of hope, and he felt he could not stop; he must go on; he must do something great for his country—a country crying for help, a land of sunshine and wealth, now dreary and sad and penniless.

Yes, he must be up and doing. Revolution must be stamped out if the land was ever to attain success, if the children were to be fed and the coffers filled. Then it was ambition began to enter his breast, and he felt he must take his part in the saving of Mexico.

Diaz was still nothing but a soldier, a keen one 'tis true, and blessed with a splendid constitution; but as yet he was merely the rough and ready fighting man. He knew little of politics. Diplomacy meant nothing to him. He had never travelled outside his own country, and even Spanish was still somewhat of a foreign language to him, his own Zapotec-Indian coming more glibly even at that time to his tongue.

CHAPTER IV.

MEXICO'S STRUGGLE FOR REFORM.

It is interesting to note how simple and direct General Diaz' diaries always are. He states facts. He makes no comments. He neither praises nor blames. He does not enlarge or enthuse on any event, any action, or any victory.

These diaries are truly characteristic of the soldier. He is a man of few words. The bald truthfulness of his sentences is so like himself that one can really see the man photographed in paper and ink.

From this it must not be inferred that Diaz is only matter-of-fact, brisk, hard, and calculating, for he is just the reverse in many ways, and, as said elsewhere, he is two men in one. The romantic, warm-hearted, affectionate, loving creature on the one hand; on the other, the stern, grave ruler of a people. He is strangely complex.

These diaries, with which the following pages deal somewhat fully, were often written under great stress, jotted down at odd moments either on the eve of action, or immediately after, and although some passages have been enlarged later, the simple, direct style, the absolute faithfulness to detail minus all attempt at embroidery remain.

Political considerations made it indispensable after the victory at Oaxaca that Salinas should remain at the head of the troops. It was not thought prudent at that stage to promote Diaz to the command.

Driven out of Oaxaca, Cobos withdrew his forces towards Zimatlán. Realising that by following this route he would be

cut off from his base of operations, and noting that his rear-guard was not attacked, he doubled back in order to reach the interior by the road from Oaxaca to Tehuacán. This brought him once more near to the town in which he had just suffered defeat. That Colonel Salinas committed a grave military blunder in not leading his troops in pursuit of the enemy in the first place after their flight from Oaxaca, and again when they returned within easy reach of his lines, no student of military affairs will doubt.

For this omission he was severely criticised by Captain Félix Diaz, the younger brother of Porfirio.

Indignant at the censure passed upon his inaction by his inferior officer, Colonel Salinas ordered that Félix Diaz should himself go out against the enemy, as he seemed to consider that course so urgent. The enterprise appeared foredoomed to failure. So insignificant was the body of troops detached for his command that to keep up the spirits of his men he had to resort to subterfuge, representing that reserves would be hurried after them. They had, too, but little ammunition. In the rear of the force came a mule-pack loaded with cartridge boxes, but few save its leader knew that many among the boxes so ostentatiously displayed contained nothing but stones.

Instead of defeat, Félix Diaz led his pursuing column to a victory which seems out of all proportion to its strength, for the force numbered only two hundred men. General Diaz just refers to it :

"Félix overtook Cobos on August 9th, 1860, and defeated him in La Seda, taking ten cannon and many prisoners, among them about four hundred dragoons of the Guides, Cavalry, and Grenadiers. These men came over to our side, and formed the nucleus of a regiment which he afterwards organised as the 'Oaxaca Lancers,' and with them he continued the campaign under the orders of Colonel Salinas."

There are many charming references in Diaz' diary to his brother Félix, for whom he entertained a strong affection. Their devotion began in the old home, and despite their being engaged

for a time in different political camps, strengthened as years went on. Busy as was the life of Porfirio, we see constant evidences in his career of this sympathetic trait :

"My brother Félix," he says, "was born on May 2nd, 1833, five months before the death of my father. Although there was not much difference in our ages, I, being the elder, was looked upon by him more as a parent than a brother. He was a most efficient helper in my military career, and sealed his devotion to me with his blood.

"My brother was very fond of all physical exercises. Robust in constitution, he was a man of great muscular strength, and being gifted in an especial degree with those qualities which help to make a soldier, he showed valour and calmness in all the encounters in which he engaged. He had natural talent, although it was little cultivated. His was a merry nature—at times, in solemn moments, too much so, perhaps. In critical phases of a battle his active mind would suggest the happiest devices and the most ingenious stratagems for thwarting the enemy, and how often were these attended with the best results!

"Félix began his career in the Seminary of Oaxaca in 1846. During his first year of the study of philosophy in the Institute of Sciences and Arts of the State, he told me of his strong desire for a military vocation, and later he offered himself as a volunteer in an artillery battalion.

"I was unwilling that he should adopt a soldier's life unless he could receive an efficient training. So I obtained from the Government permission for him to leave his battalion, whereupon I sent him, as I had power to do, to Mexico City, to take his place in the Military College. In this course I was assisted by the position and influence of my old teacher, Pérez, in the capital.

"Félix was the contemporary at the Military College of Don Miguel Miramón, who was captain of his company ; later he became a general, was made President by the Reactionaries, and, finally, was an upholder of Maximilian, beside whom he was shot. After two years' study in the college, my brother obtained the position of ensign, and was sent to put down a native rising on

the Texan frontier. Unfortunately I do not remember any of the interesting episodes of his life during this period, although I have heard him speak of some notable incidents. I only know that he carried on a very active campaign against the turbulent natives of Sonora, and that he sustained a wound from an arrow.

"Subsequently he was promoted to be lieutenant-colonel, and fought in the Conservative ranks. My brother was in the army when General Santa Anna returned to power in 1853.

"When I was in Tehuantepec in the years 1858 and 1859, my brother was much concerned to think that I was fighting on the opposite side. A report reached him that I had fallen in an encounter in Oaxaca, and this news decided him to separate from the Reactionary forces. Profiting by the fact that he was not at the time with the fighting ranks, but was on the Staff of General Leonardo Márquez, he petitioned for leave, obtained it, and came to offer his services to us at Oaxaca, in March, 1860. On his march Félix learnt that the notice of my death was false. After our meeting he enlisted at my side, and henceforth served the Liberal party.

"We were together in all the operations of the second siege of Oaxaca, in our retreat to the hills, in the battle of Ixtepeji, in the action of San Luis, and in the actual taking of the city of Oaxaca."

As soon as the Constitutional forces had re-taken possession of Oaxaca, Don Marcos Pérez, whose intimate association and influence with Diaz in his student days has already been alluded to, was established as Provisional Governor of the State. The appointment was not popular, and there was soon an agitation to drive him from office. Diaz writes:

"Knowing the dislike felt towards Don Marcos Pérez, my old and beloved teacher, and the intention to overthrow him, I sought to win over Colonel Salinas, who had thrown in his lot with the malcontents. He assured me that he would take no steps against Pérez if I would persuade my old friend to remove from office two of the political leaders whose actions had occasioned no little public indignation.

"As I was still lame from my wound, Pérez used to visit me at my quarters. I remarked to him on one of these occasions that Salinas was a most estimable and honourable man, but that he was much prejudiced against certain political leaders. Pérez answered me that he had heard nothing except rumours, without proof to justify them, and that he could not abandon his friends.

"I then assured him that I would do nothing myself to render his rule difficult, nor would I permit any organised agitation against him, adding that he could be sure that so long as I was in Oaxaca he would have no trouble. This he well knew without my saying so, because my friendship with him obliged me to act thus; but I made it clear that unfortunately I could not be responsible for what might happen after my departure, which could not be long delayed.

"I left Oaxaca shortly afterwards. When I had gone, Pérez was at once charged with not having presented the annual 'Memoria' required by the Constitution. Then Don Ramón Cajiga was nominated Provisional Governor by the Legislature, and named Licentiate Don José Esperón as his secretary, a man who put himself at the head of the conspiracy against Pérez.

"Thus ousted, Pérez never survived the blow and the deception of those he had believed to be his friends. He died on August 19th, 1861. In him the Republic lost one of its most distinguished sons."

Barely had Diaz recovered from his wound sufficiently to mount a horse than he left Oaxaca, and plunged once more into the fighting which continued, with varying fortunes to the combatants, in the Eastern States. The War of Reform dragged out some months longer; the wealth of the Church, which was the chief mainstay of the Reactionary cause, was not yet exhausted, but the disruption had already begun. Early in the same year Miramón had returned to his original design of capturing Vera Cruz, which remained the centre of Juárez' Government, and again laid siege to the city.

Vera Cruz, although on the Gulf of Mexico, is very hot, and the vegetation tropical. A European finds it an effort to do

anything. In the neighbourhood green parrots fly overhead, and always in couples. One never sees a solitary parrot; they are birds that seem to like company, and prefer to screech in pairs. Perhaps parrots gossip, and therefore meet in couples to wreck their neighbours' reputations! Flocks of gorgeous-hued macaws often cloud the sky; spider-monkeys continually screech in the virgin forest; terrapin swim in the water; one of the two kinds of poisonous lizards, known as the Mexican helodern, crawls under the verdure, hiding its deadly head, while lovely green lizards (Iguana) about eighteen inches to two feet long, lie upon the banks. The latter make excellent food.

Strange round objects clustering about the trees, resembling ships' buffers, attracted my attention when I visited this fascinating spot during my travels in 1901.

"What are they?" I once asked.

"Hornets' nests," was the cheerful reply; "and those other bag-like things are the 'hang-nests' of the lovely orange-coloured bird you see with black tail and wings."

There are hundreds of hornets' nests near Vera Cruz. What charming things to disturb! Egrets fly overhead, and on the lagoon are thousands of buzzards along the water's edge, tall, black, and forbidding, waiting for their carrion prey. In the year 1860, when so much fighting went on in these regions, there was often not time to bury the dead before these vile buzzards set to at their gruesome work.

Such sights were too common and the times too fearsome for Mexicans to trouble over in those terrible days. A couple of natives quarrelled. Immediately they drew their machetes (swords) and thrust at one another. In a few moments one was carved to pieces. His friend dragged his body to the side of the road, stole his hat, shirt and sandals, and thrust the corpse into the ditch for the buzzards to feed upon. They made short work of the man. No enquiries were set on foot, and the story was too usual to be remembered long.

Murders of the same kind are not unknown to-day in the wildest parts of Mexico, which is a land of incongruity, civilisation and barbarism marching hand in hand. The civilisation

Photo by The AUTHOR.] A Mexican door.

Mexican-Indian boat.

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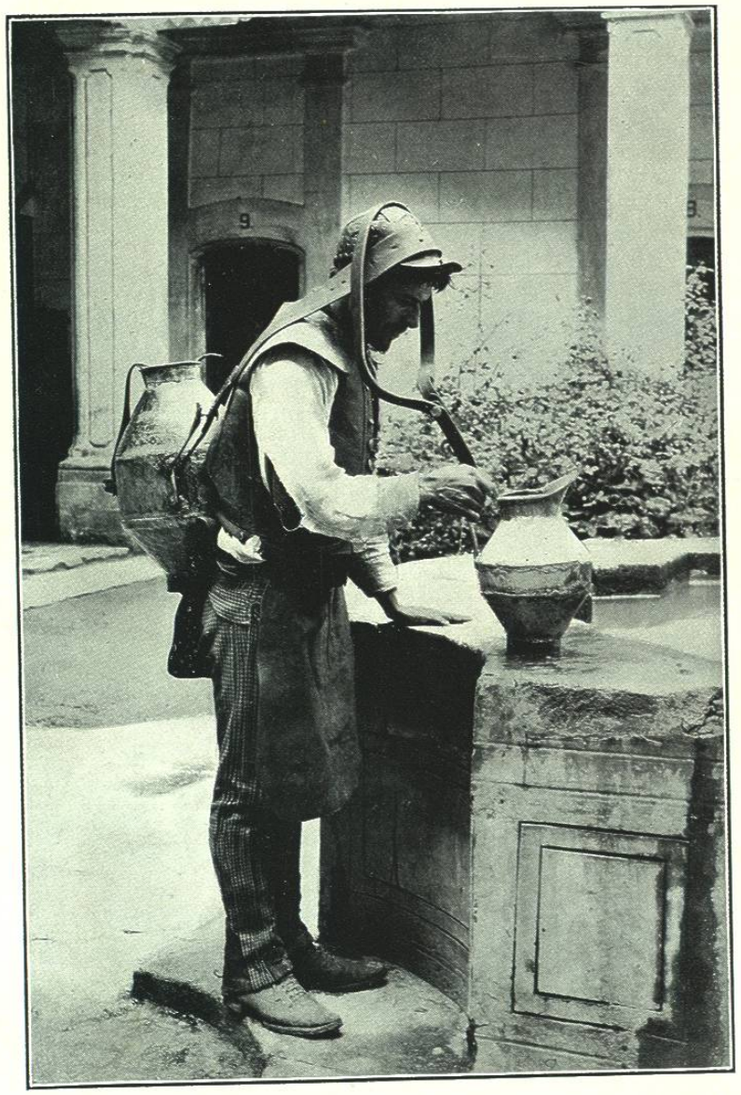

Water seller at the well.

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of the capital is amazing, the barbarism of some of the mountain districts still astounding.

An incident of the siege of Vera Cruz is of importance, as it was the first indication of that action by foreign Powers which a few years later was to alter the whole course of Mexico's history. Juárez, as has already been said, had been recognised as President of Mexico by the United States. Miramón had purchased two vessels at Havana and armed them to co-operate with his land forces. Juárez requested the commander of the United States squadron to examine these ships, claiming that they should be treated as pirates. The American frigate was fired on when so doing, whereupon her captain at once seized the ships.

Later, the vessels were released, but the delay was of immense importance to the Juárists. Vera Cruz was bombarded for days, Mexican and foreign property suffering alike in the consequent destruction; but the second siege failed no less signally than had the first, and Miramón withdrew his dispirited soldiers to the capital.

It was at this darkest moment of the war, when besieged in Vera Cruz, that Juárez issued his first decree sequestrating the lands of the Church, a step which eventually deprived the Reactionaries of their chief financial resource. Then came the law making marriage a civil institution only, depriving the clergy of further emoluments. This was followed by the law for religious toleration and the civil appropriation of the cemeteries.

It was beyond Juárez' power to enforce these Laws of Reform at the time, but they proved that his determination to destroy the abuses of Clerical ascendancy had in no way been affected. Their issue had great influence upon the country. No previous effort at reform had ever been upheld in face of such obstacles as Juárez had encountered, and as his honesty of purpose was realised, the unity of his followers strengthened, and proportionately the forces of the Reactionaries broke into factions. Events of the war turned in his favour. General Ortega, his commander-in-chief, captured Guadalajara, one of the Clerical

strongholds. Miramón, marching to meet him, was routed and driven back. The victorious Juárists then concentrated their forces in the vicinity of the capital. At Calpulalpam was fought out on December 22nd, 1860, the decisive battle of the War of Reform. On the two sides twenty thousand men were engaged.

It must no doubt be accounted ill luck on the part of so strenuous a soldier as Porfirio Diaz that he had no part in this final triumph of the Constitutional cause, for which he had fought so long. With his division he made a forced march to effect a junction with General Ortega, but when he arrived the battle had been already won, and he was only in time to join in the pursuit of the beaten Reactionaries, who, broken and in disorder, were flying back to the capital. The triumph of the Liberals was complete. Mexico City lay open to them.

Juárez thus found himself to be, in fact, what for so long he had been in title only, the head of the Mexican State. Constitutional government was installed in the capital to take the place of Clerical and military rule. He demanded an election on the Constitution of 1857, and was voted President by a large majority in May, 1861. The decrees of Vera Cruz were soon put into operation.

The country was suffering from all the ills that follow in the wake of civil war. Officials necessary to uphold his position were lacking to Juárez. Constant warfare had robbed every calling of its most strenuous men. The clergy, though beaten in the struggle, were not cowed, and were exciting enmity and trouble wherever they could.

In spite of these difficulties Juárez set himself to put affairs in order, and on the basis of his Laws of Reform above mentioned, he instituted more decisive measures against the Church. Though meeting with much opposition, he gradually gained a reputation for fairness of dealing, and laid the foundations of sound constitutional principles throughout the government of Mexico.

Before this end was attained the country was for two or three years further distracted by guerilla warfare. Miramón had fled from Mexico after the disaster to his army at Calpulalpam, but the ablest of his generals, Márquez, Mejía and Cobos,

with the more desperate of their followers, took to the mountains and from these fastnesses continued their resistance.

Leonardo Márquez, "The Tiger of Tacubayo," is one of the most sinister figures in Mexican history. A product of a time when a career was open to every adventurer who would give his sword to the cause of reaction and clerical domination, he came to the front in the early days of the War of Reform. His personal bravery was never questioned; but for his cruelty and rapacity it would be difficult to find a parallel, bearing in mind that his deeds date not from the days of Cortéz, but are within living memory.

After a victory against the Juárists at Tacubayo, he distinguished himself by shooting down his prisoners in cold blood. A deed which especially brands his name with infamy was perpetrated on the same day. Six medical men had come out from the capital to care for the wounded and defeated Juárists left on the field. Márquez had these ministers of mercy lined up and shot dead.

He had been placed under arrest by his own followers for robbing a convoy of $600,000. A man of no sense of honour, with no scruples, he was responsible for most of the terrible atrocities and barbarities which marked the progress of the guerilla warfare. Ten thousand dollars were offered for Márquez' head by Congress after his murder of Ocampo under most revolting circumstances. This Melchor Ocampo, next to Juárez, was the most remarkable of the Reform leaders. A politician, a diplomat, an earnest man of science, a counsellor, but at no time a soldier, Ocampo had received high honours.

It had been the object of one of the guerilla bands to seize him, but in making their capture they mistook their man. An innocent life would have been sacrificed had not Ocampo himself come forward to save it. He was taken before Márquez, by whose orders he was shot on the roadside, and his body hanged to a tree. Such was Márquez' daring that he appeared before the capital, and actually quartered a cavalry column on the town.

Diaz, when the stress of the War of Reform was over, had returned to Oaxaca, and had been honoured by his native State