

IN MEXICO—AFTER PRES. DIAZ—WHAT?

What is the truth in regard to the health of President Diaz? I asked Mr. Limantour, the minister of finance, who has acted as provisional president in the absence of the chief executive.

"We do not believe he is very ill," the minister replied, says J. D. Wholpey in St. Louis Globe-Democrat. "He has some rheumatism in the back of his neck and his shoulders which does not yield readily to treatment, but that is not believed to be serious, except as the president is now advancing in years and is necessarily losing some of the great recuperative power he has always shown. He is a tremendous worker. He has never been sick a day in his life, and therefore when he has a slight indisposition the people are apt to exaggerate its seriousness. He would have returned to the City of Mexico some time ago, but the ministers united in a message to him to the effect that all was going well at the capital and he should stay as long as was advisable to avoid the great change of temperature from the hot country where he has been to the City of Mexico, which is cold at this time of the year. President Diaz is over 70 years of age. He has led a strenuous life. It is only natural he should begin to feel the weight of advancing years, but we do not believe he is seriously ill. We believe he will be spared to us for many years to come."

"Will the president make his proposed European trip?" "That I doubt very much," said Mr. Limantour. "It is a long, hard journey and I do not believe he will undertake it. He wants to go. He needs the change and rest, but it will doubtless be given up, as it has several times before."

"Will he make any tour at all?" "He may go to the United States, the only objection to this being that while he desires quiet, he would hardly be able to enjoy much of that on a trip through the United States, where the people are anxious to give him a great reception. If he goes to the United States it will probably be in May or June."

"Has he any thoughts of retiring from the presidency?" "He would undoubtedly like to do so were he sure all would go well. He might possibly retire from the active administration of the office in favor of some one who would carry out his policies. He would always be within call, however, and ready to respond, as was the case once before. That is, perhaps, the only political change which may be anticipated in the near future. The removal of President Diaz from the service of his country is not a possibility the people of Mexico care to contemplate."

Notwithstanding the conservative statements of this cabinet official, there is considerable dynamite in the present political situation in Mexico. Mexicans and resident foreigners are eagerly and anxiously discussing the possibilities of the future. While there is no avowed censorship of the telegraph or media, no resident correspondent in Mexico can treat of these matters with any degree of frankness. Tourists and special writers who come to Mexico for a brief stay are rarely able to grasp the situation as it really is, and for this reason the people of the United States are possessed of very little real knowledge as to the principles on which the Mexican government is conducted or of the influences which are constantly struggling with each other for supremacy.

From the talk in one quarter it might be inferred that President Diaz has already laid down his earthly burden, and that the fight for his shoes was now on. In another quarter it is stoutly maintained that the political situation today is the same as it always has been during the recent years of the present administration, and that but one man shines in the political heavens. "Diaz is dying," says one solemnly. "Nonsense," says the other with considerable asperity. "He never was in better health—a touch of rheumatism—advancing years against him, but poor—that is nothing. Just you raise your hand against the government and see if he is alive or not," and so it goes. Men affirm or deny as their interests or sympathies may lie. Many shake their heads and look wise because they know nothing, and perhaps this is true of the largest proportion of the co-siders.

Upon very good authority it may be said that President Diaz is probably older than is generally believed. Officially his age is 70, but he would be perhaps conservative to add at least five years, and this five years comes at a critical time in the life of a man whose energies have been fully exercised from the days of his boyhood. Physicians of standing in the City of Mexico who are familiar with the physical condition of the president, say that his troubles are now due to the hardening of the arteries, and that from this arises the pain which he suffers constantly at the base of the brain and in his shoulders. The most persistent medical treatment has failed to relieve his distress, and for this reason the heads and look wise because they have gained wide circulation. The truth of the matter is, in all probability, that President Diaz has never suffered from ill health, but from the time of his boyhood he has been a soldier and hunter, and has experienced many severe physical trials, for which

DIAZ ON HIS DIGNITY.



GENERAL PORFIRIO DIAZ

President of Mexico averse to taking initiative in meeting President McKinley. Presidents, therefore, may not foregather. Anxious as President Diaz, of Mexico, undoubtedly is, to meet President McKinley when the latter passes through Texas on his way to the Pacific coast, official dignity may prevent the two executives from foregathering. President Diaz does not think that he should go out of his way to greet the head of another country, while President McKinley, of course, is equally desirous of preserving his own official dignity. Thus the meeting between the two executives, which would be a notable event, may never take place.

Had Mexico a constitutional way of dealing with all emergencies and difficulties there would be little anxiety beyond that which attends a possible change of administration in the United States. Under a dictatorship, however, where the people are not well informed in the theory of the popular will, there is no security in the written procedure, for it is never followed. A wise, strong man makes a wise strong government in Mexico. Such a man has been in power for twenty-four years. He is now closing the cycle of his usefulness and the distress in the

prospect of his laying down the scepter is all the more real in that his reign has been so wise and so beneficial it is realized it will be unusual good fortune to discover another equally wise and skilful hand grasping the helm. "After Diaz whom? After Diaz what? Is he really falling, this great president of ours?" the Mexicans are asking.

"Is this country, long so peaceful and so prosperous, again to be plunged into the horrors of civil disturbances?" investors are wondering. "Are grasping, ambitious men to secure control, plunder the people, drive away foreign money, burden the treasury with war expenditures and give occasion for rival politicians to organize revolutions?" This is what everyone would like to know, for it is generally acknowledged that while certain things may be probable in the political future, anything is possible under such a scheme of government as prevails among this people.

In all these recent years of peace the people have received no political education. This part of their public economy has been attended to for them. The country has been tranquil, the hand of government has not fallen heavily upon them, under a paternal care, wages have risen and life, liberty and property have been safe. Hence there has been no cause to grumble or even to inquire as to why the people were not allowed the voice in the government guaranteed to them in the first law of the Republic of Juarez. There are signs of an awakening political conscience, however, among these people, and when the present ruler has passed beyond all earthly power it will be difficult for his successor, no matter who he may be, to entirely still its promptings. The birthright of a citizen of a republic is a voice in the government. When the citizen acquires through education and superior environment a knowledge of his birthright it will not be long before he demands the freedom to exercise it.

Should President Diaz decide to leave the active administration of affairs to others the solution of the difficulty would be simple, for he would appoint a provisional authority who would be sustained by the same semi-political military machine which has upheld his own administration. In such a case there would be no shock no disturbance, for he would not abate his vigilance in the least. The course of events to follow his death is a matter of more uncertainty, and is protected well into the domain of speculation.

In case of the disability of the president the minister of foreign affairs, now Senor Mariscal, formerly minister to Washington, becomes acting president so long as it is necessary to assemble congress in extra session and provide for an executive to hold office until the expiration of the regular term.

"How is it possible that McKinley could be elected President of the United States when he is only a major?" I was asked by a prominent Mexican politician, and in that question lies

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much significance. President Diaz is known more by his military title of general than by his civil title as the executive. In weighing the chances of those who aspire to power, therefore, the military element must be taken into serious consideration. It is a trite saying in Mexico that he who has the army with him is the strongest with the people, and there is good reason for this, as political power in this country does not rest upon the ballot, but upon the control of the physical forces of the country.

The man who is now looked upon as the active executive head of the government under close control of the president is Josez Ives Limantour, the minister of finance. He is the ablest financier and statesman Mexico has developed outside of military circles. Were he equally strong in a military sense, or had he the close friendship and unselfish support of a great military leader, there would be no question as to his becoming the next president of Mexico, quickly installed without disturbance when Porfirio Diaz laid down the reins, but fortunately or unfortunately for Mexico, as the case may be, Limantour stands purely by his civil strength, and herin lies the doubt as to the presidential succession and the present tangle of duty which prevails in the southern country.

Beautiful for Ever. Women nowadays keep their good looks much longer than they did. The fifty today is not so old as the woman of thirty was—well, thirty years ago we are becoming very Continental, and married woman reigns supreme, and sure to read the list of beauties at a ball the names of mothers, the mothers included together, but in several instances, if truth were told, it might be the daughter's name and not the mother's which would be left out.—The Outlook.

Hitting Out All Round. Fashion, as it is called, is now at the mercy of any millionaire gambler, or any enterprising Monte Christo, from across the seas. Victorian literature is declining into the "short story" and the "problem play," taking its heroes from among women with a past and its verses, the favorite style of the Cockney ring, and the barrack cantina. The reek of the pot-house; the moon-hall, the turf, the share-market, the thieve's fence, infects our literature, our manners, our amusements, and our ideals of life.—Frederic Harrison in "North American Review."

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