uncle was "quite well again," and as he knelt before her she bade him cut some flowers.

Till that moment flowers had never grown on the barren hill, but to the Indian's astonishment he instantly saw them blooming all around. He picked a quantity, which she requested him to take to the bishop as her sign. Until he had done so, no other eyes were to look upon her offering. He wrapped his fragrant treasures in the blanket, or "tilma," which every Indian wears, and set off once more for the bishop's palace. When Juan unfolded his tilma before the ecclesiastic, upon the cloth was miraculously printed the face of the Virgin.

That picture exists to this day, carefully guarded in the Cathedral of Guadalupe. The Patron Saint is depicted in a blue robe, with a skirt of a soft pink shade; the colours are subdued yet warm. She has a halo all round her.

By February, 1532, a temple had, as directed, been built upon the spot, and Juan Diego and his uncle Bernadino became the servants of the Virgin.

Thousands of Indian pilgrims gather together every year to do honour to their Patron Saint, and the Guadalupe Festival is far more famous in Mexico than even the pilgrimage to Lourdes in Europe. Indeed, there is much in common between the French miracle enacted three hundred years later and that of the Lady of Guadalupe.

CHAPTER XI.

AN EMPEROR'S DEATH.

THE four most important persons in the history of Mexico at this time were scattered.

Diaz was on the eve of taking Mexico City, a great stroke for the Republicans. Juárez, the President, was away in the north. Carlota was in Europe, where she had been pleading Maximilian's cause. The Emperor himself was shut up in Querétaro, waiting eagerly both for further news of his wife, and help from his former supporters.

How he must have rued the day he ever set foot on Mexican soil; three long years of disasters in which he had never known the joys of peace of mind, or not been dogged by constant care.

A man less devoted would have blamed his wife, for she it was, as we know, who urged him to accept an Imperial crown; but his love for her remained strong as ever through all these years of trial, as will be seen at the end of this chapter in his own words.

Besieged in Querétaro by the army under General Escobedo, now numbering some twenty thousand men, Maximilian maintained its defence from March 12th, 1867, to the 15th of May. Swiftly the lines of investment manned by the exultant Republicans closed around him. The city was an unfortunate choice for his last stand, and a poor strategical position. The hapless Emperor afterwards called it "a mouse-trap," and so, indeed, it proved.

General Mejía had brought the troops of the Third Division of the Imperial army, formerly operating in the north, into the city. General Miramón, after his defeat at San Jacinto,

retired with the survivors of his force upon Querétaro, and thus helped to swell the numbers of its defenders. These two generals, gallant soldiers both, whose military reputations throughout the conflict remained untarnished, stood by Maximilian to the last, and laid down their lives for the cause they had espoused.

The garrison consisted of nine thousand men, with thirty-nine guns. They fought bravely and stubbornly. The defence was distinguished by a series of brilliant sorties. The results of one of these, led by Márquez, who had entered Querétaro as General-in-Chief of the entire forces, and had taken the first favourable opportunity to get out of it, we have seen. His withdrawal further weakened a position which had already become difficult to maintain.

Maximilian, confronted by his adversaries on every side, displayed great bravery and fortitude during the harassing days of the siege.

Friends within the country and beyond its borders made many attempts, when the triumph of the Republicans was seen to be inevitable, to effect some arrangement by which Maximilian should be allowed to renounce further pretensions to his throne and to retire in safety to Europe. General Escobedo had no authority from Juárez save to accept the Emperor's submission. Sympathisers who sought to intervene were told that the time had not arrived for negotiations.

Overtures to this end were made to General Diaz while his army was extended before Mexico City. Within the gradually-narrowing circle of steel which he maintained around the old capital were two active adherents of the unfortunate Emperor, Father Fischer, the German priest who had enjoyed many favours from him, and the Princess Felix Salm-Salm. This lady, of unusual height and commanding manners, whose husband was afterwards held a prisoner with Maximilian, was unremitting in her efforts to save the Emperor.

"About the 18th of April," General Diaz writes, "before the investment of Mexico City was complete, Father Fischer, the personal secretary of Maximilian, came out to see me, and I

received him in the farm of Los Morales. He proposed to me that the Emperor should abdicate, on condition that he was allowed to leave the country without any responsibility for all that had occurred during the period of his rule. I answered this by sending Father Fischer back at once to the city, telling him that I had no power to enter into such arrangements.

"I then reported the matter to the Supreme Government.

"Some days afterwards the Princess Felix Salm-Salm, a lady from the United States, who had married an Austrian officer in the service of Maximilian, came out of the city with similar proposals to those made by the priest, although she was less exacting, and added that when once consent to the arrangement had been given, the foreign forces directly under Maximilian's orders would cease to take any further part in the military affairs of the country. My reply to the first proposal of the Princess was much the same as that given to Fischer. Without waiting to ascertain whether or not she was authorised to add the second proposal, which it was impossible to accept or even to take seriously, I ordered the Princess to return to Mexico City, and directed an escort to accompany her as far as the enemy's lines."

Diaz had already, in fact, refused other negotiations, which began to reach him even before his army arrived in front of Mexico City. A suggestion of a prettily conceived plot is contained in this passage from his records of the time :

"On my march from Texcoco to the village of Guadalupe, Señora Donna Luciana Arrazola de Baz came to me from Mexico City. She was the wife of Don Juan José de Baz, who was with me. She told me that General Nicolás Portilla, who was at that time Minister of War for the Emperor, had commissioned her to offer me an entry into the capital on condition that some concessions were made to him, to the Mexican officers of the Imperialist army, and to certain ministers. The first aim sought by Portilla, she added, was a union between the two armies, with the intention that, when united and reciprocally recognising the positions that the officers on each side held, they should together proceed to establish a new order of things, which should

be neither the so-called Empire of Maximilian nor the Constitutional Government of Señor Juárez.

"Of course I put aside the extravagant proposals and would not look at them, even in their most favourable light, which was that of our uncontested entry into the city."

Señora de Baz, who pluckily undertook this somewhat delicate mission, was a lady noted for her Republican enthusiasm and personal courage—qualities which no doubt explain her selection as envoy. This was by no means the first offer that Diaz had received of a bribe to throw over Benito Juárez and the national cause to which they were jointly pledged; he had indignantly rejected all of them without a moment's consideration.

Juárez meanwhile watched the development of events from San Luis Potosí without stirring.

Querétaro fell on May 15th, the end being hastened by an act of treachery. The Emperor had presided over a council of war only the previous day, when it had been intended that the entire garrison should make an attempt to break through the lines of the besiegers. The sortie was postponed for twenty-four hours. That same night Colonel Miguel López, a member of the Emperor's staff, went over to the enemy, and before daybreak admitted the Republicans to the city.

Maximilian was roused from his sleep in the Convent de La Cruz, and advised to fly for his life. He hastened out in the grey dawn, and found everything in confusion, for a general assault on the city had already begun. General Escobedo, having borne down a part of the defences, poured his troops into the town. The Imperialists, trapped and surprised, stood at bay, many hesitating, others fighting furiously with their backs to the wall. Miramón early in the encounter was wounded by a bullet in the face.

López' treachery has been the subject of acrimonious controversy, but it is plain that, while delivering over the city, it was not intended to capture the Emperor, but to give him time to escape. Many officers acquainted with the facts survive. It was a brother of General Pedro Rincón Gallardo,

now the Mexican Minister in London—a delightful veteran, with all the courtly manners of the blue blood of Spain—who led the first party of Republicans into the city, and the Minister himself followed with the cavalry and saw all that took place.

The result of the interview between López and General Escobedo was that the Convent de La Cruz, which Maximilian had made his headquarters, should be attacked that same night. At midnight, accordingly, a column was formed for the assault by General Francisco Velez, who commanded the line. Colonel José M. Rincón Gallardo was placed at its head, and his instructions were that at 2 a.m. a person would come out of the enemy's trenches, that he should go forward to meet him, and should execute all the orders that this man might give him.

At the hour named this person, who proved to be Colonel Miguel López, appeared as arranged, and told Colonel Rincón Gallardo to advance with him, and to order twenty of his men to follow at a short distance. The Republican, being suspicious, took López by the arm, keeping his pistol at full cock. In this way they entered the cemetery attached to the Convent de La Cruz through a breach made by the artillery a few days before. López had been given command of all this line, and his troops, whose arms were piled at the time, on seeing their commander were put off their guard.

Immediately afterwards the entire Republican column swarmed through the breach, making prisoners of the Imperialist soldiers at the cemetery before they had realised what was happening. La Cruz itself was taken, without any resistance.

Besides the chief or principal staircase, there was another in the second court-yard by which the Emperor descended from his room. In this second courtyard he mounted his horse, and accompanied by General Castillo, who was in uniform, and with his full staff, he directed his way to the street, having to pass through the enemy's troops in order to go out by the chief gate of the Convent, when he found his passage barred by the Republican soldiers. López thereupon called to their commander, "The Emperor! Give orders that they let him pass." "*Que*

passen, son paisanos" (Let them pass, they are citizens), said Colonel José Rincón Gallardo, and the men stood aside. His explicit orders from General Escobedo had been to obey López.

Maximilian refused to fly. He summoned Miramón and Mejía, and sent orders for as many troops as possible to be assembled on the Cerro de las Campanos, and for the place to be defended. When dense masses of infantry approached, he had the mortification of seeing his own troops go over to the enemy, while others were taken prisoners.

Thrice the Emperor consulted Mejía as to the possibility of cutting a way out, but the stoical Indian at his side declared it to be useless to attempt it.

Much blood had been shed before Maximilian realised the utter hopelessness of his position. He was many times fired upon, but remained unscathed.

Seizing a handkerchief he tied it to his riding-whip as a flag of truce, and started down the slope of the Cerro de las Campanos, where he was confronted by Colonel Green. This officer, a Canadian by birth, who was a smart, well-preserved man of about sixty when I met him in Mexico, described to me how the Emperor's surrender was effected. Colonel Green was the only British officer fighting for Juárez and the Republicans. Originally an artist travelling in Mexico, he had been drawn into the whirlpool of Mexican life, and after some adventurous years was commanding before Querétaro a band of volunteers he had raised. Though a Briton in appearance, he is thoroughly Mexican in sentiment.

"Maximilian was disheartened," said the colonel, "and nervous. His lips were trembling; he looked ill and wan, but withal showed himself a noble and gallant soldier."

"I surrender," he murmured.

"You must surrender to General Escobedo."

"No, no, not to him—to you, or to General Corona!"

"Calm yourself," replied the colonel; "I have a letter from my brother at Washington in my pocket, and he tells me the American Government has interceded for your life."

These words came as a great relief to the unfortunate Emperor, and a flash of joy illumined his face, but it was only momentary.

By this time General Corona, a good-looking officer, who was afterwards Minister in Madrid, and then the leader of the Army of the West, had arrived. Standing aside, Colonel Green beckoned to Maximilian to surrender formally to his superior officer.

"I am Maximilian, Emperor of Mexico," he pulled himself together sufficiently to say, as he presented his sword to Corona, standing beside whom was General Riva Rincón Palacio.

"You are a Mexican citizen and my prisoner," was the stern reply of his captor.

The Mexican Empire, conceived by Louis Napoleon for the furtherance of schemes designed for his own aggrandisement, in which the welfare of the nation had no part, and constructed over the graves of thousands of French soldiers, was at an end. A deluge of blood had swept over the country before Maximilian's unstable throne was established. The Emperor had striven to bring peace, but fate decided that during his brief rule he should be engaged in unceasing warfare. The long and bitter conflict of five years, commencing with the French Intervention, had drained the country of its manhood. There was not a family in Mexico, rich or poor, but mourned the loss of a father or son by death, captivity, or exile.

The blow shook Napoleon's throne in Europe. From the collapse of the Mexican enterprise dated the growing discontent with his *régime* and suspicion of his aims which had its sequel three years later in the train of disasters that attended the Franco-German war. It had driven poor Carlota into madness. The tragic drama was now to claim its last victim, Maximilian himself.

After his surrender Maximilian was taken back to his quarters at the Convent de La Cruz. Sentries were posted, and a guard was even placed in his room. An hour or two later the fallen Emperor asked to be permitted to see the brothers Gallardo, and when they appeared he took them out on a little flat roof, or balcony, adjoining the apartment.

"One of you allowed me to pass to-day in the Convent de La Cruz," he said.