

life of this remarkable man is its ending. Having passed through every phase of danger, while so many of his contemporaries fell in battle, or met death on their knees, he bore a charmed life, and, surviving defeat and exile, returned to the scenes of his grandest triumphs, and breathed out his last days on his own soil surrounded by his family.

In the accompanying illustrations we see him first as president, covered with the insignia of his successes; and the later portrait presents him as he looked at the time



GENERAL SANTA ANNA.

of his death. The contrast is striking and mournful, telling of failure in a man possessing so many elements of greatness, who might have held the highest place in the hearts of his countrymen long after his physical frame had moldered into dust.

The signing of the Federal Chart in 1857 was one of the most important of all the memorable events in Mexican history. Its anniversary is wisely observed as a national holiday.

Of the large number of signers, there remain only twenty-five survivors. Several of these are octogenarians, while others fill places of trust and importance in their country's service. Foremost and best known to us are Señor Ignacio Mariscal, at present Minister for Foreign Affairs; Señor Romero Rubio, Secretary of the Interior; General Ochoa; and the veteran statesman, politician, and soldier, Guillermo Prieto—all of the capital.

We now come to consider a few of the leading spirits of the war of reform which began to be prosecuted when Santa Anna stepped aside from the political arena.

## BENITO JUAREZ.

Let us now take a pleasant stroll through the Alameda and along the great highway leading to Tacuba, until we come to the grand old church and pretty *plazuela* of San Fernando, and the Pantheon, bearing the same name. The little plaza is shaded by giant trees, fragrant with myriad flowers, carpeted with soft, green turf, and the air rendered sweet and delicious by the ripple of the sparkling fountain; a place for day-dreams, so quiet and redolent of the past. But, in pursuance of our object, we suddenly find ourselves within a broad, grated doorway, and the next moment a polite little old man, clad in domestic, comes forward, hat in hand, with a smile, and the question:

"What will you have?"

"We wish to see the monument to Juarez;" whereupon he leads the way, halting as we halt to read an inscription on this or that tomb or vault, and volubly relating the history of the occupants of this grand old burial-ground. He became so interesting at last, that I found myself desirous to know something of him, this plain, humble, polite old man. Without ceremony I asked:

"Tell me something of yourself."

"*Muy bien, señora.* You have heard of the battle of Chapultepec, between the Americans and Mexicans?"

"Yes!" I replied; "but what has that to do with you?"

He shook his head, as he recalled the scenes then enacted, and responded:

"I was the bugler on that awful day, and saw our dear old flag go down and the Americans take possession of that place, so sacred to every Mexican."

He then went on to relate the tragic and heart-rending incident of the death of the gallant forty-eight students, boys from fourteen to twenty, who had their swords wrested from their hands and died nobly in defense of their country. We listened to the old man's reminiscences as we passed the tombs of Zaragoza, Miramon, Mejia, and others; but welcomed the timely silence which fell on the party as we

reached the tomb of Mexico's greatest statesman, patriot, and soldier, her Indian president, Benito Juarez. Here he lies, stretched out in majestic, marble dignity; so life-like, so realistic, as to cause a sudden thrill of awe in the beholder. It was a touching inspiration of Manuel Islas when he chiseled this sublime effigy, with the mourning figure of *La Patria* bending over it. Summer and winter this noble tomb is fragrant with floral offerings most gorgeous and beautiful, laid there by his grateful countrymen.

In striking contrast with the grandeur of his last resting-place was the early home of the Champion of Reform. I see it now, a simple adobe structure containing two or three rooms, without windows, their earthen floors cleanly swept, and with, perhaps, only one or two doors for the whole building. The roof was of either adobe or planks; if the latter, it was held in place by numerous stones, while climbing and clinging tenderly to the unsightly walls were tropical vines and plants which, in the profuse luxuriance of nature, covered the whole with their blossoms of gorgeous



BENITO JUAREZ.

tints, finally disappearing over the housetop, and transforming the humble home into a bower of beauty. The inclosure was composed of the organ-cactus, standing like sentinels warding off all intruders.

The village of San Pablo Gueltaco reclines unevenly on a rocky spur of the Sierra Madre in the State of Oaxaca, whose shores are washed by the waters of the Pacific. The hamlet has its narrow, irregular streets, its forest trees, tropical flowers, and luscious fruits, and in the grateful shade stands the neat white church to which the devout, in undisguised simplicity and piety, repair at all hours of the day.

The Enchanted Lake lies near, reflecting in its translucent depths the tropic growths surrounding it, and suggesting the romantic and shadowy traditions of the past.

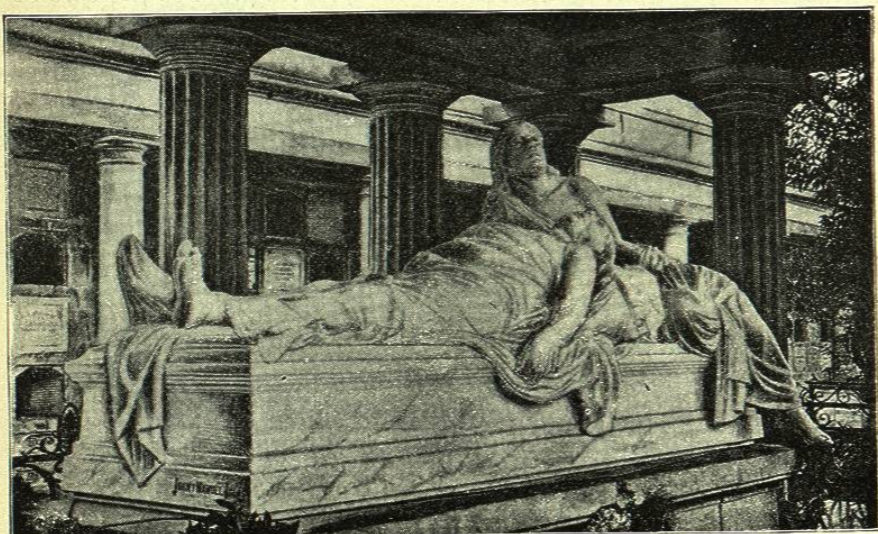
Two hundred Indian aborigines constitute the entire population of San Pablo. They live by tilling the soil in the old-time honest way. The parents of Benito Juarez cultivated their few acres and tended their cattle with the rest, in happy equality. Amid these primitive surroundings the champion of Mexican independence and reform, on March 21, 1806, first saw the light. He never knew a mother's love, she having died at his birth, leaving him to the care of his grandmother and uncle. Here he lived until he was twelve years of age, and was so thoroughly an Indian that not one word of Spanish had ever passed his lips.

About this time he attracted the attention of a worthy citizen of Oaxaca, who took him into his service, and recognizing the boy's talents, determined to give him the best possible educational advantages. He placed him in the ecclesiastical seminary, with a view to the priesthood, but finding that profession repugnant to his tastes, within a year he threw off the robes and turned to the law. He entered the college of Oaxaca, where he pursued his legal studies, teaching at the same time. Here he graduated with honors, and in 1834 was admitted to the bar. During these years he distinguished himself in every branch of study, and his conduct was most exemplary.

He did not long pursue the practice of law, but devoted himself to political affairs. Quite early he began to study the welfare of his country, being deeply imbued with a sense of the importance of a radical change in affairs. The Conservatives imprisoned him for his outspoken utterances, but the effect was to add strength to his vigorous thought.

In 1842 he became chief justice of the Republic, which office he held for three years. He was made governor of his own State in 1847, and remained so until 1852, on every possible occasion introducing liberal measures and useful reforms. As a determined enemy to des-

potism, he was exiled by Santa Anna, when he took up his residence in New Orleans, where he lived for two years in great poverty. On the revolution of Ayutla, in 1855, from which event dates the law of reform, Juarez returned and joined with Alvarez, who commanded the revolutionary forces against Santa Anna. The success of the revolution made Alvarez president, and Juarez became minister of justice and religion. His first move was a bold one—the abolition of the special clerical and military courts, under which these two classes had enjoyed immunity from the general laws. Congress sanctioned the



TOMB OF JUAREZ, IN SAN FERNANDO.

whole, but a change of administration followed, when the new president, Comonfort, fearing the progressive liberalism of Juarez, appointed him governor of his own State.

The promulgation of the Federal Chart in 1857 made a decisive change in the political outlook. In this year Juarez was elevated to the office of justice of the supreme court—a position equivalent to that of vice-president of the United States. In 1858 he became president, but the strength of the reactionary party was such as to cause him to transfer the government from one point to

another until he reached Vera Cruz. A strong defense was his recognition as president by the United States in 1859; but it was not until 1861 that he was enabled to establish his government at the capital, having defeated Miramon, who was at the head of the church party. The next year he was confirmed as president, and at once set about reorganizing the whole body politic. The suppression of religious orders, the confiscation of church property, and the suspension of the payments of foreign debts and national liabilities were the most prominent acts of his administration.

Mention has been made in another chapter of the wholesome effect of his vigorous measures, and the great work still goes on. Juarez seemed to have been born to redress the wrongs of the times, and events so shaped themselves in his stormy career as to develop the wonderful firmness and strength of his nature. After the issuance of his decree suspending the payment of national indebtedness, France, England, and Spain united to invade the country. The allied forces reached Vera Cruz; but Juarez having pledged himself that the interests of creditors should be protected, all withdrew except France. Under pretense of protecting its citizens, but really with a view to establishing a monarchy in which the interests of the church would be paramount, the French government sent an army of invasion, April, 1862, under General Forey, whose first movement was the capture of Puebla. Juarez, finding the capital insecure, retired to San Luis Potosi. In 1864, protected by French bayonets, Maximilian ascended his uncertain throne, while the government of the people, represented by Juarez, moved from one point to another until it finally rested at Paso del Norte.

While here, President Juarez was frequently invited to cross the river, and visit the American officers at Fort Bliss; but he always declined, fearing that such an act might be construed into an abandonment of his own beloved soil.

In June, 1866, he began his southward march. Over much of the same ground which he had traveled a fugitive, he now led his victorious army. In February, 1867, Marshal Bazaine, with his army, sailed

for France, leaving Maximilian behind in a hostile country. The latter was entreated to leave, but his fate withheld him.

Juarez soon had possession of Queretaro, where Maximilian had concentrated his few remaining soldiers. The story of the execution of Miramon, Mejia, and Maximilian, on June 19, 1867, needs no repetition. For some time public opinion, especially outside the republic, censured the execution of these distinguished men; but in counting the cost of their venture, they must have anticipated death in case of failure. The memory of Juarez is undimmed by the shadow of aught that would detract from his glory. Had he never done another act save that of divorcing Church and State, his name should remain forever embalmed in the hearts of his people.

Although every opportunity to acquire wealth was afforded him in the various positions he held, the truth comes down to us that he died a poor man. His family relations were of the happiest nature, and in the society of wife and children he enjoyed relaxation from the cares of state and public affairs.

He was re-elected president in 1871, and, after so much storm and contest, he might have hoped to live out his days in undisturbed calm; but though physically strong, his nervous system gave way at last. He died on July 19, 1872, aged sixty-six years, revered and honored by his contemporaries and a shining example for future generations. The recumbent marble figure in San Fernando is but a faint tribute to his worth.

Among the many pleasant people of historic association whose acquaintance I made at Morelia, was the polite and accomplished son of Melchor Ocampo, who was a prominent figure in the early reform movement, and whose name is familiar to many of our own countrymen of that period. The young man gave us the life of his father, from which I have made a few touching extracts. The enthusiastic compiler, Eduardo Ruiz, properly dedicates the work to the students of San Nicolas, because, as he says, "the last thought of Ocampo, before his execution, was of the students, whom he called his sons."

One of the choicest spirits of the time, and associated with Juarez

in the reform agitation, was Don Melchor Ocampo, Governor of Michoacan. He had also been a cabinet minister under Alvarez, in 1855-56. Alike in his brilliant and studious youth, and in the dignity of his mature manhood, he devoted himself to the cause of emancipating his country from military depotism and from the tyranny of those retrograde ideas which had so long retarded her progress. He was a poet and a scholar, as well as a patriot, philanthropist, and statesman, and his pen and sword were alike consecrated to the service of his country. Like many of his contemporaries and fellow-workers in the field of reform, he did not live to enjoy the fruits of his labors; but who will therefore say his life was incomplete, or not fully rounded out?

His tragic death exemplified all the manly virtues of his life, and it is fitting to relate how grandly and calmly this Mexican hero died.

He had retired to his country place near Pomoca, where he sought a quiet interval from the cares of state, solaced by friendship and surrounded by his trees and flowers.

In the early morning of a day in May, 1861, a company of reactionary soldiers, with their captain, approached the house. They entered and arrested a gentleman whom they saw there, Don Entimio Lopez, under the belief that he was Ocampo. The soldiers were about to retire with their prisoner when Ocampo appeared on the scene. He had been in an inner room, and had just discovered the presence of the soldiers, and his friend's arrest. He approached the captain, asking, tranquilly:

"For whom are you looking?"

"Ocampo," was the reply.

"Well, I am Ocampo: release this gentleman; he is my guest."

Without giving him time to get even his hat, they marched off with him to Tepeji del Rio, where, on being presented to General Marquez, the cause of the proceeding was clear and the issue certain. This general had given orders that any one taken prisoner who had labored in the cause of reform, should be instantly shot.

Ocampo proved his heroism in the trying hour of death. He slept calmly the night before his execution. The next morning, June 3, 1861, he was notified that his hour had come. Standing beneath the shade of a grand old tree, he leaned against its trunk; then asking for pen, ink, and paper, he wrote in a firm hand an addition to his last will and testament in behalf of his family, remembering also some orphan children, and adding a clause bequeathing his library to the Colegio de San Nicolas. Then placing his hands upon the tree, he raised his head as if in prayer, when the discharge of firearms added another to the long list of martyrs to the cause of liberty in Mexico.

In appreciation of his character and services, his native State has added his name, and is now known as Michoacan de Ocampo. His remains were taken to the capital, and, after lying in state in the national palace, were laid to rest in San Fernando, in the glorious companionship of his co-laborer in reform, Juarez.

Mexico has her hundreds of noble and heroic sons, many of whom have reached their three-score and ten years. They have served her in victory and defeat, and through her darkest hours have never swerved in their patriotic allegiance. Some of them now occupy exalted positions in diplomatic relations with foreign countries.

Among those who have grown gray in her service are Señor Navarro, for a quarter of a century Mexican consul at New York. He was a strong adherent of Juarez, and is a native of Morelia. Another is Señor J. Escobar, the venerable consul at El Paso, Texas, who has faced danger in all its forms, braved defeat time and again, but never lost his love of country. On one occasion at Chihuahua, during the French intervention, he was imprisoned and made to sweep the streets with the common prisoners of the town, for attempting, with others, to celebrate the 16th of September in honor of Hidalgo. The ladies and children turned out *en masse* and strewed flowers along his way as he performed his humiliating task. He has filled various responsible public offices, having been Secretary of Legation at Washington 1861-2-3, and was also sent to England during the war between the States as a confidential agent of his government.

The pages of history have not recorded a more stirring event than the war between the United States and Mexico.

Benjamin Franklin wisely said, "There never was a bad peace nor a good war," and taking up these sentiments after the lapse of a century, Hubert Howe Bancroft says: \* "If the injustice of all war was never before established, it was made clear by the contest between the two republics of North America. The saddest lesson to learn by citizens of the United States is, that the war they waged against their neighbor is a signal example of the employment of might against right, or force, to compel the surrender by Mexico of a portion of her territory and, therefore, a blot on her national honor." "The United States," he continues, "had an opportunity of displaying magnanimity to a weaker neighbor, aiding her in the experiment of developing republican institutions, instead of playing the part of bully."



GOMEZ FARIAS, THE FIRST MAN TO RECOMMEND THE TAXATION OF CHURCH PROPERTY.

In a severely caustic spirit he continues: "The United States could have secured peace by ceasing to assail the Mexicans, who were fighting only in self-defense; but the much desired peace they resolved so to secure by war that a bargain, which was nothing better than a barefaced robbery, should be secured. It was not magnanimity but policy which prompted Polk and his fellows to pay Mexico about twenty million dollars when she was at the conqueror's mercy. It gave among the nations, howsoever Almighty God regarded it, some shadow of right to stolen property. \* \* \* The total strength of the army