V

RUPTURE BETWEEN THE ALLIES

THE situation was fast reaching a crisis. An explosion was imminent. The arrival of General Almonte,[1] who was destined by Napoleon to be the chief executive during the regency, only hastened the rupture between the allies and precipitated the final declaration of hostilities between France and Mexico.

The irritation of the Mexican government knew no bounds. A decree condemning to death all traitors and reactionaries had been passed, and on March 23 it was officially communicated to the allies. On March 26 General de Lorencez joined the admiral at Tehuacan, and the latter pushed on to Orizaba, where the allies were to hold a final conference on April 9. Here General Prim and Sir Charles Wyke insisted upon the departure of the exiles, urging that their presence placed the intervention of the powers in an absolutely false light before the world.

Their secret relation to the exiles imposed upon the French the responsibility of their safety; the

[1] March 1, 1862.

admiral flatly refused, at the same time announcing his intention to carry out at once the provisions of the convention of La Soledad, and to retreat with his contingent toward the coast, thereby recovering his freedom of action and the right to march upon Mexico without further delay.

It was obvious that the Mexican government was only gaining time in order to give the climate a chance to do its work. General de Lorencez, disapproving of the preliminary treaty which circumstances had forced the admiral to sign, was strongly inclined to break through its provisions and push on to the capital. He was overruled by the admiral's high sense of honor.

Measures were immediately taken to execute the articles of the convention by bringing back the French forces beyond the Chiquihuite, and on April 7 General Almonte, officially recognized by the French, endeavored to rally the scattered remnants of the clerical party by issuing a proclamation signed by ninety-two Mexican notables, in which he declared himself provisionally the supreme chief of the nation. To this President Juarez responded by a decree establishing martial law and declaring all cities occupied by the French in a state of siege. War with Mexico was declared.[1]

[1] Where was the solemn assurance that there existed no intention to threaten the independence, the sovereignty, and the integrity of the territory of the Mexican republic? And yet, even after the repulse of the French at Puebla, Napoleon, in a letter to General Forey, dated July 3, 1862, still kept up the flimsy farce. "The end to be attained," he wrote, "is not to force upon the Mexicans a form of government which would be dis-

The rupture between the allies was final, though peaceable. On April 15 Sir Charles Wyke and General Prim[1] concluded a separate treaty with the government of Juarez, and, having thus skilfully extricated themselves from a perilous situation, they prepared to leave the French to their own destiny.

Meantime the rainy season was approaching, at which time the difficulties, already so great, must become multiplied in a land where roads were only so called by courtesy and were little more than beaten-down tracks. The return of the French army to the coast, where the vomito was now raging, meant death to many, and possible disaster

agreeable to them, but to aid them in their efforts to establish, according to their own wish, a government which may have some chance of stability and which can insure to France redress for the wrongs of which she complains" (Mémorial Diplomatique, March 12, 1865). Was this blindness or duplicity?

[1] The instructions given to General Prim by the Spanish government were as follows: (1) A public and solemnly given satisfaction for the violent expulsion of her Majesty the Queen's ambassador (the terms of which were prescribed minutely), in the absence of which hostilities must be declared. (2) The rigorous execution of the Mon-Almonte treaty, and the payment of the Spanish claims unduly suspended by the Mexican government, and the payment in specie of 10,000,000 reals, this being the amount of unpaid interest. (3) An indemnity to the Spaniards entitled to damages in connection with the crimes committed at San Vicente, Chiconcuagua, and at the mine of San Dimas, and the punishment of the culprits and of the authorities who had failed to punish said crimes. (4) The payment of the cost of the three-masted schooner *Concepcion*, captured by a ship of Juarez.

The instructions close with the following: "Such are the conditions to be presented by your Excellency, but never peace; and without their complete acceptance by the government of the republic, it will not be possible to suspend hostilities." Compare French text given by Domenech, *loc. cit.*, p. 383.

MIGUEL MIRAMON.

A Mexican general, born in 1832. He fought against Juarez, and after defeat in 1860, fled from Mexico. Maximilian made him grand marshal, and minister to Berlin. He returned to Mexico in 1866, and was shot with Maximilian in 1867.

to the army. But the terms of the treaty were formal, and the admiral was not one to break his word. M. de Saligny and General de Lorencez were less punctilious; they reluctantly obeyed the order of the commander-in-chief, but watched for an opportunity to break through the impalpable barrier raised—as they thought, by honor alone—between them and the Mexican capital.

The opportunity soon presented itself, and General Zaragoza, commander-in-chief of the Liberal army, unwarily furnished General de Lorencez with the excuse for which he so anxiously longed, by addressing to him a communication concerning four hundred soldiers disabled by sickness, who had been left behind in the hospital at Orizaba under the protection of the treaty of La Soledad. In the wording of this communication the French general saw, or chose to see, a threat to the life of his soldiers.

It is but fair to say, however, that the sanguinary decrees issued one after the other by the Mexican government, the feeling against foreigners now rapidly growing among the people, the close proximity of numerous guerrillas standing ready to take advantage of the first moment of weakness or distress, the murder of French soldiers whenever they strayed from the camp,—all these symptoms of a fast fermenting spirit in the invaded land seemed to warrant the apprehensions of the general with regard to the safety of his trust.

At all events, he boldly assumed the whole responsibility of the step he was taking. Leaving

Córdoba with the army, he immediately pushed on to Orizaba (April 19), where he arrived (April 20) just as General Prim, with the Spanish contingent (and the newspaper staff which, gossip related, had traveled in his suite to herald his exploits—truly a sinecure!), were leaving by the same *garita* on their way to the coast. General Zaragoza, with the Liberal army, retreated from the city by one gate as the French entered by the other, with all the bells of the city ringing in token of popular rejoicing—under compulsion. General Zaragoza fell back upon Puebla. Having secured Orizaba as a basis of operation, General de Lorencez, with some five thousand men, started in pursuit of the Mexican army (April 27).

In the meantime a courier from France had brought the recall of Admiral Jurien de la Gravière, whose fall from the favor of his imperial master was kept no secret. The same courier that brought the admiral the disapproval of his government brought General de Lorencez his promotion to the command of the army. Napoleon, deceived by his minister's statements, now corroborated by General de Lorencez, only later did tardy justice to the admiral, to whom he strove to make amends by attaching him to his imperial staff.

Thus the clearing up of a situation already precarious was left to a man of narrow views and small capacity, who, according to the verdict of his own officers, had little to recommend him save the soldierly qualities of bravery and energy. That General de Lorencez, under instructions from his

government and relying upon the statements of its agent at Mexico, should have arrived imbued with erroneous ideas with regard to the popularity of the intervention and the relative strength of the Liberal and clerical parties, seems natural. But enough had taken place since his arrival in Mexico to open the eyes of one less wilfully blind. Any military chief of average capacity must have seen that the whole Mexican population was not rising to "greet the French army as liberators," and that the popular enthusiasm that was to open to them the doors of every town, turning their progress to the capital into a triumphal march marked at every point by ovations, showers of flowers, and the spontaneous vivas of a hitherto oppressed and now grateful multitude, was but a fast disappearing mirage luring them on to destruction.

Instead of the promised enthusiastic welcome a sullen acquiescence in the inevitable everywhere greeted the foreign invaders. This, whenever compatible with personal safety, turned into active enmity on the part of the nation, and often into open and revengeful cruelty. Instead of the great reactionary army, numbering at least ten thousand men, which, rallying under General Marquez, was to hurry to his support on his march upon the capital, a few stray guerrillas had joined his forces, ill-armed, ill-fed, undisciplined bands, upon which small reliance could be placed, and whose presence under the French flag only helped to irritate the feelings of the people. And far from the Liberal party losing its partizans upon the landing of the

French, some of the reactionary leaders,—as, for instance, General Zuloaga,—forgetting their former feuds at the first sound of a foreign invasion of their native land, had rallied around the Mexican government, whose cause now seemed linked with that of the national honor.

When reverses and difficulties of all kinds assailed the army, it was remembered that General de Lorencez's violation of the sacredness of a treaty had taken place on Good Friday at half-past three o'clock, and I was told that this coincidence had been looked upon by many among the soldiers as a bad omen.

The Mexican government, however, had made good use of the time gained by the skilful negotiations of its representatives; it had earnestly prepared for resistance, and now concentrated its whole strength upon the defense of Puebla.

Such was the condition of affairs when unforeseen circumstances brought me to Mexico.

PART II

THE FRENCH INTERVENTION
1862–64