias sailed for New Orleans *en route* for San Francisco. Both then conspired from without, Lerdo for restoration, Iglesias for legalization, apparently without comprehending that, if they gave up while they were in the country, with

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considerable resources at their command, their undertakings from without, bereft of resources, was ridiculous.

General Díaz held elections; the public ratified the Revolution, and elected its leader Chief Magistrate of the Republic. Lerdo, in virtue of his skepticism, lived and died in exile. Iglesias returned to his country, saying, to quote his own words, "Grief over public affairs, homesickness in exile, and circumstances entirely personal, made my residence out of the country a veritable sacrifice." With this statement he justified his return. It is true enough that his ostracism was self-imposed and without adequate reason, and I am the last person to deny him the judgment which he asks of impartial history in the following words: "Without ambitions of any kind, he sacrificed all to the fulfillment of Duty." Under these circumstances, the only question for the historian to discuss is whether Iglesias chose the best method of fulfilling his duty.

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To whom was the triumph of the Revolution due? It is difficult to give a categorical reply to such a question; but I honestly think it was due rather to the stupidity of the Government, the skepticism of Lerdo, and the lack of confidence of the army, than to the political and military skill of General Díaz and the efforts of his followers.

It is said that General Mejía, Juárez's Minister of War, whom Lerdo had retained, betrayed the President. I have never entertained this belief; Mejía acted in this instance with his usual lack of perception, that is all. Although Mejía was a general, he was not a soldier; he never had the true military spirit, and he did not accomplish a single thing of real value, but he was never disloyal. He was one of the great number of men who were thrust into high positions, nobody knows why, and retained there through a sort of tacit acquiescence on the part of the people. In my opinion, Mejía was elevated to this position simply because he was an

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Oaxacan, and an old friend of President Juárez. Some people say that when the Revolution broke out Mejía drew up an adequate plan, which was rejected by Lerdo, and that from that time on the Minister of War determined to give up completely his own initiative and to follow the orders of the President.

The forces of the Government, although they always fought without confidence or enthusiasm, inflicted frequent and severe defeats upon the Díaz forces, without understanding how to reap from these triumphs all the advantage possible, or even wishing to do so.

As a Revolutionary leader, General Díaz made serious mistakes. The first he made at the time of the uprising against Juárez, by starting revolution in the South, when the great majority of his backing was located in the North; the second he made at the time of the uprising against Lerdo, by going to the North to head the Revolutionists, when the

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strength of his resources lay in the South; that is to say, in Oaxaca, Puebla, and Vera Cruz.

After being overthrown in Icamole, General Díaz fled to the United States, and from New Orleans went to Vera Cruz in the steamer "City of Havana," disguised as a Cuban physician. At Tampico a battalion of infantry was taken on board, and General Díaz thought that his *incognito* had become known and that he was lost. General Díaz threw himself into the sea, trusting in his skill as a swimmer to reach the shore. This he never would have succeeded in doing, because his strength had been much broken by an illness, from which he was still suffering. Fortunately he was noticed as he threw himself overboard, and a boat was launched, which undoubtedly saved him from certain death. The purser of the steamer "Alphonso K. Coney" hid the general, and thanks to his cleverness and the aid given him at Vera Cruz by General Juan de la Luz Enríquez, Agustín

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Marañón, and the brothers Alpuche, owners of the lighters which loaded and unloaded the American steamers, he was able to reach the shore, disguised as a sailor, mount a horse, and start by way of Boca del Río for Alvarado, whence he reached Oaxaca. When the police of Vera Cruz made a search for General Díaz, he was already beyond their reach.

In Oaxaca he organized a small army, and, in the mean time, succeeded in regaining his health. Lerdo at that time did not know how to make hostilities against him. With very poor equipment, Díaz marched toward the center of the Republic, and was met by General Ignacio Alatorre, who came out to oppose him with a strong division, consisting of the three arms.

The two armies came in sight of each other on the ridge of Tecoac, as has already been said. The Government forces fought without spirit; Alatorre showed himself somewhat sluggish, according to the military critics; nevertheless, he would have defeated the



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Revolutionaries, if it had not been for the opportune arrival of General Manuel González, with a considerable force, which immediately attacked the governmental commander with intrepidity, and thus gave the victory to the Revolutionary leader.

The Revolution found its principal ally in the opposition of the press, which completely robbed the Government of its prestige, introduced lack of confidence and depression into the ranks of the army, and fired the public mind against what we then called "the most disgraceful tyranny." What a tyranny! It not only sanctioned liberty, but even permitted license in the press! The more exhaustively one studies this period, the more he is confirmed in the conviction that defeat was due not so much to the Revolutionaries as to the Government, which literally wrought its own downfall.

## CHAPTER VI

### DÍAZ AS PRESIDENT

#### *FIRST PERIOD*

**I**N several of my works already published, I have studied the first period of President Díaz's presidency. I therefore find myself obliged to repeat much of what has already been said in my previous writings.

When General Díaz came into power, he found himself standing before the tribunal of history, with a great responsibility resting upon him. He had fought in the name of progress, order, and liberty, first the Juárezist, and then the Lerdist administration. He had promised the regeneration of the country, and his promise must be fulfilled. He must do something great—so great that it would justify his former position. First of all, it was necessary to dominate the situation com-

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pletely; to remove whatever obstacles were placed in his way; to crush all illegitimate ambitions; to fuse into one all antagonistic elements, and to electrify a society which as yet had neither ideals nor political faith. Unless he succeeded in doing all this; unless he could carry out his programme completely, he would remain in the category of a common revolutionist, actuated by criminal ambition. If every man is responsible to himself for the wise choice of a business or profession, it is certainly still more true that he is responsible to his country for the position he assumes in politics.

General Díaz came into power under the most unfavorable auspices, for although he was supported by a strong party, it was nothing more than a party of opposition, and not homogeneous. As is the case with all revolutionary groups, it was possessed of considerable force, but included a horde of undisciplined followers, because, during the time of actual struggle, it was neces-

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sary to welcome all sorts and conditions of men.

He found the treasury empty, credit gone, lack of confidence everywhere, international relations broken or suspended, and grave complications with the United States impending. To meet so many dangers, and to save the nation's honor, demanded excellent judgment, faultless tact, calmness, firmness, and patriotism.

Lerdism had been conquered, but not annihilated. Some of Lerdo's commanders and officers remained loyal to his party and refused to recognize the new order of things. Some retired to their homes and took up their work. Others plotted, but always unsuccessfully, either from lack of skill or because the "Cause of Restoration" no longer carried any prestige, or, perhaps, merely because society was heartily tired of internal disorders. Nevertheless, the Lerdists continued to be a source of anxiety, and to hamper the free action of the Government.

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One of the most solemn promises of the "Plan de Tuxtepec" was to abolish the immediate reëlection of the President of the Republic and the governors of the States. In order to carry this provision into effect an amendment to the Constitution was adopted and ratified. This, we must remember, restricted to four years the time at General Díaz's disposal, and made the favorable outcome of his enormous undertaking extremely doubtful; for nothing great can be accomplished in a short time.

Fortunately, General Díaz had developed his powers on the field of battle. He was accustomed to creating resources, organizing armies, and collecting war material. This military education was all the statesman had to fall back upon; but, under the circumstances, it was the most appropriate and suitable education he could have had—indispensable, one might even call it, considering the exceptional conditions under which the country was laboring at that time. Every-

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one knows that the science of war demands a wider range of knowledge than any other, and demands in addition a forceful genius, rich in resources.

Emerson, the great American philosopher, has declared that man has the power to determine his own value. It is worthy of universal acceptance, this maxim, that man can achieve the character which he attributes to himself. Let him grasp the situation, place himself in an irrefutable position, and all men will accept his pretensions. The world is bound to be just, though it is always profoundly indifferent to the choice of rôle which each one makes for himself. Let him be a hero, or a fool; it is all one to the people. They will surely accept the standards which he has raised for his own acts, the limits which he has set for his own personality, whether he trails his coward spirit in the dust or links it with the stars as they revolve in the dome of heaven.

General Díaz had faith in himself, and

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therefore inspired confidence in others. He believed himself capable of dominating the situation, and he dominated it.

Porfirio Díaz had just completed his thirty-seventh year, and was in the full vigor of his physical and mental powers, when the people enthusiastically placed him in the presidential chair.

He came into prominence when his genius was fully developed and when the nation was ready for the labors which he undertook. It will be generally granted, I think, that there is in affairs a ripening process which one must patiently await or his undertaking will fail, and happy the man who arrives at the propitious moment!

Although it is true that great men always hold a dominating influence at any given moment, we must not forget that this influence is necessarily affected by the larger current of their times. So that the superiority of these men really consists in their ability

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to perceive the trend of events and to act accordingly.

It is commonly said that arriving at the appropriate moment is a matter of chance, but I do not believe it. Nothing happens by accident in an orderly universe, but of necessity. Historic events do not take place at haphazard; they unfold in obedience to a law which we have not yet fathomed.

Necessity creates the instrument and the material to supply the thing needed. This is the reason that in history we always see the much needed man appear just at the right time. Necessity brings him forth, inspires him, and makes him arrive at the crucial moment. Is the man himself conscious of this compelling force? Yes; by intuition; therefore he does not hesitate nor procrastinate.

General Díaz knew that sooner or later he would reach the presidency, and during the time that he lived in the solitude of the country he was forming his plans of government.





GENERAL PORFIRIO DÍAZ IN 1867.



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He then decided that the first step must be to bring about peace and enforce it at any cost, as that was the only condition under which his work would be possible.

He well knew that he would have to meet the baleful vices created by revolutionary turbulence, so long continued that it had become a kind of second nature in our race. But he succeeded in solving the problem, and when he came into power, surrounded by so many professional revolutionists, he understood that the only way of escape was to keep them under his control. He perceived that if he could muster sufficient skill and judgment to manage them he could render them harmless—even useful.

By his success in repressing with firm hand the last traces of disorder, he ended this turbulent period in our history and inaugurated a period of evolution—an evolution which began with himself, by changing him from revolutionary leader to civil ruler, from soldier to politician, from politician to ad-

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ministrator, from military hero to "Father of Peace." He who through the necessities of the situation had been the Destroyer, by virtue of his new undertaking became the Restorer.

He planned, created, and organized. He began by experimenting, under the guidance of his intuition; he continued by the light of the experience, which he was gaining and storing up daily; he concluded by scientific verification, which is the highest achievement of human wisdom.

He held the conviction that the greatness of a nation consists not in its potential or latent energies, but in its positive and dynamic activities; that is, those which manifest themselves in action scientifically directed, and reveal themselves in deeds which contribute to the purposes of society.

But these potential energies cannot be converted into dynamic energies by the will of any man, no matter how skillful, for the concurrence of other factors is necessary; such

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factors, for example, as suitable material to work with, the right opportunity, aid from the general attitude of society, and time, always a most important factor in the development and strengthening process which any great and complicated system must undergo.

As I have already said, Díaz began by establishing peace, as the first condition of prosperity. It is true enough that peace is a result, but as is the case with all effects, it becomes in its turn a cause.

Much has been said both for and against peace, this most precious acquisition of our times in Mexico, each one stating his judgment as he has formed it from his own point of view. And, after all, peace alone means little. Peace, as a political term, is merely relative, and means public tranquillity; that is, a state in which there is no enemy to fight, either within or without. So far it is a merely negative condition. Peace is the absence of war. But the word is capable of sustaining a further meaning. Peace is order

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balanced by law. In this definition we find already the positive element. But even in this acceptation there is something lacking; there is a distinction between a mere passive state of peace and the live, active condition which we might call dynamic peace. Unquestionably, under either of these two aspects, peace results in benefit to mankind, when compared with war; but there is, nevertheless, a great difference between the two. The former brings with it in the long run enervation and paralysis of initiative. It has the same effect that disuse has upon steel; though the metal escapes the wearing process of use, still it is slowly destroyed by oxidation. Thus it is with the mechanical peace which is useful only in a period of transition, for if it is too long continued it becomes dangerous, unlawful tyranny, and order is maintained at the expense of liberty; order of this kind is really nothing more than discipline bordering on complete subjection.

Peace of the second kind is active, positive,

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dynamic. It enters into the social organism as an integral part; it quickens dormant energies, promotes activity, brings out the unformed, strengthens the weak, unites the divided, heals the sick, lifts the fallen, and reclaims those who have gone astray; it leads all, though by different paths, to a common end, the betterment of society, both morally and materially. As the whole movement is based upon respect for law, respect on the part of the governed, making them careful not to misprize the law; respect on the part of the administration not to misuse their power; each side does its duty with perfect respect for the rights of the other.

General Díaz was obliged to resort to both systems. It was absolutely necessary to begin by repressing lawlessness, otherwise the development of a peaceable and harmonious social order would have been impossible.

Octavian peace, that of *toto orbe in pace composito*, which prepared the ground for

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Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero, and opened the road to Rome for the so-called Barbarians of the North, was not the work of Augustus, but the logical result of the condition of the Roman Empire. It had reached the stage of mortal decadence. As Rome had her time of aggrandizement, she had of necessity a process of decay, which ended in extinction, as happened in the case of Egypt and Greece. Prostration and lethargy marked the beginning of the last agony. This happens with nations just as it does with individuals, for they also are subject to physiological laws.

I am firmly convinced of the sincerity of General Díaz's intentions when he came into power. He was a true democrat. He had proved it on many occasions. He considered it dangerous in a democracy to continue a chief magistrate in power indefinitely; he believed that the best guarantee of public liberty is the periodic renewal of the men



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who wield the power. For failure to carry out this principle General Díaz condemned both Juárez and Lerdo.

In the beginning of Díaz's administration, the revolutionary spirit threatened to overthrow the new order of things. Some Lerdist leaders, among them those who had defended their chief with so little courage, whether from remorse or some other cause, instituted what they called the "Restoration." For this cause they plotted with little skill and less success. It was said that Lerdo was always opposed to these conspiracies, and looked with equal scorn upon his "posthumous<sup>1</sup> partisans" and his enemies. The Government at first showed a certain leniency toward the conspirators, but there came a time when it was thought necessary to chastise and terrorize these enemies of the Government.

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<sup>1</sup>The poignancy of this phrase will be missed by the American reader, unless he happens to remember that Lerdo's friends postponed vigorous action till after their leader was politically dead beyond the possibility of resurrection.

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This was done on the frightful night of June 25, 1879.

On the night of the 23d of the same month, the Mexican gunboats *Libertad* and *Independencia* happened to be anchored in Tlaxotalpam (State of Vera Cruz). A group of Alvaradians, led by one António Véla, took possession of the *Libertad*, through the connivance of some of the crew. The *Libertad* immediately started for Alvarado before the *Independencia* could stop her. The Revolutionaries disembarked in Alvarado and surprised a picket of the Twenty-third Battalion, which constituted the garrison of the town, carried them all on board, and quickly put to sea, with the intention of reaching "Laguna del Carmen."

This uprising in favor of the Restoration of Lerdo was a part of a vast conspiracy, which had for its principal object the capture of Vera Cruz. It had ramifications all over the country, in the large cities, and even in the Capital itself. Its principal leader was

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General Mariáno Escobedo. Coöperating with him were several colonels of recognized ability, such as Lorenzo Fernandez, Bonifacio Topete, Carlos Fuero, José B. Cuesto, and others of no less reputation.

The news of the capture of the *Libertad* was received in Vera Cruz on the 24th, brought by a pilot of the port named Carmona. He was immediately arrested by General Luis Mier y Teran, Governor of the State.

Teran was a fanatical Díaz supporter. Although born in Guanajuato, he had gone to Oaxaca at a very early age, and was considered an Oaxacan. He had served in the "Three Years' War" as a subaltern, having taken part in the defense of Vera Cruz when it was bombarded by Miramon. He was a big, pompous man, but very open-hearted, and possessed of warm sympathies. His education had been very scant, and his courage was of the rashest kind. In Vera Cruz he was immensely popular among the lower classes, but the well-to-do never took

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him seriously as a politician, although they liked him very much as a man.

Teran had served in the Army of the East, had taken part in the defense of Puebla when it was besieged by the French army, and had been captured and deported to France. On his return, he escaped from Vera Cruz and again joined the ranks of General Díaz. He was one of the heroes of April 2d.

After the triumph of the Republic he returned to Vera Cruz and became a broker again, but still took an active part in all conspiracies and revolutions of the Díaz party. In fact, he was the virtual chief of that party in his state. At the time of the "Plan del la Noria," he was Commander in Chief of the Revolutionaries in Oaxaca. He was defeated and made prisoner in San Mateo Xindihui by the Juárezist General Loeza. At the time of the "Plan de Tuxtepec," he was defeated and made prisoner by the Lerdist General Alatorre at the battle of Epatlan. Though a good leader of a column, he was the poorest

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kind of a commander in chief. His character and his eccentricities won for him the name of "Crazy Teran."

After General Díaz's victory in Tecoác, Teran regained his liberty, and was sent to Vera Cruz as military commander, and upon the establishment of the constitutional government was elected Governor of the State. Teran lived in constant fear, not because he was a coward, but because he understood fully the supreme importance of Vera Cruz at that moment; it was the key to the Republic and the chief source of supplies for the Government. He was aware that plotting was going on, but he could not discover the source nor obtain sufficient evidence to convict the conspirators.

Some days before the occurrence of the events which I have just described, he ordered several suspects to be arrested. Among these was Don Vicente Capmany. They were handed over to me for judgment, for at that time I was Federal Judge of the District

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of Vera Cruz. As the authorities were unable to furnish me with proofs of any kind, I was forced at the expiration of the trial to issue a mandate placing the accused at liberty. This put me in bad repute with Teran, who, though he could not question my party loyalty, accused me of being weak. To this accusation I replied that I was a judge, not an executioner, and could only act according to the law.

On June 24th, the very day on which the news of the seizure of the gunboat *Libertad* came, Teran received from General Díaz details of the plot which was being concocted in Vera Cruz, and a list of the persons involved.

Teran, overrating the danger, telegraphed to President Díaz that there was an uprising in the garrison. The President answered him in his usual laconic fashion "Shoot them red-handed." During the night Teran ordered the arrest of the men whose names he had on the list. The po-

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lice were slow in carrying out the order, and the most important leaders escaped. These were Colonel Fernandez and Colonel Cueto. The police succeeded in arresting Jaime Rodriguez, Dr. Ramon Albert Hernandez, Antonio Ituarte, Francisco Cueto, Luis Alva, Lorenzo Portilla, Vicente Capmany, Ricardo B. Suarez, and Luis Galinie. These men were placed in the public prison. At dawn, on the morning of the 25th, in the midst of a great downpour, the prisoners were conducted (with the exception of Suarez, Galinie, and Carmona) to the barracks of the Twenty-third Battalion. Manuel Rosello, Antonio Loredo, J. A. Rubalcaba, and Juan Caro-Garcia, officers of the Twenty-fifth Battalion, were also arrested. General Teran arrived at the barracks of the Twenty-third, and ordered the execution of the four officers above mentioned. Two of them, Rosello and Loredo, succeeded in saving their lives, thanks to the prayers and persuasive eloquence of the Major Juvencio Robles. Rubal-

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caba, Caro, and the other civilians already mentioned were executed in a summary manner.

The immediate effect of this Bacchanalian orgy of blood was to strike terror to the hearts of all conspirators. That the feeling was deep and lasting is proved by that fact that it is still felt to-day, thirty years afterwards. It was clearly understood that revolutionists need not expect any leniency from the Government. In consequence, all acknowledged themselves conquered. After this "pacifism" <sup>1</sup> began.

At the close of President Díaz's first term, the Díaz party understood that they had gone too far in prohibiting immediate reëlec-

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<sup>1</sup> As there seems to be no word to convey the idea of peace imposed from without as distinguished from a condition due to inner harmony, Señor de Zayas has used the coined word "pacifismo," and asked to have it transposed bodily into English. "Pacifism" he defines as peace imposed by forcible means and with a tendency to absolutism. Pacification would not express the meaning, as Señor de Zayas wishes to describe a permanent, as opposed to a merely transient, condition. In another passage, he has made a further distinction by using the phrase "mechanical peace" as contrasted with "organic peace."



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tion. General Díaz himself saw with dismay the approach of the termination of his power, for he had hardly more than begun to establish the reforms he had planned.

At this juncture, an idea occurred to him which would modify the effect of the law, without altering the letter.

It was certainly legal to transfer the Government to other hands as a sacred trust, to be returned after four years to President Díaz. The question then was, "Who would be a fitting man for this trust?" The name of Don Justo Benitez at once occurred to Díaz. Benitez was an Oaxacan, a man of profound judicial knowledge, great energy, and sterling character. For many years he had been General Díaz's only counsellor, his private secretary, his general secretary, and the actual director of administration of the Eastern States while they were under the control of General Díaz. Benitez had been, one might almost say, the mind of the young commander. On assuming power, President

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Díaz had made Benitez his highest cabinet officer. Benitez was a man of unquestionable honor and absolute loyalty. There could be no one better than he to carry out the regency, as the period between 1880 and 1884 might well be called.

After Benitez had been designated as candidate, he sailed for Europe, with the intention of making a political tour in order to facilitate the reopening of diplomatic relations which had been broken off on account of the war with France. This absence was fatal to his interests, for when he returned the opinion of those in control had turned against him.

It is said that Benitez made the mistake of acting as if he actually had in his hands the reins of power. He allowed his own personality to assert itself. This alarmed General Díaz and made him suspicious, with the result that Benitez fell from grace, never to rise again. He was one of the many factors eliminated by our inexorable mathematician.

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It was now necessary to think of some one else; he must be a soldier, accustomed to discipline, and ready to obey orders absolutely. General Teran, who had really been thought of by General Díaz before Benitez, had already been cast aside because of the overzealousness which he had shown on June 25th. Then Díaz thought of General Don Manuel González, the real hero of Tecoaac.

González was a rough man, without education, without training of any kind, much less administrative knowledge. As a commander of guerrillas, he was brave to rashness. He had served in the ranks of the Reactionaries, and afterwards gone over to the Republicans at the time of the war against the French. He had done excellent service in his country's cause under the orders of General Díaz. Manly, forceful, and loyal, he was always true to his word, even if he had given it lightly; and in addition he was one of General Díaz's most fanatical partisans.

The appointment of González created a

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scandal in the Díaz party, for many of its members had already made formal agreements with Benitez. The incident even caused a ministerial crisis. However, the command of General Díaz was complied with, and González was elected president. He came into office December 1, 1880.

There are those who assert that when General Díaz stepped down from the presidency, he vowed that if he ever became president again he would hold the office for life. I doubt the authenticity of this story, for General Díaz does not make confidences of this kind.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE RE-ELECTION OF GENERAL DÍAZ

**T**HE administration of General González was for the first two years a veritable blessing to the country. The former officials and commanders of the old army, who had served under President Lerdo de Tejada, and who, through pride or military feeling, had refused to enter the service during the administration of General Díaz, now submitted to the Government, and were reinstated in their grades and activities. This did much to promote general good feeling in the country. Under his administration the great railroad lines were begun, and work was commenced on the improvement of the port of Vera Cruz. Commerce increased to a marked degree, and the breath of returning civil life was inhaled all over the country. But the last two years of his ad-

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ministration were extremely disastrous. In all branches of the Government there was fearful wastefulness and much scandal over peculations, and but for the fact that the time set for General Díaz's return to power was near at hand, we should certainly have again entered upon an epoch of revolution. The principal cause of trouble was the forced circulation of nickel coins and the arrangement of the English debt upon a basis which was at that time considered a national disgrace.

Many people thought that General González would limit his action to that of deputy of his predecessor and successor, but such was not the case. Once in power, González acted entirely upon his own initiative. General Díaz did not even try to exercise any influence over him; so that González and his circle were responsible for all the good and evil of that administration. The González party wanted to work for the continuance of their chief in power, but he flatly refused.

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His word had been given, and he was determined to live up to it.

The elections were held, and much enthusiasm was shown for General Díaz, who was elected almost unanimously, for everyone believed that only through him could their legitimate hopes for better conditions be realized.

When General Díaz again took up the reins of government, on December 1, 1884, he found himself compromised by the action of his predecessor, principally because the public had been aroused on account of the state of the treasury, the issue of nickel coin, and the projected rearrangement of the English debt. The storm of indignation had reached the breaking point.

It was absolutely necessary, therefore, to continue enforcing, at all costs, mechanical peace, or, as I have already called it, the policy of "pacifism." Fortunately, the peo-

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ple responded, for they saw that it was their only hope of salvation.

At this juncture General Díaz began the great work which has given him a world-wide reputation. General Díaz's first period was one of initiation and experiment; his second was devoted to the development of a perfectly conceived plan, now worked out in all its details.

The people understood that four years was not sufficient time to complete such a work of reorganization. They trembled before the prospect of another and a different administration, and, impelled by public opinion, Congress repealed the Constitutional amendment which prohibited reëlection. At first, only a second term was permitted; but afterwards the very men who had originally set the limit of a single term reëstablished the old *régime*, which gave to the public the power to reëlect its chief magistrate indefinitely. Thus was the work of the revolution of Tuxtepec brought to naught.



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By enforcing discipline with an iron hand, General Díaz succeeded in converting the army from an instrument of revolution into a bulwark of the law, from a howling mob of barrack-room disturbers into guardians of the peace, from terrorizers of the people into protectors of life and property.

Law and order was now established upon so firm a basis that it gave security to the people, not only in the populous centers, but in the remote districts, and brought protection to the dwellers in huts as well as to the rich in palaces. Under the vivifying influence of peace our arid deserts were transformed into agricultural regions, and the great stretches of our extensive territory settled; the capital of the country was becoming convinced that there was a better field for its investment at home than abroad, and foreign capital was shown that from Mexico a greater return could be obtained, and actually was being obtained, than from any other country; our wretched bays were

being converted into safe harbors; an iron network of railroads was spread over the country, joining the interior with the frontier, most of the towns with the capitals of the provinces, and all the provincial capitals with the metropolis and the outside world. The impetuous current of our rivers was being dominated by bridges, the deep abysses of our cañons spanned by viaducts, and even the mountain barriers conquered by tunnels.

Peace made it possible to mine the iron and coal, to utilize the rivers with the turbine; under the influence of progress and civilization manufacturing plants were built, boilers started, smelters lighted, and great factory chimneys reared with their plumes of smoke, standing out against the sky; levers were opened to give passage to the restless steam that it might drive pistons, and thus communicate its throbbing life to the dead machinery. One might almost say that the mechanism had been endowed with life and could

actually reason, for it seems to swell with pride at being made the depository of man's will and intelligence, and thus inspired, it forges, it grinds, it hammers, it weaves, it spins, combines and separates, selects and classifies, presses and molds, polishes and puts the finishing touches upon all kinds of work. The machinery itself seems to be alive and to infuse its life into the workmen.

The same is true of capital; it infuses life into enterprise, and by improving transportation carries the impulse to distant settlements, even reaching foreign countries in its beneficent work. The factory whistle replaces the church bell, calling men from sleep to their life of activity, telling the laborer that it is time for breakfast, giving him the signal to quit work and seek his grateful and well-earned rest, and again calling him the next morning.

The plow furrows the earth, the sower sows the grain, the irrigating ditch waters it, the sun warms it into life, the seed germinates,

and the plant spreads its leaves and blossoms, the smiling promise of the autumn crop. The reaper cuts the grain and fills the barn with the remunerative harvest. On the other hand the flocks and herds graze upon the mountain sides and chew their cud in tranquillity under the shade of protecting trees, growing the tender flesh which is to serve us as food, the wool from which we make our clothes, and the hide which later industry will work over and turn into articles to satisfy a thousand needs of our complex civilization. Farther away in the mountains the mining industry is continually making more scientific its processes, more perfect its organization, and more economical its business methods; it makes the depths of the earth pay an equal or even greater tribute than the soil to the private individual and to the public at large.

Under the influence of peace, the postal facilities have been properly organized, and the wires of the telephone and the telegraph

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stretched to the borders of the Republic; all the cities and towns, and even the smallest villages, are linked together by rapid, cheap, and convenient service, which greatly contributes to national unification. This facilitates trade, it brings us together, and makes us of one mind. We suffer with all in a common grief, we rejoice with a general thanksgiving. The cry for help is heard, no matter how remote the spot, where desperation raises it, and relief is sent to any part of the country by the national spirit of charity. Public instruction follows in its wake, the trained teacher taking the place of the priest, converting the school into a center for the growth and expansion of the mind; replacing the brutal system of former times and the out-of-date methods; substituting for the idea that to spare the rod spoils the child the belief that more can be accomplished by persuasion and kindness than by force.

The social position of woman has been raised without undervaluing her womanliness

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or overlooking the fact that she was destined by nature first of all and above all to play the noble part of wife and the sublime and sacred rôle of mother.

The administration of justice has been improved, because there has been time to study problems and try experiments in order to correct and complete the law, to make a better distribution of the duties of administration, and to pay the officers more liberally, to increase the number of courts and the number of judges for each court.

Charity has increased in sincerity and in scope it has grown into philanthropy as far as the public administration is concerned, and even in the action of individuals. I do not mean to imply by this, however, that the well of individual charity has run dry, for compassion is instinctive in our race, and charity is fostered by our religion. We should never forsake it, no matter what some people say, because there are griefs which can only be consoled by the individual, and miseries

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for the alleviation of which it is right that personal aid should be sought.

A country without well-organized finances is a building without a foundation. The underlying basis of the bettered social conditions which we now enjoy is the public treasury.

The great problem which General Díaz had to solve was this: Was the administration bad because of the lack of resources, or were resources lacking because of bad administration? Díaz's answer was definite and clear. These evils are intimately connected, so intimately that one cannot exist without the other, and, being interdependent, they must be remedied simultaneously. But after solving the problem in principle it was necessary to solve it in practice, and General Díaz began the process of national evolution by first establishing order, method, and a wise economy in the public administration.

The conditions which necessitated economy had already been made and imposed

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upon the country in such a manner that it was impossible to avoid the issue. It was imperative to create resources to relieve the situation. Up to that time, owing to the exceptional circumstances through which our country had been passing, the fiscal system consisted in collecting the little which was available and in avoiding payment of the large amounts which the country owed; or in seeking loans to tide over the necessities of the moment, and paying when it could with exorbitant interest. But General Díaz inaugurated new methods. He established a reasonable system of taxation, which was increased little by little; he recognized and consolidated all debts; arranged for the payment of interest, and established a sinking fund. He succeeded in raising large loans, under extraordinarily favorable conditions, considering the circumstances. The purpose of these loans was to develop the resources of the country, to unlock its riches, and thereby increase the Government's revenue.



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The best possible proof of the President's wisdom is that, although the Government's expenses have increased from year to year, there has always been a surplus, and that, in spite of this yearly increase in the cost of administration, the Government has been supported without detriment to the productive and consumptive capacity of the population, and has not reduced the people to poverty. On the contrary, both public and private wealth has increased, and along with it the general well-being.

These beneficial results have surprised everyone familiar with Mexican history; not even the most optimistic would have dared to predict that in such a short time the leaks through which public wealth flowed out could have been stopped, and new sources of prosperity discovered, much less that credit could have been established upon a basis of equality with that of the first-class powers.

In an honest administration the money

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flows from the people into the public coffers and back again to the people, through different channels. By this ebb and flow of wealth both the administration and the people are enriched; in a word, upon this depends the national wealth, in the broadest acceptation of the phrase; for the Government can thus bring about all the blessings which have been enumerated in the preceding paragraphs, and they are all factors in the prolongation of life; for they cut down distance, multiply time, lessen illness, furnish better arms for the struggle of existence, open new fields for the mind and new employments for the hands; in short, furnish means for the development of every man's personality; and upon this depends the development of the country, which is nothing more than the sum of its individuals. In numbers it is the sum of these individuals, in quality it is the average capacity of these individuals.

Having solved the problem of existence through the solution of the economic prob-

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lem, it became less difficult for Díaz to state and solve the higher problem of the kind of existence we should lead under all its different aspects, political, administrative, and social, so full of details, complexities, and difficulties. These in turn were arranged slowly but surely, effectively and decisively. If, as the great captain of the last century has said, money constitutes the sinews of war, it may be said with equal truth that money is the life of peace and the basis of progress.

General Díaz used his political position as the fulcrum and his will as the lever with which to elevate the country. He knew that power can exist only when it is recognized and respected. Armed with the law backed by force, he obtained the necessary recognition and respect. He had studied at short range the characteristics of our previous revolutions, and knew that all originated from the same source; namely, the antagonism between authority and liberty, two prin-

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ciples which in a proper political system not only harmonize but supplement each other, and really ought to be inseparable. He also knew that our parties in their excitement and extravagance had carried both to such extremes as to divorce them entirely from one another.

Chateaubriand says, in his "Mémoires d'outre Tombe," that in France the Republicans made the mistake of exceeding the limits of true democracy on the one hand as far as the Legitimist party exceeded the reasonable limits of monarchy on the other. The former thought violence the sole road to success, while the latter considered a return to the past the only way of salvation. The same might well be said of our own country. The Republican party aspired to absolute liberty and ended in Jacobinism; the Reactionary party set up a standard of absolute authority and became a tyranny. Neither the one nor the other understood that liberty without justice becomes license, and that justice, unless enforced with a strong hand, becomes im-

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potence; that power without justice results in tyranny. But it is equally true that there can be no authority without justice nor justice without liberty; for all these are related as causes and effects, each one being at the same time both cause and effect. General Díaz earnestly set himself to the task of harmonizing authority and liberty, and the result was peace, with its natural accompaniment—order.

His plans were laid with such foresight, and his ideas carried out with so much skill, that the most extreme Radicals came to see that respect for law does not imply servility, and that obedience to law does not mean slavery. The Reactionaries, on the other hand, were convinced that liberty does not necessarily mean anarchy, and that established justice is only the carrying out of duty because duty precedes law, both in time and in importance.

The country, saved from ruin, and on the threshold of prosperity, very properly real-

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ized that it was only right to concede to the man who had brought about this change not only sufficient time to carry out his plan of regeneration, but also all the lawful power necessary to clear the way of all unnecessary obstacles and hindrances, such as the dilatory processes of law.

The systematic opposition, which had become a settled habit in Mexico and had remained in operation to a certain extent as a legacy from former practical politicians, now fell into disrepute. Its voice was stifled by the enthusiastic plaudits of the entire nation. The people preferred the eloquence of deeds to that of flattering promises, and ceased to discuss either the character or the actions of the man who had succeeded in placing his country in such an advantageous position. From that time on the public assumed toward him the attitude of "Let him do what he wishes," which exactly fitted in with the motto which Díaz had adopted, "Give me a free hand."

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Mexico, after the administration of General González, was evidently in the same plight as France after the Directory; that is, the people found themselves in the position of stockholders who have no president. It was fortunate for them that in place of a General Bonaparte a General Díaz presented himself, for instead of war they got peace; instead of international hatred they received the respect of the entire world, and instead of ruin, prosperity. France could, without inconsistency, repudiate her leader, and this she did by separating her cause from that of the tyrant. But Mexico thought it wiser to retain the man of her choice, because his ambition was entirely compatible with the nation's interests.

## CHAPTER VIII

### WHY GENERAL DÍAZ HAS REMAINED IN POWER

I AM about to approach the most difficult and important subject of this book, namely, the reasons why General Díaz has been continually reëlected, or, if you prefer, the reasons why he has been indefinitely retained in power—a fact which by some has been considered proof of his tyranny, and by others an equally palpable proof of the degeneration of the Mexican people.

In the consideration of this point, I am going to reproduce the substance of the series of unsigned articles, which I published some time ago in one of the New York papers, regarding the presidential elections in Mexico.

I then expressed my conviction that the re-election of General Díaz was necessary, because the most fundamental interests of the country unquestionably demanded it; and I



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founded my opinion upon three principal arguments, which may be categorically stated under the following heads:

1. Instinct of Self-Preservation.
2. The Unanimous Wish of the Country.
3. The Absolute Necessity that General Díaz Should Finish his Work.

I expanded each one of the above headings separately as follows:

“1. The Instinct of Self-Preservation.

“Mexican society was formed in the midst of a long and fearful struggle against the mother country, Spain. When the country came to its own politically, thanks to the achievement of its independence, it tried all kinds of governments without being able to establish any one of them, because the bases upon which each was founded were ill-assorted, if not antagonistic.

“During this long period, which lasted from 1821 to 1876, the instinct of self-preservation was not, properly speaking, general, but partisan; for each party thought

that it alone possessed a true system, in fact the only system by which order could be established, peace assured, and the welfare of the people gained. Every honest political system must be founded upon this idea.

“The truth is that all of these parties were in error, either because they started upon false principles, or because they exaggerated true ones; for it is well known that nothing is so often responsible for mistakes as the exaggeration of the truth.

“According to the Conservative or Reactionary party (in Mexico the terms are synonymous) power emanates from the rulers; according to the Liberal party, power emanates from the people. Both parties ignore or appear to ignore the fact that power comes neither from the rulers nor the ruled, but that necessity creates it. Power is transitory, if it arises only from the exigencies of the moment; lasting, if it is born of stable and legitimate aspirations. Although it may be true that audacity and force are sufficient

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to win the victory, genius, virtue, and, most of all, a sense of responsibility are necessary to make its effects permanent.

“But the instinct of self-preservation underwent evolution, as does everything else that is human; and having been dominant for long years, in spite of the efforts of those who held more rational views, it nevertheless gradually succumbed to these ideas, but only after they had been embodied in a man of unusual force and insight. From that time on intelligence began to enlighten the understanding of the parties, took possession of their wills, united society, and finally evolved a rational instinct, precursor of a rational intelligence—a phenomenon which seems anomalous, but is in reality perfectly logical and wholly in accord with psychological laws. *This new-born instinct makes for peace, reasonable and rational peace; it accustoms us to habits of calmness and order, and finally through repetition, generation after generation, forms these habits into race instincts.*

“ Thus rationalization, forcibly impressed at first, in time became free, thanks to the intelligence and perseverance which finally molded our wills and made us understand that we were responsible before humanity for the condition of our country, since its greatness or decadence depended upon our acts, and its future was in our hands.

“ As soon as we understood the magnitude of this responsibility, instead of frightening us and making us turn back, it made us resolutely go forward, resolved unalterably to help on the work of order and progress inaugurated by General Díaz, whom we obey, not because we are forced to, but in order to establish the principle of solidarity.

“ Since then, each time that the elections come around, a tremor runs through the Republic, a grave doubt arises, not upon the question of a successor to General Díaz, but upon the question whether General Díaz will be willing to remain in power, in view of the long years of fatigue which have been heaped

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upon him. We appeal to his patriotism; we invoke him by every means which is likely to influence him; all classes are united by a common desire; they beg him, as a sacred duty, to continue in the presidency, and to finish his great work, or at least to carry it forward as far as possible.

“General Díaz has said repeatedly that it is now time for him to retire, and the nation has answered that this time will never come as long as he lives and follows the path which he himself has laid out. He tells us that we ought to choose a successor, but after taking the measure of our contemporaries, we reply that there is no one sufficiently great to replace him. He asks us what we will do when he dies, and we answer that when that day comes we will put in his place the one who most nearly approaches him in greatness; but that until that catastrophe overtakes us, and we are forced by necessity to take that step, it is our right and duty to insist upon the service of the best man we know

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rather than to try experiments with those we know not of.

“What is it that inspires our people with such judicious doubts and such prudent scruples? It must be the instinct of self-preservation, deeper rooted now than ever, because we see for the first time that our national life is sound. To this fundamental instinct the spirit of useful activities unites itself, because it perceives that the work of the nation is good and remunerative; that it increases home comforts and public conveniences; that it improves our educational system; that it has become a power which sweeps us on toward the unknown with irresistible force, obliging us to remember the past, to appreciate the present, and to prepare for the future.

“2. The Unanimous Wish of the Country.

“As the end of each presidential term approaches these doubts arise, and after the election has been held, enthusiasm breaks

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forth, not as a local occurrence, but as the spontaneous expression of the gratification of the whole country, nay, even the whole world; for there is no country to-day upon which the attention of the world is more fixed than it is upon Mexico, which a short time ago was so humiliated, so unfortunate, so misunderstood, but to-day is envied by some, pointed out as a model by many, and respected by all.

“This universal sympathy comes in great part from the admiration which foreigners feel toward our distinguished President, and it is due also to the Mexican people, who have been wise enough to appreciate him in all his greatness while he yet lives, and have identified themselves with him and have placed the nation’s destiny unreservedly in his hands.

“If some people maintain that the judgment of foreigners in this matter is of little importance, and that it should not have any influence upon our national politics, I reply

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that there can be no greater nor more dangerous error than this. It is equally true of society and of the individual that public opinion increases or lessens power according as it is favorable or the reverse; and certainly in international relations the question of the good or bad reputation of a nation is a most important factor in the cultivation of friendship, commerce, and credit. I might almost say that these things constitute indispensable elements in the life and prosperity of a nation. It is perfectly right, therefore, that those nations which have interests in Mexico, whether because their subjects have settled and taken up their occupations in Mexico, or because they have capital in private industrial enterprises or public works or any other vested interest in our country, should be greatly concerned in our peace and prosperity, and in the maintenance at the head of the Government of a man who gives them the most reliable guarantee of order and activity in the country and of hon-



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est government and the fulfillment of contracts.

“That this general opinion is most favorable to General Díaz is shown by the praises of the press, the distinctions and honors which have been conferred upon him, and even upon his chief assistants.

“3. The Absolute Necessity that General Díaz Should Finish his Work.

“There are people, I know, who contend that this argument is false, but their position is based, I think, upon the understanding that we mean that Mexico will reach her highest development under Díaz. Nothing is farther from our thoughts, for as readers of history we know very well that nations do not develop as rapidly as individuals, and that those which quickly reach their highest development are short-lived.

“A work of the kind which General Díaz has undertaken is by its very nature slow, and all that he expects and all that we have a right to expect of him and of the present

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generation is that we may succeed in establishing in our country her habit of life, eliminating all disturbing elements, strengthening the principles which she already has, and creating new ones which will increase her vitality, thus laying substantial, firm, and immovable foundations upon which shall rest the superb edifice of the future."

"Some people tell us that if so much has been accomplished (assuredly no one can doubt this assertion) his work must now be completed. But this is not so. One thing is still lacking.

"As yet there has not been time for the root so favorably planted to grow. We must accustom ourselves to contemplate what has already been achieved without astonishment, though not without gratitude, in order that we may become habituated to peace, order, and progress. We must incorporate these elements so firmly in our national organization that they will remain there for-

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ever, so that we Mexicans may justly believe that all this progress and well-being is the collective work of the nation, the result of our own will, intelligence, and work, even though it has been inaugurated by a great man. It will take time, I repeat, for the effect which has been made upon other countries and the respect, referred to above, to be attributed to the country as well as to its noted President. But I am sure that to bring this to pass is to-day the greatest aspiration of General Díaz, for to him the glory of his country is the supreme aim.

“ Finally, our system lacks that clearness, perfection of administrative detail, completeness, and simplicity which is necessary in order that when General Díaz relinquishes his control the system bequeathed by him to the nation will not offer difficulties, or leave room for strife, still less end in disaster; in order that his successor may carry on the good work without stumbling and without

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vacillation; in short, that there may be no break in the continuity of our development, and that his successor may find all important political, economic, and social problems so well solved that there will be no further necessity of creation, but simply the need of normal growth; that there may be no struggles to undertake, only the fruits of victory to gather. Thus, even if the new president should not prove to be a man of exceptional ability, he might, nevertheless, carry on the administration successfully and perpetuate the advantages which we now enjoy.

“For the above reasons, I agree with all classes in Mexico, all political parties, and all foreign powers who have relations with Mexico, that the reelection of President Díaz is a necessity.”

“I have written this article, not to sustain the prestige of a candidate, whose superiority no one questions, and whose tenure of office

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necessity imposes, but to collect and bring to a focus the ideas and opinions of the public at large—to make a composite photograph of them, as it were—and also to correct certain errors, current among foreigners, which at first sight seem to be favorable to General Díaz, but which in reality belittle his greatness and make the public of Mexico appear timid and servile.”

“General Díaz has plainly shown, during the long years of his presidency, that he is not actuated by motives of ambition, personal profit, or party aggrandizement, but that he has been actuated by the legitimate ambition of a patriot, and has exercised his power for the attainment of the noblest and highest ends for which a patriot can work—the welfare of the country as a whole. The public, which from the first almost by intuition rested its most cherished hopes upon its leader, has come to hold as an inner conviction, founded on reason and experience, the most ardent faith in the Government. Just

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as General Díaz thinks that his greatest glory is the good of the people whose destinies he controls, so we, the people, think on our part that our greatest glory is to work with him, each one according to his ability, to further the interests and aid in the aggrandizement of our country; we do this with the inner conviction that to work with determination for the accomplishment of a noble purpose is the highest aim in life, the truest form of happiness, because a life of activity radiating from the country as a center and coming back to it, is the realization of the highest ideal which the spirit of man can conceive."

When I wrote the above I was not laboring under any misconception as to the danger of placing in the hands of a single man all the power of Government, nor was I ignorant of the fact that in so doing we were transferring our liberties to the hands of another. But at that time it seemed to me a less dangerous

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risk to take than that of placing a new man at the head of the Government.

Three ways were open to us: that of electing a new man, that of electing a president designated by General Díaz, and that of re-electing the President himself.

The first I considered the most dangerous and most difficult of the three courses, because during the long administration of General Díaz no new man had arisen, properly speaking. That is to say, no man had arisen by his own efforts and shown any especial ability for administration. If any men have become distinguished, it has been only under the protection and sufferance of the president, raised from obscurity by Díaz himself, and without more value than he has thought it advisable to credit them. The proof of this assertion lies in the fact that each one of them has come to nothing as soon as Díaz has pushed him aside. Although it may well be that under the *régime* of cowardly flattery which obtains among us, only the individuals

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whom General Díaz has raised up are considered great and those whom he has thrust down are belittled.

In following the second course, the same objection would present itself: namely, our lack of faith in the personality of the man who might be designated as his successor by General Díaz. Furthermore, if the incumbent should take it into his head to act upon his own account, he would become by that move a new man of untried ability. If he were to follow General Díaz's orders strictly, it would be better to keep on with General Díaz himself in power, appropriating all the glory and assuming all the responsibility, as he now does. The experiment made with General González was too disastrous an undertaking to repeat.

The third course being the safest and the most satisfactory, we have always decided upon it and reelected President Díaz.

Then, too, we have always cherished the hope that General Díaz would enter upon a



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new phase, and extend our liberties by giving the people a more direct participation in public affairs. This would bring out our latent administrative abilities and allow some man to develop the desired qualities of leadership.

This was our expectation, and this is still our hope.

## CHAPTER IX

IS GENERAL DÍAZ A TYRANT OR A DESPOT?

*HOW HE HAS BEEN GOVERNING*

**T**HE manner in which President Díaz has been governing and his repeated reëlections have gained for him various titles according to the point of view of different critics. For some years past the North American press, which in general has shown itself as distinctly pro-Díaz as the Mexicans themselves, has been in the habit of calling President Díaz “an intelligent tyrant” or “a good tyrant.” The first phrase is admissible, for a tyrant may be intelligent, but the second is not, for goodness and tyranny are incompatible terms. According to the precise definition of the Spanish Academy, a tyrant is “one who unlawfully seizes the Government of a state, especially if he rules arbitrarily and without due processes

of law." This definition embodies both the ancient and the modern significance of the word. The Greeks called anyone who usurped the sovereign power a "tyrant," and that is the original meaning of the word. It is equivalent to "usurper," because the significance of the word is derived from the means used in the acquisition of power, and does not refer to the manner in which the power was exercised. The case of Pisistratus might be cited as proof, for he was called "tyrant," although he was neither unjust nor violent in his methods of government; while, on the other hand, this title was not used in speaking of Persian kings, notwithstanding the fact that they were truly tyrannical in the modern sense. But as usurpation generally leads to violence, the Greek themselves later on used the word in the sense of a reproach, and this meaning has persisted down to our own times. So that in all modern languages the epithet is applied to those who govern with cruelty and injustice, without

respect for laws, either human or divine, even though they may not have usurped the power. Henry VIII of England is an example. Thus it appears that there cannot be any such thing as a "good tyrant," because the words are mutually exclusive. But the term is not applicable to General Díaz in either acceptation, because he did not obtain power by usurpation, but through a legally sanctioned election, and he has not governed with cruelty, injustice, or disregard of law. He is, therefore, not a tyrant either in his manner of coming into power or in his practice as a ruler.

Let us see whether the epithet of "good despot," which has been applied to him by some writers, will fit him better! In its original sense "despot" meant "master" or "lord" (*δεσπότης* in Greek). This title was given in ancient times to persons who exercised the supreme control in certain countries, and to-day signifies a sovereign who governs in his own right, without subjection

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to any law or constitution—an absolute monarch, as we would call him.

From the legal point of view this is not the case with General Díaz, for he governs in the name of the Constitution. Though as a matter of fact he governs by virtue of the extraordinary confidence which he inspires, and under a sort of tacit understanding between the governed and the governor. At the end of each presidential term there has been something more than an expression of toleration of his manner of governing; there has been most enthusiastic approbation, unmistakable and reiterated after each reëlection. More than this, there have been frequently conferred upon him, under different forms, unusual powers, to be applied in all branches of public administration. These powers were bestowed by Congress, in its character of legitimate public representative and in the form of a sovereignty, for the use of which the Executive was to render account in due time. Congress itself was to decide whether

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it should bestow or withhold its approval. A study of the situation and of the vicissitudes through which the country was passing will reveal the fact that it was necessary to do this.

The instinct of the people, the experience acquired by its rulers, the desire for peace, for progress, and for prosperity, obliged the two opposing groups, the Liberal and the Reactionary parties, to lay aside their hostile attitude, give up their bickerings over abstract principles, and confine their efforts to the field of the actual and the practical. No one any longer dared to shout, "Let the colonies perish, but save our principles"; everyone was ready to accept the dictum that we must first provide for existence and afterwards consider what sort of an existence it should be.

It was then seen, as I have already explained, that the principle of a single term without reëlection had its serious objections, and the clause in the Constitution forbidding

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this was changed to meet the necessities of the situation. All were ready to see their declaration of principles and even some of their rights disregarded, in order to bring about the one end which all agreed was of paramount importance, namely, peace.

This fervent desire for peace began in the time of Juárez, when the Empire had been destroyed, and with it the Reactionary party. Juárez himself would have courted peace, if we Porfirists had not hindered him with our systematic and unbridled opposition and our disorderly outbreaks. But it is noteworthy that, in spite of all our efforts, we did not succeed in overthrowing the "Grand Old Indian of Gueletao"; this was due in large measure to the fact that the public was tired of strife and longed for peace.

During the administration of Lerdo the situation was not far different. The Porfirist Revolution was not really popular, and, as I have already said, Lerdo fell more on account of his own apathy and skepticism than be-

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cause of any popular sympathy with the Revolution. The public wanted peace.

Porfirio Díaz arrived at the propitious moment and satisfied this general desire. The public knew that all the disorderly elements of the population were at the command of this man, and that as long as he remained in power there would be nothing to fear from them. Furthermore, they understood that it was for the public interest to retain General Díaz in the presidency, that the seeds of revolution might not be again scattered broadcast. After the death-dealing day of June 25, 1879, of which I have already spoken, even the Porfirists themselves were cowed, and have ever since remained in complete subjection to their leader. There have been no further serious conspiracies. General Garcia de la Cadena was the last to venture a return to the old practices, and his foolish attempt came to naught; for at the very outset he fell into a skillfully laid trap and lost his life. He was the "Last of the



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Mohicans." Since then terror on the one side and a sincere desire for peace and prosperity on the other have prevented further uprisings. The choice lay between Revolution and Dictatorship, and the people unanimously chose to lay aside the musket and submit to the yoke.

But President Díaz did not at once institute a system of *sic volo, sic jubeo* absolutism. He based his power upon the Constitution of 1857, and from the first has been gradually modifying it, until he has adjusted it to suit his purpose. His government was actually and undeniably personal, but he knew very well how to cover up appearances and make the public believe that all were taking part more or less directly in public affairs. His tactics were very simple. When he conceived a plan, he talked it over with the secretary of the branch it affected, and, if the matter were important, he called together his whole Cabinet, and each member expressed his opinion with entire freedom. On

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questions of transcendent importance he indirectly consulted public opinion through the medium of the press, or named special commissioners, who reported their conclusions to him. On such occasions, the President listened attentively to all that was said, and quietly and dispassionately discussed each point, without undervaluing any sensible argument, no matter from what quarter it came. As soon as his mind had been made up, he sent to Congress a draft of the proposed law, and at the request of the legislative committee of Congress he granted them a hearing, and the whole matter was discussed from all points of view. As all were animated by the desire to arrive at the best possible solution of the matter, the draft was modified, altered, or left intact, according to their best judgment. The President not only discussed the projected law with the members of the legislative committee, but also with any senators or congressmen who requested an audience. The result of this

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method of procedure was that when a decision had once been reached, the projected law had been examined, discussed, and revised, not only by the Executive, but by a large part of the members of both houses, and it therefore passed without wrangling, and usually with little or no amendment. This method simplified the work of Congress and obviated the conflicts between the two legislative bodies and between the legislative and executive departments and, best of all, suppressed parliamentary discussions, which were considered dangerous by the President, on account of the fieriness of the national character and its susceptibility to eloquence and passion, which makes it unable to confine itself to safe limits for a system of the kind which was being established. This method also had the effect of preventing the development of important individual figures in Congress and about them such groups as those which gave President Juárez so much trouble.

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This system is impractical, unless the legislative body is perfectly under control.

In all quarters of the world, even in those countries which have the greatest electoral freedom, such as England and the United States, the Government endeavors, either directly or through the medium of its party leaders, to control primaries and conventions, in order that the result of the elections may be favorable to such candidates as it can count upon for support. Because no system of administration can work successfully against the opposition of a hostile Parliament. In those countries which have a strictly parliamentary rule, this difficulty is obviated by a change of ministry to suit the majority party; thus serious situations are avoided. But in countries like our own and the United States a different system is followed. There is no such recourse to fall back upon, or at least it is very seldom used. As a matter of fact, in the United States there is no such thing as a change of

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Cabinet on account of congressional opposition, because the theory is that the president constitutes the executive branch and not the ministers. While in restricted monarchies and in France the ministers constitute the real governing power. In Mexico, whenever we have interpreted the Constitution differently from the American practice (our Constitution is an exact copy of that of the United States), there have been frequent changes of the Cabinet, but no beneficial results. General Díaz's plan would have been impossible in the form in which many people said it ought to have been carried out. His government has been successful precisely because he has changed it from a centrifugal to a centripetal system.

In this way it has come about that the Legislative power has been little by little delegated to the President, and the Judicial power has been going the same way, as all matters connected with politics or the interests of the administration have been referred

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to him, so that in the Judiciary, as well as in all the other parts of the complicated machinery, to which I have already referred, the president constitutes the main pivot upon which they all turn.

This places the administration of justice, as well as all other departments, under central control. In order to better accomplish this object the Constitution was amended, and the President of the Supreme Court was divested of his office of Vice-President of the Republic, a doubling up of offices which caused such serious difficulties and political catastrophes in the time of Juárez, of Lerdo, and even of President Díaz's first term.

The Judiciary has been, and is still, called a "Power," just as the Legislature is, but both of these bodies have been disarmed and are therefore impotent. In reality, they are to-day nothing more than branches of the Executive.

The case of the public itself is not far

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different. For it has been gradually handing over its electoral power to the President, first by asking his advice as to whom they should elect; later by receiving his orders and thus losing their interest in going to the polls; finally by forcing the Government to hold elections on its own account in order to prevent the country from falling into the dilemma of becoming a nation without a head.

Let us now pass to the consideration of the government of the states. When a governor is to be elected or reëlected, delegations representing all classes go to the Capital to ask of the President his moral support for their candidate, or at least to inquire whether their nominee is *persona grata*. These very individuals are the ones who afterwards guide the elections, and, as they are the leaders of the localities in which they live, they achieve a complete triumph; there being no chance for disagreement after they have all, tacitly or by arrangement, fixed

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upon a candidate or decided not to enter the struggle.

Following this method, not at the solicitation of General Díaz, but fostered by him, there has been established through continued practice a custom which has invalidated the sovereignty of the individual states. In truth, one must acknowledge that this sovereignty is an absurdity. Pomeroy says, with abundant reason, in his "Constitutional Law": "It is impossible to maintain that a state of the Union is an independent and separate political entity; it has no intrinsic Legislative power; its functions of government are limited, not only by its own Constitution, but by that of the Union. It can neither amend nor amplify its own fundamental law, because it is limited by the supreme law of the nation, which it cannot override. Instead of enjoying the power of sovereignty as an independent political society, each state finds itself in a position of permanent subordination." We must not



overlook the significant fact that it is a North American who writes thus and that he is referring to the United States, the freest country in the world, and the one from which we have derived our Constitution.

The individual states certainly cannot have either sovereignty or independence, properly speaking; but they do have liberty, because they are federal entities, free to move within the sphere of action which the Constitution has laid down for them. I sincerely believe that a confederation of *sovereign* states cannot constitute a nation in the true sense, because the first condition, that of national entity, is violated. Where the sovereignty is divided there can be neither power, responsibility, nor harmonious action. When I am in Vera Cruz or Jalisco, I have never thought of myself as living under the flag of Vera Cruz or Jalisco, but under the Mexican flag and under the protection of the laws of my country. The conception of a group of sovereign states is revolutionary and destruc-

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tive of patriotism the moment it tends to divide allegiance instead of unifying it; and in so far as it does this, it weakens rather than strengthens the country.

One of General Díaz's greatest claims to gratitude, one of the highest services he has rendered the country, is that of having modified this erroneous conception; it is due to him that we no longer have Sonorans, Oaxacans, Yucatanians, and Michoacans, but *Mexicans*, from one end of the Republic to the other. In order to bring about this change, it has not been necessary to violate the Constitution or any law of the land. All that had to be done to give to our institutions their true character was to correct abuses and to reduce everything to reasonable proportions. It is incontrovertible that all measures necessary for the preservation of order may properly be considered to fall within the legislative rights of a nation. But legislators are in a sound position only when they see to it that the laws are

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restricted to those which are *necessary* to insure order.

The rectification of our conception of the sovereignty and independence of states has been brought about without disturbing the principle of liberty to govern their own internal affairs within the limits prescribed by the Constitution. But at the same time the governors have actually given up some of their powers, and in their desire to coöperate more effectively in the work of nationalization, they have ended by turning themselves into federal officials, dependent upon the central government, by which they are in reality designated.

The governors, in their turn, have followed the same practice within their respective states, nominating the members of the Legislative and Judicial bodies, and even the Municipal officials, thus completing the system, and creating a single political and administrative machine of colossal size, extending over the whole Republic and

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manipulated by the power of the individual at the center.

I doubt whether General Díaz, when he was elected for his second term, had conceived this vast plan, but I think affairs were gradually tending in this direction on account of the anxiety for peace and the eagerness for material progress which had taken possession of the nation; and the movement toward centralization, already begun, was favored by the President and skillfully promoted as the best means of accomplishing his far-reaching plan.

The people were quick to see that the more power they conceded to the President, the greater became the material prosperity of the country and the more broad and comfortable their own lives. Under these influences they were induced to lay aside their liberties, one might almost say to abjure them altogether, in order to give themselves up to the enjoyment of their happy lot.

Some writers have said to the Mexicans,

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who boast so much of their Democracy: "Monarchy is not merely the existence of a king, but a centralization of power." The people have replied that what they cared about was the name, not the thing itself; and that peace and bread meant more to them than all else. In vain they have been told, "Peace not only implies order, but liberty as well." The people have answered: "Without peace there is no bread, and without bread no liberty." In vain has it been pointed out that "repeated reëlection is the method, 'pacifism' the lure by means of which the way is paved for the preconceived end, the one completes the other." The people reply that they are tired of experiments and that they put up with things as they exist because, if it is not good, it is at least the best that they have had, and it assures them bread. In vain has it been explained that "although the multitude of railroads, tunnels, gigantic bridges, good highways, palaces, and countless other evidences of material progress, rising as if

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by magic from the bosom of the earth, bear striking witness to the advantages of 'pacifism'; it is nevertheless true that all this is only for the purpose of astonishing the enslaved multitude into believing that all these portents, almost miracles, are the natural and predestined fruit of peace—of sacred peace, which has had to traverse a long *via crucis* of bitterness and tears." The public replies that it has always traversed this *via crucis* without having the consolation of material progress and comfortable life; that this system has given them and will continue to give them bread. Always and forever the same reply with this irrefutable logic of bread. "One can live without liberty, but not without bread!"

President Díaz, realizing the situation, has taken good care that there should be no lack of bread, even for his enemies. Should one ask the rich banker whether he prefers the past to the present, he will, in spite of the natural tendency of human nature to think

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that the past is always better than the present, answer, "No," because his business is better now than ever. The same reply will be received from merchants, landowners, artists, artisans, men of the city, men of the country, and even from the humblest peasant whose hut the revolutionaries burned, whose family were outraged, and whose "burro" was stolen, and he himself tricked into becoming a soldier in order that he might serve as food for cannon.

If one says in Mexico that every Octavius becomes an Augustus, and after every Augustus comes a Tiberius, a Caligula, a Claudius, a Nero, there are plenty to reply that every Cromwell becomes a Lord Protector and prepares the way for a Charles II, and that every Revolution is followed by a Reign of Terror, and every Terrorism by a Napoleon.

It is the normal condition of people to think more about the present, which they can understand and which means everything to them, than of the future, which is a matter

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of conjecture, and affects them less than it does those who come after. But there is one thing which no Mexican can fail to see: that to-day we are respected by all the nations who yesterday looked down upon us; to-day we are given a place of honor in all international conclaves, in all scientific congresses; we are mentioned wherever national honor, science, order, progress, civilization, peace, concord, or any great and noble sentiment or interest of humanity is discussed; we are always represented and well received, and frequently our Capital is chosen as the place in which to hold international congresses.

Is there any room for shadows in this picture? Yes; but that is true of every picture. There is always the question, however, whether all this material and moral progress has not cost too much? Of course we all know that nothing is gained without some outlay. But really the question is not "How much has it cost?" but "Is the return worth



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the outlay?" In all this advance, has not much been lost and trampled underfoot? I think so. For in the triumphal procession of the car of progress, every one who tries to stop, or even change, its course, is run over and crushed, whether he be brave or stupid or ignorant.

But can all this advance be the work of one man? No such movement can ever be singular in its character. A commander in chief, even if he measures to the exceptional height of a Napoleon, cannot triumph in a campaign alone. General Díaz understood this well. His long military career had taught him its truth and he knew how to apply the lesson in his civil capacity. He chose his captains, so to speak, and began by organizing and disciplining an army of peace. When he had accomplished its organization, he began his campaign, relying, not upon his good fortune, nor his hopes, but upon his insight, his perspicuity, and his forceful and indomitable will.

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He transferred the struggle to another field of operations. In the former, those who were ready in action rose and succeeded best. In this, different aptitudes are required, another sort of knowledge, and different weapons. Boldness alone is not sufficient; one must also have knowledge and patience. Force alone is not enough; one must also possess ability. Those who doubt, those who vacillate, those who slip, those who fall, drop to the rear or perish. Whose fault is it? That of the system? No! The will of the individual is at fault on one side, and the universal and eternal law on the other side.

It is said that a reign of plutocracy has been inaugurated in Mexico. This is true, but the phenomenon is not local, it is general. In all countries of the civilized world, plutocracy has taken the place of aristocracy, and the former rules. It is no less true of the American Federal Republic than it is of the centralized Republic of France or

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of the constitutional monarchy of Great Britain; and every plutocracy is conservative.

It is said that fortunes have been made in a day—colossal fortunes of tainted wealth—and it is certainly true; it is equally true that this has happened everywhere. But all these are secondary considerations. The important thing is to know whether the benefits it has bequeathed to us are worth, in a material sense, the wealth they have cost; whether, in short, they have actually brought us that which is more useful. But, you will object, that the issue I raise is not a moral one. I am well aware of that; quite the contrary, it is eminently practical, and, above all, it is an unalterable fact.

As a general thing, the people do not complain so much of the millions of dollars which are stolen from them as they do when their liberties are juggled with. They are more than right in this. The loss of many millions is insignificant compared with the loss of a

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single one of our public liberties. Our liberties are so closely connected and intertwined with one another that the destruction of one must necessarily mean the ruin of all. In truth, there are no such things as liberties, there is only LIBERTY.

## CHAPTER X

### PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MEXICO

**A**S we have seen, there has been going on in Mexico a process of concentration, with one man as its center. This man was the product of the warlike conditions which were the necessary consequence of more than sixty years of internal revolution. The situation was exactly the same with Julius Cæsar in Rome. It would have been impossible to bring about this concentration through violent means, for a legal dictatorship could not have been built up through violence. It could only be, as it was in this case, the result of continuous and skillful manipulation; restrictions each time drawn closer, but in a manner which would flatter the Reactionary party without alarming the Jacobins.

Díaz severed the various states from their

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respective local governments and bound them to the central Government. He made the national palace a "Capitol." Beginning with a military oligarchy, he ended with an autocracy. He had the wisdom not to disavow the Constitution of 1857, but to set it up as a sacred standard, which he constantly invoked and as constantly modified, not in order to keep within constitutional limits, but in order to mould the Constitution to suit his own purposes.

I do not believe that he deceived anybody or even attempted deception. His action was open, and his intention sufficiently clear. Everybody understood what he was aiming at; many denounced and protested, but nobody dared to take the responsibility of stopping him. On the contrary, concession after concession was made with undeniable good will. I have already shown the reason for this; there was hunger for bread and thirst for peace, and everything was sacrificed to these two irrepressible demands. These acts

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were justified on the ground that it was our first duty to reëstablish the physical strength of the nation.

It has been asserted that this attitude destroyed public spirit. Even the Government became alarmed, as was shown in 1906, when difficulties arose with the United States regarding the position assumed by the North American press hostile to Mexico, on the ground that a general uprising had been planned for the purpose of reënacting the Sicilian Vespers and slaughtering all the Americans in the country.

A cabinet meeting was held to discuss the question whether such apathy might not prove disastrous in case of war with our neighbor at the north. The prevailing opinion was that public spirit in Mexico was not dead, but sleeping.

I take a still more optimistic view; I believe it is beginning to awake. Now that "the hunger for bread and the thirst for peace" have been satiated, I think that the

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public is beginning to feel a hunger for justice and a thirst for freedom. When a country forswears its liberties and foregoes its right to self-government, and has not learned to adapt itself to the more liberal doctrine that the interest of the whole country must be the interest of each individual; when citizens of the middle class return to their fire-sides, imagining that to profess a lack of interest in politics is to show practical wisdom, it is because they fail to appreciate that politics involve our life blood, our money, our honor. When a country does not know how to defend her liberties, and places herself under the protection of a "Man of Destiny," the outcome is sure to be that which we have just seen: "Disintegration and demoralization." Who makes this assertion, you will say, a demagogue? No; an advocate of civil order; a nobleman, the Duke of Audiffret-Pasquier.

A country ought to know better than to give itself over body and soul to a single





SEÑORA DOÑA CARMEN ROMERO RUBIO DE DÍAZ, WIFE  
OF PRESIDENT PORFIRIO DÍAZ.



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individual, no matter who the man or what the circumstances. Again you will ask, "Who makes such assertions?" A pretender, a man of the opposition party, a candidate? No; M. Thiers, President of the Republic of France.

The words which I repeat we once knew well; in fact, they were engraved upon our memory before Díaz became president. They were a part of the creed of the Liberal party, and especially of the Porfirist faction; they were written upon the revolutionary banner raised at the time of the "Plan de la Noria" and the uprising against Juárez, and at the time of the "Plan de Tuxtepec" and the uprising against Lerdo.

When we gave up our rights we were not acting in ignorance, but in the full knowledge of what we were doing; we were actuated by the confidence which we had then and which many of us still have, that our renunciation was not a permanent abdication of our civic rights, but a transfer of them in good faith

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to the keeping of a man of irreproachable honor; one who would know how to return them as he had received them, little by little, until complete restitution had been made. We were confident that we would never have to say, "Díaz, return to us our liberties," as the Romans exclaimed, "*Vare, legiones redde*"; that General Díaz, a patriot and a man of honor, could never bring himself to repeat the phrase of the insolent Napoleon III, who, in order to palliate the failure of the French intervention in Mexico, said: "It is the secret of Providence that she does not always respect her own combinations."

In my opinion, public spirit is beginning to rise in Mexico, and, what is still more significant, this impulse is showing itself in the form of disorder. Since last year (1906) there have been set on foot socialistic movements which are in reality, if I am not mistaken, political movements. I have had oc-

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casión to study this movement, because General Díaz entrusted me with a confidential mission for this purpose. I served him with my accustomed loyalty, and thought it my duty to speak with frankness. In a report addressed to him, dated July 17, 1906, I have presented the results of my investigations in the State of Vera Cruz, in part in the following words:

“As to the question of subverting law and order, it is certain that the idea did not originate in Orizaba, but that it emanated from the Capital. It is equally certain that the labor question has been seized upon merely as a pretext; the situation is one of which it is easy to take advantage: 12,000 workmen, their ignorance, their character, and their just cause for discontent.”

“I believe with Giuciardini that in politics, as in medicine, good remedies are common enough; the skill consists in knowing how to administer them with timeliness and judgment.”

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This I was bold enough to say to the President, and I also sent him, on August 3, 1906, some confidential notes, which I believe it will not be out of place to repeat here.

“CONFIDENTIAL NOTES REGARDING THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SITUATION WHICH HAS BEEN BROUGHT ABOUT IN THE COUNTRY; ITS CAUSES AND THE WAY TO WARD OFF THE DANGER:

“MR. PRESIDENT:

“I am neither a pessimist nor an optimist. I look upon all events with calmness, study them without passion or preconceived ideas. This seems to me the only way to form a just judgment, or rather, one which is as nearly just as possible, considering the fallibility of the spirit of man, and more especially my own intellectual shortcomings. Following this method, which is strictly scientific, I have studied the actual conditions in the country, the situation in which the

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Government finds itself, and the significance of the socialistic movement which has been inaugurated and grows daily in importance, for it is evidently on the increase both in extent and in intensity. After making an analysis, I have busied myself in seeking the remedy for the evils complained of by our people. Finally, I have undertaken to predict, by the use of the deductive method, what, it seems to me, must ensue. In the brief notes which follow, I have the honor, and also the boldness, to present to you the results of this study.

“When you were good enough to entrust to me the task of speaking for the Government through the press, empowering me to investigate this subject freely and without special instructions, I felt it a great honor, and was deeply gratified with this proof of your confidence. I believe that it would not comport well with the confidence which you have placed in me, if I limited myself to the composition of more or less high-

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sounding editorials, contradicting the assertions of the opposition press, propounding sound doctrines, and defending the Government from the accusations and calumnies of its enemies. All of which, even supposing that I were capable of doing it with distinguished ability, would not satisfy the public, nor ward off the dangers; to accomplish this neither the exposition of theories, the most eloquent writings, nor the soundest arguments would suffice. These might be helpful elements, but could not be the principal nor the decisive factors.

“I consider it my duty, therefore, to address you with the frankness of an old and tried member of your party, who has never served directly or indirectly any government but yours; I speak with the loyalty of a personal friend, and the disinterestedness of an ardent patriot. I make no pretense of showing you anything new, much less of giving you advice; it would, indeed, be presuming on my part to think that I had more talent and



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more experience than the man who has the reputation of being one of the greatest statesmen of our century. All that I shall attempt to do is to express my own opinion, to make clear my point of view, which is the result of an intimate knowledge of the Mexican people, gained through contact with all classes. This may be of much value, because conditions have kept me entirely free from the strife of politics, and have placed me in a position to observe at close range that which it would be impossible to see from the heights, and also to hear that which does not reach you, even as a faint echo, on your distant pinnacle of power.

“ In so doing, I am fulfilling a duty of conscience, which you will rate at its true value, and make of my opinions whatever use you see fit—surely the best possible use.

### “ THE SITUATION

“ It would be a great mistake to suppose that the present movement is confined to the

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working classes. On the contrary, it is widespread, including directly and indirectly all classes of society. Among its members the rich are in the minority, the middle class in the majority, and the membership from the lower classes is increasing under the leadership of the other two. In joining the movement, the rich are moved by ambition, the middle class by necessity and by the desire to satisfy their aspirations, the lower classes because they are pursued by wretchedness, and because they are always and in all parts of the world prone to sedition.

“ An aspect of socialism has been cleverly thrown upon this movement by its promoters, but the truth is that although it does on its social side attack industrialism (not capital), its real attack is on the political side against the Government. The attitude of the opposition press is sufficient proof of this assertion, for it has prepared the way for and supported this movement; it has mingled with the complaints of the workmen the fault-

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finding of all classes; it has collected and published all kinds of news, true and false, which could possibly be made to throw discredit upon any or all officials of the Government.

“Discontent reigns in almost every state, caused chiefly by the fact that certain governors seem to remain in office indefinitely and the group which surrounds them does the same. This destroys the legitimate ambition of all the rest of the citizens, who think, reasonably enough, that they have a right to a direct participation in the management of public affairs, either for the realization of their own cherished ideals or for the fulfillment of their ambition to exercise power—in a word, to satisfy their own self-esteem. Those who have no such ambitions at least desire a change, for they think that whatever might follow, the change would be better than that which they have to-day.

“With my accustomed frankness, I say to you that this feeling has nothing to do with

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the presidency of the Republic. No one aspires to that office, and no one conspires against you. If they have any complaint at all, it is that you retain in office men whom they condemn as useless, and, in some cases, even harmful. They say that Mexican society is at present divided into two castes: one the governing class, which seems to be inviolable, and for whom power, privileges, benefices, business opportunities, titles, and honors are reserved; the other the governed, cut off from opportunity, only fitted to become soldiers, laborers, and slaves, without hope, without future, a prey to wretchedness and suffering. I do not justify this opinion, I merely point it out.

“These elements of discontent the opposition press exploits with skill, making them count by spreading them far and wide, and using them as the means of maintaining an effective campaign. Our opponents succeed because there is no one to come forward and rectify their exaggerations and contradict

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their falsehoods. The Government periodicals are not strong enough, either in numbers or influence, to counteract the work of the opposition press.

“To return to my theme, I am forced to admit that there is considerable discontent over the immovability of many officials and employees of the Government; irritability on account of the abuse practiced by some, perhaps by many of them; impatience on the part of those who think that they are justly entitled to hold high public positions, and who place all their hopes on a change of administration, even if it be only a partial change. Then, in addition, there is a feeling of hatred against a certain political clique, which has been and is still considered (whether rightly or wrongly) to be in complete mastery of the country and to have exclusive control of the public business. It is even supposed to have a monopoly of all the most remunerative fields for private enterprise. There are also complaints against the authorities on

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the ground that officials have little or no consideration for the public, but are concerned only in enriching themselves and their friends; it must be admitted, however, that even in matters of greatest and most evident public utility, the opposition party sees nothing but private business and opportunity for individual enrichment.

“ To all these causes of discontent is added at the present moment the labor question, soon to be followed by agrarian agitation. It is certainly true that although the condition of the laborer is bad, that of the peon is infinitely worse. The only reason that the rights of the peon have not already been brought into the field is because the industrial laborers, being more intelligent, more turbulent, and more easily influenced, because they live in large groups, constitute much better material for the purpose the Socialists have in hand; namely, to change the existing order of things. Furthermore, they are confident that the agricultural laborers will join

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them as soon as the occasion for their help arises.

“Many people think that the opposition press is aiming at the profit which the increased sale of the papers will bring in, but this is not true. Underlying their efforts is sincerity, and to this fact is due their energy and persistency. Many people believe that newspapers of this class do not exercise any great influence. That is a mistake. They find a great number of readers: those who buy out of mere curiosity, others whose natural malevolence gives them a taste for everything which decries those in power; and still others who find their own desires echoed in these publications. Many people believe that these papers can be destroyed by persecution, or, at least, brought under control; but this is the greatest mistake of all. Every persecuted editor will in that way be raised to the rank of a Martyr to Liberty; and the hero of the dungeon usually becomes, sooner or later, the hero of the barricade.

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## “MY MISGIVINGS

“The accumulated experience of history teaches us that when no one looks out for the public, the public looks out for itself; and when the public looks out for itself, it ceases to be a river running in its natural channel, and becomes a flood, an inundation. When the honest poor rises to vindicate its rights, it finds itself isolated, and is, therefore, willing to accept aid from any quarter. The first that offers is always that of the rascal and the criminal, for in the overthrow of order such men always see a free field for their misdeeds. Experience has also taught us that revolutions occur only when circumstances are favorable; when the seed of martyrdom has been sown upon a ground of conviction. This gives moral strength to men, and endues them with the courage to face death in defense of the cause which they have espoused.

“I have already sketched the outward cir-



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cumstances and I have pointed out where the seed of martyrdom can be found. From this exposition it is apparent that we have both the latent and the active elements of revolution in our midst. It will not do to assert that the class affected is insignificant and that the manifestations of discontent are harmless. Let us remember that when the French Revolution broke out, and Louis XVI exclaimed 'This is merely a street broil,' the Duke of Liancourt replied: 'No, Sire, it is a revolution.' We all know that the event proved the duke to be right.

"Charges are made daily against the Government without being met with reasonable answers, much less with proofs; and because it is easier to hear one who shouts than thousands who hold their peace, the discontent grows and gradually spreads throughout all classes.

"Nothing is so fatal in politics as the *laissez faire* doctrine, for it is interpreted as a sign that the administration does not know

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what to do. When the Government fails to answer its critics, the impression gets abroad that there is no reasonable explanation to offer. If it is true, as Mirabeau said, that the silence of the people is the lesson of the king, it is equally true, in my opinion, that the silence of kings is the justification of the charges made against them by the people.

“There is certainly something very grave in this cock-sure attitude. Those who look with indifference upon the present situation are making an unpardonable mistake, and, furthermore, are shirking their responsibility before history. The slight uprisings which have up to the present time taken place in Cananea, Aguascalientes, Chihuahua, and even in the Capital itself, are forerunners of what is being worked up in other cities under cover of the labor question; they are trials of strength to test the extent and quality of the forces which the Socialists have at their disposal; they are experiments to bring

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out the underlying conditions and show the leaders how far they can go.

“I perceive that there is agitation below and alarm above. This condition can only be made right by the energetic and patriotic action of him who forms the apex of the social pyramid.

### “MY OPINION AS TO THE BEST WAY TO OVERCOME THE THREATENED DANGER

“The only way to meet and destroy the idea of revolution is to expose the falsity of the base upon which it rests, as I have already had the honor of explaining to you upon another occasion. But later on, when the idea has been so far developed that it has already blossomed into aspiration and begun to express itself in action, the only way to overcome the revolution is to lead it. If Louis XVI had understood this truth, and had known how to put it into execution, the ‘Great French Revolution’ would have been known in history as the ‘Great Evolution.’

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“ You have been good enough to entrust to me the first part of this undertaking, and I have endeavored to carry it out in the best manner possible. The results, to another more vain and more optimistic than I, might well have been considered highly satisfactory. These results may be summed up as follows:

“ 1. We have succeeded in making the opposition press, almost to the last periodical, understand the danger to which they are exposing the country with their revolutionary propaganda, and they have moderated their attacks against the Government and turned their attention to the study of the social questions involved, looking at these questions from the point of view of moral and economic evolution, and following the course of reasoning which I pointed out at the beginning of my campaign.

“ 2. The laborers who were ‘on strike’ have thus far followed my advice, which has been amplified and strengthened by what

other papers have written, even the opposition papers themselves.

“But all this, sir, does not constitute a decisive victory; it is only a success of the advance guard; it is not peace, but merely a truce. As soon as the first feeling of apprehension is over, and the moment of expectancy has passed, they will return to the struggle with more zeal than ever, if not with cruelty and bloodshed. What has been accomplished so far is due not to my ability, but to yours. The sole cause is the change of front which you ordered *El Imparcial* to make: that is, to quit its irritating, dogmatic position and its redundant and insulting tone of superiority, its uncompromising attitude, and its intemperate expressions of ill will. This action has been taken as evidence of your separation from the Scientific party,<sup>1</sup> and the public has breathed a sigh of relief;

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<sup>1</sup>The party headed by Cabinet Minister Limantour was called the “Scientific party” by its founders on the assumption that they alone possessed the truth. Their idea was to

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therefore, on reading the declarations and promises which I made in the name of the Government, the people have begun to hope for better things. But they are not to be deceived with promises, nor can their desistance be long counted upon after they have once made up their minds to act; nor am I capable of resorting to double dealing in order to restrain them.

“For the complete realization of the first part of the undertaking which you have been good enough to entrust to me, resources are lacking. *El Imparcial* is by no means equal to the task single handed. It is already discredited in the eyes of the people; everything it publishes is looked upon with suspicion. As soon as the first moment of surprise is over, the salutary effect will vanish, unless reënforced by the utterance of other papers and supported by convincing, practical action.

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reduce it all to precise formulas. They look with the most profound contempt upon the masses, and in fact upon all those who do not offer themselves as passive instruments for the accomplishment of this party's ambitions.

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“As to the suggestion in the second part of my report that you yourself should head the movement, I am not in a position even to express an opinion, much less to point out the proper course of action. You are so far superior to me in knowledge and experience that I could not think of such presumption, but I do consider it my duty, sir, to beg you not to look upon the affair of Cananea with indifference, but to accede to the public demand, to break your silence, to investigate, and to demonstrate that the Government was fully justified in its action, thus dissipating doubts, calming fears, and satisfying public opinion. In addition, I am sure it would be well to effectually countenance the laborers in so far as their demands are just; to appoint a commission composed of five competent men to study the labor question and to make such suggestions as they deem advisable. This would suffice to calm agitation *for the moment*, to inspire confidence in the Government, and hope that the precarious

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situation of the laboring classes would be improved.

“ We are in the midst of a period of agitation, and it would be a great mistake to ignore the fact. Such periods are fertile in systems, projects, and plans of all kinds, especially harmful kinds.

“ I do not believe that public opinion is always right, but I think that it should always be taken into account and satisfied, especially at present, because there *exists* a decided tendency to disregard a decree, unless its justice be fully demonstrated, or force be used to compel obedience. The latter method is the more efficacious for the time being, but it always carries with it a reaction, more or less violent in proportion to the amount of repressive force which has been exerted.

“ I trust you will pardon the liberty I have taken in speaking so plainly and at such length upon matters which are beyond my competence. For thus trespassing upon your



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overburdened time, I beg you to forgive me, and I feel sure that your kindness and good judgment recognize my loyalty as a member of your party, my sincerity as a friend, and my love for our common country.

“ (Signed) R. DE ZAYAS ENRIQUEZ.

“ MEXICO, August 3, 1906.”

It is undeniable that the country is passing through a period of agitation and uncertainty. Almost every one in Mexico who has any power uses it and abuses it, and the cowed public submits. From the car conductor up, everyone is permitted to despise the public and treat it tyrannically. The manager of a manufacturing establishment is a feudal lord and his agents treat the working classes as if they were slaves.

In May of the present year (1907) a Mexican paper published a long letter addressed to the President by a workingman named José Neira. It was written concerning a

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strike. In it occurred the following remarks:

“ At the present time, although the laborers and their employers are intimately connected by ties of interest, they are very far apart. The capitalists are very high up; we are very low down; and between them and us there exist as the only intermediaries a multitude of ‘go-betweens,’ who exploit those above to as great an extent as those below, deceiving both. These ‘go-betweens’ form a regular stairway, from the man who sweeps out the office to the manager-in-chief. They transform all that passes through their hands, either up or down, to suit their own ends. In the factory, everything is for sale. For five dollars the ‘boss’ will give three looms to the man who has two, four to the man who has three. For one or two dollars, the ‘*correitero*’ will credit you with good marks; for twenty-five cents the inspector will fail to report; for the same amount, he

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will allow smoking and the floor sweeper will change all the broken reels, bobbins, and spools.

“ We laborers are obliged by the ‘ bosses,’ under penalty of losing our job, to take one number at least in each of their raffles, and they have one every week; to apply for funds which they loan at the rate of twenty-five per cent a week, whether we need the money or not; and to pretend that we are deaf when they make love to our sisters, our daughters, our nieces, and even our wives. These ‘ bosses,’ who in turn are ‘ bossed ’ by other employees higher up, are among us sort of sultans, who hold our money and even our honor at their beck and call. Woe to him who repels or tries to thwart the amorous caprices of one of these gentlemen! They will fine him and punish him for several weeks, and finally the ‘ *cor-reitero* ’ will come, full of pompous majesty, to whisper in his ear: ‘ Don’t be a fool. Don’t carry on so with the “ boss ”! What’s

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the use of getting fined and punished? Don't you know that he can consign you to the army?' It is true; the will of these mandarins is law. All they have to do is to inform the management that the person in question is a terrible Socialist who stirs up strikes, and it's all up with that particular laborer."

This description is a true picture of the condition of affairs in almost all the states of the Federation, and the bitter feeling of the laboring classes is apparent in nearly every town in Mexico.

I remember that in 1875, when we were making preparations for the Revolution of Tuxtepec, which was to place General Díaz in the presidential chair, I published a book entitled "The Helots of the Nineteenth Century." On page 117 and following pages I said: "Those who know the inner history of the France of 1847 and of the Mexico of 1875 must be surprised to see how many points

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of similarity there are between the two countries during these two epochs.

“ In the France of that day as in our country to-day, peace apparently reigned, and the ministers, satellites of M. Guizot, could say, as the cabinet members of Señor Lerdo de Tejada might have, that the public security was in no wise disturbed, that the budget of state was covered with perfect regularity, that the eighty-seven prefects of His Majesty exercised the functions of their offices with as much independence (?) as could the twenty-seven governors of the constitutional states of our Federation.

“ There was a veritable plethora of riches and well-being; railroads were built in all directions; the Minister of War in France, as the Minister of War here, ordered the construction of battleships, not only in the national shipyards, but also in England. The cry of the memorable administration of Guizot was ‘ Get rich ! ’

“ At first sight, the man who cannot see

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farther than the outside of a question would believe that the material condition of France at that time was the best possible. In that country, as in our pseudo-republic, scandalous fortunes were made in a day, the origin of which no one could explain. Usury and shameful speculation was the order of the day; the health of the country was threatened by the growth of a terrible cancer; the condition of affairs can best be described by the biblical expression, 'whited sepulcher.'

"In the France of 1847 there was a privileged class which formed what was called 'the legal country.' For the members of this class were reserved the public offices, the rich sinecures, the flattery of the 'powers that be,' the attentions of the ministers, honorable decorations, invitations to the Tuileries, handshakes of the 'Bourgeois king'; in a word, it was the reign of the grocers, as the people have called it; only members of the ring took part in public affairs; they alone

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were called, and consequently they alone were chosen.

“ But while they were talking of the dances and royal entertainments which ‘Philippe Égalité’ was lavishing upon his protégés, the great majority of the law-abiding citizens who had honest ambitions and were willing to work murmured against this bureaucratic and self-centered government, which took no thought for the future (of France), but only for their own present advantage and that of their hangers-on; and whatever business they undertook was merely for the aggrandizement of some speculator. But the tempest was slowly gathering, drawing together the scattered elements of discontent from all sides.

“ The very thing which happened there is taking place among us here to-day. At first, only suppressed murmurings from below, then open protest that the revenues of state should be squandered in sumptuous banquets while the public goes hungry; that

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money should be squandered on perfectly useless, if not perfectly ridiculous scientific expeditions, while the masses clamor for schools; gold braid and gorgeous trimmings to set off a gallant army, while the wretched people with difficulty find rags to cover their nakedness.

“In the France of 1847, as in the Mexico of 1875, public indignation burned against the adventurers who had succeeded in putting themselves in control of the situation; the people hurled their scorn against an immoral government, which was hiding under a mantle of virtue, and had brought everything down to a purely material basis.

“What was the result of this brewing opposition? Toward the end of 1847 the storm began to darken the horizon of ‘Philippe Égalité,’ and during the following year burst with fury as menacing as that which in 1793 overthrew the worm-eaten throne of Louis XVI. At that time, Louis Philippe recognized the rottenness of the situation and had



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the sense to abdicate and retire to England. 'In Mexico they never abdicate. Our rulers, like the "Old Guard," may die, but never surrender.'"

This is what I said in 1875, and I notice that others are repeating the same thing to-day in a somewhat different form; taking another epoch in France to point the parallel, that of the last days of the Third Empire and the final catastrophe at Sedan.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE LAST PHASE OF THE EVOLUTION OF PRESIDENT DÍAZ

I HAVE described, though in a sketchy manner, the whole public life of President Díaz, and the evolution of his character, an evolution which has not traveled in straight lines. Nature has no straight lines, and no evolution ever follows the direct course, but moves in a constantly ascending spiral.

The query naturally arises in one's mind: Has President Díaz stopped growing? Does he actually present to us to-day the last stage of his development, the final form in which he will pass into history?

It may seem that prudence should counsel me to propound this question fairly and therewith end my labor. But that would be to destroy the fruit of all my work. For I consider my task positive, and if I should

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end it by simply raising this question, the results of my investigation would be shrouded with doubt, and, therefore, largely negative.

I am well aware that every man is a tendency, a suggestion, never a complete expression. But I am equally sure that the law of each man's being, as well on the spiritual as on the moral plane, is to fulfill the functions which his own nature prescribes. President Díaz is cast in a mold which compels achievement of such a high order that he cannot stop with that which he has already accomplished, for it has affected only the material side of Mexico.

History does not furnish us with a single example of a man who, after gaining permanent possession of the supreme power, voluntarily returned to the people, either all at once or by degrees, the liberties which he had taken from them. Nations never shake off the yoke except by revolution. They must by their own courage and heroism re-conquer

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what they have lost through indolence, cowardice, or the desire to gain some immediate advantage at the expense of their future welfare. But President Díaz cannot and ought not to allow himself to be classed in this category. Because if he did he would be a contradiction to himself, he would destroy his prestige, and descend to the level of an ordinary tyrant, an ambitious upstart, who had deceived the people and defrauded them of their highest and most legitimate aspirations.

In order to complete his work he does not need the conditions that surround a mythological demigod, but simply those of a man inspired by patriotism, righteousness, honor, and respect for his own reputation. It is to me inconceivable that President Díaz can be a hard, unyielding man, actuated only by selfish ambition, cold and heartless, "a bronze statue upon a granite pedestal." For that would prove him to be, in the last analysis, a man capable of raising to his memory a

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monument of curses upon a pedestal of ignominy. In thinking him incapable of this, I am not founding my belief solely upon my aspirations for my country, nor upon my admiration for the hero of this biography, nor yet upon my desire that General Díaz may pass into history universally venerated, but upon the belief that, deducing the unknown from the known, General Díaz will feel himself compelled to carry out that which duty so imperiously commands. Although Díaz may have made mistakes (and it is certain enough that he has done so), I do not believe him capable of committing the awful crime of treason to his country.

For this reason I counsel him with frankness and with sincere loyalty to shortly become the head of the revolution which is beginning to stir in the soul of Mexico, at last awaking from her long sleep. I adjure him to lead the movement at once, for although it is beginning very timidly, it has, nevertheless, made a beginning, and if he takes the

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initiative now, he can transform the movement from revolution into evolution, nay, even more, into salvation, and for himself stamp the achievement of the statesman with the seal of greatness.

Many people will laugh at my having several times referred to a revolution in Mexico, for they consider this impossible, in view of the fact that peace is, in their estimation, so firmly established, and the people so dominated by the yoke that they are incapable of even dreaming to shake it off. As long as President Díaz holds the reins of the Government it is practically certain that things will remain as they are, both because of his overwhelming prestige, and because of the terror inspired by his practice of drowning in blood any attempt at uprising. The last time this happened was only a few months ago, when the strikers of Orizaba were shot down by General Rosilino Martinez, according to the custom established on June 25, 1879. But once the pressure of his iron

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hand is removed, the presence of the inflammable material, now lying hidden on every side, will be revealed, and the whole country will be ablaze. This everyone knows but no one dares to confess.

At the present moment the financial situation is bad all over the world, but in Mexico it is frightful. The greatest lack of confidence exists in the money market. Banks are changed from credit-giving institutions into places of hoarding. The feeling of instability is general. We are assured that there is much money in the country, but that those who have it do not allow it to get into circulation. Why is this? Because the capitalist is nothing if not far-sighted; he sees the storm brewing before the professional politician is alive to the situation, and he is afraid that his money will be seized by some one and hoarded if he puts it into circulation.

All classes see with disgust the immense sums that are spent to beautify the Capital and to furnish large profits to the ring, when

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this money is so badly needed for the necessities upon which the very future of the country depends, such as the irrigation of vast stretches of waste land and immigration matters, which have been shamefully neglected under the pretext that there were no funds for this purpose; and this, too, when it is evident that there is enough and to spare for the construction of palaces, theaters, promenades, and for sumptuous entertainments which no one approves.

Physical law controls actions, but moral law imposes duties, and he who fails to fulfill his duties, whether from ignorance, indifference, or lack of ability, must be considered a failure, even though he may have accomplished much and rendered great service in other directions.

To-day more than ever the life of Mexico is bound up in the life of President Díaz. For he alone possesses the key to the situation; he and he only can convert into "organic



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peace" the "mechanical peace" which he has imposed with such skill and power. 'And I must insist, in the face of all that interested flattery can say to the contrary, or convicted error assert with sophistry, our peace is "mechanical." The mere fact that everything in Mexico depends upon the will of a single individual is sufficient proof of my assertion—a single individual who controls public affairs in their entirety, down to the minutest detail; a single individual who can make or mar reputations, lives, and fortunes, because all are forced to consult him, obey him, and believe, or appear to believe, whatever he says on his mere word, without asking for proofs or explanations.

If President Díaz should happen to disappear suddenly, paying the tribute which all must pay to death, it would throw Mexico into the worst state of confusion that our country has ever experienced.

In a few words, I will try to explain my meaning. We are all at sea politically, be-

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cause for many years in Mexico it has been looked upon as a virtue, or perhaps as a necessity, to avoid taking an interest in politics. We are, therefore, without any strong, recognized successor, anyone with an established reputation, because for many years there has been nothing in Mexico worthy the name of popular elections. It is true that Señor Don Ramon Corral figures as vice-president, but it is equally true, as all the world knows, that he does not owe his position to popular election, but to the direct appointment of President Díaz. Señor Corral is unknown in politics. He may be an exceptional man, but no one is sure of it, because he has not demonstrated his ability; in fact, he has had no chance to show his qualities.

In June, 1904, at a National Convention, called ostensibly for the purpose of nominating candidates for president and vice-president, the Hon. Ignacio Mariscal, Secretary of Foreign Relations, was put up by some delegates for the second place. But one of the

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members of the convention announced from the speakers' desk that he had been "instructed to present as official candidate" for the vice-presidency Señor Don Ramon Corral, Secretary of the Interior. Señor Corral was nominated by the convention.

In this connection, Señor Mariscal wrote, in reply to a letter from his supporters, a statement (on July 20th) which was published by all the papers. In it he expressed himself with his usual frankness, saying that if he had foreseen that his name was going to be proposed he would have made every effort to prevent it. He added:

"I never have aspired to the vice-presidency, for reasons which I will explain further on, *nor would it have been possible for my candidacy to succeed against that of Señor Corral, which had already been cut and dried before the convention.*

"Already it is evident that the candidacy of the Secretary of the Interior has much more support and probability of success at

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the national elections than it had at the time of the convention, although the evidences were many and great at that time. *For to-day he has the declared approval of the President to count upon, as was shown in the speech Díaz made at the National Convention, in reference to his own candidacy and that of Señor Corral.* PRESIDENT DÍAZ'S OPINION, THAT OPINION WHICH HAS ON SO MANY OCCASIONS PROVED ITS EFFECTIVENESS, UNSUPPORTED BY COMPULSION, MERELY BECAUSE OF THE ABSOLUTE CONFIDENCE WHICH HE HAS BEEN ABLE TO INSPIRE, CONSTITUTES THE MOST CERTAIN GUARANTEE THAT THE CITIZEN IN WHOSE FAVOR HE HAS DECLARED WILL BE ELECTED VICE-PRESIDENT. It would have been foolish of me, therefore, with my experience of years, to expect any votes to speak of in the election for the vice-presidency, a position which I repeat I have no desire to fill."

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Read as you will the words of this honorable and sincere man, you will always come to the same conclusion, the conclusion that I have pronounced at the beginning.

Not long ago (in fact, in this very year, 1907) the United States press took up the question of a successor to President Díaz. Some papers predicted that Señor Limantour, the Secretary of the Treasury, would succeed him; others mentioned Señor Corral; and still others mentioned an unknown as his probable successor. These articles caused great alarm in Mexico, and among the papers at the Capital which took up the affair with fervor there was one hardy enough to assert that the successor to President Díaz would be the "LAW."

I can say with all sincerity that I have not the slightest idea what the author of this riddle was driving at. Who is the "law" and what is the "law"? This amounts to a justification of what I have said above, because if *El Diario*, the paper to which I

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refer, thinks that Señor Corral is the legitimate successor of the President, as things stand to-day, it should have made its statement categorical, considering that the "LAW," even when it is written in capitals, is a thing, and that things cannot succeed persons, for there cannot be any Government except through the instrumentality of individuals. Moreover, in the last analysis, the "Law" in Mexico is General Díaz, and will continue to be as long as he lives; but will cease to be when he dies.

At the present time, the Liberal party is disorganized, or perhaps one might better say that it has disappeared; for it no longer exists as a Liberal party, properly speaking; while the Clerical party is better organized than ever, and is possessed of far greater resources than it had at the time when it was forced, as a measure of political necessity, to disentail the property of the clergy. It is true that this party has no leader of repute, but we all know by experience that necessity

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always creates a leader. The situation is such, then, that we may well fear that a reaction is in store, and that it will precipitate an uprising as sanguinary, or perhaps even more sanguinary, than the Revolution of 1857-1860, because the Liberals, the Radicals, and the Jacobins will unite to fight the common enemy.

But looking at the case in the most favorable light possible, and supposing that the President should die without completing the evolution which we all anxiously await, and that Corral should come into power without opposition or mishap of any kind, and with the tacit or expressed consent of all the people, how would he govern? To return at once to the constitutional *régime*, that is, to respect the spirit and conform to the letter of the Constitution, would be difficult, because it would be necessary to begin by making radical changes in the direction of decentralization throughout the administrative department. This would be sure to cause dis-

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content among all those who have become accustomed to government according to the present system.

To continue according to the existing plan would be dangerous in the extreme, because no matter how talented the new president might be, he would lack the prestige of President Díaz, and fail in consequence. The present system is like the arms of Achilles, so ponderous that no one else could support the weight; Patroclus himself was borne down by it.

Another and most important factor in the problem, a factor which would stagger the boldest, is our public debt; or, more correctly speaking, our foreign debt. It amounts to hundreds of millions of dollars and requires an enormous sum to pay the interest; a sum which must be forthcoming with perfect regularity, not only because the reputation of the country demands it, and because we are under formal contract, but also because any lapse would imperil the credit upon which



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we are living, disturb our friendly relations with other countries, and therewith our freedom from anxiety, lest our national independence be jeopardized by a foreign intervention or a degrading protectorate. I, for one, have not the least doubt that revolution would bring upon us unavoidably these unhappy consequences. We see, then, that if President Díaz should die, leaving affairs as they are to-day, we should find ourselves face to face with this terrifying dilemma: either hopeless political slavery, or revolution, with the danger of losing our separate nationality. Either horn of the dilemma would lead to equally disastrous consequences for Mexico.

President Díaz ought not to count upon another reëlection. His present term of office expires on December 1, 1910; that is to say, when President Díaz will be more than eighty years old, and it is natural to suppose that at that age it would be impossible for him to continue governing. Therefore, he

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must accomplish in his present term all that he hopes to bring about. There is no time for delay.

The President has probably not felt himself growing old, but unquestionably he must have done so, for all men are mortal, and although life has no fixed limits, his death cannot be very far off, judging from the President's age, his stupendous labors, and the normal duration of human life, under such conditions. General Díaz may not be aware of his approaching end, but, like every one living, he must be traveling inevitably toward death.

It is impossible that our illustrious ruler can have any idea of leaving us such a political heritage, one whose necessary outcome would be fraudulent bankruptcy, bankruptcy of principle, bankruptcy of private and public interest, a condition worse than chaos, for chaos is always looked upon as a beginning, and this would be an ending.

That a monarch so corrupt as Louis XV

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should exclaim: "After me the deluge!" can be understood, but it is unthinkable that a man of honor like President Díaz should leave us in his will any such legacy! It is unthinkable, I repeat, that President Díaz should do this, because in that event the world, upon seeing our disasters, would rightly quote to us the words of the Prophet to the effect that we were reaping our just deserts for having embraced ideas of compromising peace in the hour of our extremity.

No, it is not possible that President Díaz intends to have us pay for the temporary advantages of peace the price of national extinction.

General Díaz has founded a school, as it were, for almost all the South American presidents are trying to imitate him by curtailing public liberties and endeavoring to become autocratic. From him they have learned the methods which lead to dictator-

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ship. This is an undeniable fact, and because of it America, perhaps the whole world, is watching to see what will be the outcome of President Díaz's administration. If his evolution ends by organizing liberty as an effective means of converting arbitrarily enforced order into organic peace, as I have called it, his example will be salutary, because it will show those who are attempting to create autocracies the only way to fulfill patriotically and honorably the obligation which accompanies power. If he does not do this, whether for lack of noble purpose or for lack of time, his example will also be salutary to the people, because they will learn at our expense never for any reason to entrust the destinies of their country to the hands of a single man, no matter how high-minded he may be, nor how conspicuous the services he may have rendered in times of danger.

In either event, I trust that the public and their rulers will not forget the lesson.

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It is related that Napoleon once visited the Jesuit convent in Rome, and that the general of the order acting as his guide showed him all the different departments, explaining the purposes and methods of each, and pointing out the suitability of the instruction as a preparation for the special work which each group was destined to carry forward. All were divided into groups, devoted to different branches of science and art. Finally, they came to an immense hall which particularly attracted the attention of the Emperor, because the pupils in it looked so very unintelligent. Unable to imagine for what purpose such youths could be destined, he asked his guide: "What on earth those stupid boys could be trained to do?" The imperturbable general replied: "To satisfy the inexhaustible demand for martyrs to the Japanese."

General Díaz certainly possesses this admirable faculty for taking advantage of the special aptitudes of each individual, and

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assigning to him the position which best fits his capacity. For the very reason that I recognize in him this distinguished attribute, I do not believe that he has created such an enormous department for "Martyrs to the Japanese" that he intends to place in it the whole population of Mexico. Nor do I believe that he has any idea of continuing the Government after his death, not in his own person, for that would be impossible, but through the medium of a man imposed upon the nation by him to carry on the work from the point where death interposed. I do not believe this is possible, for President Díaz is a strong character, and would naturally wish to complete his own undertaking. Therefore it is unthinkable that he should intend to give to another the glory of perfecting his work. Nor can I conceive that he has wished to rear an edifice at the cost of so much sacrifice, only to have it fall as the tomb closes over him, overthrown by the inexperience or the incapacity of a successor appointed by himself.

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For in the first case the fortunate successor would share in his glory, and President Díaz would have deferred his own glorification until after death; in the second case, the disastrous work of his successor would obscure the memory of the "Hero of Peace," a title which is much more coveted by the President than the one which he has already so justly earned, "Hero of War." There is no way for him to seal his career with golden opinions and to assure his title to the veneration of the nation and to a lasting place in history but that of converting "mechanical peace" into "organic peace," founding it upon Liberty, and remembering always that "PEACE IMPLIES NOT ONLY ORDER, BUT FREEDOM."

It is meet to "render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's," and unto the people that which is theirs by right.

The standards of the people must be raised and invigorated, for a sound, active public opinion is indispensable as a basis of insti-

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tutions and nations. Where this element is lacking, there is no people, in the true signification of the word, but only a degraded multitude. Liberty attaches man to the soil more than material possessions. Consequently peoples deprived of liberty are ripe for conquest; having nothing to lose, they make no effort to defend themselves, but allow a foreign power to enslave them. Such is the effect of tyranny. Peoples thus pacified, who accept order without liberty, are like the ox, fit for service, but not for the perpetuation of their national existence.

There are peoples, like the English, who respect law, but repudiate authority; there are peoples, like most of the Latins, who respect authority, but despise the law. We Mexicans must be brought to understand that the law is above all and that our first duty is to obey it and make others obey it; that when a government over-rides the law it becomes an outlaw and a public enemy.

We must restore in all its fullness the



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true conception of citizenship and make it understood that there is no title of nobility to compare with that of citizen, because class distinctions always imply, on the one hand, relative superiority and, on the other, abject inferiority; while citizenship implies free men in a free country with equal rights, equal obligations, and absolute equality before the law.

We must also make the people understand that the political rights which the law concedes and guarantees to them are at the same time sacred duties which they must fulfill religiously, under pain of being considered traitors to their country; for he who does not take his part in political affairs, fails to go to the polls, or permits trickery and falsification of the returns, commits a crime which injures him, and is all the more culpable because it carries with it consequences fatal to the whole of society.

It is indispensable that the people who work and pay the taxes, whose resources

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constitute the national wealth, should freely elect in the manner prescribed by the Constitution their representatives, and through them have absolute power to decide how heavy the burden of taxation should be, what proportion should be raised from each field, and in what manner the taxes should be collected and distributed.

We must blot out every principle of oligarchy, put a stop to the system of legislative commissions, and eliminate every trace of autocracy. We must put into practice the principle that the power of government does not reside in the Executive, but that it is exercised jointly by the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches, not as three distinct powers, but as three phases or manifestations of a single united Government. Each branch has its field of action clearly defined by the Constitution; to the Legislative department is assigned the power to make the laws, to the Executive that of putting them into force, and to the Judi-

cial that of seeing that the laws are complied with.

It is advisable to leave the way open for the exercise of all aspirations and all aptitudes, and not to direct the latter, nor to encourage the former in an arbitrary or capricious manner, injurious to the dignity of the individual and prejudicial to the best interests of the nation. It is wise to concede the greatest liberty to the expression of ideas. That public which cannot complain openly will conspire in secret. To gag the political orator is to arm the political assassin. In those countries in which the press is restricted, we find demoralization due to the fact that the privileged incendiary goes free, while the honest man who raises the cry of alarm is imprisoned.

Another anomaly common in countries devoid of freedom is that it is sometimes convenient for an office-seeker to expose his vices and always dangerous for any citizen to show his virtues. For this reason it has

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always been the part of wisdom in times of tyranny to avoid exhibiting too much intelligence or too high a sense of honor. For just as nothing is so exasperating to the millionaire as a man upon whom his millions make no impression, so it happens that to a despot nothing seems so worthy of punishment as a character or an intelligence superior to his own. Any system of politics is bad in which the term *society* is applied only to the small group of people who act according to the ideas of the ruler; the term *people* to those who are sufficiently docile to allow themselves to be managed, while to the rest is applied such depreciative epithets as *populace, horde, rabble*. It is necessary to accept the people in its entirety, to try to achieve the greatest good for the greatest number, without entering into political distinctions or metaphysical subtleties.

To accomplish the good results outlined above, there are only two methods: evolution

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and revolution. Revolution can be put into practice only by the people; evolution can be realized, in this case, only by President Díaz. For him there is nothing easier. His wish alone would be sufficient. All that is needed is to have him put the Constitution into force, slowly but surely, in order that the people may become accustomed to the exercise of their rights. It would be well to begin by permitting the people, nay, even obliging them, if necessary, to elect their municipal authorities, guaranteeing to them the inviolability of their vote, and protecting them against the vengeance of the local authorities. Let us do the same with each state governorship, as the term of office expires, in order that the citizens may freely elect whomever they consider most worthy to occupy this distinguished position. When the time for election of representatives, senators, magistrates, and public officials of all kinds arrives, let us inaugurate the same truly popular elections.

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Let the President return to the Legislature all its prerogatives, and never ask for nor accept extraordinary powers to be used in any branch of the Government, unless, of course, in case of serious danger to the maintenance of order, or to the perpetuation of our institutions. Greater scope should be given to personal initiative and to individual ambition, in order that each one may show his abilities, develop them, and thus become of greater value to the country. The people should be free to express their opinions in writing, in print, or orally, and the country should no longer have forced upon it a subsidized press. Public ideals should be allowed to grow again, and every one should be permitted to work for the ideals in which he believes, without hindrance, and with the sole condition that he shall not transgress the law. The president should not maintain any ring of personal favorites, but should ally himself to the people.

This is little, but it is all that is needed.

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The President has only to say to the cataleptic people, "Arise and walk." In doing this, General Díaz would seal his career with golden opinions, and assure to his people a future of peace, liberty, and happiness. If his life is spared, as I hope with all my heart that it may be, there is yet time in the three remaining years of his presidency to bring about the evolution which I have pointed out.

I have now reached the end of my labors. The purpose of this book has restricted me to a brief, sympathetic treatment of the causes which have brought about Mexico's present condition; but the reader will find detailed information and an exhaustive analysis in another work, which I shall shortly give to the press.

From what I have written, it is evident that as yet it is not possible to make up the President's account. Whether the final balance will be in his favor or against him will depend upon his future actions. President Díaz

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has it in his power to pass into history as the "FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY," a title which up to the present time Washington alone has deserved, or to leave the reputation of a man who, in spite of great ability, strayed from the way, disappointed public confidence, and brought to naught the sacrifices of his fellow-citizens. Even in that event, it may be that flattery and intellectual superficiality, seeing only the outside of things, will still contend that President Díaz was the creator of a nation. History will make the inexorable reply, "He created a nation, but he destroyed a people."

NEW YORK, June, 1907.

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THE END







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