

scious of the fact, that the construction of his mind well fitted him to please. And though moving beneath the robes of royalty, he so pursued his course of life, that the light of friendship threw its cheering rays all around him.

We will soon follow him across the trackless ocean.

CHAPTER III.

Carlota—Her birth—Genealogy of family—Education—Personal description—Marriage—Life in Italy—In Mexico—Her derangement—Cause of it—Late residence in Belgium—Palace of Tervueren.

THE frame that includes the biographical portrait of His Majesty Maximilian, would present a blank space if the characteristic features of his august spouse, the lovely, the beautiful, the accomplished, and much-beloved Carlota, were not portrayed by his side, in their true colors. We cannot think of His Majesty without having the vision of the Empress rise up before the mind's eye, as though she were a part of the same being. Scarcely one of her sex has attracted equal attention in the present age. The dazzling splendor of her virtues has caused unbounded praises to be lavished upon her, while her misfortunes have grieved the hearts of millions.

She is a descendant of Henry IV. of France, who perhaps was one of the best rulers France ever had, since Louis IX. He fell by the hand of the assassin, the fanatical Ravaillac, May 14th, 1610. Her father was Leopold I., of Belgium, who was born December 16th, 1790, and was the son of the Duke Francis of Saxe Cobourg Saalfelde. He was naturalized in England, March 27th, 1816, and married May 2d of the same year to Princess Charlotte Augusta, daughter of George IV., of England. He received at that time a pension of fifty thousand pounds sterling, the title of Duke of Kendal, and the rank of a prince of the blood.

It was not long thereafter before he was deprived of that lovely companion. She died in childbirth, Nov. 5th, 1817,—the child non-surviving.

In 1832, August 9th, he again married, uniting himself to Louise Maria Theresa Charlotte Isabella de Orleans, daughter of Louis Philippe, King of France. It was his fortune to enjoy the companionship of the second far longer than that of the first wife; but before a score of years had rolled away, she, too, bid farewell to all there is of earth, on the 11th of October, 1850.

He had by his last wife the following issue: Leopold, Duke of Brabant, now King Leopold II. of Belgium, who was born April 9th, 1835; Prince Philippe Eugene Ferdinand Marie Clemente Bandonin Leopold George, Count of Flanders, born March 24th 1837, and was Major-General and Honorary Commander of the Regiment of Guides; and the Princess Maria Charlotte Amelia Auguste Victoire Clementine Leopoldino, born June 7th, 1840, and who is Carlota, ex-empress of Mexico. Her father, Leopold I., was a man of rare scholastic attainments; and was not ignorant of that science and that art requisite to make skilful moves on the military chessboard. He was termed *the Nestor of kings*. He expired in December, 1865. He was then the oldest sovereign in Europe.

The mother of the Empress Carlota was known by the appellation of the *Holy Queen*. As she died in 1850, it was not her pleasure to long watch over the advancing years of her lovely daughter, who, nevertheless, became a bright ornament even among princesses.

Carlota was born at the palace of Laeken, which is about fifteen miles from Brussels, on the 7th of June, 1840; and never passed over six months of her life in France, although she is called French. The French tongue is her vernacular.

Nearly eighteen years ago, the promenaders that sauntered through the public park of Brussels, frequently observed a charming and attractive little girl, the picture of beauty and loveliness, accompanied by her two

little brothers, a preceptor, and governess. She was plainly dressed, wearing a broad-brim straw hat, a short dress, and white pantalettes; and under her *coiffure*, on each side, could be seen her neatly braided hair. That her appearance of beauty and innocence should not be lost to memory, the skill of the artist was brought into requisition, and her portrait, as she was then dressed, was taken; which may now be seen in one of the private apartments of the palace of Brussels. She was usually then seen, when promenading, with a little hoop in her hand, which she never rolled. The little bright-eyed and rosy-cheeked girl wishfully looked upon the various groups of children which she chanced to meet, anxious to join them in their innocent pleasures. But, no, that was not allowed,—the governess said, *No*. She then doubtless wished that she had no teacher to control her, as she saw no good reason why the freedom of others should not be allowed to her. Her little party never seemed to stop nor run, but gravely walked on with a measured tread.

The former part of the life of those children was not a gay one. At home, in the palace, during the lifetime of their mother, they were taught to pray, and all the principles of religion which their youthful minds were capable of receiving, were instilled into them. The days of reception were not play-days to those youths;—the lessons of Christianity were dispensed with, only to let those of etiquette be given in their stead. As visitors entered, they found the little princess by her mother's side; and as salutations were given and received, the bright-eyed daughter did not fail to act her part. The rank and dignity of the different personages were soon known to her, and the respective salutations due to each.

The young princess never seemed to have a playmate of her own age. She saw no one around her save the ladies of honor, whom her father had chosen for her

mother. Their conversation was principally upon religious topics, or matters of importance. And yet with all the apparent severity and strictness of her mother, the princess was the object of that parent's deepest affection, who doted upon and idolized that daughter. It was the Christian virtue, the honest pride of that good mother's heart, that caused her to watch with a jealous care every act and word of that young and tender heart, that was destined to attract the world. But while that young princess was in the bud of life, the genial rays of that mother's affectionate heart ceased to shed their holy influence over her. She saw that mother on the couch of death, and heard her last affectionate farewell, which fell upon her ear like the music of a sad dream, mournfully sounding, long after that Spirit of Love had entered the heavenly portal. After that sad bereavement, the broken-hearted princess lived as it were alone in the midst of the ladies of honor.

It was quite observable, that from the age of eleven to fifteen she was less child-like in her manners and conversation than most children of that age, even including those of royalty. It must be attributed to her continual companionship with those of maturer years. She always possessed a marked gravity and dignity even in the ballroom. At the age of sixteen she was allowed to attend balls; but only four times a year, when they were given by the king in the winter season. None but those of royal blood were honored with her company in the dance; and none were permitted to embrace her in the waltz but her brothers. And while she gazed upon others that whirled in the round dances, it was apparently with indifference; and as they glided briskly in the circle, she promenaded in a dignified manner, yet with a pleasing air.

She was fine-looking—her stature tall, majestic, not haughty, graceful in her carriage; and with her air of

majesty there was mingled a gentleness and mildness of disposition that won and attracted all who chanced to meet her. Her face is oval; complexion bright, and readily flushed; her nose is a little aquiline; her mouth is pretty, and beneath her rosy lips is a set of regular pearl-white teeth; her eyes are not large, but very bright, and when she becomes excited, they flash like fire. She has a heavy head of hair, of a beautiful dark auburn shade. Nature formed her for an empress, and her acquirements not less fitted her for the station. As she rose above the horizon of childhood, she appeared in all the splendor of the morning star, bright, beautiful.

The photographer, the painter—all the powers of art, have failed to do her justice, in attempting to transfer her beauty on paper or canvas. Her beauty, her goodness, her Christian virtues, will ever defy the pen.

She inherited the talents of her father. Her mind was deep, and exceedingly well cultivated. If her native powers were not more than ordinary, it would be remarkable, since her father and mother were both of superior intellect. At an early age she was placed in the presence of the ministers of State, while matters of importance were discussed; and therefore her opportunities for forming her judgment and training her logical powers of thought, were more than those usually allotted to princesses,—of which she gave conclusive proof in after years. She spoke and wrote, with great perfection, the French, Spanish, German, English, and Italian languages. As has been before observed, she was married in the year 1857, being then of the age of seventeen years. She never became a mother.

Not long after her marriage, in the month of August, a multitude of the people of Brussels might have been seen in front of the palace, as though attracted by something unusual. It was so to them. Upon the balcony of that palace stood the enchantress of that house, Arch-

duchess Carlota, in bridal robes; and by her side stood, arm in arm, a tall, fine-looking man, in the uniform of an admiral. That personage was the then Austrian Governor-General of Italy, Archduke Maximilian. Three days after, the new Archduchess bid farewell to her native home. The then gathered concourse of people had often seen her; but that pleasure was about to be taken from them, and they gazed lingeringly upon her with admiration mingled with regret.

Early deprived of her mother, surrounded by no female blood-relatives (whose affections are always deeper than those of any other persons), they almost wondered at her remarkable qualities, her intelligence, her Christian virtues, and, above all, her charity.

She was fortunate in her marriage, for love tied the knot that bound the two. She seemed to entirely forget her passed hours of loneliness, and thought of the future, which was portrayed by her in bright colors. Nothing thwarted her for a while in her desires. Her husband was all kindness, and his feelings of affection never for a moment slackened.

As she arrived at Milan, she was delighted with her change—with the land of Italy, which was to be her new home for some time to come. She saw in the Archduke perfection, a man of intelligence, of dignity, of power—brave to a fault, and the personification of affection. She was complete mistress of herself. She might almost have believed herself an absolute sovereign, at least while the Archduke held the position of Governor-General of Lombard-Venice.

Her advice was listened to with the utmost attention by the Archduke; for one possessed of such a fund of knowledge, with such a keen sagacity, might well be considered as having a judgment based upon reflection, which would be entitled to much weight, and far too important to pass unheeded.



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Her mind was deeply engrossed with the affairs of State. She sought the welfare of Italy while there, rather than parties, balls, and fashionable entertainment. The poor of the cities where she visited, and where she resided, will bear ample evidence of her generosity. She was desirous of possessing the good-will of the people. She was always kind to those around her; even to her servants, she rarely made use of any bitterness of tone in language, under even the most provoking circumstances. She was impressed with the idea that the hearts of the subjects were the true throne of a sovereign. Her ambition was exceedingly great,—but withal, an ambition to do good. The Christian principles instilled into her youthful mind never forsook her. In her studies she gave undeniable testimony of energy and great determination. In some of the voyages made by the Archduke she accompanied him; also on the various trips made in Italy. She sailed to the island of Madeira, and there remained while her husband was on a voyage to Brazil. After her return from that island, she wrote a work in French, entitled, "A Voyage to Madeira." The work has been highly spoken of by those who have had the opportunity of perusing it. It bears evidence of a cultivated mind, of reflection, refinement, and elegance of taste, clothed in a pleasing diction.

If her heart swelled with pride, as she was called to sustain the dignified position of Empress, it was an honest pride—a pride to fill the station with honor to herself, her husband, her adopted country, and with honor and virtue in the judgment of the world.

She seemed ever watchful for the progress and improvement of Mexico—the advancement of education, and the protecting care of the poor and needy. The same generosity which she exhibited in Europe was made manifest in the New World, even to a greater degree. She has often been observed walking through

the mud, holding up her skirts, in order to visit the poor in the hospitals, and also others that were needy, in their own desolate homes. She established schools, and visited them in person. If she visited a town, only for an hour, the first inquiry made by her was as to the condition of the schools. She was not satisfied with the answer of any one as to the state of the houses of instruction, but would visit them in person. The bad condition of the weather and roads never prevented her from so doing. She examined the scholars in their lessons, gave them kind advice, and not unfrequently pieces of money, to encourage them in their studies. Never in the history of Mexico was the number of beggars so small in the capital as during her presence there. The poor never had such another friend in all Mexico.

While she was in the city of Puebla, on her way to the capital for the first time, on the 7th of June, which was the anniversary of her birthday, she presented to that city the sum of seven thousand dollars out of her own private purse, for the benefit of the poor. On that occasion she wrote the Prefect of that city the following letter:

“SEÑOR PREFECT:

“It is very pleasing to me to find myself in Puebla, the first anniversary of my birthday which I have passed far from my old country. Such a day is for everybody one of reflection; and these days would be sad for me, if the care, attentions, and proofs of affection, of which I have been the object in this city, did not cause me to recollect that I am in my new country, among my people. Surrounded by friends, and accompanied by my dear husband, I have no time to be sad; and I give thanks to God because he has conducted me here, presenting unto him fervent prayers for the happiness of the country which is mine. United to Mexico long ago by

sympathy, I am to-day united to it by stronger bonds, and at the same time sweeter—those of gratitude. I wish, Señor Prefect, that the poor of this city may participate in the pleasure which I have experienced among you.

“I send you seven thousand dollars of my own private funds, which is to be dedicated to the rebuilding of the House of Charity, the ruinous state of which made me feel sad yesterday: so that the unfortunate ones may return to inhabit it who found themselves deprived of shelter.

“Señor Prefect, assure my compatriots of Puebla that they possess, and will always possess, my affections.

“PUEBLA, 7th June, 1864.”

“CARLOTA.”

Her acts of charity were unbounded. It was the greatest pleasure of her life to relieve suffering humanity. In this respect she was remarkable.

The *Paseo*, or pleasure-walk of the city of Mexico, with its shrubbery and flowers, is another illustration of her generosity, her taste, and her desire to please her subjects. Before she arrived in that city, not a flower nor bush, save the large trees, graced that pleasure-ground, nor the grand square, in front of the palace. She scattered there her own funds; from which have sprung up sweet-scented flowers and green bushes, that delight and attract the multitude, after the weary hours of labor are ended. One can now scarcely visit those pleasure-grounds, who saw them a few years ago, without bringing to mind the good heart that beautified them.

I once heard a very intelligent gentleman say, in the city of Mexico, that if that country had ever had a President with half the ambition, energy, and honesty of the Empress, it would be in a far more prosperous condition than it is, or ever had been.

Her intellectual capacity was certainly great, and her

administrative abilities of no mean order, added to a remarkable political sagacity. She was not surpassed by any living woman, in those qualities. Had she been a man at the head of a powerful government, she would have been considered the leading sovereign of the age. With all these qualities, usually sought for, and more generally expected to be found in the other sex, she did not fail to possess that grace and refinement of manner, at all times and under all circumstances, which are the peculiar attributes of an accomplished lady.

The brightest jewel she possessed nature gave her. It was CHARITY. Wherever she went, the squalid face of poverty received an illuminating smile of happiness from the reflection of that ornament. A view of her beaming face always produced a pleasant thought. The influence of her presence was like that of the rising sun, as it comes rolling up, spreading its soft genial rays all around, dispelling the bitter coolness of the morn.

The Empress was by no means possessed of idle habits. She was usually up at half-past six, and at seven in the saddle, taking her exercise, accompanied by her lady of honor and an officer. For many days she would ride every morning; and then, for a period, only every other day. Between eight and nine in the morning was the time for prayer; then came breakfast, which she usually ate alone—sometimes with one of her ladies' of honor. After which, accompanied by one of those ladies, she visited in her carriage the schools, hospitals, and the poor people that were in want, at their respective homes; or attended to some business affair pertaining to the Society of Charity, of which she was president. At two o'clock she went out to the palace of Chapultepec, where she usually resided, or at least spent the most of her time. At half-past three she dined in company with the Emperor, and frequently with friends invited by His Majesty. After dinner she promenaded in the grove

around the palace; then returning to the palace, would read awhile, or use the pencil or brush, for which she had a fondness. Her general hour for retiring was nine.

She carefully read the newspapers, and scanned closely whatever was written upon the subject of Mexico and its sovereign. She marked with a pencil every article or paragraph which she considered of any importance, for the perusal of His Majesty: as he was busy, it was a saving of time to have the matter, which was worthy of consideration, brought immediately to his attention. She was either engaged in some of the foregoing occupations, or improving the flower-gardens. She was apparently never idle.

She was accustomed to wear, in the summer, dresses of cambric muslin; and in the winter, those of wool or silk, but not of a costly character. In fact, they were extremely plain, but made and fitted with remarkably good taste.

In the winter season she gave *soirées* every Monday. She never wore the same dress twice on those occasions. She danced four quadrilles during the evening, which was the extent of that kind of exercise with her.

When grand receptions were given at court, she wore a rich white satin dress, with low neck, trimmed with gold and brilliants; a purple velvet mantle, bordered with gold; a diadem of brilliants; jewelry of great value; the Grand Cross of San Carlos, the Grand Starred Cross of Austria, and that of Brazil.

Through all that imperial splendor, shone with a far brighter lustre her smiling face, the index of a gentle and affectionate heart.

The breath of scandal never discolored the fair name of the Empress. She was above suspicion. Such perfect disinterestedness manifest in all her acts of charity—such superiority to all selfish considerations—such zeal for good, and such sanctity of life, were virtues which

shone so eminently conspicuous in all her behavior, that the unprejudiced who have been inimical to her form of government, and to the reign of their Majesties in Mexico, have been free to credit her with the perfections ascribed to her by her friends.

She had two ladies of the palace, who received each a salary of four thousand dollars per annum. One was Miss Josefa Varela, and the other Mrs. Concepcion P. Pacheco. The former is about the age of twenty-two, of dark Mexican complexion, from Texcoco, which is about twenty miles from the capital. She is a descendant of Moctezuma, and for that reason was selected for the position. She said to me that the genealogy of her family had been given to the Emperor. She is a pleasant young lady, not at all diffident in the presence of strangers, and shows a knowledge of society. She had received beneficial lessons from the Empress, with whom she was a favorite.

There were numerous ladies of honor attached to the Empress, who did not remain in the palace, and who received no compensation. They resided in their respective homes, and went to the palace on reception-days, and whenever the Empress desired their company in visiting the hospitals or other places of charity.

In 1865, it was considered necessary that a tour of inspection should be made through Yucatan. His Majesty could not well go, on account of business requiring his presence at the capital. It was therefore decided that the Empress should proceed to make the tour. And on the 6th of November of that year, she, with her lady of honor, Miss Josefa Varela, started, escorted by numerous officers, among whom was General José Lopez Uruga, commander of the escort; Señor Ramirez, Minister of Relations; the Belgian and Spanish Ministers, and several others, numbering twenty-four. She was received at Vera Cruz with great demonstrations of joy;

and still more, and greater enthusiasm at Yucatan, considering the number of the population.

On her arrival at Merida, in Yucatan, she was elegantly yet plainly attired. She wore a white dress with blue trimmings, and a graceful hat, likewise decked with blue. Her person was unadorned with jewelry. She was received by a large concourse of people—women and children surrounding her, with their offerings of sweet-scented bouquets; the military in their full-dress uniform: and in short, the whole community were out to gaze on her with perfect admiration.

Her Majesty was received at the entrance of the cathedral by the Rev. Dr. Lerado Rodriguez de la Sala; and as a religious ceremony was performed therein, that temple was crowded to its utmost.

She was addressed by the political Prefect. And while in her apartments, on the 23d of November, the multitude, anxious to gaze on her, and to hear some pleasant word from her, called loudly for her; and for their gratification she presented herself upon the balcony, and spoke as follows:

“We have long wished to visit you, in order to study your necessities and learn your desires. The Emperor being prevented from effecting this important object, has sent me to you to present you his cordial greetings. I assure you from my heart that he deeply regrets that he cannot be here with me, to tell you how great is his affection toward you. He will regret it still more when I inform him of the enthusiastic reception you have given me. He desires, and by all means will endeavor, to secure the prosperity and happiness of the people of Yucatan.”

She visited the hospitals, prisons, houses of the needy, and made donations for them. She donated the sum of two thousand and five hundred dollars for the establishment of a free-school for girls; three thousand dollars