

The stormy debate in Congress on the subject of the English debt, immediately preceding his retirement, will never be forgotten; when Salvator Diaz y Miron—only twenty-six years old—turned the tide of politics in the National Assembly, and aroused the people to a sense of the wrong and injustice to which they were called to submit. The students from the various colleges who had never before taken a part in politics, gathered into the Theatre Iturbide, and, hearing his burning words of eloquence, were enthused with the same spirit and patriotic zeal. This inaugurated a new departure in the politics of the country, and henceforth the brave and gallant youths of the Mexican republic were to become a power in the land, and eventually prove her lasting regeneration and redemption.

On the first day of December, 1884, at eight o'clock in the morning, with severe republican simplicity, General Diaz was again installed as chief executive. The treasury was empty, the national credit at its lowest ebb, and the whole country groaning under the burden of her difficulties. But President Diaz was fully equal to the requirements of the situation, and, with the full confidence of the people, he again set himself to the task of repairing the injured ship of state, and setting her afloat in smooth waters.

Although beset by so many obstacles, he has proved his superior judgment and intelligence, and his thorough knowledge of the wants of his country. In this second administration she has progressed slowly, but steadily, in all that constitutes a nation's prosperity. Public education has received a stimulus before unknown, the arts and sciences are nurtured, business enterprises encouraged, and peace reigns within the borders of the republic. Knowing the importance of cultivating international good-will, the President is doing all in his power to encourage American enterprise and to insure the safety of life and property.

General Diaz is a man of the highest appreciation of those who have in any way served him during his many perilous adventures. One of the most thrilling of these occurred after the disastrous battle of Incamole, in the State of Tamaulipas, in 1877, when the forces

of General Diaz were utterly routed, and he was fleeing before the enemy. He made his way through Texas to New Orleans, but as his followers were badly demoralized, it was evident that without his encouraging presence the cause of the insurgents was lost. Disguising himself in a slouch hat, pulled down close over his eyes, blue goggles and a white beard, he embarked on a vessel bound for Vera Cruz. He appeared to be a respectable gentleman, with weak eyes and a remarkable rotundity of figure. He registered as Dr. Rodríguez, and at once retired to his state-room, where he was confined by incessant seasickness. His identity was unsuspected by any, with the exception of one of the lady passengers, the wife of a Mexican revolutionist.

At the port of Tampico a regiment of Mexican government soldiers came on board to take passage for Vera Cruz. General Diaz, fearing discovery, doffed his disguise, and, taking a life-preserver, plunged naked into the water, hoping to swim to the shore, ten miles distant. The captain, supposing him a lunatic, sent a boat after him, when his suspicions of the swimmer's insanity were confirmed by his resisting their attempts at rescue. He was, however, hauled into the boat and brought back to the ship. The boat had hardly touched the gang-plank, when the aforesaid lady rushed forward with a large sheet and enveloped the rescued man. Thus concealed from observation, he was brought on board and given in charge of the purser of the vessel, Mr. A. K. Coney. To him Diaz revealed himself, and begged for protection, which the purser promised to give. The colonel of the regiment, suspecting his presence on board, and also the purser's cognizance of the same, offered the latter, in Diaz's hearing, \$50,000 for information of the insurgent. In the president's words, his heart sank when he heard the tempting bribe, quickly to beat, however, with admiration and gratitude at the rejoinder of the noble young American, "I know nothing of Diaz."

On the arrival of the vessel at Vera Cruz, he was smuggled off under the guise of a lighterman by the faithful purser. After many other adventures, and when the fortunes of war had placed the refugee at the head of the republic, one of his first official acts was the ap-

pointment of Mr. Coney as consul to Navarre in France, afterwards to Paris as consul-general, and later as consul to the port of San Francisco.

President Diaz has been twice married, his present wife being Carmen Rubio, the lovely daughter of the Hon. Romero Rubio, Secretary of the Interior. Madame Diaz is now only twenty-four years of age; her figure is lithe, willowy and petite; her beauty rather of the Moorish type, her complexion delicately pink, like a sea-shell; eyes large and luminous, with a wealth of raven-black hair peculiar to the women of her country. She is extremely graceful and cordial in her manners, and bears with remarkable composure the honors showered on her as first lady in the Aztec country and mistress of the Mexican "White House." In her dress she is fully up to the European standard, and, her toilets being ordered direct from Worth, she enhances her beauty with rich fabrics and warm hues. In addition to her personal charms, she adds the accomplishment of being a linguist of a high order, speaking English and several other languages with equal fluency.

There are no "White House receptions," nor general social demonstrations, such as we know at our own capital. There is no contest for precedence between the wives of members of the cabinet and diplomatic corps, and perhaps the peace of the country is none the worse for that.

Never before, perhaps, have two as youthful, beautiful and noble women occupied their respective exalted positions as Carmen Romero Rubio de Diaz and Frances Folsom Cleveland. They are near the same age, each the pet and idol of her respective people. In Mexican homage and courtesy Madame Diaz, by common consent, is called "Carmelita" throughout her realm—a pet name her people have given her expressive of their love and tenderness.

I recall with much satisfaction my acquaintance with President and Madame Diaz, and the gracious courtesy and hospitality with which I was welcomed in their home. The last personal reminder of this distinguished pair was received on the eve of my departure from the capital, when President Diaz at my request inclosed the photographs



Ramon Corona

of himself and wife, and, in the autograph letter, as seen in front of book, bade me God-speed on my homeward journey.

President Diaz is one of the most dignified public men to be seen in any country. He is now about fifty-five years of age, of medium size, and of erect, strikingly military bearing. He has a rich olive complexion, grayish hair, and dark, expressive eyes, which in repose are peculiarly thoughtful and pathetic, but which light up in speaking, and must have flashed with electric fire in battle. His face is martial, even heroic, and his whole bearing expresses strength and confidence in himself and in his people. His manners are most polished and genial, and his conversational gifts exceptionally fine, indicating kindness and good feeling and a strong personal magnetism. He is a patriot of the purest order, a statesman, an honest man, and on the Western continent to-day there is not a more brilliant military genius.