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THE
BEST WEEKLY
NEWSPAPER
IN ARIZONA.

FIRST SERIES,
Vol. XIV, No. 3

NOGALES, ARIZONA, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1909.

Whole No. 863

THE MAKERS OF MEXICO.

(From the London Morning Post.)

Among the first acts of Mr. Taft after his election as President of the United States, was a picturesque exchange of international courtesies on the Rio Grande with the beloved and veteran President of Mexico, General Porfirio Diaz. It is now stated that President Taft is to demonstrate still further his respect for the "Father of Modern Mexico" by commencing an exchange of visits.

The result of such a visit it is difficult to forecast. But, there is no doubt that our American cousins, who have already reaped enormous profits on their investments in Mexico, regard it as a diplomatic move of supreme commercial importance. Until recently, English investors were inclined to reward the States east of the Sierra Madre as the "Ultima Thule" of good things. The Americans, on the other hand, willing followers of Horace Greeley's advice, "Go West, young man," have found abundantly remunerative ground in Western Mexico for their capital, whether the investments sought were railways, agriculture, or mines. The thousands of investors who have interested themselves in Mexico with such satisfactory results both for the capitalist and the country, since Porfirio Diaz took up the reins of government, will be greatly interested in this visit to the veteran President.

The life of Porfirio Diaz has been so closely linked with the rise of his country as to make the story of the man and of the nation almost inseparable. Originally intended for the priesthood, Diaz forswore his ecclesiastical career for that of a soldier. He was barely twenty when he joined the army, and from that moment the advancement of the nation and of Diaz have been almost constantly upward and onward. For a quarter of a century, beginning with 1850, Diaz led many an internecine struggle, and the history of Mexico during that period might be described as one broad red stripe of carnage. Through all this struggle the figure of Diaz towers; a personality so virile, a will so determined, a courage so unrivalled, broke down in the end all opposition and allied the warring factions into the united whole which is the Mexico of to-day. It was not until the autumn of 1876 that Diaz was made President of Mexico, but with an interregnum of four years when Señor Gonzalez, was elected, he has been President ever since.

Diaz has proved himself not only a brave and efficient soldier, but a wise and able statesman. The laws that he promulgated were administered, and, being administered, swept aside the hordes of highwaymen, established schools and punished political corruption. He was able to arrange for the efficient collection and expenditure of national revenues, and has placed his country's integrity upon an enviable plane—for it is known that Mexico's laws, pledges, and concessions stand for just what they say, and

mean just what they express. When the value of her silver currency was depreciated by half, advisers were not wanting who urged the repudiation of her debts, but Diaz stood firm. He added £20,000,000 to the annual revenues of Mexico, which up to that date amounted only to £3,000,000, and yet constantly lessened the burden of the taxpayer.

To-day in his eightieth year, he is still the strong man. During recent discussions on the proposed amendment to the mining law, certain clauses were embodied by Congress which were considered inimical to the foreign investor in Mexico. When presented for his signature, President Diaz reported this new law back to Congress with the objectionable clauses eliminated. In no way could the members have better expressed their respect and loyalty for the aged President than by their immediate acceptance of his amendments.

The Vice-President of Mexico, Señor Ramon Corral, is one of the most whole-hearted supporters of General Diaz, and it is not an unimportant coincidence that both President and Vice-President hail from the Western States. Ramon Corral is a native of Alamos, in the wonderfully rich State of Sonora. It was this State which was the scene, of the late Mr. Harriman's activities in connection with the Pan-American line, and his important extension and consolidation of Southern Pacific interests. The Vice-President also acted as Minister of the Interior, and in that role has had a great part in the administration which has led to the prominent position that Mexico now holds among the nations of the world.

The discrimination of the President shows itself in the high character and exceptional ability of the Ministers occupying the great offices of State in Mexico. It would have been difficult for any of the European Powers, with their centuries of precedents and accumulated financial knowledge to have produced a wiser or more skilful Minister of Finance in the interests of his country than Señor José Yves Limantour. The initiation of the scheme for giving Mexico control of certain trunk lines crossing the Mexican border, as well as the manner in which it was carried out, was masterly in the extreme, and would have done credit to a Gladstone or a Bismark. Señor Ignacio Mariscal, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, is another old and well-tryed servant of the nation. He is a polished statesman, a loyal colleague of the President, and is well known amongst English diplomatic circles, having at one time served as Mexican Ambassador to the Court of St. James.

But it is not only among the old and well-tryed Ministers that Mexico has ground for congratulation. The younger generation show themselves equally well equipped to carry on the work of governing the country, in every way worthy of their illustrious and able predecessors. In this respect Señor Mariscal is particularly well favored in having secured as his Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs

Señor Federico Gomboa, who is now visiting Europe as the Mexican delegate to the diplomatic conference on International Maritime Rights. At once a statesman and a scholar, a diplomat and a *litterateur*, Señor Gomboa has spent a most strenuous life. He is as energetic a worker as his illustrious namesake of the eighteenth century, the Xavier Gomboa, who found time, between his business as a lawyer and his onerous duties on behalf of Mexico at the Court of Madrid, to compile his celebrated work, "Commentaries on the Mining Ordinances of Spain," which is devoted largely to mining in Mexico. Like him, Federico Gomboa is a juriconsult of considerable eminence, but his leisure has been devoted entirely to literature. Although he is now only in his forty-fifth year, he has twice served as Minister Plenipotentiary to Central and South American States and as Charge d'Affaires at Washington during the absence of the Minister. With a younger generation of statesmen as able as Señor Gomboa, Mexico need have no concern for her future.

Mexico's representatives in the old world are also in every way worthy of their country. It would be difficult to find a better Minister than Señor Miguel Covarrubias, the representative at the Court of St. James. He thoroughly understands the English character and when in course of time he returns home and, in still more responsible positions, shares in the government of his country, he will leave behind memories of a man who, without offending the susceptibilities amongst whom his lot was cast, never failed to accomplish all that was possible for the land of his birth. But Mexico has other interests in Great Britain besides diplomacy, for her commerce with London, as the largest port of the world, was always important and is growing still more so. An article dealing with Mexico's development would be incomplete without some reference to the Consul who, as the ambassador of commerce, can do so much to smooth over the difficulties for shippers trading to distant parts of his territory. Consul Adolfo Bulle, like Vice-President Corral, spent his boyhood's days in that land of sunshine, Sonora, and claims that from a life-long acquaintance with the rich district of Barranca he is more than justified in considering the confidence of English investors in the Barranca district absolutely well placed. In fact, Consul Bulle is, if possible, more optimistic as to the magnificent future of Sonora's mining industry than was our guest of last year, General Luis E. Torres, the veteran Governor of the State, himself a large mine owner in Barranca, whose work in settling the troublesome Indian question brought him well-deserved praise.

What Mexico would have been without such able men we can only imagine by the present chaotic condition of Venezuela. President Diaz and his colleagues at an early stage realized that any Government, however good, might be set at naught without a railway sys-

tem, which in addition to ensuring the control of the country, would develop its boundless resources. Unfortunately, the physical configuration of Mexico made railway construction anything but an easy task; but, with confidence in its rulers and in its future all difficulties were overcome, and Mexico has now 22,302 kilometres of railway equipped and in operation. This was yesterday, and represents principally the mileage in the eastern States. Today the development of the West has begun, and from Sonora on the north to the isthmus of Tehuantepec on the south, there exists a stretch of territory which for richness of its mineral deposits and the potential wealth of its agricultural resources could not perhaps be duplicated anywhere on the American continent.

It was the wonderful possibilities of this rich west coast which induced the greatest owner and builder of railroads America has ever known, Mr. E. H. Harriman, to decide that as far as possible this territory should be made subsidiary to the Southern Pacific system. For that purpose he contracted to build no less than 1,472 miles of railroad, the greater part of which was planned to traverse Sonora, and most of this work was completed before his untimely death. Already the effect of this development is being seen on every hand; hamlets are growing into towns and mining camps are rapidly becoming important ports. In no case is this wonderful development better seen than at Guaymas, the chief port of Sonora. Scarcely known a decade ago, it is now a port of the first rank from which start no less than five steamship lines to various important centres of the Pacific coast.

The generous treatment and the security which General Diaz and his colleagues have ensured to foreign capital invested in the country, as well as his equally generous treatment of the railroad constructor, has already more than realized the President's wildest dreams of his country's progress. Yet, to those who know Mexico, and especially the Western States, this development is only in its infancy, and Mexico should soon see herself recognized as ranking very little, if any, behind the United States as one of the greatest producers of the world's mineral and agricultural wealth.

Tour of Inspection.

Tuesday there arrived at Nogales from the north a special train consisting of several private cars bearing Superintendent W. H. Whalen of the Tucson and El Paso divisions of the Southern Pacific, and other officers who were on a tour of inspection. Remaining at the line city some time and looking over everything thoroughly, they departed about 7 o'clock p. m. The party included General Superintendent Platt, Supt. Averill, Supt. Worthington of the San Joaquin division, Assistant Chief Engineer Barlow, Resident Engineer Nauman of the San Joaquin division and Frank Burkholt, division engineer of the Los Angeles division.