

Minister of Spain, whose brilliant attire was shown off by the white *capa* of a *maestro de ronda*; Viscount Beughen, Belgian Minister, in handsome and sober diplomatic uniform; Colonel Francisco Orla, in the uniform of an officer of the army of Guatemala, which country he represents; General García Velez, Minister from Cuba, in civilian attire; Cavaliere Aldo Nobili, Italian Minister, in diplomatic uniform; M. Gregoire de Wollant, Russian Chargé d'Affaires, in uniform; Liang Hsun, Chinese Chargé d'Affaires and Fong Ying Kai, Attaché of the Chinese Legation, both of whom wore their native attire, with plumed caps; Mr. Clarence Key, Foreign Secretary of the Chinese Legation; Señor Vega, Chargé d'Affaires of Chili; Herr Geza von Gaspardy, Austro-Hungarian Chargé d'Affaires, who wore the picturesque plum-coloured velvet uniform, fur-trimmed pelisse, and plumed shako of a Hungarian cavalry officer, and Count Charles Kielmansegg, Secretary of the Austrian Legation, wearing the brilliant uniform of a lieutenant of the Duke of Lorraine's dragoons.

At ten o'clock the open carriages bearing the official party started from the National Palace. They were headed by a detachment of the Blue Horse Guards, commanded by Lieutenant Manuel Blazquez.

The first of the long line of carriages were occupied by the State Governors and the Delegations of the Legislature and Judiciary.

Last of all came the Presidential carriage, occupied by the Supreme Magistrate and Don Gabriel Mancera. General Diaz wore civilian attire, being in plain evening dress, with the tricolor band crossing his breast.

Immediately behind the Presidential carriage rode the following officers of the President's staff in handsome full-dress uniform, gorgeous with gold aiguillettes, and all well mounted; Captain Porfirio Diaz, junior, Captain Agustín del Rio, Captain Enrique Hurtado and Captain Armando I. Santacruz. The rear of the procession was brought up by another detachment of the Guards under Captain Gustavo A. Salas.

All along the route the President and Vice-President-Elect were the recipients of a continued ovation.

The ceremony of taking the oath of office was very brief and simple.

When the President and the Vice-President-Elect entered the House, all the members and the occupants of the boxes rose; cheers and clapping of hands came from all parts of the hall.

Señor Alfredo Chavero, the Speaker of the House, occupied a scarlet and gold chair on the raised dais in the rear of the Chamber, for he was the most important person of the moment, the old President being no more and the new one not yet sworn in.

Whilst all the members of both Chambers present stood, Señor Chavero, as representative of Congress, remained seated.

Majestically General Diaz mounted the dais and advanced to another gold and scarlet chair placed beside that of the Speaker. That other chair, however, the President did not occupy, but standing in front of Señor Chavero, and after shaking hands with him, he repeated in clear, ringing tones the customary formula of the oath, promising to discharge well and faithfully the duties of the office of President to which he had been elected, to consider always the welfare of the nation, and to observe and to cause to be observed the Constitution and Laws of Reform.

Señor Chavero then said, still sitting while the President and every one else remained standing: "If so you do, may the nation reward you; and if so you shall not do, may she call you to account."

The President's declaration was received with a renewed outburst of applause.

Then Don Ramón Corral made an analogous declaration, suited to the office of Vice-President, and the formula repeated by Señor Chavero was the same. Señor Corral's declaration was also greeted with applause.

This brought the ceremony to a close, and the President and Vice-President retired from the Hall amidst loud acclamations.

General Diaz repaired to the reception room of the Chamber, where he spent some moments in pleasant conversation with Benito Juárez, son of the illustrious Reform President of whom we have heard so much in this volume; General Mancera, Manuel Cervantes and Enrique Landa.



A group of natives of General Diaz' own State repaired to the Palace to congratulate him. Señor Miguel Bolaños Cacho, one of the justices of the Supreme Court, and himself a native of Oaxaca, acted as spokesman. He referred to the general congratulations, and then went on to say :

"But we citizens of Oaxaca are able to say to you something more. We can affirm that we are glad to have first seen the light of day in the same region as that in which the ancestors of so illustrious a citizen as yourself made their homes, in the very *terreno* in which your cradle was rocked. We can declare that we are proud of the brilliant renown which you have shed on that soil. We come once more to assure you that we are your followers, and that we take comfort in the thought that our sons and our sons' sons of Oaxacan birth will be entitled to claim for themselves the foremost positions in moments of danger, seeing that they will have the solemn obligation of imitating the example and honouring the memory of their great men ; Antonio Leon, the hero of Molino del Rey ; Benito Juárez, the hero of the Reform and the war against the so-called Empire ; and you who, by half a century of patriotic labour, have identified yourself with the glorious life of the Republic."

President Diaz, in acknowledging this address, was deeply moved, and said that the words of friends from his own native State stirred him like the long-lost but well-remembered voice of a parent.

Diaz, as these pages have indicated, showed no particular characteristics to lead to prominence in civil life until he was a man over forty. A good soldier, true as steel, brave, hardy, capable in every way, but nothing more. He was merely a fighting man ; indeed, it was not until after he was actually President, when nearing fifty, that his gifts for government asserted themselves. Such late developments are rare, although, to take our own country, Cromwell was forty before he made any mark. Up to that time he was a quiet, obscure country person, who had made a few dull speeches in Parliament. Or again, Chatham. Chatham was fifty before he was heard of outside his own circle, and yet a few years, barely months, later

the world was at his feet. Some people develop late, others mature young. Strong character always asserts itself whenever opportunity offers.

The capacity for seizing opportunity is worth more in the long run than wealth, beauty, or brains.

It is rather the cry nowadays to say that men's best work is done before the age of forty, and all good work accomplished by sixty, but among endless exceptions General Diaz must be cited.

His life's work really began at forty-six. Up to that time he had been an officer in a somewhat disorganised army, and his ambition, at the outset, as we know in an early chapter, never soared beyond attaining the rank of a colonel.

He was nearing fifty when he entered Mexico City at the head of the Revolutionary Army. Then it was that his greatest achievements began. Romance and adventure were behind him, although personal peril still surrounded him. He had to forget he was a soldier, and be born again as a leader, a politician, a maker and not a destroyer, though no doubt the experience of public affairs, which he gained in a smaller way in those early years spent in Oaxaca, served him to good purpose when he became head of the Republic.

At sixty, instead of being intellectually played out, he was only on the high road to his best, which he reached about ten years later. At seventy-five he has every faculty, every power, and all quickened by the experience of three-fourths of a century. This is remarkable for a man of his age, and even more remarkable for one of his race, born in a semi-tropical land.

From the foregoing pages it will have been seen that Diaz began life with nothing in his favour and everything against him. He was of humble birth. His education was indifferent. He read few books, and knew little of the history of nations or of international politics, for there were no public libraries, no newspapers, no trains in that little out-of-the-way tropical town of Oaxaca, and therefore Nature had been practically his only master. She had quickened his power of observation, just as poverty had taught him self-denial and thoughtfulness.



No ruler of a nation ever began in humbler surroundings, or was fostered in a more unlikely nest from which to fly to such exalted heights.

From the lowest, upwards to the highest rung this man climbed; and not only that—for that would be but personal attainment—he has taken his country upwards with him. He shared her misfortunes, and she is now reaping the reward of his labours.

Who can say he is not the greatest man of the age, or does not deserve a niche amongst the greatest men of all ages and all climes?

Yet when Diaz talks one would think he had never achieved anything. He never uses the first pronoun singular, always speaking as "we," but not the "we" with a capital W habitual to Royalty; just simply *we*, meaning others in preference to himself. That is why it has been so difficult to draw his picture, to show the modesty lying behind his giant strength.

What have been the results of President Diaz' long administration? That terrible poverty which sapped the life's blood from the country during three-fourths of last century has turned to affluence. Peace is the outcome of Revolution. The land, jibed and jeered at abroad, now holds a position among the leading nations. Lawlessness has given place to wise jurisdiction. The Mexicans are better governed, they can afford to pay the taxes imposed for the benefits they receive, and are yet more wealthy. Instead of money pouring out to repay old debts, foreign capital is pouring into the country, so secure has Mexican credit become in the world's markets. Manufactures are building up new sources of internal revenue, and agriculture, particularly the growth of tropical products, is so admirably encouraged by the State, that agriculture alone must ensure the nation's prosperity, even should mining be destined at some future day to fail.

These are the material results. More important still in the life of a nation, Diaz has taught the Mexicans the benefit of lasting peace, and has set before them an ideal of honest public life consistently maintained, which has made a return to the

old corrupt traditions almost impossible. Diaz some day will die, but his example and his system will survive him.

A youthful veteran is the President, and this is all the more remarkable when one remembers that hunger was not unknown to him in the early days, that for the first twenty-five years of his life he struggled against great odds, that for the next twenty-five he was helping to make history in one of the wildest countries of God's earth, and that only this last quarter of a century has he left camp life and strife behind, and devoted himself to figures and a desk, to politics and diplomacy; only lately has he thrown aside the soldier's cloak, and taken to the frock coat and tall hat of civilisation.

The man has changed as much as his circumstances; those who knew him when he was young declare that it is almost impossible to believe he is the same flesh and blood. The rough voice and manner of the soldier have mellowed in tone and softened in gesture.

Even his physiognomy has become more refined, more gentle, more haughty it may be; only during these last few years has the courtier outstripped the commander. It is a remarkable instance of self-evolution, a change not only of character, but of features which can be seen by comparing different portraits.

Diaz has been above all a patriot, whether old or young.

Mexico is always uppermost in the mind of its President. When an engineering friend of mine was leaving Mexico after many years' residence in that land, he asked General Diaz, as he said good-bye, if there was anything he could do for him in Europe.

"Yes," he replied, shaking him warmly by the hand, "speak well of my country."

And so must come to a close the story of the career of this wonderful man. A battle roll of some fifty engagements lies behind him—twice seriously wounded, often slightly hurt, three times a prisoner, marvellous and daring escapes achieved; then a Presidency lasting for thirty years (less four years spent out of office), a Presidency famous for its political rule,