

MEETINGS of AMERICAN PRESIDENTS

MRS. TAFT'S AIDE TO WED

Miss Alice M. Blech, Says Washington Rumor, Is to Be Richard Wainwright's Bride.

Washington.—Once again Washington official society is on the qui vive for the very latest rumor is that Miss Alice M. Blech, secretary to Mrs. Taft, will soon resign her position to assume that of the wife of Richard Wainwright, the son of Admiral Wainwright. Ever since last winter gossip has been busy in prophesying Miss Blech's engagement. The couple have been almost constantly together.

Perhaps never before has the secretary to the wife of the president been as averse to public notice as has been Miss Blech. When it was discovered that Mrs. Taft, following Mrs. Roosevelt's example, had chosen her amanuensis from the state depart-



Miss Alice M. Blech

ment, there was a great hue and cry for the favored one's picture. But not until now has it been possible to secure one.

Somehow the impression has gone forth that Mrs. Taft's secretary is unattractive and of middle age. On the contrary, Miss Blech is most attractive looking and is in the early twenties. She has smooth brown hair and always wears neutral shades or white, which throws it into a beautiful contrast.

Miss Blech has mastered seven languages. Probably the one thing which attracted Mrs. Taft to her was the fact that she was told that the young woman was a thorough pianist, having won much applause in the local musical circles.

Miss Blech has filled a difficult role most successfully and has made herself a favorite, not only at the White House, but in official circles generally, by her efficiency, tact and diplomacy.

Tall, slender, quiet and reserved, Miss Blech has a charming manner, and a delightful personality, which have won for her a host of friends. She is well known to Mrs. Roosevelt and Mrs. William S. Cowles, both of whom have shown an interest in her. She has lived much of her time on the continent, and at Alexandria, Egypt, and has the poise and reserve of the traveled woman of culture. She does not appear in society, and lives quietly with her mother in an uptown apartment.

Miss Blech usually arrives at the White House at nine o'clock in the morning, and with Mrs. Taft goes over the correspondence, takes dictation and receives such instructions as the wife of the president may have for her. Her duties are not heavy, and the afternoon usually find the day's work done.

BICYCLE WITHOUT FORKS.

Paris.—A novel bicycle built without forks, so that if a tire bursts or is punctured during a race or a long ride it can be speedily changed, has been introduced in this city. It will be noticed in the illustration that in place of the usual fork to keep each



wheel in position there is a single stay on alternate sides on the front and back wheel. They give a somewhat insecure appearance to the machine, but are said to have stood the tests well.

The Final Test.
"Doctor," asked the patient, whose eyes had been undergoing treatment for a period of six months or more, "do you think they're all right now?"

"Yes," said the oculist; "I think I can assure you, Mr. Pinchickel, that your eyes are cured. But there is one more test I should like to apply. See if you can, read that at a distance of 12 or 14 inches without blinking."

Whereupon he laid the bill before him.



THAT the United States and Mexico are daily practicing the lessons of peace is shown in the thousands of miles of practically unguarded border which half a century ago demanded thousands of troops for protection. If any additional guarantee was needed it was shown in the recent exchange of visits between President Taft of the United States and President Diaz of Mexico. It required a special concession from the Mexican congress in order that the illustrious Mexican

might cross the border to grasp the hand of the man who has been honored with the highest office of the United States. President Taft set aside precedent and crossed over into Mexico to return the visit and the many pleasing incidents connected with his brief sojourn on foreign soil emphasized the friendly relations that exist between the two countries.

There have been meetings in the past between presidents of American republics which were fraught with much of historic significance to the people they represented. Great affairs of state have been discussed in this manner with consequences of great benefit to the countries involved.

In the year 1822 the port of Guayaquil, Ecuador, was the scene of one of the most notable events in the history of America.

Bolívar, the liberator of the northern provinces, and San Martín, the liberator of the southern provinces, met together for a conference that decided the destiny of South America. Bolívar was certain that his genius would be rewarded by the honor of the election to the first presidency of the country to which he had given freedom. San Martín, had he but asked it, could have become the elected head of a new nation. San Martín withdrew, however. The war against Spain had still months to run before a constitution could be made effective and therefore this hoped-for first meeting of presidents was only a dream that might have been.

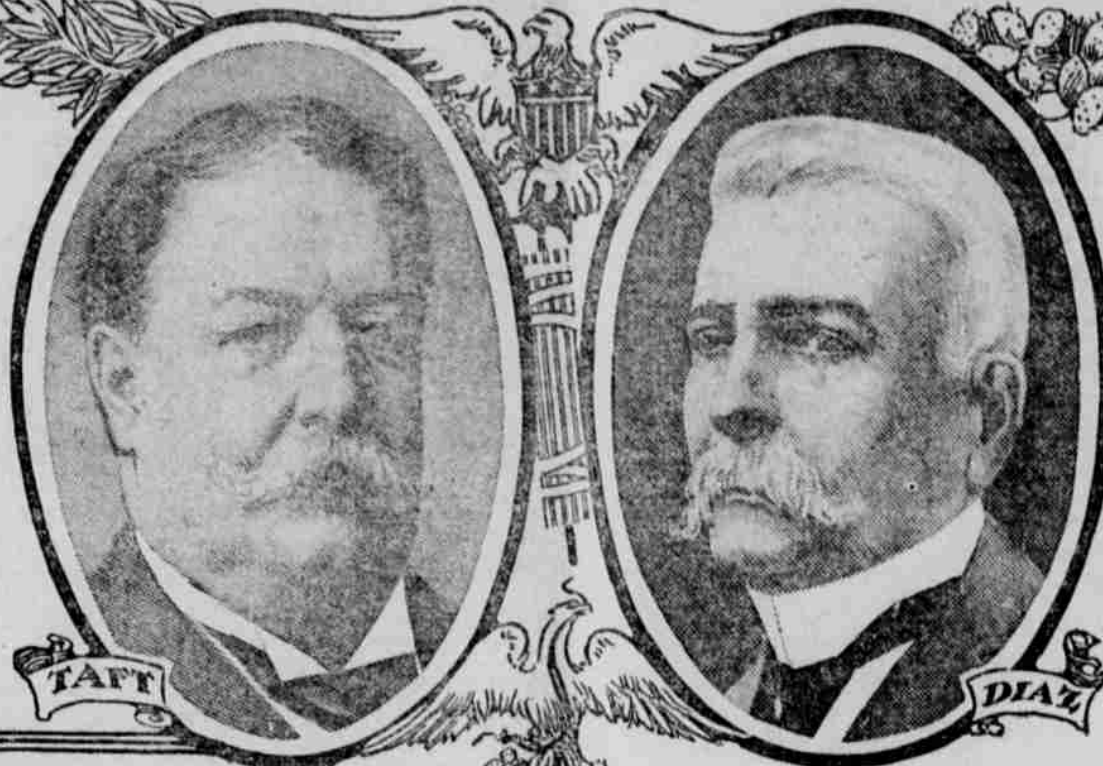
History shows that the struggle for liberty continued for a generation beyond the elections of the first presidents in many of the republics of America. Early meetings may have taken place between some of them for the purpose of informal discussion concerning unsettled policies of constitution and government, but there are scant evidences of any such personal communication. One meeting, however, is recorded, which was fruitful of results that influenced the future development of the whole region of the river Plate. This occurred in the year 1855. At that time the war in Paraguay had reached a crisis. The Argentine Republic, Uruguay and Brazil had decided to combine forces against President Lopez of Paraguay, but at the moment harmony of action had been lacking because of indefiniteness of purpose among the three republics. It was then that President Flores of Uruguay crossed to Buenos Aires to confer with President Bartolome Mitre of the Argentine Republic. He was received in state, but the council was one for military deliberation rather than for official and diplomatic ceremony. The Brazilian minister was called to this meeting and these three agreed upon an offensive and defensive alliance, the consequences of which are seen in the national boundaries of to-day.

In disturbances of this nature a president was apt to be not only the constitutional but also the actual commander-in-chief of the army of his country. Experience on the field was an essential factor for success in the executive chair. A far-off reflection of the glories of Crecy might have been the ambition of many of these leaders, if the strong love for constitutional republicanism had not held them and the people in check.

Meetings of American presidents, therefore, have in the great majority of cases taken place as a matter of neighborliness and to strengthen the ties of friendship which must, as time passes, draw closer to each other the republics of the new world. Their purpose has been altogether one of peace. A notable instance of such a conference is shown by the meeting held at Corinto, on August 21, 1904, when the presidents of Nicaragua, Honduras and Salvador and a special delegate from the president of Guatemala assembled with the express intention of fostering by all honorable means the peace of Central America. The four governments thus represented manifested a decided moral resolve to harmonize the ambitions of each for the good of all. Steps like this lead to beneficial consequences and undoubtedly the sympathetic expression of regard between these neighbors made easier the brilliant peace conference held by the five republics of Central America under Secretary Root's guidance in the closing months of 1907.

Central America probably leads in the number of cases when presidents have grasped one another by the hand and discussed among themselves, by oral communication, affairs and policies they were elected to guard. It is not a long journey from one capital to another, and between contiguous seaports the distance is so short that informal meetings are easy of accomplishment. The president of Salvador and the president of Guatemala have more than once exchanged personal greetings. In fact, Gen. Rufino Barrios, while chief executive of Guatemala, was an attentive host, for the presidents of Costa Rica and of Honduras, during two administrations, visited him. The presidents of Costa Rica and of Nicaragua once met on the frontiers of the republics, and so rapidly are the means of communication being extended in this century that undoubtedly many similar meetings will be arranged in the future for the benefit of this Central American confraternity.

With the growing demand for mutual understanding and the absence of all that danger which has so frequently attended the visits of European rulers outside the confines of their own nations, these international visits are becoming more and more frequent. Sometimes they are of an informal nature, the president traveling in his private capacity and being welcomed as a foreign guest simply. Some years ago President Zaldívar of Salvador came to the United States and was received as befitted his position. President Iglesias of Costa Rica, just before his brother entered the Naval academy at Annapolis, traveled incognito through the United States and was entertained by President McKinley in Washington. He has always looked back upon that event with a kindly memory. Many years before that, however, Gen. Rufino Barrios, while president of Guatemala, visited the

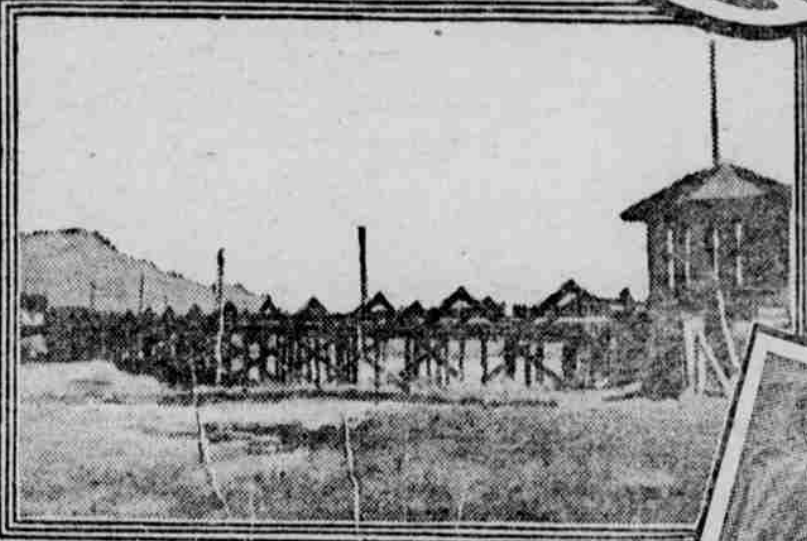


TAFT DIAZ

time Republic by the president of Brazil in October, 1900.

Gen. Julio A. Roca was in his second term as president of the Argentine Republic. He had served his country long and faithfully in many positions of trust and was recognized in Europe, where he had traveled extensively, as one of the most capable men of his generation. Dr. Campos

New Orleans, although once the capital of a vast territory acquired by a president of the United States 100 years before, had never seen a head of the nation until President McKinley came. This trip was continued, with equally lasting benefits, through Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. It was in El Paso, Texas, that a meeting had been arranged between President McKinley and President Diaz of Mexico, but the poor health of



THE INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE OVER THE RIO GRANDE



MEETING BETWEEN SAN MARTIN AND BOLIVAR



PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT VISITING TO PRESIDENT AMADOR'S RESIDENCE IN PANAMA



MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENTS OF ARGENTINA AND CHILE

Salles had assumed the presidency of Brazil in 1898. His early life had been passed under the empire, but the spirit of the age had fired his republicanism, and, despite all the traditions of an hereditary aristocracy, he had devoted his genius and his energy to the establishment and perpetuation of the new republic.

The Argentine Republic and Brazil have long been on friendly footing, but, separated as their capitals are by 1,000 miles of ocean, or by an equal number of miles of almost untraveled forest, they have not always been able to find opportunity to meet in intimate friendship. For this reason, and because the times seemed favorable for expressions of personal and national regard, these visits were arranged

between the two nations. It was the first time in the history of South America that an official visit was paid by one president of a republic to another. A squadron of the navy escorted President Roca to Rio Janeiro, where the Brazilians were lavish in their hospitality. The city was en fete for days, and the enthusiasm of the people was the best evidence of the success of the hitherto untold event. The Argentine Republic, not to be outdone in a display of hospitality and friendship, made even more elaborate preparations for the return visit of President Campos Salles the following year. Buenos Aires was decorated in all the perfection of which that beautiful city is capable. The people demonstrated that their friendship and hospitality was as sincere and spontaneous as that of their neighbors, and the impressions of good will left on each other, however much it may be founded on sentiment, have undoubtedly carried far-reaching consequences in the hearts of the citizens of these two republics.

Visits of courtesy of an informal nature are becoming more and more frequent as good-fellowship spreads from nation to nation. An instance well in point is seen in the proposed call at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, of President Montt of Chile, who will pay his respects to the president of Brazil when he returns from Europe early in the coming year.

Meetings on the boundary between nations are of a somewhat different character and cannot, from the very nature of the locality, be surrounded with the elaborateness of ceremony attainable in a nation's capital. They have a world-wide significance, however, since they show that presidents can shake hands across the border and that what they like to do in brotherly affection the neighboring people will do also. Another good result of such a meeting is the direct benefit upon the people of the region through which a president travels, for it brings him into touch with many persons and conditions he might not see otherwise, and carries evidence to all alike that he is their executive official as well as that of the residents of the capital of the nation.

Consequences of great benefit, for instance, followed the meeting, in 1899, between

MR. PLAZAZUS' RECORD

One of the Reasons Why He Couldn't Get Extension of Credit.

"We're pretty nearly sting proof," said a banker the other day. "Any time any one puts one over on us he'll have to operate with a mace. Nowadays no bit of information about a client's personal character is considered too pennyroyal for us to notice it."

The statement was called out by the presence on the banker's desk of a large roll of manuscript reports, pinned together. The unfortunate who had been made a subject of an antemortem had always thought himself a pretty fair sort of a citizen. He hadn't done anything very objectionable, beyond getting stowed now and then, riding a bit too fast in autos and acting as a chronic host for Broadway's chorus girls, the New York correspondent of the Cincinnati Times-Star says. It so happened that he wanted an extension of credit and had applied to his bank for it. And the credit man did the rest.

"We have here," said the banker, "the usual Dun and Bradstreet reports on Mr. Plazazus. We have a highly entertaining series of clippings, in which our late client appears as the leading man in a lot of funny doings by electric light. We also have statements from every man he has ever worked for and so far as possible every man he has ever done business with. And still we haven't enough. I have asked for a special report upon certain phases of his activity that are not shown here. Every bank in New York has been victimized at various times by men who offer us an apparently clean bill of health. We don't find out until it is everlastingly too late that they are sufferers from a moral pip. Nowadays a man to get credit standing at a New York bank must pass an examination that would send the average deacon howling to the woods."

In Mr. Plazazus' case his request for a loan was refused and he was asked to take his account out. Not that it wasn't sound financially, but two years ago he had been jobbed by a bunch of shell workers. "A man," said the bank president, "who tries to get money in that way expects to profit by a dishonest game. He's apt to try to hand us a queer check next time he gets hard up. That experience of his proves him to be not merely a fool, but a dishonest fool. We can't afford to waste time on either class."

Attaining Friends.
The world will value you for what you give. If you invite friends by your manner, and are kind and cordial, you will have them. If you wait for the world to invite you, you will be disappointed.