

*Ladder for Reaching Heaven.* To-day the greatest man on the American continent is the Mexican President.

Those who know Mexico by rumour may be surprised at this, forgetting everything but the fact that between 1821 and 1884, sixty-three years, Mexico had fifty-five presidents, two emperors and one regency. Like some great chemical solution, a seething mixture of heterogeneous elements, during all those years the subtle combinations had been proceeding which have resulted in the crystallization of a new nation. The languages spoken among these twelve millions give one a faint conception of the diversity that more and more tends to unity. Nahuatl (Aztec), Zapotec, Otomi, Mixtec, Huastec, Miju, Tarahumar, Tepehuan, Totonac, Cora, Cac-chiquel, Matlazinga, Tarasca, and Maya are some of these strange tongues. But now Spanish has spread everywhere, and English is compulsory in all the myriad schools. "So when we old are gone," touchingly remarks the President, "Mexico will have two idioms."

At No. 10, on the south side of the Street of La Soledad, in the City of Oaxaca, Porfirio (Porphyry) Diaz was born on the 15th September, 1830. His great-grandmother was a Mixtecan Indian. He attended a primary school till he was seven, and then became an errand boy in a store, but attended the secondary school subsequently until he was fourteen. At the seminary which he entered at his mother's wish he supported himself by teaching. He determined however to adopt the legal profession and graduated after a four years' course. Having entered the law office of Juarez he became professor of law in his College. At seventeen he had joined the National Guard, and from being Mayor of Ixtlan he became a Captain and served in crushing the rebellion of Jamiltepec. He had studied military science under Commandant Uréa, and during this campaign "he distinguished himself by his zeal as a patriot, and his consummate skill in organizing troops." In 1858 he defeated Cobos, and for two years he was Mayor of Tehuantepec. The disturbed state of the country afforded him constant experience on the field. In May, 1860, he had pacified the rebellious State of Oaxaca. It is said his characteristic tactics were a night march and a day-break assault. He took part in continual military actions for several years and on the 5th May, 1862, defeated the European troops with his raw recruits. Previous to this he had been promoted to be colonel and lieutenant-colonel, and in 1861 had been elected deputy to Congress. In his campaign against Marquez, the "Panther of the South," he gained such a victory that his superior General Gonzalez Ortega petitioned the Government for the rank of General for him. After his victory over the French he was appointed Governor and military command-