

CHAPTER XV.

Order to embalm the body—Mode of embalming—Requests for the corpse—Denials—Written request granted—Corpse delivered to Austrian authorities—Departure of same for Europe.

PRIOR to the execution of the Emperor, the Government of the Republic had been solicited to permit his remains to be so prepared that they could be sent out of the country, and also to allow the transportation thereof to the family of Maximilian in Europe.

His Majesty wrote a letter to that effect, on the sixteenth of June, to Señor Don Carlos Rubio, and also one on the eighteenth, to General Escobedo, in which he requested that his physician, Dr. Samuel Basch, be permitted to embalm his body; and, in conjunction with Baron A. V. Magnus, to take it to his family relatives in Austria.

That request was not wholly acceded to; but with a view of having the body so preserved that it might be in a proper condition to convey away, provided that right should thereafter be granted, the Government forwarded the following instructions in relation thereto, to General Escobedo:

“Telegram—San Luis Potosi, June 18th, 1867. At nine o'clock of the morning:

“C. GENERAL MARIANO ESCOBEDO, Queretaro:

“The Government has been asked that, as soon as the execution of Maximilian shall have taken place, permission be granted to dispose of the body, with the intention of carrying it to Europe.

“This has not been permitted; but in consideration of the petition, the C. President of the Republic has ordered that you will proceed in conformity with the following instructions:

“*First.* After the execution of the three convicted persons shall have taken place, if the relatives of D. M. Miramon and D. T. Mejia should ask to dispose of their bodies, you will permit them immediately freely to do so.

“*Second.* You only will order what may be necessary respecting the body of Maximilian, denying anybody else the right to make any disposition thereof.

“*Third.* You will order to be made, within the proper time, boxes of zinc and wood, to preserve in a proper manner the body of Maximilian; and also those of D. M. Miramon and D. T. Mejia, if their relatives do not ask for them.

“*Fourth.* If any person should ask that he be permitted to embalm or inject the body of Maximilian, or to do anything else which may not be improper, you will refuse the right to any other person to do the same; but in such a case, you will provide, without prohibiting the presence of foreigners, that it be done by Mexicans, in whom you have confidence, and that every thing be done in proper manner, at the expense of the government.

“*Fifth.* After the execution shall have taken place, you will provide that care be immediately taken of the body of Maximilian, and also of the others, if their relatives do not ask for them, and that proper decorum be paid them after the fulfilment of justice.

“*Sixth.* You will direct that the body of Maximilian be deposited in a proper and secure place, under the vigilance of the authorities.

“*Seventh.* For the final rest of the body of Maximil-

ian, and of the others, if their relatives do not ask for them, you will provide that the accustomed religious acts be performed.

“LERDO DE TEJADA.”

Baron de Largo, the Austrian *chargé d'affaires* near the Empire of Maximilian, having, among others of the diplomatic corps, been ordered away from Queretaro, went to Tacubaya, and remained until the city of Mexico surrendered. He sent the following message to the President of the Republic:

“Telegram—From Tacubaya, for San Luis Potosi. Deposited in Tacubaya the 19th of June, 1867.

“Received in Potosi, at nine o'clock and 25 minutes of the night, the 20th of June.

“C. PRESIDENT:

“I pray you to concede to me the body of Maximilian, in order that I may convey it to Europe.

“BARON DE LARGO.”

The following reply thereto was given by the Minister of Foreign Affairs:

“Telegram—San Luis Potosi, June 20th, 1867, at 10 o'clock and 15 minutes of the night.

“TO SEÑOR BARON DE LARGO:

“The President of the Republic has directed me to say to you, in answer to your telegram of yesterday, which was received this evening, that for grave reasons the right cannot be granted you to dispose of the body of Maximilian.

“S. LERDO DE TEJADA.”

On the 19th, immediately after the execution of the Emperor, his body was transported back to the convent, whence it went forth with breathing life scarcely an hour before. That lifeless corpse presented a ghastly sight to the few surrounding friends that had been near it when it was the tenement of the bright soul that had already winged its flight with more than the wild lightning's speed to mingle with others around the heavenly throne. Alas! what an hour may bring forth! It was a mournful proof that there is one event unto all.

The work of preservation was forthwith commenced by Drs. Rivadeneyra and Licea, in the presence of Dr. Basch; the latter having no right to dictate as to the mode of procedure in the embalming, but only to make suggestions. The physicians had no naphtha to use in the work, but injected chloride of zinc into the arteries and veins, having taken out the intestines, heart, liver, lungs, etc., leaving the frame by itself. That operation lasted three days. During these nights the body was kept in alcohol, save the head. It was varnished twice, each time occupying two days in drying, and was hung up for that purpose. Nearly eight days were occupied in completing the process of embalming.

All the parts taken from the interior of the body were prepared by being mixed with the powder of tannin and gauls.

The body was afterward dressed in black pants, military boots, with the blue campaign coat which the deceased wore, with plain gilt buttons, buttoned up to the neck; black neck-tie, and black kid gloves. Black glass eyes were placed over his natural ones. Glass eyes of the color of Maximilian's could not be obtained. Robbing the face of a portion of its whiskers, and the head of its hair, and changing the color of the eyes, have somewhat disfigured the remains.

The coffin in which the body was placed was made of cedar and lined with zinc. Within the metallic lining was another of cambric. Under the head was placed a black velvet pillow trimmed with gold thread, with gilt tassels at the four corners. The exterior of the coffin was covered with black velvet, ornamented with bands of gold lace. The cover over the face was of glass. Near the foot of the coffin and parallel with it were two small compartments, one on each side, and about two feet in length. In the one on the left side were deposited the heart, liver, and lungs; and in the other the remainder of the substances taken from the interior of the body, all which were mixed with charcoal and chloride of lime.

The coffin thus arranged, with its contents, was placed in one of the churches at Queretaro, and subsequently moved to the Governor's quarters. For the first two or three weeks after the embalming the body looked tolerably well; but a month's time darkened it, and it soon gave increasing evidence that the work of attempted preservation had been badly done. While in the quarters of the Governor, it was seen with the glass cover cracked and spotted with candle-grease, as though stowed away like so much worthless trash.

Baron Magnus—who had been most faithful to the Emperor during his imprisonment, and was still anxious to render favors to the family of the deceased, as well as to carry out his own desires—presented the following solicitation to the Minister of Foreign Relations:

“SAN LUIS POTOSI, June 29th, 1867.

“SIR: The prisoner Prince at Queretaro, the evening before his death, expressed, in a letter signed by his hand and directed to General Escobedo, the desire that his mortal remains be confided to us, myself and Dr. Samuel Basch, physician of the deceased, in order that

Dr. Basch might accompany the body to Europe, and that I might charge myself with having the body embalmed, as well as with all that which concerns its transportation to Europe.

“In conformity with the will of the deceased Prince, which he expressed to me verbally, the transportation of his remains should be done without any ostentation, and in such a manner as may carefully avoid anything which might excite demonstrations or even public curiosity alone.

“Reiterating, in consequence, the demand which I have had the honor to express to His Excellency, to please cause the necessary orders to be given that the mortal remains may be confided to me; it would be agreeable to me, should it please the Government, to transport the body to the coast and on board of one of the vessels of the Austrian navy stationed at Vera Cruz.

“I avail myself of this occasion to repeat to Your Excellency the assurance of my high consideration.

“A. V. MAGNUS.

“HIS EXCELLENCY D. SEBASTIAN
LERDO DE TEJADA.”

The minister responded to the foregoing communication with the following note:

“SAN LUIS POTOSI, June 30th, 1867.

“TO SEÑOR BARON A. V. MAGNUS, &c., &c., &c.

“SIR: I received the communication which you were pleased to direct to me yesterday, stating that the Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian of Hapsburg, on the evening before his death, expressed the desire that his mortal remains should be confided to you and Dr. Samuel Basch, to transport them to Europe.

“According to what I had the honor to manifest to

you before, the Government of the Republic believes that for various considerations it cannot permit the mortal remains of the Archduke to be carried to Europe.

"For this reason, I am pained to answer you, that the Government cannot give the orders which you have desired, with that end.

"I avail myself of this occasion to repeat to you, Señor Baron, that I am, very respectfully,

"Your obedient servant,

"S. LERDO DE TEJADA."

The body of the Emperor was again solicited on the part of his physician in the following terms:

"C. LERDO DE TEJADA, Minister of Government and of Foreign Relations:

"The undersigned, with due respect, has the honor to present to you, Citizen Minister, that:

"As private physician to the deceased Archduke Maximilian, I was charged by him to carry his body to Europe, with the object of delivering it to his family.

"That such was his will is shown by the letter signed by himself, which on the 16th of June last past he directed to D. Carlos Rubio, in Queretaro, and a copy of which I have the honor to annex hereto (Sub. A), as well as the letter of the 18th of the same month, the original of which is in the hands of C. General Escobedo, as it is shown by the letter of C. Colonel Ricardo Villanueva, which (Sub. B) is found hereto annexed.

"The fulfilment of this request I consider a sacred duty, and I hasten in its performance to solicit you, Citizen Minister, to be pleased to grant that the above-mentioned body be delivered to me; supporting this solicitation by the fact that, by a superior order, the bodies of his companions in misfortune have been delivered to the

families, and that never, and in no time, has the supreme government refused to deliver any corpse to the relatives who asked for it.

"I beg, finally, that you will condescend to answer my respectful solicitation, whatever that answer may be, in order that, on returning to my country, I may be able to justify myself before the family of the deceased Archduke, in having done on my part all that I could to succeed in transporting the body in question.

"Which will be received as a favor from you by

"Your most respectful servant,

"DR. SAMUEL BASCH.

"C. MINISTER.

"MEXICO, July 27th, 1867."

The above petition produced the following response:

"Minister of Foreign Relations and of Government, Department of Government, Section 1st.

"In view of your petition of day before yesterday's date, for permission to convey to Europe the mortal remains of the Archduke Maximilian, the C. President of the Republic has determined that for various and grave considerations the petition cannot be acceded to.

"Independence and Liberty. Mexico, July 29, 1867.

"LERDO DE TEJADA.

"TO DR. SAMUEL BASCH."

The following message was sent by the Military Commander of Vera Cruz to the Minister of War:

"Telegram—From Vera Cruz to Mexico. Received in Mexico the 26th of August, 1867, at 7 o'clock and 29 minutes of the night.

"C. MINISTER OF WAR:

"The Austrian Admiral, Tegethoff, arrived this morning at Sacrificios, in the war-steamer of his nation, 'Elizabeth.' He sent a message to this military command, stating that he desired to pass to the Capital, and to obtain permission from the Supreme Government to carry away the body of Maximilian. I desire to know whether I must prohibit his going to Mexico.

"ZEREGA."

The answer sent was as follows:

"Telegram—Office of Minister of War and Navy, Mexico, August 26th, 1867.

"CITIZEN MILITARY COMMANDER OF VERA CRUZ:

"The President of the Republic has been informed that Admiral Tegethoff has arrived at that port, and that he desires to pass to this Capital. You can let him pass without objection.

"MEJIA."

Messrs. Mariano Riva Palacio and Rafael Martínez de la Torre, two of the counsel of Maximilian, presented themselves before the Minister of Foreign Relations on the third of September, and stated to him that Admiral Tegethoff had arrived, and that he desired an interview with him, the Minister.

The request was granted, and the hour of five on that afternoon was designated for an audience.

At the appointed time, the Admiral, accompanied by the two mentioned counsel, appeared before the Minister, and said that he had come to Mexico with the object of asking of the Government of the Republic permission to carry away the mortal remains of the Archduke Maximilian.

Mr. Lerdo, the Minister, replied that he would submit

the petition to the President of the Republic; and in order that he might take it into consideration, the Minister requested the Admiral to be pleased to state in what character he made the solicitation.

The Admiral said that when he determined to come to Mexico, it was considered that it would appear better to the Government of the Republic that he should not come on an official mission from the Government of Austria; but only with a private charge from the family; for the natural feelings of affection and piety create the strongest desire to possess and honor the mortal remains of the Archduke. That in consideration thereof, he had only come with a private charge from the mother of the Archduke, and from his brother, H. M. the Emperor of Austria.

In response to an observation of the Minister, the Admiral also remarked that he had brought no written document, and that his charge was given to him verbally. He added, that were it necessary, he was ready to state in writing that he had come with such a charge.

The Minister concluded by saying that he would submit to him, on the following day, the determination of the President.

On the 4th, the same counsel and the Admiral returned to the palace; on which occasion, the Minister of Foreign Relations stated to them as follows:

"That the permission to carry away the mortal remains of the Archduke had been asked before, by Baron Largo, *Chargé d'Affaires* of Austria near Maximilian; by Baron Magnus, Prussian Minister, near him; and by Dr. Baseh, physician of the Archduke. That the Government answered the three, that it had reasons for not acceding to their petition. It so answered, because the Government believed it to be its duty; that in order to decide whether it would permit the transfer to Austria,

of the body of the Archduke, it would be necessary to have for consideration, either an official document from the Government of Austria, or an express one from the family of the Archduke, asking for the body, from the Government of the Republic.

"That although the Vice-Admiral, by his social position in Austria, and by his personal circumstances, is worthy of the consideration of the Government of Mexico, it cannot decide to permit the carrying away of the body of the Archduke, considering that he has brought no document in which is contained any of those two requisites necessary in the case. And that the President of the Republic has authorized the Minister of Relations to say to the Vice-Admiral Tegethoff, that when any of the two requisites are fulfilled, either by an official act of the Austrian Government, or by an express one from the family, asking for the body of the Archduke, the Government of the Republic will be ready to permit that it be transferred to Austria, being governed by the natural feelings of piety through which the petition will be made.

"That the Government ordered opportunely that the body should be embalmed, and that it should be deposited and preserved with the care and decorum which a body merits; which was done through the same natural feelings of piety.

"LERDO DE TEJADA."

Not many days had elapsed after the termination of the foregoing correspondence relative to the body of Maximilian, when the same was transported to the city of Mexico, and deposited in the San Andres Hospital. It was soon observed that decay was working so rapidly upon it, that it became necessary to make some preparation to arrest its progress. When the cloth bandages were taken off for that purpose, the smell of putrefaction

issuing from the wounded places was sickening. It was bathed for some time in a solution of arsenic, which assisted in its preservation for a short while; but it was apparent that it would not long be recognizable. The face was much sunken in, and the whole features were gradually changing. There was a prevailing opinion that the Government was ashamed to let the world know the true condition of the corpse; hence the unwillingness to let any one view it. If any particular friend obtained a permit from the Government to see it, he did not succeed in so doing. The keeper gave some excuse, and it so turned out in every instance, that the seeking individual was frustrated in his plan. In fact, I was informed that the keeper in charge of the corpse had received positive orders to allow no one to see it, although the persons presenting themselves there for that purpose should bring written permission from the highest officer in the Government.

After the second process of attempted preservation of the body was completed, it was attired in a suit of black, and laid in a new coffin made of granadilla wood, which was elegantly polished, and ornamented with a few carvings.

On the 9th of November the corpse was delivered to Vice-Admiral Tegethoff by the Mexican Government, after the following official correspondence in relation thereto:

Count Beust to the Mexican Minister.

"VIENNA, Sept. 25, 1867.

"EXCELLENCY: A premature death having torn the Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian from his relatives, his Imperial and Royal Apostolic Majesty has the very natural desire that the mortal remains of his unfortunate brother may find their last repose beneath the vault that

covers the ashes of the princes belonging to the house of Austria. The father, the mother, and the remaining brothers of the august deceased share in this desire with an equal earnestness, as likewise do all the members of the Imperial family.

"The Emperor, my august master, has the confidence that the Mexican government, listening to sentiments of humanity, will not refuse to mitigate the just grief of His Majesty by facilitating the realization of this desire.

"To that end, Vice-Admiral de Tegethoff has been sent to Mexico with orders to address to the President a petition for the delivery to him of the remains of His Imperial Majesty's beloved brother, so that they can be conveyed to Europe. On my part, I am charged, in my capacity as Minister of the Imperial Household, to request the kind interposition of your Excellency for the object of securing for the Vice-Admiral the authority necessary to that effect.

"I have the honor, Excellency, of asking that you will convey, in anticipation, to the Chief Executive the expression of gratitude on the part of the august Imperial family for the granting of this petition; and accept for yourself the expression of that same gratitude for the good offices which you may have to perform.

"I avail myself of this occasion to present to your Excellency the assurances of my high consideration.

"BEUST,

Chancellor of the Empire, and Minister of
the Imperial Household.

Reply of Señor Lerdo de Tejada.

"DEPARTMENT FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
MEXICO, Nov. 4, 1867.

"EXCELLENCY: Vice-Admiral de Tegethoff has delivered to me the note which your Excellency addressed me on September 25 last.

"Your Excellency informs me therein that His Majesty the Emperor of Austria has the very natural wish that the mortal remains of his brother, the Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian, may find their last repose beneath the vault that covers the ashes of the princes belonging to the house of Austria; that the father, the mother, and the remaining brothers of the deceased Archduke share in this desire, as do likewise all the members of the Imperial family; and that His Majesty the Emperor having the confidence that the Mexican government will, out of sentiments of humanity, facilitate the realization of this request, has sent to Mexico the Vice-Admiral de Tegethoff to solicit of the President permission to convey the Archduke's remains to Europe.

"Fully impressed with the just sentiments set forth in your Excellency's note, the President of the Republic has not hesitated to take measures so that the natural request of His Majesty the Emperor of Austria, and of the Imperial family, may be duly heeded and carried out with distinguished consideration. In accordance with the dispositions of the President, I have made known to Vice-Admiral de Tegethoff that the mortal remains of the Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian shall be at once delivered to his care, in order to convey them to Austria, and thus accomplish the object of his mission.

"I have the honor, Excellency, to assure you of my most distinguished consideration.

"S. LERDO DE TEJADA.

"To his Excellency Count of BEUST, Chancellor of the Empire, and Minister of the Imperial Household of Austria, Vienna."

On the 10th of November, Vice-Admiral Tegethoff, several other Austrian officers, and a Mexican force of a hundred men, escorted the remains of Maximilian from the city of Mexico, and reached Vera Cruz on the 25th,

at four o'clock, P. M. The Ayuntamiento of Vera Cruz met the *cortège* at Potrero, about two miles distant from the city, and returned with it. The coffin was deposited in the Parochial church until six o'clock the next morning, whence it was removed to the Austrian war-steamer *Novara*, en route for Vienna. The saloon was draped in mourning; in the centre of which, a table covered with black cloth, supported the coffin. At the head was erected an altar bearing a cross with the image of the Saviour; on the right, hung the Austrian flag; on the left, the Mexican;—both with drapery of black drooped upon the coffin—over all which laid a sword. Around the coffin stood six large silver candlesticks, supporting each a large lighted wax-candle. Two armed sentinels stood near by, day and night.

At about nine o'clock that morning, religious service was performed; and at one o'clock, P. M., the *Novara* steamed from the Mexican coast for Havana, arriving there on the first day of December. The Cuban Government had made extensive preparations for imposing obsequies, and communicated with Admiral Tegethoff in relation thereto. The Admiral replied that his instructions would not permit him to allow any funeral pomp.

The *Novara* remained in that port until six o'clock, P. M., of the 4th, when she weighed anchor and sailed for Austria.

Large crowds of people had gathered upon the wharves, in little boats, and at the windows, long before the hour of departure. At half past five, the bands on the two Spanish war-steamers *Gerona* and *Tetuan*, commenced to play funeral marches. On ships and forts, waved at half-mast the Austrian and Spanish colors, wreathed with black crape. And as the *Novara* ploughed the water out into the sea, all the Government bands united to freight the air with martial funeral

notes. The Austrian fleet in the Levant have been ordered to return to escort the *Novara* as she nears the Austrian coast.

It will be remembered that the *Novara* carried Maximilian and Carlota to their new home when both were in blooming health and in high spirits, as the elected Sovereigns over many subjects.

But how changed! That Emperor is now a subject of "Death! great proprietor of all." The humble clay of that once noble chief has crossed the bounding main to his native land again, where father, mother, brother, and others of imperial and royal blood, await its coming in mourning and sorrow; where the heaving sigh and moistened cheek can but faintly attest the depth of smothered grief; where the monumental stone shall mark the final rest of MAXIMILIAN I.

"Deep for the dead the grief must be,
Who ne'er gave cause to mourn before."

THE END.

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