



LIFE

OF

ALEXANDER

HALL

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JAMES SOUTHER



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Maximilian^om

MAXIMILIAN I,

LATE EMPEROR OF MEXICO.

WITH A SKETCH OF

THE MEXICAN EMPIRE.

BY

JOHN W. BAKER



L I F E
OF
MAXIMILIAN I.,
LATE EMPEROR OF MEXICO,
WITH A SKETCH OF
THE EMPRESS CARLOTA.

BY
FREDERIC HALL,
ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S LEGAL ADVISERS.

"Fiat justitia ruat cælum."

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FONDO
FERNANDO DIAZ RAMIREZ



PREFACE.

TWO great events of the last half of the Nineteenth Century will stand out like embossed inscriptions on the pages of American history, all crimsoned with the blood of the murdered. And the advancing waves of Time will not efface them, nor the names of those who prominently figured therein. President Lincoln was the victim of the one, and Ferdinand Maximilian of the other. The essential difference characterizing the two is, that the tragedy of the latter followed a judicial farce, and was performed by a Nation, while that of the former, unaccompanied by a farcical show, was perpetrated by a private individual.

The trial and execution of an Emperor are not of so frequent occurrence as not to produce excitement, and attract attention all over the civilized world. The history of such events, and of the life of him who formed the great subject thereof, cannot fail to be observed with more than ordinary interest, although recorded in a homely style.

The meeting in that tragical scene of Republicanism

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and Imperialism will somewhat heighten the desire to scan with a piercing eye, to probe to the bottom the feelings, the passions, the seething hate, that actuated and governed the whole act.

I have endeavored to portray succinctly, in the first chapter, a history of the leading events which mark the Austrian nation and the House of Hapsburg, that the reader may carry in his mind that picture of the past, while he surveys the portrait of one of the late descendants of that ancient line of Imperialism.

It has not been my purpose to give a history of the Mexican Empire during the reign of Maximilian, but to detail his personal qualities and actions; and to concisely state the facts and law pertaining to his trial; adding thereto a short biographical sketch of his affectionate and talented spouse, the Empress Carlota.

The biography of a ruler necessarily includes many important facts that peculiarly belong to the historical records of his nation. But the main subject of the one excludes the bulk of the other.

It has not unfrequently been observed that the biographies of Sovereigns and Statesmen usually contain too much of State documents to interest the general reader, and not sufficient of the minutiae of their private life. In other words, the majority of the reading community wish to see the person live, as it were. I have sought to weave both herein. The most of the docu-

mentary statements are contained in the chapter which relates to the trial of the Emperor; and in this instance will perhaps be, to many, the most interesting portion of the work, particularly to those of the legal profession, and to statesmen.

I gathered my materials and nearly completed the work while in Mexico, and was most diligent in my exertions to collect facts. And the task of sifting the truth from the many false rumors, in my researches, was not an easy one. The variety of statements placed in circulation during battles and sieges is great; and many incorrect and improbable stories are related by honest persons, believing them to be authenticated facts. Those who have observed criminal proceedings in a court of justice, and have heard half a dozen or more witnesses relate their conflicting stories as to what occurred at the time of the committing of the alleged crimes, will readily understand all this. Scarcely any two individuals hear or see alike all of the actions and sayings in a conflict of arms between either small or large forces.

I trust I shall not be charged with either vanity or egotism in recording the many brief conversations between His Majesty and myself. To most persons, the exact expressions of an emperor, under the circumstances in which I met Maximilian, are fraught with greater interest than the chronicle of events which

transpired while he swayed with full power on the imperial throne.

What I have written in regard to the relative value and progress of the Empire and Republic of Mexico, has not been prompted by any tincture of taste for Imperialism, nor by any personal enmity to the President or Cabinet of the Republic, with whom I have had none but amicable relations.

The engraving of the place where the execution of the Emperor occurred is taken from an excellent drawing made for me by my friend, Mr. JOHN M. PRICE, an English gentleman, and engineer on the Vera Cruz Railroad. It is a far better view than any photograph ever taken of that ground. None were taken at the very time of the execution.

If I have failed to embalm the name of that good man, MAXIMILIAN, in a pleasant style, I hope that the value and interest found in the materials of this work will compensate for the poverty of their dress.

FREDERIC HALL.

RUTLAND, Vt., December, 1867.

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MAXIMILIAN.

CHAPTER I.

Austria—Her accessions—House of Hapsburg—Its origin—Descendants thereof.

COULD we count backward the notches on the long measure of Time, for ten centuries, and by a magic wand bring up the then living from their subterraneous dwellings, in a certain part of the territory watered by the Danube, the ear would catch the sound of *Oest-reich* (east country), as the appellation of Austria. That territory was the nucleus around which, subsequently, has been formed the great Austrian empire.

If we carefully view that empire through the long vista of ages, we shall not fail to observe that its political and territorial phases have been more diverse than the number of the centuries.

If we now examine it in a geographical, ethnographical, and linguistic point of view, we shall consider it a curious piece of Mosaic work. It has been observed that the ethnographical map of Austria exhibits one hundred and twenty different groups of nationalities, and the number of linguistic groups nearly two thousand. It suggests itself to one's mind that the workers