


PRESIDENT DIAZ

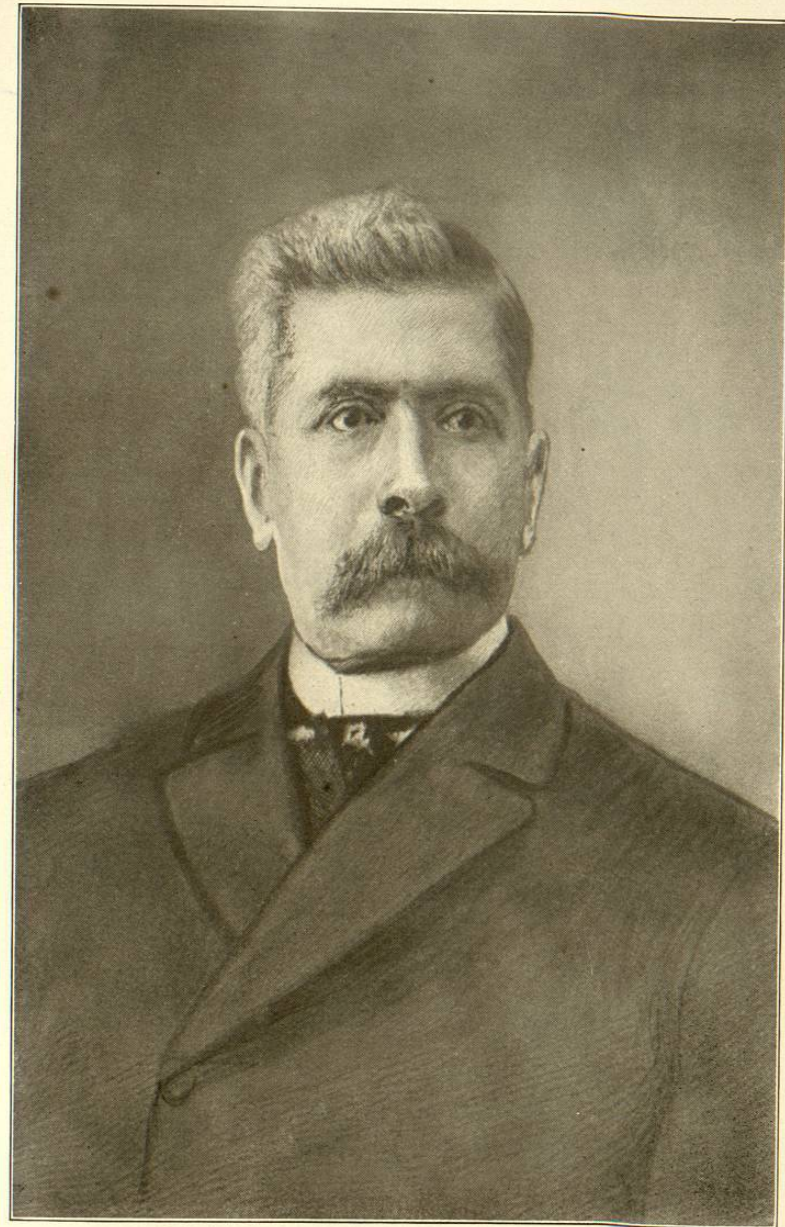
ORFIRIO DIAZ, a distinguished Mexican general and statesman, President (for the sixth term) of the Mexican Republic, was born at Oaxaca, Sept. 15, 1830. He was educated at the Institute of the State of Oaxaca, and after planning to study law, he abandoned it to enter the national guards when the American army invaded Mexico. In 1854, he engaged in the rebellion against Santa Anna, and for the following two decades was active in the numerous revolts and insurrections against the successive governments of Mexico. He attained the rank of general in 1861, and in 1863 took part in the defence of Puebla against the French. Upon its surrender, Diaz effected his escape from imprisonment within the French lines and took command of the Mexican army. In spite of many difficulties and reverses, he maintained the Republican cause throughout the period of French rule under Maximilian, which was brought to an end by Diaz's capture of Puebla (April 21, 1867), and by that of the City of Mexico two months later. In October of the latter year Diaz was an unsuccessful candidate for the Presidency against Juarez, and for the following nine years was usually in opposition to the government. He headed the revolt against the administration of President Lerdo in 1876, putting Lerdo's forces to rout in several engagements. In 1877, he was elected President for four years, but his administration was an unquiet one and he was chiefly occupied in putting down revolts. He secured the election of General Gonzalez as his successor in 1880, and on the expiration of Gonzalez's term of office, in 1884, Diaz was elected President a second time. Through successive reelections he has continued in office as head of the Mexican Republic until the present (1902). He is popular throughout Mexico, and in his administration of affairs has exhibited firmness, as well as wisdom and executive ability. Under his administration the trade and manufactures of the Republic have been greatly augmented, education has been fostered, the resources of the country have been developed, and railroads and telegraphs have been extended. The annual income of Mexico is to-day about sixty-five million dollars, and its expenditure is under sixty million.

PEACE ROOTED IN THE HEARTS OF ALL

SPEECH DELIVERED AT A BANQUET GIVEN IN HIS HONOR, DECEMBER 7, 1900

GENTLEMEN,—In responding to my distinguished and good friends, Governor Obregón and the honorable deputy Chavero, I begin with manifesting to them and to their respective constituents, in whose name they have honored me, my profound gratitude for the deli-

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cate and kindly expressions with which their eloquence enlarges upon the services rendered to the country by the personal direction of the administration over which I have the honor of presiding. If there may be any merit in the felicitous choice of its personnel, that would be mine.

The enthusiasm with which my fellow citizens celebrate the countersigning of my mandate honors me as amply as it does undeservedly, because, presuming that that enthusiasm signifies a vote of approval, it may be interpreted as a ratification of those which, in their legal capacity, they cast in my honor. I esteem their friendly manifestations at their full value, and I accept them with all the gratitude of which I am capable; but in so far as the eulogium lavished upon me declares me author of the peace that the Republic enjoys, notwithstanding that it bears the character of a delicate compliment inspired by the well wishes of my friends, I cannot excuse myself from subjecting it, with all respect, to an opportune rectification.

To restore peace to a people whose moral sense has been fed for more than a half century by frequent and sanguinary struggles of force against law, the action of one man does not suffice, whatever be his power and his prestige; it necessitates the positive and very vigilant labor of many men, armed with the powerful, intelligent, and enthusiastic will to harmonize the conformities and interests of society with the conformities and interests of all and each of its associates; and who are possessed with such abnegation that they can with serenity receive and pardon the most injurious and untruthful imputations while the masses are beginning to perceive that they are engaged in preparing a great benefaction.

The triumph of one of the parties is a propitious occasion to initiate a period of peace, if at the root of victory the

bustle of a general industrial activity makes itself felt, giving work to many thousands of men, bread to as many families, and which, in obedience to a well-meditated system of reproductive improvements, promises to capital a safe and immediate theatre for undertakings so lucrative as to provoke the eager influx of foreign investments.

In the contrary case, when the defeated recover from their stupor they associate themselves with the growing phalanx of the deceived to fan the embers of revolution; unscrupulously aided by the press that, from self-interest, thirsts for everything sensational, whether it be true or doubtful, or even false.

Our last war, in its closing stages, offered us in their order the successive pictures of this natural evolution.

In the first days of relative peace, out of regard to the state of the treasury it was not possible to undertake public works of importance; and, as was to be expected, there surged up a new revolution which the government was able to suppress with energy scarcely sufficient to be efficacious. From that time on, the dissidents adopted an attitude as hostile as the tolerance of the governing power, which was not slight, would permit, occupying themselves with criticising pitilessly all the acts of the government and more than once carrying their fervor to the point of calumny.

The disaster of that attempted revolution prolonged the period of expectation, and, although painfully, the government was enabled to formulate its first contracts for public works and credit, proceeding immediately to the extension of various railways and telegraph lines; and it dedicated itself fundamentally, and accepting all kinds of responsibilities, to the complete extinction of brigandage, which threatened to take possession of the entire territory of the nation.

As soon as commerce could count upon security on the highways and upon facile locomotion there began to be felt the activity of capital, its corresponding and well-merited profit, and the vigorous and growing influx of foreign money. A new perspective so grateful in the country, and a horizon clear of revolutionary prognostications, caused the dissidents—who until then had remained hostile to the government and to the shelter of the barrier which in itself it provided for them through its respect for the rights of others, began to pour torrents into the seductive arena of business, then and there and unreservedly affiliating themselves with the lovers of peace, leaving their fortunes in action as substantial guarantee of their good faith.

The government, now freed from the necessity of keeping on its guard which had been imposed upon it by the spectre of revolution, its confidence in the future invigorated, summoned to the work of public administration all the ex-revolutionists whose honor, ability, talents, and prestige gave assurance that they could serve their country. It is a pleasure for me to declare here that all who were called have loyally performed their labors.

The government having once felt itself supported by all Mexicans, without distinction of parties and with equal confidence in the patriotism of all, put into execution its so often dreamed-of program that is condensed in these words: "Little politics, much administration."

Eversince then the net of railways has been rapidly extended in all directions, and throughout the whole national territory has been spread the telegraphic system, with nocturnal service, reduced tariffs, and connected with the inter-continental cables; fiscal and banking laws, far-reaching, like that which liberated commerce from internal tariffs, have been promul-

gated; and with all its energies the government proceeded to construct ports, lighthouses, and other great protective works, hygienic and commercial, which for future generations will furnish as many evidences of the present civilization; it perfected the postal service, giving cheap and daily communication for all cities, towns, and villages in the Republic, with letters, parcels, and money orders, and with representation in the International Postal Union of the civilized world; and it normalized fiscal credit with great mercantile benefits.

I have here sketched in large strokes the real concurrent factors, not of peace directly, but certainly of the harmony of interests which, in consideration of welfare of self, unified the will of all citizens in favor of peace and created this grateful ambient medium, this general well-being, in which we live, which induces the promotion of festivals like the present, and which, in the ultimate result, is nothing else than the manifestation that all legitimate ambitions are either satisfied or are in the normal and certain way of so becoming.

And here I have likewise the demonstration of my proposition: That genuine peace, the peace that is rooted in the hearts of all, that which is substantial and fruitful, is not, nor cannot be, the work of one man, nor of many men, but of all the active members of the societies that have the fortune to enjoy it; sufficient is the honor to be one of these.

In giving thanks once more to my personal friends and to the honorable governors for the much that they have given me and honored me, I urge them to join with me in thanking also the honorable diplomatic corps for their presence at our table, and to drink with them to the peace and prosperity of the nations which they so worthily and so sagaciously represent, and to the personal happiness and long life of their august sovereigns

and worthy chiefs of state respectively; and to invite them to drink with us, because from our entrance upon the century whose gates we are touching, there stands pre-eminent at the head of all purposes of all Mexicans, that of making our country as great, as illustrious, and as rich as it is hospitable and sympathetic.

[Special translation by Sylvester Baxter.]