

ernment a limited hereditary monarchy, with a Catholic prince.

"2. The sovereign shall take the title of Emperor of Mexico.

"3. The imperial crown of Mexico is offered to his imperial and royal highness the Prince Ferdinand Maximilian, Archduke of Austria, for himself and his descendants.

"4. If, under circumstances which cannot be foreseen, the Archduke of Austria, Ferdinand Maximilian, should not take possession of the throne which is offered to him, the Mexican nation relies on the good-will of His Majesty Napoleon III., Emperor of the French, to indicate for it another Catholic prince."

It is in this analysis and summary of causes that led to the London convention and its dissolution at the Orizaba conference; of the relations of Mexico to the powers she so openly defied; of the motives that led Louis Napoleon to enforce the claims of France alone; of the history of the invasion to the surrender of the capital; and of the origin and action of the Assembly of Notables, that one may see in a true light the Mexicans' choice of a sovereign of the new empire; judge the real causes of their action; and gain acquaintance with the problems of Church and State, of diplomacy and politics, that awaited the coming of Maximilian and Carlotta.

#### CHAPTER IV.

Choice of a ruler—Estrada and the Clerical leaders—The Archduke—Birth—Education—Student—Naval commander—Viceroy—Marriage—Carlotta—Ancestry—Personal qualities—Miramar—Invitation to Mexican throne—The deputation—Estrada's plea—Maximilian's reply—Popular vote—Guaranties—Motives—Ambition—Von Gagern's warning—Carlotta's decision—Acts of adhesion—Treaty of Miramar—Second deputation—Acceptance of the throne—Departure from Miramar—Visit to Rome—Arrival at Vera Cruz—Proclamation—Journey to the capital—Reception—Vision of imperialism—Chapultepec.

NAPOLEON received the nomination of the Assembly of Notables "as a symptom of favorable augury," and hailed with satisfaction the result of the intrigue and diplomatic negotiations at London, Mexico, Paris, Brussels, Rome, and Vienna. Forey and Bazaine and their victorious legions had opened the way to the accomplishment of the original scheme. The crowning act must be brilliant and dramatic; and the new empire must rise from the ruins of the old civilization, and challenge the world with its lustre and promise, to rank with that other empire of which the first Napoleon

dreamed and prophesied in the land of the Egyptians. The choice of a ruler in the new government was a serious question. It was necessary that he should be acceptable to the clerical and royalist parties at home and abroad; to the great powers, wearied of the Mexicans and their revolutions; and willing to serve the vanity and ambition of the Emperor of the French. Mexico could offer no suitable candidate; and, in French judgment, any Mexican name would have had no prestige, and would have commanded no respect. It was clear to the parties in interest that the sovereign must be a foreigner, a man of royal lineage, and above the jealousies of a commoner raised to kingly dignity and power.

The shrewd old diplomatist, Estrada, for twenty years the earnest advocate of foreign intervention at Rome and Vienna; Almonte, and other clerical leaders, privy to the secret negotiations and plans for the establishment of a monarchy in Mexico,—now that the golden moment for the realization of their hopes had come,—hastened to name the man for the occasion, the Austrian Archduke Maximilian. The choice was no surprise to the Emperor, for negotiations had been opened with the

Archduke before the London convention was written; and it commended itself to his political sagacity, for by it he could make partial amends to Austria for the surrender of Lombardy and Venice, as the ultimate price of peace in the Italian campaign; her neutrality would probably be assured in the event of war with any other power; and the prince was a champion of the Church, a defender of the religion the Emperor had undertaken to restore in its western stronghold; and, above all, through this selection he could defeat the ambition of the Spanish court for the elevation of one of the Bourbon princes, and no continental power would probably challenge his choice.

The crown was offered to a man of kingly race and history. At Schönbrunn, in July, 1832, a second son was born to the Archduke Francis Charles, brother of Ferdinand I. of Austria, and Sophia Frederica Dorothea, princess of Bavaria. In royal fashion this child of imperialism was christened Ferdinand Maximilian Joseph, honored names in the annals of the house of Hapsburg-Lorraine. He was educated for the navy, entered the service at the age of fourteen; and, apart from the pre-

ferment and promotion which would inevitably mark the career of the emperor's brother, he won, by his ability and merit, the rank of rear-admiral. Prince Salm-Salm, a schoolmate and close friend, who served on the staff of Maximilian, and who died in a charge of the Prussian cavalry at Gravelotte, thus describes him :

"He was about six feet high, and of slender figure. His movements and gait were light and graceful, his greeting especially genial. His mouth had the unmistakable stamp of Hapsburg house, but not so strongly marked as with some of his illustrious family. The expression of his face was kind and friendly, and so was his bearing. Even with his intimates he was never familiar, but preserved a certain dignity of manner. He was true to his friends, and loyal to a fault ; for he never could suspect treachery in those who surrounded him. His love of beauty and harmony was so great that he was easily captivated by handsome people with pleasing manners ; and he could not divest himself of the idea that a fine human form must contain a noble soul. Raised in the gayest capital in Germany, or, perhaps, in the whole world ; educated at one of its most brilliant courts ; this prince, though always of a cheerful disposition, was never prone to frivolity or the many follies by which young men, situated like himself, usually enervate alike their brains and systems. While others were flitting the 'golden moments' away,—taking part in pompous shows, or indulging in the effeminacies of a life at court,

—he was immured with his professors, or deeply intent upon some erudite work. Educated, too, by men who feared not to tell him the truth,—men who had his welfare solely at heart,—he 'possessed opportunities'—I am using his own words—'seldom, alas ! accorded to princes.' Nor has he shown himself to be unworthy or unappreciative of the lore and devotion thus bestowed upon him by his early teachers."

He was of fine presence, winning and courteous manners, charitable in his judgments of men and their motives ; and, while intolerant of any abuse of power, and a critic of monasticism and the barren life of the cloister, he was an imperialist in every sense, and an extremist in his devotion to the tenets of the Catholic Church. He was a noted linguist, a student of the natural sciences, whose acquirements won the friendship and interest of Humboldt, and an enthusiast in scientific discovery and exploration. In 1854, at the age of twenty-two, he was appointed commander-in-chief of the imperial navy. In this high office he accomplished many notable reforms. He modified the system and discipline of the service, adopted the later designs in construction and armament, increased the naval force, planned improvements of the coast defenses, visited Candia, Egypt, and Palestine, for the study of

natural history and archæology, and began the construction of the great naval station and arsenal at ancient Pola. While engaged in these important enterprises, and at a period of intense political excitement in 1857, he was chosen governor-general of the Lombardo-Venetian kingdom. Its peoples, tossed upon the tides of revolution, in all their history hated everything that bore the name or sign of royalty; and Austria then knew no rule of her diverse nationalities, save that of force.

To modify or temper the decrees of a military despotism, to thwart the designs of men whose only hope of preferment lay in the rigorous enforcement of its decrees, to hold in check the impulses of the masses, and satisfy them that prosperity and freedom could come only through patience and peace, were some of the tasks for the young viceroy to master. There was need of statesmanship, of political sagacity, of broad sympathy; and these qualities so centred in Maximilian's character, that he won the respect and confidence of all classes. For two years he filled the position with honor, and left, as the notable results of his administration, valuable public improvements, a more humane policy toward political

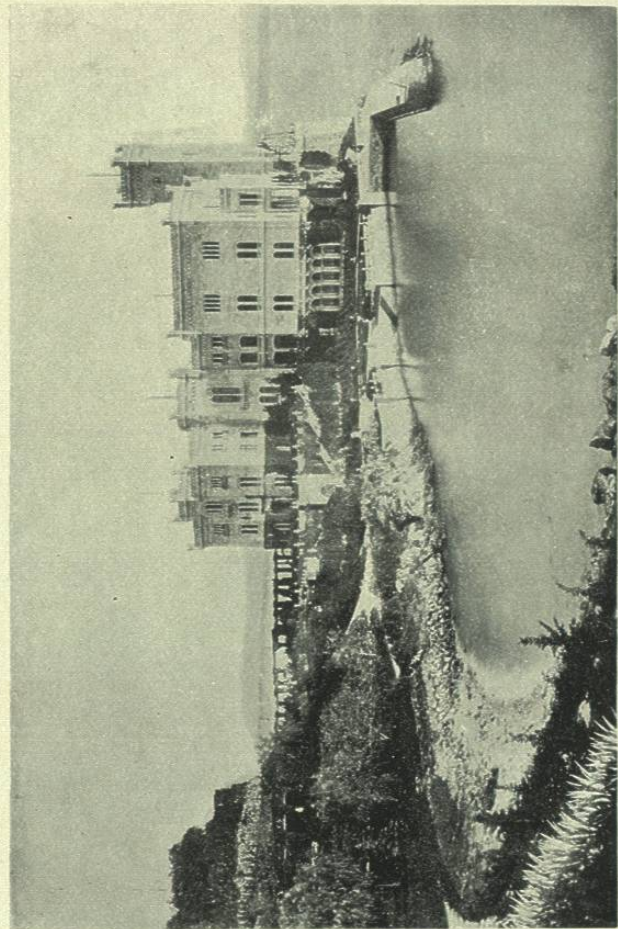
offenders, and a *modus vivendi* which made the Hapsburg yoke more tolerable to bear, until the final cession of the kingdom to Italy.

At the opening of the Franco-Italian campaign in 1859, when the kingdom itself was to become one of the prizes of battle, Maximilian retired from his office, and resumed his studies of literature and science at his castle of Miramar, which he had built near Trieste. It was at this period in his life that he wrote the books of travel, the collections of precepts and sketches, which have invited the attention of scholars, from their literary and philosophic merit; and made journeys to Brazil, Madeira, and England, where he was welcomed and fêted.

But the notable event in the early manhood of the Archduke, and the one which moulded his destiny when the great question of his life was to be decided, was his marriage in the first year of his viceroyalty (July 27, 1857), at Brussels, to the Princess Maria Charlotte Amelia, daughter of Leopold I., King of Belgium, and the "Holy Queen" Louise Maria, the second daughter of Louis Philippe. At the time of her marriage, Carlotta was but seventeen years of age; but she was no

stranger to questions of diplomacy and statecraft, since from childhood she was accustomed to be present in the Council of State when questions of policy were discussed, and she was familiar with both the open and secret operations in imperial politics.

She was tall, beautiful, and graceful, with a gentleness that won all who met her, and of courtly and gracious manners. She spoke and wrote with equal fluency, French, German, English, Spanish, and Italian, and was trained in all the duties and refinements of court etiquette. She was noted for her acts of charity, and devoted, both in her private and public life, to the happiness and welfare of the people. The marriage of these royal lovers was less for reasons of state than from affection and choice. There seemed to be, in the courts of Europe, at that time, no man of higher promise, of more notable achievements for his years, than Maximilian; and, beyond question, there was not, among the daughters of royalty, one of greater acquirements, of wider knowledge of political affairs, of loftier ambition, of fairer fame, than Carlotta. No woman of royal lineage and history in our time, save one—Eugénie—has met so sad a fate.



CASTLE OF MIRAMAR

In September, 1863, to their home of happiness and peace, at Miramar, came the deputation appointed by the Assembly of Notables, consisting of nine distinguished Mexicans, to plead for their unhappy country, and tender to the Archduke the Mexican throne. The prayer of the deputies was ingenious and impressive, presented by their orator, Estrada :

“Prince : The powerful hand of a generous monarch had hardly restored liberty to the Mexicans, when he dispatched us to your imperial highness, cherishing the sincerest wishes and warmest hopes for our mission. . .

“Once again master of her destinies, Mexico, taught by experience, is at this moment making a last effort to correct her faults. She is changing her institutions, being firmly persuaded that those now selected will be even more salutary than the analogous arrangements which existed at the time she was the colony of a European state. . . . But whatever may be our confidence in such institutions, their efficiency will be only perfect when crowned in the person of your imperial highness. A king, the heir of an old monarchy, and representing solid institutions, may render his people happy, even in the absence of distinguished qualities of mind and character ; but very different and exceptional qualities are required in a prince who intends to become the founder of a new dynasty and the heir of a republic.

“Without you, Prince—believe it from these lips which have never served the purposes of flattery—without you, all our efforts to save the country will be in

vain. Without you will not be realized the generous intentions of a great sovereign, whose sword restored us to liberty, and whose powerful arm now supports us in this decisive hour. With you, however, experienced in the difficult art of government, our institutions would become what they ought to be, if the happiness and prosperity of our country are to be guaranteed. With you, they would have for their foundation that genuine liberty which is coupled with justice and moderation—not the spurious counterfeit we have become conversant with during half a century's ruinous wars and quarrels. . . .

“Faithful interpreters of the longing desire and the wishes of our country, in its name we offer to your imperial highness the crown of Mexico,—that crown which a solemn resolution of the Assembly of Notables has of its free will and accord handed over to your imperial highness. Even now that resolution has been confirmed by the assent of many provinces, and will soon be sanctioned by the entire nation. May it please your imperial highness to fulfil our prayers and accept our choice. May we be enabled to carry the joyous tidings to a country awaiting them in longing anxiety ; joyous tidings not only for us Mexicans, but also for France, whose name is now indissolubly bound up with our history ; and gratitude for England and Spain, who began the work of revival ; and for the illustrious house of Austria, connected by time-honored and glorious memories with a new continent. . . .

“These are the sentiments which, in the name of our grateful country, we lay at the feet of your imperial highness. We offer them to the worthy scion of that powerful dynasty which planted Christianity on our

native soil. On that soil, Prince, we hope to see you fulfil a high task, to mature the choicest fruits of culture, which are order and true liberty. The task is great ; but greater is our confidence in Providence, which has led us thus far.”

The Prince answered their appeal in these memorable words :

“I am profoundly grateful for the wishes expressed by the Assembly of Notables. It cannot be other than flattering to our house, that the thoughts of your countrymen turn to the descendant of Charles V. It is a proud task to assure the independence and the prosperity of Mexico under the protection of free and lasting institutions. I must, however, recognize the fact—and in this I entirely agree with the Emperor of the French, whose glorious undertaking makes the regeneration of Mexico possible—that the monarchy cannot be re-established in your country on a firm and legitimate basis, unless the whole nation shall confirm, by a free manifestation of its will, the wishes of the capital.

“My acceptance of the offered throne must, therefore, depend upon the result of the vote of the whole country. Furthermore, a sentiment of the most sacred of the duties of the sovereign requires that he should demand for the proposed empire every necessary guarantee to secure it against the dangers which threaten its integrity and its independence. If substantial guarantees for the future can be obtained, and if the universal suffrage of the Mexican people select me as its choice, I shall be ready, with the consent of the illustrious chief of my family,

and trusting to the protection of the Almighty, to accept the throne."

So far, even then, had the question of acceptance been settled in the Archduke's mind, that he imposed but two conditions,—that the people should ratify the action of the Notables, and that certain great powers of Europe should guarantee the stability of the throne which was offered him. It is at this turning-point in his life that one seeks to the best advantage for the motives of his choice, and for that light in history which leads to a true judgment of himself and of his career. It has been urged that Maximilian was simply the tool and victim of Napoleon; that, after deluding him with fair promises into acceptance of the throne, he broke his word, withdrew his protection, and left the prince to his enemies. This is but part of the truth. Maximilian became emperor of Mexico both to suit Napoleon's purpose and his own. He had ample warning of the probable consequences of his enterprise, and from first to last acted with full knowledge of the problems and risks his acceptance would involve.

At Paris, in 1861, Estrada had broached the question to the Archduke, and thus afforded

him ample time for investigation; and again at Paris, in 1863, the offer of kingship was made to him with the Emperor Francis Joseph's consent; and at the same time a Prussian officer who had served in the "War of Independence" in Mexico,—Baron von Gagern,—at Maximilian's request, prepared for his information, a paper on the condition of Mexican politics. In this paper, and in several interviews, he urged the Archduke to renounce the scheme, and closed his remonstrance with these words: "I fear your Imperial Highness will pay for the attempt with your head." And ten years later Von Gagern met Baron Kuhn, then Austrian War Minister at Vienna, who told him that his memorandum was preserved among the archives of the state, and that he himself had done all he could to dissuade the prince from accepting the crown. The causes which shaped his destiny are to be found, in part, in his character and environment. He was a man of limitless ambition, but lacking in that strength of will and clearness of judgment which are at once its sole justification, and the only means of ensuring its success. "Gallantry, courage, honesty of purpose, with a host of the private



virtues, did not save him from being the unconscious instrument of insensate vainglory, bigotry, cupidity, peculation, and bad faith.

So long as he was chief of the Austrian navy, or viceroy of Lombardy-Venice, he felt that in some degree he filled his proper place; but when he was recalled in 1859, and retired to private life, he became deeply discontented. He was a man of action, hungry for distinction, and confident of his own powers. To one whose exemplar was Charles V., the rôle of an ordinary archduke was intolerable. Had not many a prince been called to kingship in Europe, to win a name in the world's history? Even then, was not the heir of the house of Braganza, who had renounced his claims to that little kingdom, reigning in peace over the vast realm of Brazil? Might not he create, in that sunny land of kindred peoples, an empire even greater than Austria? He was poor too; for in his whole career he had been an illustration of his own aphorism,—“Princes should be machines for the circulation of gold.” And when the Mexican deputation, organized by Louis Napoleon and engineered by the French generals and clerical exiles, offered him a crown which was not theirs to bestow, he ac-

cepted the fatal gift, with its promised emoluments and honors.

But apart from the necessities of the Archduke, or his ambition for leadership and fame, there was a reason of state in his choice. In the great political and social agitation in Austria, pending the war with Italy, the eyes of many of the revolutionary leaders were fixed upon the princely and popular young viceroy at Milan, as the very man who should lead them to victory in their contest with imperialism. They were mistaken in him, his real strength and availability for their purposes; but the consciousness of their choice weighed in the decision, when the Emperor Francis Joseph granted to Maximilian his assent to his acceptance of the Mexican crown, at the special intercession of the French court, and only upon the absolute abdication of his hereditary rights to the Austrian succession. Add to these potent factors of ambition and necessity, the visionary qualities of mind of one who allowed himself to be dominated by such a man as Bazaine, and the motive for his acceptance becomes evident.

But a mind more forceful than Maximilian's was at work on the great question of his life;