

and there is little doubt that the final decision fell from the lips of Carlotta. She put implicit trust in the counsels of her father; she hearkened to the entreaties of the clerical refugees; she could not doubt the power of Napoleon and the Pope. Would not the new empire in the West be made secure in the pledges of Austria, France, and Belgium? Could not the prince command the most powerful support? The Austrian emperor was his elder brother; the king of the Belgians was his father-in-law; the queens of England and of Spain, the kings of Italy and of Sweden, were his cousins. The reward was a crown, the honor great, the hazard seemingly little; and this woman of heroic qualities, and ambitious as himself, became the arbiter of her husband's destiny.

The deputation returned to Mexico, and made known the conditions of acceptance. An election was held under the direction of the French military authorities, which confirmed the assembly decree; and plans were made to secure acts of adhesion from the several states. A secret treaty was made with Napoleon on the day of the acceptance of the throne, "to secure the re-establishment of peace in Mexico, and to consolidate the new

empire." The "guaranties of peace" were of a very practical character as finally defined in the articles. The French troops were to evacuate Mexico as fast as Maximilian should be able to replace them with Mexicans; the foreign legion of eight thousand men was to remain six years, if he so desired; four hundred thousand francs were to be paid for each service of transports between France and Vera Cruz, and one thousand francs a year for each man of the troops of the *corps d'armée*; the expenses of the French expedition to July 1, 1864, were fixed at two hundred and seventy million francs, to be paid by Mexico, together with all expenses of the Mexican army after that date; sixty-six million francs in bonds, in one payment, and twenty-five million francs annually, in specie, were also to be turned over on account of war expenses and indemnities to French subjects; and commissioners were designated at Mexico and Paris to determine all claims. To secure these burdensome pledges of the empire, a clause was inserted in the original draft of the treaty, ceding the province of Sonora, with its vast mineral resources, to France; which was abandoned only upon the vigorous protest of Maximilian.

Such were the hard and fast terms of the agreement, in contrast with the original declarations to Spain and England, and the protestations to the Mexicans inspired by Napoleon himself.

The man who re-established in himself the imperial dignity of France by the ballots of eight million voters against a dissenting minority of but two hundred and fifty thousand, might well count upon almost a unanimous result from a faction of the Mexican people, with Bazaine and his veterans as inspectors of election. The acts of adhesion were forthcoming; although many Mexicans of note never saw the official documents upon which their names were written. The hero of Donelson and Vicksburg had been placed in command of the Union forces, and was about to open the historic Wilderness campaign, with its sacrificial victories, when in April, 1864, the envoys returned, and the crown was formally tendered to the Archduke. He had been apprised of the arrival of the deputation, and that they had obtained for his election, "as far as practicable," the sanction of the popular vote. The solemn ceremony took place at Miramar, in the presence of the Emperor of

Austria and his other brothers, and a brilliant assembly of notabilities.

The Mexican deputies were presented to the Archduke and the Princess in the magnificent reception hall. Estrada, who had also been chosen president of the second deputation, delivered another address, in which he dwelt on the importance of the national vote of Mexico, which had been taken at the request of Maximilian, and which had confirmed the action of the Assembly of Notables, and added:

"Our happiness is complete in informing you, in the name of the Regency of the Empire, that the vote by which you have been designated for the crown of Mexico, is now ratified by the adhesion of an immense majority of the country, by the municipal authorities, and by the town corporations; and, thus consecrated, that unanimous proclamation has become, by its moral importance and by its numerical strength, truly a national vote. There will be no reward more enviable than that which your Highness will receive in seeing, at no remote day, Mexico prosperous and respected."

Maximilian, in his reply, said:

"A mature examination of the acts of adhesion which you have just presented me gives me confidence that the vote of the Notables of Mexico, which brought you a short time ago to Miramar, has been ratified by an

immense majority of your compatriots, and that I can consider myself henceforth, with good right, the elect of the Mexican people. . . .

"The illustrious head of my family having given his consent, I now declare that, relying on the assistance of the Almighty, I accept the crown offered me by the Mexican nation. . . .

"I shall hold firmly aloft the flag of independence, as the symbol of our future grandeur. I call for the cooperation of all the Mexicans who love their country to aid me in the accomplishment of my noble but most difficult task. Never shall my government forget the gratitude it owes to the illustrious sovereign whose friendly support has rendered the regeneration of our noble land possible. I am now on the point of leaving for my new country, paying, as I go, a visit to Rome, where I shall receive from the Holy Father that benediction which is so precious for all sovereigns, but, above all, to me, called, as I am, to found a new empire."

At the last word the deputation and all the Mexicans present hailed their new sovereign by crying out three times: "God save the emperor Maximilian I.! God save the empress Carlotta!" Estrada returned thanks to His Majesty for his acceptance, and said:

"Sire, this complete and absolute acceptance on the part of your Majesty is the prelude of our happiness; it is the consecration of the salvation of Mexico, of its approaching regeneration, of its future greatness. Every year, on this day, our children will offer up their thanks-

givings to heaven in gratitude for our miraculous deliverance. As for us, sire, there remains a last duty to perform, and that is, to lay at your feet our love, our gratitude, and the homage of our fidelity."

The solemn oath of office was then administered:

"I, Maximilian, Emperor of Mexico, swear to God by the Holy Evangels, to procure, by every means in my power, the happiness and prosperity of the nation, to defend its independence, and to conserve its integrity and its territory."

The assembly then entered the chapel, where the grand Te Deum was chanted. The imperial flag of Mexico was unfurled from the castle tower, and greeted by cheers, and by salutes from the ships in the harbor.

On April 14, 1864, Maximilian and Carlotta set out on their mission of empire. They were accompanied by a brilliant retinue of French, Austrian, and Mexican officers of high rank, many of them with their wives and daughters. The emperor chose his favorite ship, the *Novara* of the Austrian navy, for the journey to Mexico; and, embarking at Miramar with a convoy of twelve steamers, the fateful errand was joyously heralded in the holiday naval

parade along the coasts to Civita Vecchia, on the way to Rome. At all points the imperial visitors were greeted with great enthusiasm and magnificence; and a series of brilliant entertainments and festivities made memorable their welcome to the Holy City. After several audiences with the Pope, in which the restoration of the Church to its former splendor and power, and the advancement of the interests of the Clerical party, were particularly discussed, the young rulers received the communion, and departed with the Papal benediction. The voyage was uneventful; and, touching at Martinique and Jamaica, the *Novara*, and her single escort, the French frigate, *Themis*, dropped anchor in Vera Cruz harbor, at evening, May 28, 1864.

It was necessary for the emperor to at once declare the royal purpose and pleasure to his people. A proclamation was made—a strong appeal for loyalty, for support, and yet in homage to the power beyond the seas, “the civilizing power of France,” whose weakness was so soon to be made known. This was the emperor’s announcement, with the honeyed words of Napoleon, the oaths of loyalty of the clerical exiles, the music of Estrada’s promises,

and the blessings of His Holiness, still ringing in his ears :

“Mexicans : You have desired my presence. Your noble nation, by a universal vote, has elected me henceforth the guardian of your destinies : I gladly obey your will. Painful as it has been for me to bid farewell for ever to my own, my native country, I have done so, being convinced that the Almighty has pointed out to me, through you, the great and noble duty of devoting all my might and heart to the care of a people who, at last, tired of war and disastrous contests, sincerely wish for peace and prosperity. . . . The reliance that you place in me, and I in you, will be crowned by a brilliant triumph if we remain always steadfastly united in courageously defending those great principles which are the only true and lasting basis of modern government, those principles of inviolable and immutable justice, the equality of all men before the law ; equal advantages to all in attaining positions of trust and honor, socially and politically ; complete and well-defined personal liberty, consisting in protection to the individual and the protection of his property ; encouragement to the national wealth ; improvements in agriculture, mining, and manufactures ; the establishment of new lines of communication for an extensive commerce ; and, lastly, the free development of intelligence in all that relates to public welfare. . . .

“The civilizing flag of France, raised to such a high position by her noble Emperor, to whom you owe the new birth of order and peace, represents those principles. . . .

“My strength rests in God and in your loyal con-

fidence. The banner of independence is my symbol ; my motto you know already,—‘ Equal justice to all.’ I will be faithful to this trust through all my life. It is my duty conscientiously to wield the sceptre of authority, and with firmness the sword of honor.

“To the empress is confided the sacred trust of devoting to the country all the noble sentiments of Christian virtue and all the teachings of a tender mother.

“Let us unite to reach the goal of our common desires ; let us forget past sorrows ; let us lay aside party hatreds, and the bright morning of peace and of well-deserved happiness will dawn glorious on our new empire.”

The emperor and empress were welcomed with enthusiasm, and from Vera Cruz to Mexico their progress was one grand ovation. It was the tribute, in part, of a despairing people released from the curse of war and the ruin of revolution, and, in part, of a faction animated by a selfish purpose ; but to Maximilian and Carlotta, inspired by their romantic mission, the demonstrations were genuine, and prophetic of loyalty and peace. At Vera Cruz the prefect of the city, with a deputation of distinguished persons, went on board the *Novara*, and welcomed the emperor, and presented to the empress their pledge of the nation’s fealty. This was their salutation and promise :

“Your Majesty will please condescend to receive the most sincere congratulations and the most perfect homage from the authorities and the inhabitants of this district. While I have the honor to present the committee to your Majesty on your fortunate arrival, they are struck with admiration by the virtues and talents your noble character presents. Providence has offered Mexico the double benefit of an enlightened sovereign, united in destiny with your Majesty, an object of affection and respect with all good hearts, and Mexico recognizes in you a worthy spouse of our elected Emperor. The Mexicans, madam, who expect so much from the influence of your Majesty, in favor of all that is noble and great, of all that bears relation to the elevated sentiments of religion and country, bless the moment in which your Majesty reached our soil, and proclaim, in one voice, Long live the Empress !”

The empress made a graceful response in Spanish, the language in which she was addressed, which charmed the deputation.

At five o’clock on the morning of May 25th, mass was said on shipboard ; and it was determined to leave the next day on the journey to the capital. They were met, on landing, by the officials, who presented the keys of the city, with an address of congratulation. They passed through the principal streets, with General Almonte and a brilliant escort in attendance, and were warmly greeted by an immense

gathering of the people. At Puebla,—the Mexican Saragossa,—where Lorencez and Forey had made such sacrifice to Napoleon's ambition, there was a notable demonstration. They were escorted in a grand procession to the cathedral, where imposing religious ceremonies were held; and the emperor was greeted in affectionate terms by representatives of the city and nation, and made a fitting response, using, in closing, these words :

“With a sentiment of pleasure mingled with grief I see your city; with pleasure I salute one of the largest, most beautiful, and important cities of the Empire; with pain I contemplate the inhabitants agitated by the evils of political disruptions. The government, to whose elevation you have contributed, will impose upon itself the task of healing your wounds as soon as possible, and of facilitating, by means of institutions which are in accordance with the age, the development of prosperity, so that the resources of this rich country may be cultivated in the highest degree.”

Again the empress took captive the minds and hearts of the Mexicans. It was her twenty-fourth birthday; and, in accordance with her invariable custom, she celebrated the anniversary with deeds of charity. She had visited the hospital; and, finding it in a state

of dilapidation, she sent a gift to the mayor of the city, with the following note :

“Señor Prefect:—It is very pleasing to me to find myself in Puebla the first anniversary of my birthday which I have passed far from my own country. Such a day is for everybody one of reflection. And these days would be sad for me if the care, attention, and proofs of affection, of which I have been the object in this city, did not cause me to recollect that I am in my new country, among my people. . . . And I give thanks to God because he has conducted me here, presenting unto him fervent prayers for the happiness of the country which is mine. . . .

“I wish, Señor Prefect, that the poor of this city may participate in the pleasure which I have experienced among you. I send you seven thousand dollars of my own private funds, which is to be dedicated to the rebuilding of the House of Charity, the ruinous state of which made me feel sad yesterday, so that the unfortunate ones, who found themselves deprived of shelter, may return to inhabit it.

“Assure my compatriots of Puebla that they possess, and will always possess, my affections.”

At all the principal places on the way the people voiced their welcome in addresses and other demonstrations of loyalty and respect. On the twelfth of June the emperor and empress made their formal entry into the capital. Their fondest hopes were realized in their brilliant and impressive re-

ception. Volleys of artillery, mingled with the clangor of bells, heralded their coming. Thousands of the natives, inspired by the priests with promises of the restoration of their ancient liberties at the hands of the new rulers thronged the avenues of approach, bearing banners of palm-leaves and masses of flowers; the municipal authorities and deputations of citizens presented their greetings at the city gates; and the imperial procession, with an escort of troops of all arms, moved through the streets, elaborate in decorations, and under arches of flowers, to the ancient cathedral. At the threshold of this monument of their faith, memorable in the history of both Church and State, they were received by the archbishops of Mexico and Michoacan, the bishop of Mexico, and a retinue of the clergy, and conducted to a throne prepared for them in the spacious edifice. The grand *Te Deum* was sung, and the occasion signalized by impressive religious ceremonies, significant alike to the sovereigns in their love and reverence for the Church, to the prelates and priests shorn of their temporal possessions, and to the people who saw in the enthusiasm of the hour the promise of freedom and peace.

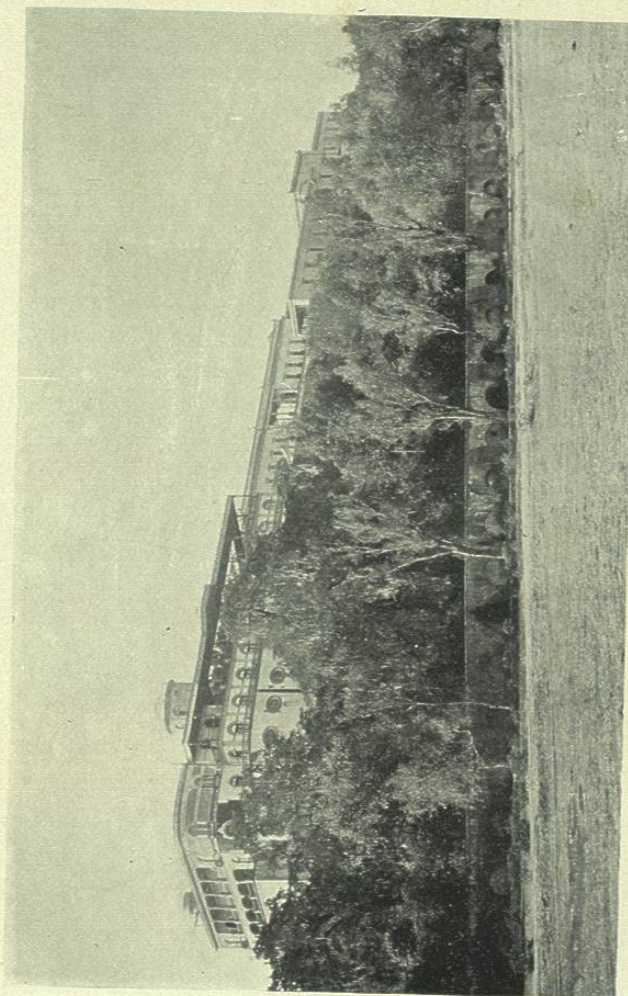
At the close of the celebration the emperor and empress held a levee at the palace, when many distinguished Mexicans were presented, orders and decorations were conferred, and the final pledges of the nation's loyalty were offered in an eloquent address by the political prefect. Thus Mexico, with gracious hospitality, undertook the redemption of Estrada's guaranties at Miramar.

Sherman had begun his historic march to the sea; and the incense of sacrifice at Cold Harbor and Spottsylvania veiled the stars of victory at Appomattox, when the emperor and empress were welcomed to the ancient city. They had trusted the invitations of the Notables, couched in the rhetoric of Estrada, and the acts of adhesion, as sincere and genuine; and they believed the greeting of their people to be both loyal and patriotic. The bayonets of Belgium, Austria, and France were at their right hand; regiments of Mexicans were rallying to their standards; and the only power they need fear was then in the midst of a mighty battle for its existence. Well might they look upon their mission as thus far crowned with good fortune. Sadowa, Queretaro, and Sedan did not cast their shad-

ows into the purple light of the sunny land, and the empire seemed secure upon the guarantee and support of the three monarchies. The vision of imperialism, as put in characteristic utterance by the young Archduke at Naples in 1857, may have seemed a present reality :

“The monumental stairway of the palace of Caserta is worthy of majesty. What can be finer than to imagine the sovereign placed at its head, resplendent in the midst of those marble pillars ; to fancy this monarch like a God graciously permitting the approach of human beings : the crowd surges upward ; the king vouchsafes a gracious glance, but from a lofty elevation. All-powerful, imperial, he makes one step towards them with a smile of infinite condescension. Could Charles V., could Maria Theresa appear thus at the head of this ascending stair, who could not bow the head before that majestic power, God-given ? I, too, poor fluttering insect of a day, have felt such pride throb in my veins, when I have been standing in the palace of the Doges of Venice, as to think how agreeable it would be, not too often, but in rare, solemn moments, to stand thus at the height of such an ascent, and, glancing downward over all the world, to feel myself the First, like the sun in the firmament.”

The castle of Chapultepec was chosen as the royal residence ; and there court life, under the new empire, opened with splendor and



CASTLE OF CHAPULTEPEC

promise, and the emperor and empress undertook to solve the complex problems which environed them like the sombre shadows of the cypresses that have kept their silent vigil at the castle since the Aztec days.