Colonel José Gallardo replied that it was he, whereupon Maximilian thanked him and declared that he had asked them to come because he thought they would have great influence in the Republican Army. They ought, he said, to use that influence so that no more blood should be shed, and if it was considered necessary he desired that his—the Emperor's—should be the last. He requested them to spare no effort to save the lives of his generals, mentioning especially Miramón, their own intimate friend.

General Rincón Gallardo tells me that Maximilian was looking pale and ill, and was suffering from dysentery. The room was littered with books. When they entered the Emperor was standing by the bed, and stepped forward to greet them in excellent Spanish. He wore the uniform in which he had surrendered, a blue tunic with gold buttons engraved with the Mexican eagle, blue trousers with a gold stripe, and high Wellington boots. On parting he shook hands with great affability. They were greatly impressed by his calm dignity.

Later the Emperor was removed to a bare apartment at the Convent of Las Teresitas, which remained his prison. Mejía and Miramón, his chief generals, were incarcerated near him. The three were summoned to attend before a court-martial constituted by Escobedo, which assembled at the Teatro de Yturbide, in the city of Querétaro, at ten o'clock on the morning of June 14th, 1867. One of the Emperor's judges was later Mexican Ambassador at Washington.

Maximilian refused to appear; though broken in health, the proud spirit of his imperial race asserted itself in the depth of his misfortunes. It is said that during the two days throughout which the trial lasted in his absence, he consoled himself by reading in his cell the history of Charles I. of England. How the pathetic story of the man who had suffered must have appealed to the man about to suffer. His defence was entrusted to eminent Mexican lawyers, with the Licentiate Mariano Riva Palacio at their head, who did all that was possible for him.

The result had been foreseen. The Emperor, with Generals

Mejía and Miramón, was charged with treason to the State, with filibustering, and with the issue of the fateful Decree of October 3rd, under which so many Mexicans had violently suffered death. The court-martial found them guilty, and the death sentence was ordered to be carried out the next day.

Juárez postponed the executions for three days, on the urgent representations of Baron Magnus, the Prussian Minister. It had been expected by all the Emperor's friends that Europe and America would interfere, and few believed that the dread sentence would be carried out. Even before his capture the French and English Sovereigns had urged the United States to intercede on Maximilian's behalf. To all such representations Juárez replied that the laws of the Republic must be observed. There hung in the balance not only the life of an individual, but the safety of a nation.

Never had a man standing in deadly peril such illustrious sureties offered for his future conduct. "I implore you," wrote Baron Magnus to Juárez' Minister, Don Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada, "in the name of humanity and of Heaven, not to make any further attempt against the Prince's life, and repeat how certain I am that my Sovereign, his Majesty the King of Prussia, and all the monarchs of Europe who are related to the imprisoned prince, his brother the Emperor of Austria, his cousin the Queen of Great Britain, his brother-in-law the King of the Belgians, and his cousin the Queen of Spain, as also the Kings of Italy and Sweden, will readily agree to give all possible guarantee that none of the prisoners shall ever return to Mexican territory."

All was, however, without avail. It could have been no wish of Juárez to take the Emperor's life, but owing to the death of many of their heroes who had been shot down in cold blood under Maximilian's Decree of October 3rd, the feeling among Republicans was so intense, that, had he escaped, both the Government and the Emperor would have been in peril of the fury of the populace and the army.

The position is a striking one. Probably it has never had a parallel. The Emperor of a great European State was interceding for the life of a brother, the Kings and Queens of Europe,

tied by bonds of relationship, though less close, and each of them knowing Maximilian personally and taking the keenest interest in his fate, were joining through their Ministers in the appeal. And to whom ? To Benito Juárez—Citizen Juárez—" the man in the black coat "—the calm, strong, resolute man, self-taught, self-reliant, reared in a school of hard adversity ; the unfriended Indian lad whom we have seen years before sleeping behind the counter in his master's shop.

Forty years have passed, and looking back the sentence seems harsh. From all we know of Maximilian's character he might with safety have been permitted to leave Mexico. He was not the type of man ever to have troubled the country again. But in justice to Juárez, with whom the supreme decision rested, it is necessary to recall the circumstances of the time. Mexico had been for generations the sport of one usurper after another. The country's liberties, if safe from interference by the dethroned Emperor, would yet be open to constant menace.

The example of Yturbide was remembered ; that of the ex-King of the Two Sicilies, who, when expelled from Naples, organised a government in Rome where he continued to receive recognition from Spain, was comparatively recent.

It has been frequently urged that the Decree of October 3rd, which condemned to summary execution all who opposed Maximilian in arms, alone justified the measures adopted towards its author, but there is in fact no trace of any feelings of revenge in Juárez' action. He was actuated solely by considerations for the welfare of his distracted country. No one knew so well the dangers of a perpetuation of the state of anarchy which had for so long existed within its borders. The time was not one for indecision. He delayed carrying out the sentence in order that he might not be accused of undue hastiness, but there is no evidence that his resolve at any time wavered.

Maximilian was shot on the morning of June 19th.

As the sun went down on his last day on earth he sat writing at a table in his little cell. These last letters, printed at the close of this chapter, reveal his whole soul.

Only thirty-five years of age, he was condemned to die.

What must his thoughts have been ? Tempted, cheated, deserted, treated with treachery and dishonesty, the one thing he loved on earth lost to him—for he had learnt of his wife's madness some months before—absolutely nothing lay before him. Austria had been endeared to him as his home, but he left it to please a woman he loved still more. He had fought hard to maintain the pomp and splendour he came out to create, but how miserably he had failed.

Childless, there was nobody to carry on his ruined name, either to greater depths or to raise it again to honoured heights—just he, one lone, desolate figure, waiting to meet his God.

And how did he do it ?

Nothing in his troubled career became him more than this final scene. The man who so often at a crisis in his life had shown himself weak and indecisive became strengthened and ennobled as he faced death. He was calm and composed, and his quiet dignity, maintained to the end, made an ineffaceable impression upon those who were with him in those last moments.

Maximilian rose at half-past three o'clock on that fatal morning, and made a careful toilet. At five he attended Mass with his two Generals, Miramón and Mejía, who were to suffer with him. An hour later Captain González entered his cell. Before he had yet spoken the Emperor said, " I am ready," and came out into the passage, where he was surrounded by his few servants, who, weeping, kissed his hands. " Be calm," he said to them ; " you see I am so. It is the will of God that I should die, and we cannot act against that."

To the cells of each of the generals he went in turn, said his farewells and embraced them, and then, protected by a strong escort, the melancholy little procession marched out to the sunlit street. " Ah, what a splendid day ! I always wished to die on such a day," the Emperor remarked, as he breathed the fresh air. A few hired carriages were in waiting to convey them to the place chosen for the execution, a little eminence at the foot of the slopes of the Cerro de las Campanas, known as " the Hill of the Bells."

It is quite close to the spot where Maximilian had surrendered

to the Republic. Everyone greeted the Emperor respectfully, and the women cried aloud.

Here a division of troops was drawn up, forming three sides of a hollow square. The condemned men alighted and walked with a firm step towards a low adobe wall, against which they were ranged. Maximilian refused to have his eyes bandaged, and was allowed to die looking death in the face.

The Emperor had been given the central position, with his generals on either side. He hesitated, turned to Miramón, and placed him in the middle, observing, "A brave soldier must be honoured by his monarch even in his last hour, therefore permit me to give you the place of honour."

Outside the lines of the soldiers a crowd of people had congregated. An impressive silence prevailed, broken only by the sobs of the women.

Miramón protested against the accusation that he was a traitor to his country. "I never was a traitor," he said, "and I request you not to suffer this stain to be affixed to my memory, and still less to my children. Viva Mexico! viva el Emperador!" He stood erect to receive the shot. Mejía, stoical as ever, cast an indifferent look around him.

Maximilian addressed a few burning words to the people. "Mexicans," he said, "persons of my rank and origin are destined by God either to be benefactors of the people or martyrs. Called by a great part of you, I came for the good of the country. Ambition did not bring me here; I came animated with the best wishes for the future of my adopted land, and for that of my soldiers, whom I thank, before my death, for the sacrifices they made for me. Mexicans, may my blood be the last which will be spilt for the welfare of the country; and if it should be necessary that its sons should still shed theirs, may it flow for its good, but never by treason. Viva Independence! Viva Mexico!"

As the Emperor's utterance ceased he advanced a step towards the firing party. The officer in command yelled at him, "*Atras!*" (Back). Maximilian quietly responded that his only object was to give each of the men a gold ounce (twenty pesos)

as a souvenir. He asked the men not to aim at his face, but at his heart, as he desired that, when his mortal remains were returned to Austria, his mother, the Archduchess Sophia, might be able to recognise him. Then he laid both his hands on his breast, and looked steadily before him.

Wisps of thin blue smoke curled upwards in the air, disclosing three bodies prostrate on the ground. Five shots had been fired. The Emperor had fallen on his right side, whispering slowly the word "Hombre." His body was pierced, and the wounds were deadly; but he still moved slightly. The officer in command of the firing party laid him on his back, and pointed with his sword to the heart. A soldier then stepped forward, and sent another bullet into the spot indicated. Mejía lived after the firing, and required two more bullets to despatch him.

The bodies of the two generals were handed over to their relatives, and the corpse of Maximilian was conveyed to the Convent of San Teresita, where it was embalmed. It was not, however, without difficulty that the relatives of Maximilian even recovered his remains. They now repose in the crypt of the Capuchin church at Vienna, the last resting-place of so many of the illustrious but ill-fated House of Hapsburg.

Maximilian wrote the following dignified letter to Juárez on the morning of his execution:

"Querétaro, June 19, 1867.

"Señor Don Benito Juárez,—

"Being about to meet death, as a consequence of having sought to determine whether new political institutions would put an end to the sanguinary civil wars which for so many years had torn this unfortunate country, I shall forfeit my life with pleasure if that sacrifice may contribute to the peace and prosperity of my adopted fatherland.

"Fully persuaded that no solid structure can be raised on a soil soaked with blood and convulsed by violent commotions, I implore you, in the most solemn manner, and with the sincerity natural to my present situation, that my blood may be the last shed, and that, with perseverance equal to that with which you

upheld the cause that has just triumphed—a perseverance which, in my prosperity, I took pleasure in recognising and esteeming—you will now devote yourself to the nobler task of reconciliation and of laying the firm and lasting foundations of peace and tranquillity in this unhappy land.

"MAXIMILIANO."

Nor did he forget his attorneys, who had laboured to procure his release, or at least to vindicate the rectitude of his intentions. To the Licentiate Riva Palacio he wrote :

"Capuchinas Prison, Querétaro,
"June 18, 1867.

"MY DEAR RIVA PALACIO,—

"The perseverance and energy with which I am informed you have defended my cause at San Luis Potosí, and the hardships which you have suffered in that task, in spite of your years and the delicate state of your health, require that I express to you my sincere gratitude for a service so generous and noble, which remains engraved on my heart.

"I regret that I am unable to express these sentiments to you verbally, and to entreat you in the same manner as I now do in writing, that in your prayers you will not forget,

"Your affectionate friend,
"MAXIMILIANO."

The last letter was to poor Carlota. It is short and of infinite sadness :

"Querétaro, June 18, 1867.

"MY DEARLY BELOVED CARLOTA,—

"If one day God permits you to recover and you read these lines, you will learn the cruelty of the ill-fortune which has increasingly pursued me since your departure for Europe. You took with you all my soul. So many events and so many sudden blows have broken all my hopes, that death is for me a happy deliverance and not an agony. I fall gloriously as a soldier, as a king ; vanquished but not dishonoured. If your sufferings be

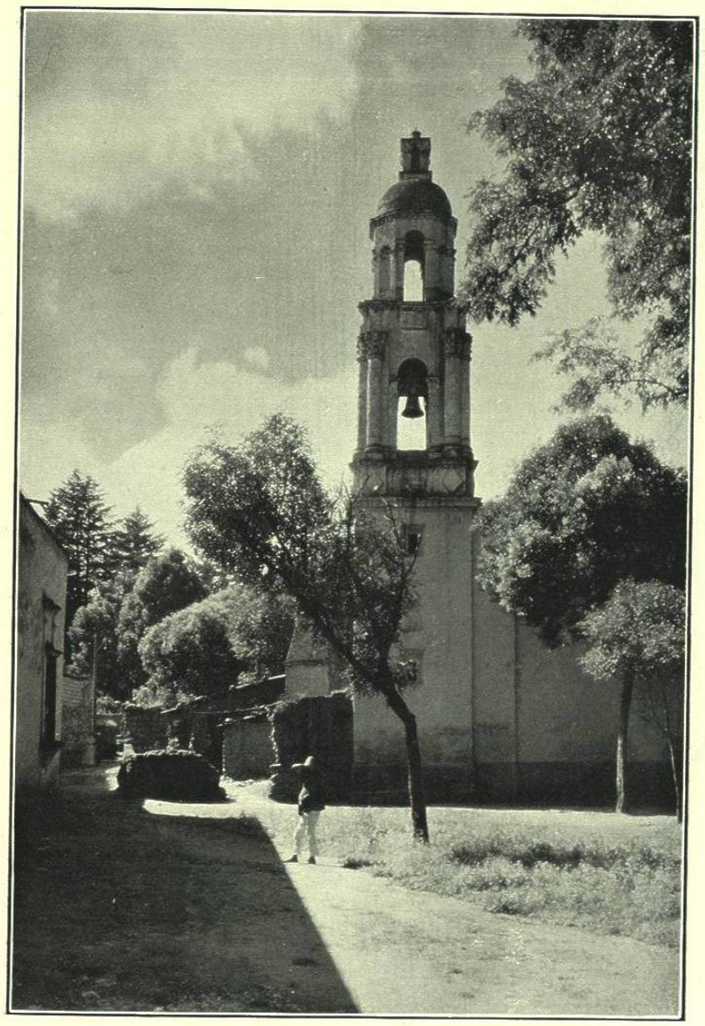

Photo by COX.]

Chimalista, near Mexico City.

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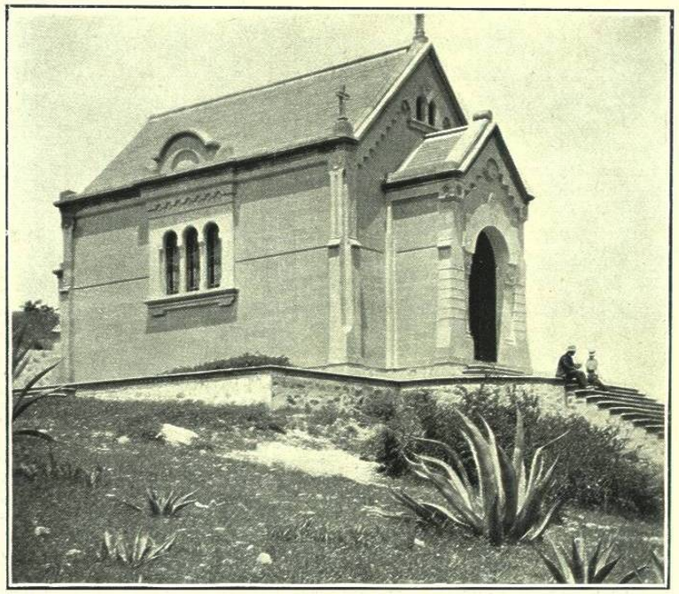

Little chapel built over the spot where Maximilian was shot at Queretaro.

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too great, if God call you speedily to rejoin me, I will bless the Divine hand which has so heavily pressed upon us. Adieu. Adieu.

"YOUR POOR MAX."

Poor heartbroken Emperor!

The sun shone as if to mock him on that awful morning. Its bright rays glinted on the golden domes of Querétaro and played among the purples and blues, the yellows and oranges of those old Puebla tiles that adorn so many of the Querétaro churches, as if to remind him of that fateful fight at Puebla.

The second crop of maize was still uncut in the fields, the heat of summer had not yet browned the verdure. Life looked its best. Mexico showed her wealth of crops and the richness of her land; but it meant nothing to the Prince, the soldier, the Emperor and dreamer, who wrote these heartbroken words to an insane wife.

Three little crosses were put up to mark the spot which closed foreign rule in Mexico. And so, his life story ended, the Emperor of Mexico fell.

Thirty years later an insignificant chapel was erected by the Emperor Francis Joseph to commemorate the tragedy, and in April, 1901, a mission was sent from Austria in the persons of Prince Khevenhüller and Prince Fuerstenberg, to formally open the chapel. When General Diaz heard this he determined to do them all honour, and despatched his own special train to meet the party at Vera Cruz. It was a pretty act of courtesy, Maximilian's successor honouring the memory of his Imperial adversary.

Diaz, when compelled to surrender Oaxaca to the French, was detained a prisoner at Puebla, as we know, for about nine months. During that time Maximilian was a visitor there. The general in command of the troops told Diaz that the Emperor had arrived from the capital, and was going to make an inspection of the military prisons, when he hoped to have Diaz pointed out to him.

Diaz indignantly refused an interview; he did not wish to be "pointed out."

Later came a message to say that a carriage would be sent, in which Diaz might make a private visit to Maximilian.

"Tell him I will do nothing of the kind," and as General Diaz retailed the story to me his eyes sparkled with indignation, the whole man seemed on fire. "Tell him if he wishes to see me, he will have to *order me* to appear as a prisoner between soldiers, for in no other way will I go before him."

"And so you never met Maximilian?"

"Never," said the old General, shaking his head and defiantly jerking it back.

"And yet," he added, after a pause, "I was sorry for him, too."

CHAPTER XII.

THE FALL OF MEXICO CITY.

MAXIMILIAN was dead. For two whole days Mexico City still held out, though the Empire had crumbled away—held out, in fact, until this important news had time to filter through and be digested by the garrison.

Two causes were responsible for this protracted defence of the capital. No reason of state existed why it should longer withstand the Republic. There was now no organised power in the country save the Republican Government. But many of those cooped within the besiegers' lines, who had played a traitor's part when the fortunes of Juárez and the national cause seemed at their lowest ebb, had good reason to fear the consequences of submission, and so left nothing undone in their endeavour to make terms for themselves.

But General Diaz refused to consider anything but the unconditional surrender of the city; and moreover declined to sacrifice his men in an assault which he realised must be unnecessary; time unaided would do all that was required.

"I knew of the complete demoralisation within the city (he writes) by the frequent proposals which came to me from some of the leading men there, offering to desert and to facilitate my occupation."

General Tomás O'Horán had come out in the early stages of