

CHAPTER XII.

THE FALL OF THE SECOND EMPIRE, AND THE RE-
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REPUBLIC.

Downfall of the Second Empire.—The Decree of October 3, 1865.—Its Effect upon the Imperial Cause.—Warning from Washington.—Napoleon III. withdraws his Support.—The heroic Carlota.—Her Interview with the Emperor of France.—Her Insanity.—Vacillations of Maximilian.—The French Troops retire.—Maximilian in Command of the Imperial Army.—He Removes his Capital to Queretaro.—The Mouse-Trap.—The City besieged by the Republicans.—General Marquez.—Treachery of Lopez.—Queretaro taken by the Republicans.—Surrender of Maximilian.—The juvenile Court.—Charges against the Emperor.—The Trial and Sentence.—Reprieve.—Efforts to save Maximilian.—His heroic Conduct.—The Execution.—Marquez and Vidaurri at the Capital.—Scheme of Marquez.—Its disastrous Result.—The Capital besieged and taken by the Republicans.—Return of the Republican Government.—Execution of Vidaurri and O'Horan.—Treatment of Imperialists.—Amnesty.—Juarez re-elected President.—His Death.—Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada.—Juan N. Mendez.—Porfirio Diaz.—Manuel Gonzales.—Reflections in the Panteon de San Fernando.

THE actual downfall of the second empire began in 1865. In October of that year Maximilian was betrayed by some of his advisers (presumably by Marshal Bazaine, who left no savory reputation behind

him in Mexico) into issuing a decree somewhat of the nature of that with which Juarez had attempted to suppress the rising monarchical party in 1862. The republican government, fleeing before the French forces in June, 1863, had sought refuge first in San Luis Potosi. It had subsequently gone to Saltillo, thence to Chihuahua, and finally, still fleeing before the Imperial forces, had been established in Paso del Norte. It was in the course of these wanderings that ex-President Comonfort, then a member of Juarez' cabinet, was assassinated.

While the republican government was maintaining itself as best it might at Paso del Norte word was brought to Maximilian that Juarez had abandoned the country, crossed the Rio Grande, and sought refuge in the United States. The decree thereupon issued was utterly at variance with the general spirit of the Imperial legislation. It goes by the name of its date, October 3, 1865. It stated that the Republican President had abandoned his government and his country, and that the cause sustained by him with so much valor had succumbed. The character of the struggle was therefore radically changed. It was no longer between

two opposing systems of government, but between the surviving government, the empire established by the will of the people, and opposing individuals. All persons bearing arms against the empire were declared bandits, were to be tried by courts-martial, and condemned to death. "Hereafter," said an army order issued by Bazaine in furtherance of the Imperial decree (and this is advanced to attest his part in the authorship of that decree),—"hereafter the troops will make no prisoners, and there will be no exchange of prisoners." Every one taken with arms was to be put to death. Rank was to receive no consideration. And within a few days the decree was rendered effective in the State of Michoacan upon Arteaga, Villagomez, Salazar, and Felix Diaz, four most estimable Republican officers, arrested by the Imperialists, debarred the rights of prisoners-of-war, tried by court-martial, condemned, and shot in Uruapam the 21st of October.

The Imperial cause suffered severely by these measures. Some of its staunchest friends refused longer to support an empire that could be guilty of such cruel injustice, while the hitherto neutrals threw the weight of their influence into the Republican cause.

Maximilian discovered his mistake when it was too late to profit by the discovery.

When the war in the United States closed, in the spring of 1865, the government at Washington was able to devote its attention to the disregard of the Monroe Doctrine of which Napoleon III. had been guilty. From the time when the first French troops landed in Mexico the French government had been repeatedly warned that its action would be regarded as a cause of war with the United States; but such warnings were unheeded so long as the United States had more war already on hand than could conveniently be disposed of. But when the war closed, leaving the United States territorially intact, the warnings of the Secretary of State in Washington had a different sound in French ears, particularly as they were emphasized by the sending of an army to the Mexican frontier to co-operate with the Republican troops, if needed, in expelling the European invaders. The French government thought better of its relations to the Monroe Doctrine and despatches were forwarded to Mexico, apprising Maximilian of the intention of France to withdraw its arms and its support from the empire.

It was on the 31st of May, 1866, that Maximilian received word of the intentions of Napoleon III. regarding the withdrawal of the troops. His courage forsook him for the moment, and his first impulse was to abdicate and return to Europe. He was dissuaded from taking this foolish step by the courageous Empress, who offered to go to France and plead with the French Emperor in person for the strict fulfilment of the Treaty of Miramar. The very next day she set out upon this mission, and her journey and the result of it are among the most heroic incidents in the whole history of Mexico, and the very saddest. Arriving in Paris, her first efforts to obtain an interview with Napoleon III. were unavailing. When finally she succeeded in confronting him he not only refused to extend any further aid to the empire of his own device in Mexico, but treated Carlota with brutal impoliteness. He finally dismissed her by asking by what route she preferred to have the imperial railway-coach convey her out of France. She repaired to Rome and sought the aid of his Holiness Pius IX. Here also she met with disappointments. Her reception at the Vatican was not what she had been led to anticipate.

Under the intense strain of anxiety and disappointment she was taken sick. Brain fever ensued and on the 4th of October she was pronounced hopelessly insane. She was taken to Miramar, and afterwards to Brussels, where she still remains in strict seclusion.

The news which reached the Emperor at Chapultepec of the issue of the mission of Carlota was such as to crush him completely. For a long time he debated with himself whether he ought to make any further attempt to maintain the empire. He at last set out for Vera Cruz, postponing his final decision until he could receive dispatches expected from Europe. He went no farther than Orizaba, and there spent two months in the most anxious vacillation. He went so far at one time as to forward his abdication to the French commissioners sent to cooperate with Bazaine in securing that document, — that being the easiest way suggesting itself to Louis Napoleon by which he could redeem his pledges to Maximilian and avoid war with the United States. But upon the refusal of the commissioners to accept some of the terms of the abdication he withdrew it, leaving Louis Napoleon to extricate himself from his delicate position in some other way.

Letters received from Europe and overtures received from the clerical party in Mexico, pledging its support and the treasures of the Church, decided the question. At the same time General Miramon returned to the country and proffered his services to the Emperor. He and General Marquez pledged themselves to raise an army sufficient to replace the retiring French troops. The Emperor accordingly returned to the capital and made the hacienda de la Teja, west of the city, his headquarters.

The French troops under Bazaine first concentrated in the vicinity of the capital where the exchange of prisoners (conducted in a manner creditable to both the Imperialists and the Republicans) occupied some time. It was in January, 1867, that the French soldiers began to retire to Vera Cruz. The embarkation took place in March. Bazaine himself was the last to embark, and his final act upon Mexican soil was to write a letter to the Emperor begging him to abdicate and offering him a chance to return to Europe.

A few foreign officers and soldiers, Austrians and Belgians, chose to remain with the Emperor in Mexico. Maximilian in person assumed the command of the armies raised

by Miramon and Marquez. But they fell far short of what had been promised. The promises of funds with which the Church had been so lavish, were but partially fulfilled, and the funds actually furnished from the treasures of the Church were wholly inadequate for the support of the empire.

Induced by the strength of the Church in Queretaro, Maximilian adopted the ill-advised measure of leaving the city of Mexico and making Queretaro his capital and the basis of his operations. He concentrated his forces there, and found it, what he himself termed it, "a mouse-trap;" for no sooner was he established there with his generals, Miramon, Mejia, Marquez, and Mendez, and with the greater part of the Imperialist army, than the Republican forces, hitherto scattered and disorganized, began to gather from the North, and united under the command of Gen. Mariano Escobedo; and about the 1st of March, 1867, the town of Queretaro was completely surrounded. A siege was begun and lasted two months and a half. On one occasion General Marquez with a few soldiers succeeded in breaking through the Republican lines and hastened to the city of Mexico to bring troops to the

relief of the besieged Imperialists; but he proved false to the Emperor, and attempted to set up a government of his own in the South, with disastrous results to himself and to his followers.

The besieged army in Queretaro had experienced all the horrors incident to a siege, when on the 14th of May a council of war was held to adopt a plan for a sortie to be made that night. It was to be conducted by Gen. Tomas Mejia, and he begged that he might be allowed twenty-four hours in which to perfect his arrangements. His request was granted. Immediately upon the breaking up of the council of war Col. Miguel Lopez, a favorite of both the Emperor and the Empress from the very day when they entered the city of Mexico, and the recipient of many favors from them, went over to the Republican camp and gave such information as would enable the Republican forces to enter the city the following morning at daybreak.

It was thus that, early on the morning of the 15th of May, a few Republican soldiers, appearing at the gate of the convent of La Cruz, the Imperial headquarters in Queretaro, were allowed to enter and make the

guards their prisoners. The alarm being given, the Emperor arose, hastily dressed, and hurried through the city to the Cerro de las Campanas,—the Hill of the Bells. He was soon joined by his body-guard and General Mejia. Miramon was wounded on his way thither, and was made prisoner. The whole garrison at La Cruz, taken by surprise, were made prisoners, the troops elsewhere were thrown into confusion, and though few guns were fired, the Republicans were soon in complete possession of the town.

As it grew lighter, a survey of the situation from the Cerro revealed the fact to Mejia that further resistance would be utterly useless. He so advised his chief. "Then I am no longer emperor," said Maximilian as a white flag was displayed, attracting the attention of General Escobedo. When the Republican Commander rode up to the Cerro, Maximilian delivered his sword into his hand.

The Imperialist prisoners were committed to the Convent of La Cruz. In a few days they were removed to the Capuchin Monastery. Juarez, who had returned with his ministers to San Luis Potosi, issued an order

for the trial of the Emperor, and Generals Mejia and Miramon. A military court was accordingly convened, under the decree of January, 1862, and sat in the Iturbide Theatre. It consisted of a lieutenant-colonel of the Republican army and six captains of artillery. The oldest member of this court was twenty-three years of age. The others had scarcely reached their majority. One was only eighteen.

The charges brought against Maximilian were treason, usurpation of the public power, filibustering, trying to prolong the civil war in Mexico, and finally signing the decree of October 3, 1865. Miramon and Mejia were tried as accomplices, and although all were ably defended by prominent lawyers, the juvenile court, apparently selected for the purpose of condemning, found them all guilty on the 14th of June, and sentenced them to be shot on the afternoon of the 16th. They were that day reprieved until the morning of the 19th.

In the mean time every exertion was made in Mexico and abroad to save the life of the Austrian Archduke. But Juarez, at San Luis Potosi, refused all petitions made on behalf of the unfortunate prisoner. Maximilian

made no appeals on his own behalf, but absenting himself from the trial, he devoted himself to arranging his private affairs. His only appeal to the Republican government was on behalf of his unhappy companions, Miramon and Mejia. His conduct throughout was such as to win the admiration of all who saw him. He was comforted in his last hours by the report brought to him that his beloved Carlota was dead, and he looked forward to meeting her soon beyond the grave.

At sunrise on the morning of the 19th of June, 1867, the Emperor and his two gallant companions in arms were taken to the Cerro de las Campanas and the preparations for the execution were quickly made. Maximilian yielded the central place, the place of honor, to Miramon, as a tribute to his bravery, and took his own place at the left of the line marked out for the three condemned men. He gave presents to the soldier executioners, bidding them aim at his body, not at his head, and then addressed the soldiers of the Republican army and the immense throng standing in sorrowful silence upon the hillsides. He said: "Mexicans, I die for a just cause, — the independence of Mexico. God

grant that my blood may bring happiness to my new country. *Viva Mexico!*" Miramon echoed his *Viva Mexico*, and the fatal volley was fired. Maximilian, thrown to the ground but not instantly killed, sprang to his feet uttering the most agonizing groans. A soldier advanced, and gave what is called the *golpe de gracia* ("the blow of mercy"), a well-aimed shot that pierced the heart of the Emperor, and stretched his lifeless body beside those of his companions. He was in the thirty-fifth year of his age and has been lamented all over the world.

The body of the Emperor was carefully embalmed by the order of the Republican government, and kept at the Capuchin Monastery, until, after a delay of several months (unnecessarily lengthened by diplomatic blunders on the part of the Austrian government), permission was given to remove it to Austria. It was taken to the city of Mexico and deposited in the hospital of San Andres. Thence it was taken, on the 12th of November, 1867, to Vera Cruz, where it was embarked on the "Novara," the ship in which the Emperor had begun his travels in 1851, and in which he and the Empress had come to Mexico in 1864. The body was solemnly

received in Trieste in January, 1868, and taken to Vienna, where on the 20th of that month it was consigned to the Imperial vault in the Church of the Capuchins. There it now rests.

After the fall of Queretaro, the city of Mexico and Vera Cruz alone of all the important cities of the country remained in the hands of the Imperialists. On the 25th of March, 1867, when Marquez succeeded in breaking through the wall of Republican encampments surrounding Queretaro, and set out for the capital, he was accompanied by Gen. Santiago Vidaurri, to whom the Emperor had entrusted the military government of the capital. Reaching his destination, Marquez assumed command of five thousand of the best troops to be raised there, but instead of returning to the relief of the besieged army in Queretaro, he set out upon the accomplishment of a purpose of his own. He fancied that Mexico was likely to be divided into separate nations, Juarez maintaining his government in one, Maximilian building up his empire in another. Marquez was anxious to establish himself in a third, with Puebla as its capital. Puebla was

at the time in the hands of the Imperialists, but was menaced by Republicans under Gen. Porfirio Diaz, and before Marquez could reach the city it surrendered. On his way Marquez fell in with the army and suffered a severe loss. Rallying his forces he attacked the Republicans again, but after a battle of three days his army was cut to pieces, and he escaped almost alone to the city of Mexico.

Upon his return to the capital Marquez found the Imperialists there so demoralized that had an assault been made the Republicans might easily have taken the place. He superseded Vidaurri, and establishing his headquarters in Santiago-Tlatelolco he raised an army of six thousand soldiers and disposed them for the defence of the city. General Diaz approached the capital, and as soon as Queretaro fell was joined by a part of the army from the North. A siege was begun and lasted several weeks. The occupants of the city, besides suffering from the cruelties and despotism of Marquez' dictatorship, experienced all the horrors incident to a protracted siege, when, the day after the execution of Maximilian, relief came to them in the form of an attack made by the Republi-

cans from all sides, which forced the surrender of Marquez. The following day (21st of June, 1867) the Republican troops entered the capital. Vera Cruz surrendered on the 4th of July.

On the 15th of July President Juarez with his ministry re-entered the capital. It was to the Republicans a day of rejoicing. To the Imperialists it was a day of anxiety. The wealthier residents of the capital were mostly Imperialists, and ladies were generally found wearing mourning for the late Emperor.

The triumphing republic, however, dealt leniently with the Imperialist leaders. Vidaurri had been executed in the *plaza de Santo Domingo* before the arrival of the President. Marquez had a long score of cruelties and robberies, as well as purely political crimes, to answer for, and would have fared ill at the hands of the Republicans had he not escaped out of the country and remained in exile. Nineteen of the prominent prisoners taken at the fall of Queretaro were tried in that city and condemned to death. The sentence was afterwards commuted to imprisonment and exile, and finally remitted entirely. Of more than two hundred prisoners confined in the old convents in the city of Mexico,

the Enseñanza, Santa Brigida, Regina, and Santiago-Tlatelolco, one only was made to suffer the death penalty. It was Gen. Tomas O'Horan. He had been a Republican and was with Zaragoza in the battle of Cinco de Mayo. His part in the history of the empire had not been prominent, but all the efforts of his friends, Republicans as well as Imperialists, were unavailing. He was executed at Mixcalco on the 21st of August, 1867. Some heavy fines were imposed in certain cases, but very little property was confiscated. For a time it seemed that peace had at last dawned upon the war-rent country, and that the new era was to be one of good feeling. Lopez, munificently rewarded by the Republican government for his treachery, has occupied the position in the public regard which the traitor always deserves.

In August, 1867, in calling for a Constitutional election, a decree was made defining, among other things, the status of those who had taken part in the late empire. In the acrimonious debates which followed upon some harsh measures in the decree, the Juarez government was sarcastically termed the "Government of Paso del Norte." For once in the history of Mexico, public sen-

timent obtained a hearing, and the harsh measures were withdrawn from the decree, and a general amnesty was proclaimed.

The election resulted in the choice of Don Benito Juarez, for president. He continued in the presidency until his death in 1872, when he was succeeded by Don Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada, who had been his faithful Minister of Relations during the wanderings of the government, and who succeeded to the presidency by virtue of his office of president of the Supreme Court of Justice. He was confirmed in his office by an election in December, 1872, and held the presidency until 1876. It was in the time-honored way that his presidential career was brought to a close. A revolution broke out, as a result of which Gen. Juan N. Mendez entered upon the presidency in December, 1876, and held the office until the 5th of May, 1877, when Gen. Porfirio Diaz, by right of military strength, became president, holding the office until the 1st of December, 1880, when he was peaceably succeeded by his friend Gen. Manuel Gonzales, who *misgoverned* Mexico for four years, and then gave place, on the 1st of December, 1884, to Gen. Porfirio Diaz. President Diaz

has proved a constitutional reformer. He has succeeded in so amending the Constitution as to be permitted to succeed himself. This he did on the 1st of December, 1888, without conflict with other ambitious aspirants to political power.

A few months after the execution that has given to Queretaro greater fame than it has acquired by reason of the many other historic incidents associated with it, the remains of Miramon and Mejia were allowed to be removed to the capital, and were buried with religious ceremonies in the *Panteon de San Fernando*. No visitor in Mexico should fail to visit this unique burial-place, within the walls of the now ruined Monastery of San Fernando. Many of Mexico's most illustrious dead lie buried there. Many of the names mentioned in the history of this later period will be found inscribed upon tombs there. In the same *patio* with the tomb of Mejia, and only a few yards distant from the unpretentious brown-stone monument (in an adjoining *patio*) marking the resting-place of Miramon, is the noble mausoleum of Benito Juarez. He rests within the shadow of the Church which he perse-

cuted,—surrounded by the ruined walls of a monastery, dismantled and left to decay in obedience to his decree,—and midway between the tombs of two gallant men executed by his orders. The tomb of Vicente Guerrero is in a niche between the two *patios*. Ex-President Comonfort is buried in the same enclosure where stand the tombs of Juarez and Mejia, and also that of Gen. Ignacio Zaragoza, the hero of Cinco de Mayo. The remains of two of the distinguished victims of the Decree of October 3, 1865, Salazar and Arteaga, lie in one of the mural tombs, which make this *panteon*, more than any other in the city, an object of interest to tourists. In another mural tomb lie the bones of Melchor Ocampo, a liberal patriot who was hanged by the reactionaries in 1863 at his hacienda for advocating liberal movements. The inscription upon the white marble slab enclosing his tomb, "Sacrificado por la Tirania," might be written over many a tomb in Mexico, where the government has, from the fall of the first empire in 1824, been imperial in form though republican in name, where it has been purely personal, founded upon the military strength of the chief-magistrate.

It is significant that of all the long list of names of those who have occupied the exalted position of President, at least thirty have been accompanied by military titles. It is significant of the power that has ruled the Mexican Republic. The military title is common there, and Mexico has been in the nineteenth century as much a nation of warriors as it was in the days of the Aztec Confederacy. The Spaniards coming to these shores made a mistake in calling the *Tlaca-tecutli* of Tenochtitlan, "an Aztec emperor," but scarcely a greater mistake than the history of the present century makes in calling the chief warrior of the nation "President of the Mexican Republic." It is only within the last few years that Mexico has given promise of a better government than that to be found under the sword.

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