

young people, in utter disregard of age, corpulence, and cumbersome military accoutrements!

The personality of Dr. Gwin was a strong one. A tall, broad, squarely built man, with rough features which seemed hewn out of a block with an ax, ruddy skin, and a wealth of white hair brushed back from his brow, all combined to make him by far the most striking figure among the group of Southern leaders then assembled in Mexico.

His own faith in the almightiness of his will influenced others, and in this case brought him very near to success. He talked willingly and fluently of his plans. Notwithstanding the decided opposition met with on the part of the Mexican government, he then confidently expected to be installed in the new colony by the opening of the year, and invited his friends to eat their Christmas dinner with him there. He was generous in sharing his prospects with them. We all were to be taken in and made wealthy: every dollar invested was to return thousands; every thousand, millions!

It was entertaining to hear him narrate his interviews at the Tuileries with Napoleon III and the other great men of the day. His tone was that of a potentate treating with his peers. He spoke of "my policy," "my colony," "my army," etc.

In 1865 Dr. Gwin again went to France to confer with its ruler. Upon his return to Mexico, he was regarded as the unofficial agent of the French government. The Emperor had promised him every facility and assistance. All that was now needed to make his dreams a brilliant reality was the sig-

nature of Maximilian. He was full of glowing anticipations. But Maximilian, who at the time was none too friendly to his allies, stood firm.¹ However much the French might urge it, the national feeling was already strongly arrayed against any plan involving the possible alienation of any part of the Mexican territory. Moreover, it was becoming obvious, from the various complications occurring upon the Rio Grande, that the befriending of the Confederate refugees must henceforth seriously add to the difficulty of obtaining the recognition of the Mexican empire by the United States—an end which Maximilian had greatly at heart, and one which, strangely enough, he never lost the hope of accomplishing, so little did he, even after two years' residence in Mexico, understand American conditions.

On June 26, 1865, Marshal Bazaine was married to Mlle. de la Peña. The Emperor and Empress expressed a wish that the ceremony and wedding breakfast should take place at the imperial palace. No effort was spared by them to make the occasion a memorable one: Empress Charlotte bestowed upon the bride a set of diamonds; the Emperor gave her as a dowry the palace of San Cosme, a noble residence, valued at one hundred thousand

¹ Later he laid stress upon his attitude with regard to this. In the memorandum written by him for the use of his lawyers at his trial in vindication of his conduct, he urged as a claim to Mexico his firm resistance to French pretensions concerning the disposal of Sonora, and his loyal effort to maintain the integrity of the Mexican territory, and declared that this drew upon him the hostility of the French. See S. Basch, "Erinnerungen aus Mexico." (This interesting document is not given in the French edition.)

dollars, where the French had established their headquarters since the beginning of the intervention. Every one was in good humor, many polite assurances of appreciation and good will were exchanged on both sides, and for a while it seemed as though harmony might be restored among the leaders. But this pleasant state of affairs was of short duration. The difficulties inherent in the situation were too conspicuous, and the causes of ill feeling were too deeply laid, to be overcome by other than superior men. Notwithstanding a superficial improvement in Mexican conditions, it was becoming patent in the summer of 1865 that nothing short of a miracle could save all concerned from disaster and humiliation.

In those days, our social circle varied from year to year according to the political and military conditions of the hour. Occasionally the arrival of some distinguished newcomer on a special mission from abroad would create a stir among us.

The advent, toward the close of the year 1865, of M. Langlais, the fifth financier sent by Napoleon III to organize the finances of the empire, caused considerable excitement and aroused the hopes of the court. His appointment to succeed M. de Bonnefons had been heralded by the French official papers with much pomposity.

He came ostensibly to act as minister of finance (without a portfolio), at an enormous salary, and was supposed, by those who sent him, to take the full direction of Mexican financial affairs.

He was a counselor of state, and was possessed

of large experience of French politics. A ministerial official, methodical, precise, fresh from the well-appointed offices of the French government, he arrived at Vera Cruz just as a guerrilla band, after taking up the rails of the only railway then laid upon Mexican soil, had attacked a train and massacred its escort of French soldiers.

The poor man's stereotyped ideas of existence were considerably shaken up by the occurrence; but he was a firm believer in his own capacity, and was disposed to attribute the failures of his predecessors to their inferiority to himself. He won the confidence and personal regard of the young sovereigns, and unhesitatingly undertook to raise the public revenue, then of eighty-four millions of dollars, to one hundred and twenty millions. How far he might have gone toward fulfilling his promise it is impossible to tell, for he died suddenly on February 23, 1866.¹

His death was a blow to the court, where he stood in high favor. The Empress Charlotte especially is said to have detected in it the finger of a fate adverse to the empire. This calamity was soon followed by another, well calculated to cast the gloom of a dark shadow across the path of the young princess.

Her father, King Leopold I, had died December 10, 1865. Upon his accession to the throne, her brother, King Leopold II, sent a special embassy to the court of Mexico to make an official announce-

¹ M. Langlais is stated to have honorably; but the favor in which said that he was working to give he was held at court makes such Maximilian the chance to abdicate a statement doubtful.

Maximilian in Mexico

ment of his reign. The ambassador, General Foury, arrived with his suite on February 14, 1866, and, having fulfilled his mission, departed on March 4. During their brief visit to the capital, the Belgian envoys had been freely entertained by society. It was, therefore, with a thrill of horror that, on the day following their departure, the news came that their party had been attacked and fired upon by highwaymen at Rio Frio, a few leagues from the capital, and that Baron d'Huart, *officier d'ordonnance* of the Count of Flanders, had been shot in the head and killed. Four other members of the embassy were wounded. Consternation reigned at court. The Emperor went to Rio Frio to see personally to the comfort of the wounded and to bring back the body of Baron d'Huart, whose solemn obsequies were conducted in the most impressive manner.

The news of this tragedy, when it reached Europe, must have cast a flash of lurid light upon the true condition of the Mexican empire.

During the winter of 1866 Napoleon III sent Baron Saillard upon a special mission to prepare Maximilian for the gradual withdrawal of the French army, and to intimate to him that he must not depend upon a continuance of present conditions. The envoy, however, failed to make upon the prince the impression which it was intended that he should make. Maximilian received him only twice, and rather resented his warnings. His visit only added to the coldness of the young Emperor's relations with the French.



DR. WILLIAM M. GWIN.

A Cloud

Shortly afterward General Almonte was sent to France on a mission, the object of which was to influence Napoleon to continue his support. The only result of his errand was a communication addressed to Maximilian, dated May 31, 1866. In this Napoleon stated the situation with a frankness the brutality of which aroused the indignation of the court of Mexico. An onerous agreement was nevertheless arrived at, to which necessity compelled Maximilian to subscribe (July 30). By this agreement, half of the revenue derived from the customs of Tampico and Vera Cruz was to be assigned to the French in payment of the debt until the entire outlay made on behalf of the Mexican empire had been repaid. The French, in return, promised to continue their support until November 1, 1867, and to withdraw their army in three detachments, the last of which would embark on that date. The imperial government was thereby deprived of half of its reliable revenue at a time when, in order to maintain its existence under the present stress, large additional resources should have been at its command.¹

The years 1865 and 1866 had been spent in administrative experiments. At first French officers detached from the service were placed in the various departments of the government as under-secretaries, in the hope of bringing about an honest and efficient organization without giving undue umbrage to the Mexicans. Members of the marshal's own household served thus in the War Department and in the Emperor's military office.

¹ See Appendix B.

But the efforts of the French to introduce regularity into the various offices of the administration were so hampered that, even had the task been an easy one, it is not likely that much could have been accomplished. They had everything against them, even their allies and the monarch whom they wished to serve.

When, however, in 1866, the situation was found to be desperate, the Emperor, seriously alarmed, became more earnest and called the French to the rescue. Colonel Loysel was made chief of the military office of the Emperor, and the full control of the departments of War and of Finance was given respectively to Colonel Osmont, the chief of staff of the Corps Expéditionnaire, and to M. Friant, the chief of its commissariat.

But at this time there was not a dollar in the treasury; the sources of imperial revenue were daily diminishing; and the expenses of the government were now paid by the marshal out of the French treasury, under his own responsibility. The hour had been allowed to go by when organization was possible.

The marshal felt—and this feeling was shared by others—that neither Colonel Osmont nor M. Friant should have accepted a position of trust impossible to fill with credit at a time when France had resolved to withdraw its support from Maximilian. Their action was attributed to personal motives. The marshal declined to coöperate with or to help them, and they became an additional source of trouble. Later on, when, the Liberal

cabinet having withdrawn, Maximilian once more turned to the reactionary party and called to power the clericals, he retained the above-mentioned Frenchmen in their departments. This affectation of confidence only added to the general ill feeling.

Under the conditions of open hostility then existing between the French and Mexican governments the interests of each were too wide apart for such a connection to continue without danger. A request from the commander-in-chief to MM. Osmont and Friant that they choose between their present ministerial functions and their respective positions in the Corps Expéditionnaire gave rise to a correspondence between the marshal and the Emperor, in the course of which the aggressive insistence of the latter compelled the former to refer the matter to the home government.

M. Drouyn de Lhuys upheld the marshal. And well it was that he did, for just then Mr. Seward, in a diplomatic note to M. de Montholon, under date of August 16, 1866,¹ peremptorily called his attention to the fact that the presence of the two French officers in the imperial cabinet was calculated to interfere with the good relations existing between France and the United States.

As a result of this communication, the marshal was censured by his government for not having at once prevented the above-mentioned officers from accepting their respective portfolios. The irritation on all sides was painfully visible.

¹ "Diplomatic Correspondence," 1866, Part I, p. 381 et seq.