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QUERÉTARO, 1867

THE end is known. On February 13 the Emperor, with Generals Marquez and Vidaurri, at the head of a column of some two thousand men, sallied forth from Mexico to establish his base of operations at Querétaro.

After his defeat at San Jacinto (January 27), General Miramon, with the remains of his army, had fallen back upon Querétaro, then held by General Mejía with nine hundred men, and it was urged that Maximilian should there join his faithful generals. This plan, evolved by Señor Lares and the clerical leaders, had for its ostensible object to spare the capital the horrors of a siege. But it was more than suspected that a certain distrust had arisen between the Emperor and his Mexican supporters. They feared lest he also might make terms with the national party; and they wished, by inducing him to leave the capital, to put it out of his power to sacrifice them or their cause. Had he not once before, after accepting the crown at their hands, thrown himself into the arms of their enemies by calling Liberal leaders to his councils?

However worthy in the eyes of posterity may appear Maximilian's attempt to reconcile opposing elements in the interest of peace and order, such a course was not calculated to inspire confidence in his personal loyalty to the once discarded extremists, now become his only supporters. Miramon and Marquez were not likely to forget that, in the hour of triumph of the monarchy erected by their hands, they had been sent, as wags then put it, one to study the art of fortification in Prussia, the other to watch the progress of civilization in Turkey.

It is difficult to penetrate all the hidden causes that governed the extraordinary policy followed at this time; but there is little doubt that individual interest and personal distrust played too large a part in its adoption. However this may be, it was at Querétaro that the last scene of the tragedy was enacted.

The auxiliary regiments, Maximilian's most trustworthy dependence in his extremity, were, by the advice of Marquez, left behind. The Emperor, he urged, must now throw himself entirely upon the Mexican nation. Thus Colonels Kodolitch, Khevenhüller, Hammerstein, and others, remained in Mexico, and only a few of the Emperor's foreign supporters followed him.

General Quiroga's division was withdrawn from San Luis and brought to Querétaro, while the veteran division of General Mendez, who had victoriously held Morelia and the Michoacan against the forces of Generals Regules and Corona, was likewise ordered, on February 13, to abandon that

section of the country and to hasten to the Emperor's support. These leaders, with Generals Miramon, Marquez, Mejía, and Castillo, and General Arellano, who commanded the artillery, were the most conspicuous among the Imperialist officers gathered around Maximilian at this time.¹

During the cruel weeks of mingled hope and despair that had elapsed since he had left Chapultepec, Maximilian had conquered self. Now the ambitious Austrian prince, the weak tool of intriguing politicians, the upholder of religious and political retrogression, disappears; and where he had stood posterity will henceforth see only the noble son of the Hapsburgs, the well-bred gentleman who, aware of his failure, was ready to stand by it and to pay the extreme penalty of his errors.

Before the figure of Maximilian of Austria, from the time when he took command of his little army and resolved to stand for better or worse by those who had remained faithful to his fallen fortunes, all true-hearted men must bow with respect. From this time forth his words and acts were noble; and in his attitude at this supreme moment, his incapacity as a chief executive, his moral and intellectual limitations as a man, are overlooked. We forget that he was no leader when we see how well he could die.

It is noteworthy that, with the exception of General Miramon, those who had most urged upon him the last sacrifice were not with him to share it.

¹ A. Haus, "Querétaro: Souvenirs d'un Officier de l'Empereur Maximilien," pp. 11, 17.

Father Fischer disappeared from the stage of history almost as abruptly as he had entered it. Señor Lares and the cabinet, who were responsible for the last plan of action carried out by the Emperor, had remained in Mexico at the head of affairs. General Marquez, when the republican forces closed in upon the doomed empire, was sent from Querétaro with General Vidaurri, under an escort of cavalry led by General Quiroga, to raise supplies and reinforcements. He was vested with supreme authority as lieutenant of the empire, and had pledged himself to return with relief within twenty days. The Emperor wearily counted the hours as time went by; but, like the raven sent out from Noah's ark, General Marquez found enough to occupy him in the satisfaction of his own greed, and was never again heard from by him who sent him.

Overruling General Vidaurri, he deserted his imperial master in his extremity. He used the extraordinary powers given him to establish himself in the capital, where, for his own ends, he subjected the wretched inhabitants to the most cruel extortions. Routed at San Lorenzo¹ by General

¹ In the difficult retreat which followed these defeats, General Marquez fled with a body of two hundred cavalry, leaving his beaten army, then pursued by sixteen thousand men, to extricate itself as best it might. Colonel Kodolitch then assumed command, and fighting his way through the enemy, brought back the debris of the imperial forces, now reduced to one third, to the capital, where the general had preceded him. It is said that this extraordinary conduct on the part of their official leader caused the indignant foreign officers no little concern with regard to the future. In order to guard against similar

Diaz, who at once proceeded to besiege Mexico, he unduly prolonged the resistance of the city after the final downfall of the empire, exposing it to the unnecessary hardships of a four months' siege, the horrors of which were mitigated only by the generosity and forbearance of the Liberal commander.

When at last the starving people rose in indignation, and would stand him no longer, he suddenly vanished. It is said that on the eve of being delivered into the hands of his enemies he managed his escape by concealing himself in a freshly dug grave. Twenty-seven years elapsed before the Mexican "Leopard" dared show his face once more in his native land, now transformed by the triumph of the men and of the institutions against which he had so desperately fought.

General Marquez, who, strangely enough, seems to have enjoyed the full confidence of his sovereign, had opposed with all his influence General Miramon's desire to conduct the war aggressively and to attack in detail the enemy's forces before they could unite to invest Querétaro.¹

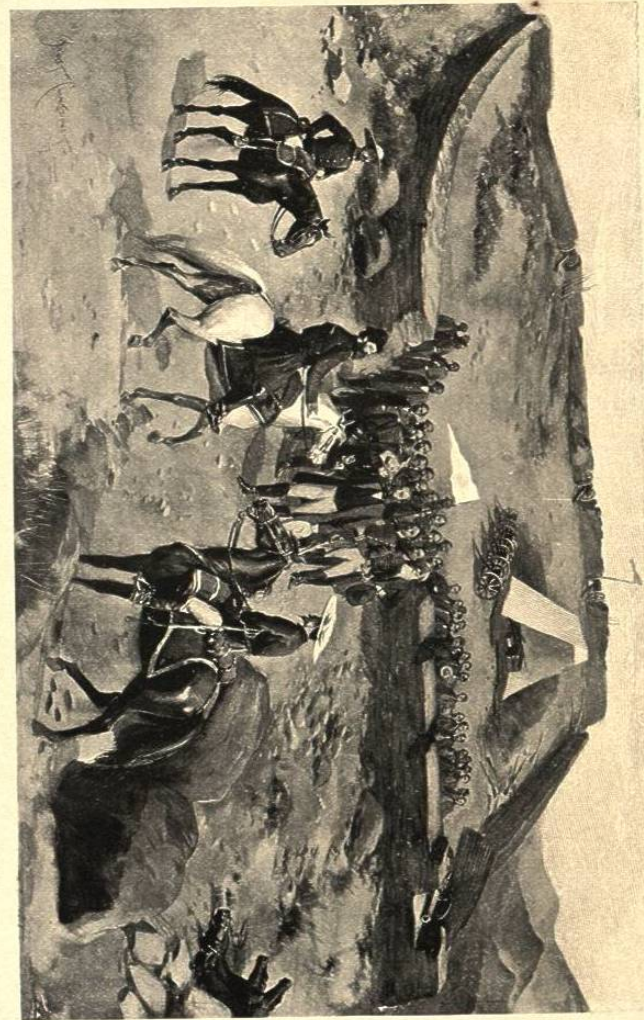
accidents, a council was held by the foreign leaders, Colonel Kodolitch, Captain Hammerstein, Commanders Kliekzing and Chenet, etc., who resolved that, although it was deeply humiliating for them to serve under a general who did not blush to desert his command under fire, as their service was needed by the Emperor they would retain their respective commissions; but in the moment of danger they would regard themselves as under the orders of Colonel Kodolitch. They further decided, should the city surrender, not to share in the terms of a Mexican capitulation, but to make their own terms, or, if necessary, to cut their way through to the sea. See Charles d'Héricault, "Maximilien et le Mexique," page 231 et seq. ¹ A. Haus, *loc. cit.*, page 164.

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Gradually the republican divisions, arriving from all points of the country, were allowed to concentrate, until the imperial army was completely hemmed in. The heroic sorties with which the weary monotony of those weeks of expectancy was broken could now only result in the gradual exhaustion of the besieged and of their supplies. General Miramon, fretting under the restraint imposed upon him, saw the circle growing closer and stronger, until it was too late to make a winning fight. Only the energy of despair could contemplate a bare escape from the trap in which the Imperialists were now caught.

After a siege of over two months (from March 4 to May 15), during which his army had been cruelly depleted by frequent sorties and by the typhus fever now raging in the town, having abandoned all hope of relief from without, starvation staring him in the face, and ammunition beginning to fail, Maximilian and his still faithful generals resolved to cut their way through the enemy's lines with the little army, then numbering about nine thousand men and thirty-nine guns. This course had been urged for some time, but General Miramon, ever sanguine of ultimate success, had opposed the idea.

Three o'clock in the morning of May 14 was the time agreed upon for the sortie. Colonel Salm-Salm was to form a body-guard for the Emperor with the Khevenhüller hussars, the cavalry under Major Malburg, and the regiment of the Empress, com-



SURRENDER OF MAXIMILIAN, MAY 15, 1867.

manded by Colonel Lopez.¹ All was in readiness. The gold and silver in the imperial treasury were divided for safe-keeping among four or five trusted men,² one of whom was Colonel Lopez, military commander of La Cruz, who enjoyed the confidence of Maximilian and had just received from him a decoration for valor.³

When the generals assembled in council at ten o'clock on the evening of May 13 to decide upon the final details of the projected sortie, General Mejía stated that his preparations were not quite perfected, and it was decided to postpone the venture until the following night.⁴

At ten o'clock on the evening of May 14 the generals once more assembled in council of war

¹ Dr. Basch (*loc. cit.*, p. 229) mentions fifty of the Khevenhüller hussars, eventually increased to one hundred by volunteers, and eighty men were commanded by Major Malburg. Count Pachta was lieutenant-colonel of the cavalry regiment of the Empress, of which Colonel Lopez was commander. These, led by Prince Salm-Salm, were to protect the Emperor during the sortie.

² Colonel Lopez, Colonel Pradillo, Colonel Campos, Colonel Salm-Salm, Dr. Basch, and the Emperor's secretary, Señor Blasio. See Basch, *loc. cit.*, p. 233.

³ Colonel Lopez was highly thought of by the French, who had conferred upon him the red ribbon of the Legion of Honor. He was appointed to act on the

imperial escort when the monarch landed at Vera Cruz, and made himself agreeable to him. The dragoons of the Empress, of which he was the commander, were regarded as one of the best regiments in the army.

The man's political past, however, did not bear investigation, and when Maximilian, whose favorite he had become, thought of promoting him to the rank of general, the best among the officers of the imperial army requested General Mendez to inform the Emperor of his record. It has been stated that his disappointed hopes influenced his conduct in the dark transactions through which his name has been handed down to lasting infamy.

⁴ Salm-Salm, *loc. cit.*

with a view to arranging for the coming conflict; but again the execution of the project was postponed twenty-four hours.

It was past eleven o'clock when Colonel Lopez left the Emperor's room after talking over with his sovereign certain details connected with the service. Before he went out Maximilian asked him, should he be wounded in the sortie, to prevent his capture by blowing out his brains.¹

The Imperialist leaders had returned to their respective quarters. The Emperor, however, was ill with dysentery; the excitement of the approaching conflict kept him awake, and he did not retire till one o'clock. At 3 he was seized with violent pain, and sent for his physician. A profound stillness reigned over La Cruz as the doctor passed through its corridors, and no sign of the impending catastrophe attracted his attention.

But the angel of death was even then hovering over the group of brave men gathered within the walls of the old convent on that fateful night. The coming hours were pregnant with tragedy. At this very moment, destiny was at work ruthlessly clipping the threads of the web so painfully woven by them, and upon which hung their lives.

At 2 A. M. a young officer of artillery, Lieutenant Albert Haus,² to whose special care his superior officer had intrusted the handling of two pieces which, in the plan laid for the intended sortie, were to defend the entrance of the *huerta*, or garden, of

¹ Basch, *loc. cit.*, p. 233.

d'un Officier de l'Empereur Maxi-

² See "Querétaro: Souvenirs milien" (Paris, 1869).

La Cruz, was awakened, as previously arranged, by his old sergeant, as he slept, wrapped in his *zarape*, by the side of his battery.

For a while he paced up and down the platform, trying to overcome his drowsiness, as he took up his watch, and finally he sat down on one of the guns, feverishly awaiting the signal to prepare for the coming struggle; for he was unaware of any change in the orders given.

Suddenly he heard rapid footsteps coming toward him, and Colonel Lopez, recognizable in the dark by his uniform embroidered in silver, stood before him, followed at a short distance by a body of soldiers. Pointing to these, he said: "Here is a reinforcement of infantry. Arouse your artillerymen; have this gun taken out of its embrasure and turned obliquely to the left—quickly."

Believing that the time for the sortie had come, the lieutenant promptly called his men, while Colonel Lopez stood by impatiently, upbraiding in forcible terms the old sergeant, who, just aroused from his first sleep, was slow to obey. After repeating his orders, he hastily withdrew.

The lieutenant was surprised at the strange instructions given him, and although he reflected that the colonel must have good reasons for the command,—probably some cause to fear an attack on this point,—he instinctively felt a misgiving.

The platoon of infantry brought by Colonel Lopez had taken its stand behind the battery. After carrying out the colonel's orders, the lieutenant looked for his sword and his *zarape*, left by

him on the ground where he had lain. They were missing. Suspecting the newcomers, he called their officer's attention to the fact. Then for the first time he noticed the strange demeanor of his new companions. The officer was utterly unknown to him. He seemed uncommunicative. There was something particularly unfamiliar in the men's appearance. Yet as a number of companies in the imperial army had been formed with city recruits or even with prisoners taken in the sorties during the siege, this alone would not have warranted serious suspicion. But when one of his artillerymen came up to him excitedly and complained that his musket had been taken from him, and when this complaint was promptly followed by another, he again went to the officer and inquired to what corps he and his men belonged. Without a moment's hesitation the stranger answered that he formed part of General Mendez's brigade.

Lieutenant Haus had long served in this brigade and knew all its officers. His doubts were at once aroused. The conviction gradually grew upon him that something unusual was taking place, and again he begged the officer to tell him the real cause of his presence at this post. The man answered that news had come that one of the battalions of the garrison of La Cruz had agreed to betray the place, but that fortunately the conspiracy had been discovered, and that all the posts were now being changed. This story tallied with the haste and peculiar manner of Colonel Lopez, the commander of the place, as well as with the unusual

stir now visible farther along the line toward the pantheon. Anxious, however, to get at the truth, the lieutenant resolved to join the colonel, and asked the officer the direction which he had taken. The stranger silently pointed toward the pantheon.

As the lieutenant proceeded to descend from the terrace, a sentry, hitherto unnoticed, roughly stopped him, crying, "Halt, there!" The man evidently had his orders, and the lieutenant turned to the strange officer, requesting him to suspend them in his favor. The latter, however, evaded the question. This irritated him, and noticing just then a man holding one of the missing muskets, he attempted to tear it away from him, whereupon the soldier attacked him with his bayonet, and things might have gone hard with Lieutenant Haus had not the strange officer interfered.

"But," exclaimed the young man, "will you tell me what on earth is going on here?" "Do not worry," reiterated the strange officer. "The truth is that we are part of General Quiroga's brigade. We have just returned from Mexico with General Marquez to relieve the place."

The palpable falsehood was enough to excite the young man's worst fears. General Quiroga, it was well known, had left his infantry at Querétaro. Moreover, it was quite impossible for troops to enter the closely besieged place without being heard and recognized by the besiegers. Something like the truth flashed through his brain. And yet how was he to account for the presence and words of Colonel Lopez, whose interest, as well as every tie

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of duty and gratitude, must bind him to the Emperor? In his bewilderment he exclaimed: "Amid so many falsehoods, I suspect treason." After a moment's hesitation the strange officer replied: "Have no fear, señor; you are in the hands of the regular army. We are not guerrilleros; we belong to the battalion of the *supremos poderes* of the republic."

For a moment the lieutenant stood petrified. The whole truth, in all its hideousness, burst upon him. The enemy was in possession of the place. What horrors would come next? And yet, Colonel Lopez—was it a hallucination? Could he have mistaken his identity in the darkness of the night? He called the old sergeant and asked him if he had recognized the colonel. "Yes," replied the sergeant, who, having been roughly handled by their superior officer, had good reason to remember.

"But then," cried the young man, beside himself, now that the terrors of the situation dawned upon his understanding, "he must be a traitor! He is going to deliver up the Emperor!"

"Are you only now finding this out?" sadly queried the old soldier.

Lieutenant Haus once more turned to the strange officer. "Then," he asked, "it is Colonel Lopez who introduced you here?"

"Certainly," he replied. And, smiling: "But, I repeat it, you need have no fear. We are of the regular army. No harm will come to you."

He looked toward La Cruz, the improvised stronghold where the Emperor had his headquar-



DON PEDRO RINCON GALLARDO.
A commander in the Liberal army.

Querétaro, 1867

ters, hoping to see some sign of a struggle—the flash of a musket, the noise of resistance, a movement, a signal. But no. The dark mass of the convent building detached itself with imposing grandeur against the night sky, and silence reigned everywhere.

He was a prisoner. The Juarists were in Querétaro, and treason even then was stealthily completing its loathsome task of destruction without his being able to give one word of warning to its victims.

The mysterious officer, guessing his thoughts, said quietly: “The whole convent is already in our power. Your emperor must be taken even now.”

At this moment Captain Gontron, a Frenchman, appeared upon the scene, seemingly free, but in a towering rage.

“I wish,” he said, “that you, who can speak Spanish better than I, would ask these black devils who have just come to relieve me at the pantheon why my *zarape* and my sword have disappeared. I believe they have stolen them. Anyhow, who are these filibusters that Colonel Lopez has brought here? If my sword does not turn up in five minutes, I will smash in the face of their rascally commander, who is anything but civil.”

The captain spoke in French, fiercely twisting his mustache. At any other time the humorous side of the situation must have struck the lieutenant, but just then he felt little inclination for mirth. He thereupon explained to the captain that they

were prisoners, and that Colonel Lopez had introduced the enemy into the place.

The Frenchman for a while stood speechless; then recovering his speech with his philosophy, he said: "After all, it had to come to an end *somehow*."

As he spoke, a Juarist officer, with a detachment at his heels, rushed upon the terrace and ordered a gun turned upon the convent. His orders were that the artillerymen be made to serve the battery. Should they demur, they must be shot down. As for the captain and the lieutenant, they were to be conducted under escort before General Velez, who was then in the convent. They were made to start at once.

Upon arriving near La Cruz, they saw a republican battalion entering the edifice. At every moment they expected to hear firing. But no one seemed aware of what was going on. Nothing broke the oppressive stillness save the dull sound of the tread of the enemy's detachments as they quietly marched along, and the quick orders whispered by the officers in the silence of the night.

Failing to find General Velez, the escort marched the prisoners back to the garden. Day was dawning. Upon reaching the garden they met Colonel Guzman, who had just been made prisoner.

The unusual incidents which had accompanied Colonel Lopez's betrayal had not remained wholly unobserved. It has been stated¹ that at 1:30 A. M. Colonel Tinajero, on watch at the convent heights, had come to headquarters and reported an unusual

¹ By M. Charles d'Héricault, *loc. cit.*, p. 252.

stir in the enemy's camp. The same writer adds that, later on, another officer had come to report that the Juarists seemed to be entering La Cruz. He was laughed at for his pains. How could such a thing take place without a single shot being fired?

Colonel Manuel Guzman, a member of the Emperor's staff, however, thought it wise personally to look into the matter. He went down into the court of the convent, intending to visit the outposts. Here his progress was barred by the enemy. He was forthwith arrested and placed under the same escort as Lieutenant Haus and Captain Gonttron, who, in a few words, told him what had happened. The colonel's face grew ashy. "Impossible!" he said; "what you tell me is impossible."¹

The prisoners now stood again upon the terrace which three hours before had been guarded by the men of the command of Colonel Jablonski, the friend and accomplice of Colonel Lopez. They were led across to the other side and made to pass down some hastily disposed steps of adobe bricks, the recent origin of which was obvious. It was clearly at this point that the enemy had entered the place. A few moments more, and they were out of Querétaro, marching between a double hedge of republican bayonets, disposed as though expecting a long line of prisoners.

At 5 A. M. Dr. Basch and Prince Salm-Salm were each abruptly startled out of a sound sleep, the first by Colonel Jablonski, the second by Colo-

¹ I here follow Lieutenant Haus's narrative, as it is based upon personal experience. *Loc. cit.*, p. 284.