

CURRENT TOPICS

A PRESS DISPATCH from Washington recently contained a serious error concerning a report on bananas made by Consul Dreher of Jamaica. In it Mr. Dreher was quoted as saying Jamaica alone exported 44,520,539 bunches of bananas in a year. Mr. Dreher really said that the total exports of bananas from all countries in 1911 amounted in round numbers to 53,000,000 bunches, Jamaica leading with exports of 16,497,385 bunches, Costa Rica being second with 9,309,586, Honduras third with 6,500,000 and Colombia fourth with exports of 4,901,894 bunches. The United States, which imports more than five times as many bananas as any other country, received during the fiscal year ended June 30, 1912, a grand total of 44,520,539 bunches, of which Jamaica supplied 15,467,918; Honduras 7,151,178; Costa Rica 7,053,664; Panama 4,581,500, and Cuba 2,478,581 bunches.

THE tragic death of Madero, the deposed president of Mexico, has drawn out many interesting descriptions of his career. A writer in the Boston Herald says: Born on October 4, 1873, on the Hacienda del Rosario in the state of Coahuila in northern Mexico, young Francisco Madero was sent to Europe to study at a very early age. His family was one of the richest in a country of great landlords, and their holdings in land and industrial interests were calculated at not under \$60,000,000. At the age of twenty-one Madero left the College of Versailles to enter the University of California, where he studied English literature and scientific agriculture. With a view to fitting himself for the task of looking after the vast interests of his family, he made a special study of cotton and rubber planting. On his return home he apparently settled down to the easy and ample life of the rich Mexican planter, but all the time he was riding around his estates and interviewing his managers and agents the young Mexican's mind was busy with problems. The dream of freeing the brown-skinned descendants of the Aztecs from the virtual slavery, which, under the name of "peonage," kept them riveted to the soil at a derisive wage, soon came to obsess his mind, and by writings and speeches he attempted to arouse the laboring class of his remote province. The social propaganda which the young planter was carrying on among his poorer countrymen did not fail to be reported at Mexico City by some of the ubiquitous spies maintained by Porfirio Diaz, but the old dictator never stirred up trouble needlessly, and was content to let the agitation pass as the work of a crazy visionary until Madero went beyond the strictures of the land and labor tenure system and attacked the muzzling of the press, the restrictions on free speech, the cruelty of the federal tax collectors, the graft of Diaz' immediate followers and other peculiarities of the personal regime. These attacks on the dictatorship were contained for the most part in a book entitled "Succession Presidential de 1910," which Madero published on the eve of becoming a candidate for the presidency. Diaz took the practical but unconstitutional course of imprisoning the daring young candidate until the elections were over, with their usual result of giving him a further term of power. Largely owing to the intercession of his father, who disclaimed all sympathy with his son's peculiar views, Francisco Madero was then let go under bonds.

THE same writer continues: Instead of returning to the hacienda to digest his lesson, Madero eluded the federal spies, crossed the American border in the disguise of a peon and soon had headquarters at the Hotel Astor in New York, where a large number of refugee Mexicans and soldiers of fortune gathered round him. In November, 1910, in spite of the vigilance of United States secret service agents, he reached his native province by land, and proclaimed open war against Diaz. After some minor successes, which had the result of bringing thousands of peasants to his banner, Madero issued his celebrated proclamation at San Luis Potosi: "Now that the people of Mexico," this document ran, "are alive to the situation and understand perfectly the dangers which threaten them in the continued dictatorship which has

tyrannized over them for the last thirty years, they should prepare to conquer or die. The time for the struggle is at hand, and should it be required, let the last drop of blood be shed to overthrow the tyrant." Practically all the elements desirous of a change joined Madero, and the Juarez regime collapsed like a house of cards. Madero showed unexpected military talent and won his way, by a series of small battles to the stronghold of Juarez, the seat of the federal power in Chihuahua and northern Mexico. Its occupation early in 1911 broke the back of the Diaz resistance, and the march on to the capital was one of triumph. Officers and men of the old army deserted by thousands, and on May 25, after a fruitless effort to come to terms, the aged president resigned and went to Europe. On October 1, 1911, Madero was elected president for a term of six years.

OF the victorious general of the rebel forces, a writer in the New York Sun says: Felix Diaz has snatched victory from the teeth of complete failure. When the movement so brilliantly begun at Vera Cruz suddenly collapsed, even some of the rebel's friends and followers condemned what they call his lack of shrewd and careful leadership. It is always easy to criticise. The rebel leader had been tricked against all rules of civilized warfare by a general whom he had known since he was a young cadet in the military academy of which the general had been the commandant. That the death sentence passed upon Felix Diaz by the court-martial was not put into effect was due merely to the force of public opinion and the fear of the government, for its members knew that Diaz's execution would have aroused the whole country against them. They had not dared to carry out the sentence. Those who knew Felix Diaz intimately did not lose their confidence in him even after his setback, and they predicted that if he were not killed he would give further account of himself. A man without impulses, self-contained and deliberate, who loves his country above anything else, and who in spite of the difficult position he occupied during his uncle's regime has never lost a friend—that is Felix Diaz. He represents the link between Mexico of the past and Mexico of the future, for, while he admires his Uncle Porfirio Diaz, the magician who brought order out of chaos, and was an important lever in the machinery of government, he is fully alive to the requirements of young Mexico and in thorough sympathy with its progressive aspirations. A man of medium height, barely over forty-two years old, he has an imposing personality and dignified mien that reminds one strongly of Porfirio Diaz. The lines of his dark face are regular and handsome. While his jaw has not the extreme prominence of that of his uncle, it is square and with the protruding chin and firm mouth reveals a strong character. His dark eyes are inscrutable and his countenance is usually impassive. The face is that of a man who has seen much of the worst side of life, whose experience is much greater than that of other men of his age. Felix Diaz is known as the man who keeps his own counsel and has learned how to wait. It is only when he smiles—and that he does not do very often—that he reveals an extremely human side and that one feels the magnetism of his strong personality. From the generally accepted description of Porfirio Diaz and that of his nephew, one would think them as men of stone. Yet seldom have I met men whose latent magnetic force I felt more strongly than that of the two Diazes.

DESCRIBING his first impressions with the elder Diaz, Porfirio, the Sun writer says that upon leaving the elder Diaz he felt that he had found a friend. Referring to the younger Diaz the Sun writer adds: The same was my impression later when I felt the firm grasp of Felix Diaz's hand and looked into his smiling face. Yet before that, for a long time I had believed him unfriendly toward me. Felix Diaz has always been a man of few words, retiring in nature, with little inclination for social life, and fond of his family. The only son of a beloved brother of Porfirio Diaz, he was carefully educated under the supervision of his uncle.

He entered the military career, going through the full regular course of the Mexican military academy, whence he was graduated a lieutenant of the engineering corps. While in the academy and afterward no special favors were shown to the nephew of Don Porfirio, and his wise uncle refrained from advancing him too fast. In the course of years and when still a major he was appointed chief of the president's staff. Although constantly close to the old president and loyal to him, Felix Diaz soon showed a spirit of calm independence and shared with his contemporaries a love for political freedom. Without asking any one's permission, on a certain date Felix Diaz presented himself as a candidate for governor of the state of Oaxaca. The young man was undoubtedly popular and for a while it looked as if he would win against the government candidate. But shortly before the time of "election" Felix Diaz was appointed Mexican minister to Chili and sent away to see the world. Reluctantly he accepted the honor conferred upon him. On his return to Mexico two years later, he was appointed chief of police of Mexico City, a post entailing great responsibility, as he not only had under his supervision the policing of the city but was personally responsible for the safety of the president and the cabinet. Perhaps the best conception of the man will be had from the fact that during the many years he was chief of police under the autocratic rule of his uncle he counted his friends even among those opposed to the Diaz regime. In all my years of residence in Mexico, and during a time when most government officials were subject to bitter accusations—first covert and then open—of graft and abuse of power, I have never heard such a charge made against Felix Diaz. Yet this man knew more about the private affairs and life of most Mexicans than any other man in the country, his uncle excepted. While Felix Diaz knew the secret of keeping in the background, he took an active part and lively interest in the affairs of his country. As much as he admired and loved his uncle, and perhaps because of this, he was opposed to many of the men who surrounded him and practically held in the last few years the reins of government. To my personal knowledge Felix Diaz never resorted to subterfuge or tried to hide his feelings in this respect, but often was in open disagreement with the vice president, the late Mr. Corral, and with the governor of the federal district, on both of whom he was officially dependent.

A REMINDER of old time labor days was given in a Sioux City (Ia.) Journal editorial, as follows:—"A Reminder of Other Days.—J. R. Sovereign, a former Iowa newspaper man, labor leader and democratic politician, is living at Keller, Ferry county, state of Washington. "He is more than four score years of age," a correspondent says in writing to the Journal, "yet is doing a fair amount of literary work, and the fishing in the San Poil river, close by, is superb. Needless to add that his closing years are passing peacefully." Mr. Sovereign was commissioner of labor statistics for four years (1890-94), during the governorship of Horace Boies. Mr. Sovereign collected statistics on the cost of raising corn in this state, and figured out that the farmers were raising this staple at a loss. Governor Boies fathered the conclusions of Mr. Sovereign's researches in some of his political speeches, notably on the occasion of a visit to New York. The matter was in the newspapers for some time, and was made the excuse for many gibes. As Governor Boies was extensively engaged in farming in Grundy county, his indorsement gave weight to the commissioner's conclusions. It can not be denied at this late day that Iowa farmers at that time were not as a class prosperous, and it is to be hoped that the price of corn may never drop to the level of that time again. Mr. Sovereign did not fix responsibility at the time on the political party to which he was attached and which he sought in all ways open to him to serve. Mr. Cleveland was inaugurated for his second term on the 4th of March, 1893, and industrial conditions were not at all agreeable throughout Mr. Sovereign's service as commissioner of labor statistics.