

retreat had already begun ; Juarez had moved his " seat of government " up from the American frontier to Chihuahua ; gloom and anxiety reigned in the court, and conspiracy in the council of state.

If the final answer of Napoleon should be favorable, all might be well ; but if unfavorable, the emperor could rely, for a continuance of his reign, only upon a reorganization of the army, or upon a coalition with the Church party, whose leaders he had so grievously offended. One of the favorite projects of Maximilian was the organization of a national army, which should be essentially Mexican ; and when notified of the probable departure of the French, the arrangements for such an organization were pushed with great vigor. Permission had been given to the French and Austrian officers and men, who chose to do so, to volunteer in the Mexican army, and nearly eight thousand men, of all arms, signified their intention to serve under the imperial flag ; and Maximilian had counted upon having an effective force of at least thirty-five thousand men, by the date of the final departure of the French. High official rank, distinguished titles, glittering decorations, and promises of ample pay,

attracted many men of ability and experience, including Magruder, Shelby, and other Confederate officers, who thought foreign residence desirable after the surrender of Lee and Johnston. Twenty-six thousand native Mexicans, and the volunteers,—French, Austrians, and men of all nations,—were the incongruous elements to be massed and disciplined, and which were to constitute the standing army of the empire. This was one of the young ruler's tasks, one of his means to self-preservation, in his lonely vigils at Chapultepec.

But there was a more serious problem. The most brilliant advocates of the French intervention in Mexico, the men who induced Maximilian to accept the crown, were the Mexican clerical refugees at Paris—Estrada, Almonte, Miramon, and their associates,—men devoted to the Church, fertile in all expedients, and sworn to recover the ecclesiastical and political supremacy, and the power the Church had lost first to the Liberals, and later to the empire. It was their belief that none could be more faithful to their cause than the devoted Catholics at Miramar. They believed that on his accession the emperor would at once restore to the Church her confiscated properties.

In the enforcement of the decrees passed in Juarez's brief administration, churches and convents had been turned into barracks, military storehouses, and stables; shrines and sanctuaries had been stripped of their gold and silver ornaments and precious stones; lands had been sold at auction, or granted to partisans and speculators; and the host of priests were shorn of the dues they had been accustomed to extort from the people in the whole history of clerical supremacy in Mexico.

In the beginning of his reign, the clergy demanded the revocation of the hated decrees and the restitution of the estates. To their astonishment and chagrin, the emperor ordered a commission to inquire into the value, extent, and location of the properties, and the indemnity which ought to be paid to the owners and occupants who had acquired title and possession from the republican government. This action, with an order for a civil list of deaths and marriages, and other limitations of their privileges, exasperated the clergy to such a degree, that they refused the offices of the Church to some of the officers of State and the owners of their former properties, and the sacrament to the dying, unless they declared

their belief that the civil decrees were contrary to law and religion. The emperor was determined, as a matter of state policy, to bring the Church party under the control of the civil law, as well as under the orders of Rome, and so keep a sure political hold upon so powerful a party. He would not make the concessions that were demanded; and a complete rupture resulted, forcing him to look for support, in the first instance, to the Republican party, which contained many secret enemies, anxious for his downfall and the restoration of a government which would make greater license, and speculation, and plunder possible, and whose leaders despised the transparent attempt to enlist favor by placing prominent Mexicans in the cabinet and household, in place of old friends who came from Europe with the emperor and empress.

No men in Mexico were quicker to see the supreme advantage which Maximilian's necessity now offered, than these ecclesiastical statesmen, who had suffered so much in conscience and pocket at his hands. No men detected sooner the first signs of disaster to the empire, than these loyal sons and soldiers of the Church. They knew the real sentiment

of the people of France; they had heard the remonstrances of her statesmen against further aid to the empire of Maximilian; they knew the vigorous condemnation of Napoleon's plan to reorganize the army at home; they knew the necessity that compelled the Emperor's declaration of an "attentive neutrality" in the struggle between Prussia and Austria, the weakness that compelled him to inaction while the Austrians crushed the Italians at Custozza and forced the recall of the French troops from Rome. They had nothing to hope from the restoration of the republic of Mexico; and they saw that when Napoleon should abandon his purpose, their chance to secure their coveted rights under a stable government was through Maximilian alone. They were ready to make terms; but they would make no sign until their watchful emissaries in Paris should advise them that the empire had nothing further to hope from France.

It was in this crisis of affairs that there came the news, first of Carlotta's death at Rome, and later of her insanity. The emperor's first thought was to leave all and go to her relief; but when he was advised of her real condition, that members of her family were with her, that

physicians in whom he had full confidence were in attendance, and that absolute quiet was necessary to her recovery, he abandoned his purpose. It was clear that the interests of the empire demanded his personal presence in Mexico, at any personal sacrifice; and every energy, every resource, was devoted to the task before him. Intense anxiety for many months, and grief at the empress's fate, overwhelmed him; and in October, 1866, he was prostrated with a severe attack of fever. With little care or hope for the future that now held so little to inspire or cheer, when he had partially recovered he went to Orizaba, that in the pure and bracing air and magnificent scenery of that region he might regain his strength.

"Life crowded on him, and the days that swept
Relentlessly all trust and love from out his heart,
Where could he put his faith, where clasp a hand,
That would not turn against him if occasion called?"

At this juncture Generals Miramon and Marquez arrived from Europe. Miramon's hatred of republicanism, his devotion to the Church party, and his zealous advocacy of foreign intervention while in exile, have been told. He was at this time about thirty-five

years old, youthful in appearance, fluent in speech, of most pleasing manners, bold and dashing in his ideas and plans, and fitted to win the admiration and confidence of the trustful emperor.

Marquez was his counterpart in intrigue, in conspiracy, in ecclesiastical politics; and one of the staff describes him as "a little, dried-up-looking old man, with only one eye, having lost the other by a musket shot from an upper window in a street fight in one of the revolutions; but the one he had left seemed to make up amply for the loss: nothing escaped it. Though very ugly, his face had a look of extreme intelligence. He talked little, but listened a great deal, and before one had fairly viewed him he had taken a comprehensive view of his questioner." In his military career he was the typical Mexican revolutionist, stained with cruelty and dishonor. It was by his orders the prisoners of war, and volunteers to care for the wounded, were massacred at Tacubaya; it was he who wantonly hanged the patriot statesman Ocampo; it was he who ordered La Garde, the chief of police in Mexico, to force a door bearing the seal of the British legation, and appropriated six hundred and twenty thousand

dollars, the property of British bondholders; it was his decree that declared all persons who served in the Liberal cause, in the civil war, worthy of death; it was he who hastened to join the French army of occupation, and who commanded the French rear-guard in the retreat from Puebla; who served the empire as commander-in-chief on the Pacific coast, and finally as the imperial envoy to the Ottoman court,—who now, with his old comrade in arms, tendered their swords to Maximilian in his extremity. These sons of revolution, of action, of double purpose—the restoration of the Church party and Conservatives to power, and promotion of their own ambition,—at once put an end to all the vacillation on the part of the emperor. "Let the French go," said they; "we want them not; be no longer the tool and puppet of Louis Napoleon; Mexicans will save the empire, and die in the service of your Majesty."

In the face of General Castlenau's appeals and Bazaine's brutal urgency to abdicate; of the Emperor Francis Joseph's offer to restore the right of succession to the Austrian throne he had formally renounced in 1864: of the oncoming tide of Liberal victories, and Juarez's

refusal of amnesty; of the departure of his French allies; of his former settled resolution to turn the government over to the French commander and leave the empire to its fate; of his love and sorrow for Carlotta, and his yearning to be with her in her misfortune,—the soul of the young emperor was stirred to its inmost depths; and with a courage, a heroism that dignifies all his mistakes, and has seldom been equalled in the history of royal lives, he came to an unalterable decision to remain in Mexico and battle for his sovereignty, his honor, and his friends.

He only asked, as needs he must, that the council of ministers should ratify his personal opinion. The council was convoked; and the emperor laid before it a full statement of the situation, and asked its judgment whether there was any substantial basis for his abdication. The decision of the council was unanimous, that he should remain at the head of the government. This conclusion was upheld by all who were compromised by adhesion to the imperial cause, and who, if the empire failed, would at least suffer confiscation of their land and property, and possibly be hung or shot, in accordance with the traditional Mexican

method, and as very recently illustrated by the victorious Liberals in the treatment of the richest and most prominent of their enemies.

At the final conference at Orizaba, November 24, 1866, the decision was made; and it was then settled that a congress of all the available Notables should be called to meet at the capital, and determine, as the people's representatives, whether the empire should continue, or some other form of government be adopted. The emperor's purpose and the plans of the council were made known in the following proclamation at Orizaba; and no one may challenge its sincerity:

“MEXICANS—Circumstances of great magnitude relating to the welfare of our country, and which increase in strength by our domestic difficulties, have produced in our mind the conviction that we ought to reconsider the power confided to us.

“Our Council of Ministers, by us convoked, has given as their opinion that the welfare of Mexico still requires our presence at the head of affairs, and we have considered it our duty to accede to their request. We announce at the same time our intention to convoke a national congress on the most ample and liberal basis, where all political parties can participate. This congress shall decide whether the empire shall continue in future, and in case of assent, shall assist in framing the fundamental laws to consolidate the public institutions of the

country. To obtain this result, our counsellors are at present engaged in devising the necessary means, and at the same time in arranging matters in such a manner that all parties may assist in an agreement on that basis.

"In the meantime, Mexicans, counting upon you all, without excluding any political class, we shall continue with courage and constancy the work of regeneration which you have placed in charge of your countryman."

In this state of affairs the only reliance was upon the Mexicans themselves. They made haste to justify his confidence. For two years they had known the blessings and gathered the fruits of partial peace, and now they stood aghast in the presence of another revolution. The Prefect of Vera Cruz happily expressed the general sentiment, in his proclamation to its citizens :

"One of the greatest events for the good of Mexico has happened, to give renewed life to the nation. His Majesty, the Emperor, who has made so many sacrifices for the well-being and happiness of our distracted country, has given final proof of his consideration for our welfare. He has put aside his duties as a man, for those momentous ones which concern his house as a ruler, and in the present crisis declared solemnly his intention to continue in the front in our defense, to the shedding the last drop of his blood. Let us give thanks to Providence for having saved the integrity of our country, and in the

inmost recesses of our hearts let us hail the resurrection of our nationality."

Pledges of loyalty and support were given by all orders and classes ; merchants furnished the money for immediate use ; volunteers flocked to the army, and the work of reorganization was soon under way.

Now came the opportunity for which the leaders of the Church party had so long waited. They had in no small degree influenced the decision of the imperial council ; they knew that, unless the empire could be sustained, their rights, privileges, and property would be forfeited under the civil-war decrees, with Juarez, their creator to enforce them ; they were well advised that there was no longer any hope of support from any foreign power, and, in his extremity, overtures were made to Maximilian for the adherence and powerful support of the Clergy and Conservative party ; concessions were granted and promised, and the potent energies of the ecclesiastical government were directed to the rescue and maintenance of the empire. The Bishops, as a beginning and guaranty of good faith, gave thirty millions of piasters to the emperor's cause ; the merchants placed twenty-five million dollars at his dis-

posal, and promised an annual subsidy to the imperial exchequer of ten millions more. Maximilian openly and gratefully accepted the aid of the party whose designs he had thwarted and whose power he had defied; and its interest and his own, in matters of statecraft, became identical. Aside from motives of ambition and honor, one of the governing factors in his decision to remain was the refusal of Juarez to guarantee protection to the Mexicans devoted to the emperor and his cause; and at his trial, Maximilian, in words that will always mark the true heroism of the man, said: "I had no course left but to remain and do all in my power to protect a large proportion of the Mexican people."

CHAPTER VIII.

Return to the capital—Mobilization of troops—Liberal successes—
 Desertions by French and Austrians—Bazaine's order—San Jacinto—Marquez's persuasion—Advance to Queretaro—Reception there—The siege—Brilliant feats of arms—Salm-Salm and the Mexican generals—Maximilian's bravery and humanity—
 Decoration by his officers—Address to citizens of Queretaro—
 The crisis—Sortie—Lopez—Treachery—Betrayal of Maximilian—
 Capture of the Cruz—Rally on the Cerro de la Campana—
 Surrender to Escobedo—Prisoners of war—Order for their execution—
 Questions involved—Delay secured—Devotion and service of Prince and Princess Salm-Salm—Overtures to Diaz, Escobedo, and Juarez—
 Attempt to escape—Court-martial granted—Maximilian, Miramon, Mejia—
 The defense—Verdict of guilty—Sentence of death—Pleas for pardon—
 Juarez's refusal—Causes.

AFTER a brief visit to the Bishop of Puebla, Maximilian returned to the capital, on the 5th of January, to arrange for the meeting of the Notables to declare the popular opinion as to the form of government. Orders were issued for all the troops to concentrate there, and Marquez was made a general of division, and charged with their mobilization. Miramon had already taken the field to check the onset of the Liberal forces. The question had now