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**Chocolate Chips**

## The Tragedy of Maximilian.

Springfield Republican.

The story of Maximilian is unique in the history of North America, and the quality that makes it unique is its romantic tragedy, its contrast of death by military execution in Mexico to the pomp and glory of the Austrian court. Many a scion of royalty has been fitted for an end no better, but Maximilian was made of finer stuff and deserved a kinder fate. Chivalric and religious by nature, a poet, and it may be a dreamer, he thought it was the call of duty when, through the machinations of Louis Napoleon the emissaries of Mexico came to him at his Swiss chalet of Miramar, at the head of the Adriatic, and sought him to lead a people weary of anarchy and war.

His was a winning manner, and the flattering emissaries told him. "We are assured that you have the secret of conquering the hearts of all men." This was the beginning. The zenith came during the few months, weeks almost, when Maximilian and Carlotta established their Mexican court in ancient Chapultepec, with all the regalia and forms of European dynasty. The end came only three years later, when Maximilian was executed for treason and Carlotta had gone mad.

The ill-fated Ferdinand Joseph, archduke of Austria and later Emperor Maximilian I of Mexico, was born in 1832, and was the second son of the Austrian Archduke Francis Charles and the younger brother of the present aged emperor of Austria, Francis Joseph. The death of Maximilian was in fact the first of the three great family tragedies that have come upon Francis Joseph, the other two being the mysterious death of his son, the Crown Prince Rudolph and later the assassination of the Empress Elizabeth. Maximilian served in the Austrian army and also with success as governor of Lombardy and Venetia. He was a devout Catholic, a kindly prince, and something of a poet. Doubtless he would have lived a reasonably serene life and died a quiet death when his time came had it not been for the schemes of Louis Napoleon, who looked with jealous eye upon the growth of United States. How Napoleon's chance came to gain a foothold in our continent, while our hands were desperately filled with the civil war, will appear from the story of events in Mexico.

In 1858, after years full of revolution and disturbance, Benito Juarez came to the head of the Mexican Government. The year before, February 5, 1857, it is worth noting, the present Mexican constitution was adopted. The struggle between church and state which had added to the disruption of the country, had become acute before Juarez reached the presidency, and he rendered it more acute in 1859 by decreeing the nationalization of the church property. But the more important historical act and the one which brought graver consequences in its train was his subsequent decree suspending payment on the foreign debt for two years. This led to foreign war and indirectly to the tragic episode of the empire of Maximilian. The direct result was that in October, 1861, England, France, and Spain agreed by convention in London to take common action to protest their interests in Mexico. While the step taken by Juarez may have been wise and have been dictated by circumstances, it is the historical verdict that it was not done with tact or diplomacy. It gave Napoleon his opening.

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Following the adoption of the convention of London in 1861, an allied fleet was at once dispatched to Mexico, and in December the Spanish fleet occupied Vera Cruz. This was the chance that Louis Napoleon had been waiting for. It needed but a few months for England and France to discover that he was plotting with the support of Austria for a French-Austrian empire in Mexican territory. In February, 1862, the English and French forces were withdrawn. On their departure the French came out in open hostility to the Mexican Government under Juarez and was joined by the reactionists and monarchists. On May 5, 1862, the French forces, 6,000 strong, suffered a defeat at Puebla, and were forced to retreat to Orizaba. But the following September reinforcements arrived from France and raised the total strength of the French army of occupation to 12,000 men. In May, 1863, the combined force of French and Mexicans captured Puebla and marched on the capital, which fell into their hands after Juarez and his Cabinet had fled. From place to place Juarez and his republican guerrillas were driven by the French troops under Bazaine, afterward "the traitor of Metz." Juarez finally established his headquarters at El Paso, on the American boundary line, and from there waged a guerrilla warfare which devastated the country and cost France great sums to keep her forces in the field. At the close of the year 1865 the French invasion of Mexico had cost Louis Napoleon \$135,000,000 and 11,414 troops. Many of the men in the Juarez forces were recruited from the United States army when our war was over, and it is said that Gen. Sheridan, when in command at Brownsville, gave to Juarez and his troops no less than 30,000 muskets.

When the French army captured Mexico City in 1863, a council of 30 members was appointed by the French commander, Forey, and this council in turn elected a committee of three, to whom was intrusted the supreme executive authority. On July 10, 1863, just a month after the flight of Juarez, an assembly of notable men at Mexico City proclaimed Mexico an empire, and following out the program of Louis Napoleon, went through the form of tendering the crown to Maximilian archduke of Austria. Maximilian accepted the crown on conditions that the action of the assembly of notables be ratified by a vote of the Mexican people. He also laid down the condition that "the European nations would give sufficient guarantees that the throne would be protected from dangers that might threaten it." In view of after-happenings and betrayals, this has a note of tragic warning. The farce of nominally securing the Mexican popular vote was easily enough accomplished by Marshall Bazaine, the French army of occupation having now risen to 35,000 men. Napoleon III, then signed the treaty of Miramar, by which he bound himself to maintain the French army in Mexico until the army of the empire should be thoroughly organized.

On May 29, 1864, Maximilian, with the Empress Carlotta, daughter of Leopold I., King of Belgium, landed at Vera Cruz. The ceremony of investing him as Emperor of Mexico had been gone through at Miramar, his Swiss chalet at the head of the Adriatic. With the Empress he proceeded to Mexico City, and then established his brilliant court at Chapultepec. Maximilian announced that his mission was the "rejuvenation of Mexico." But he knew nothing of the country or of the people over whom he had come to rule. He was anxious to conciliate all parties, but he soon found himself without the support of any. He had a praiseworthy but impractical desire to rule without leaning on the French for support, and he neglected their representative until suddenly he came to realize that the foundation, upon which his throne rested. Finally, in despair of accomplishing anything by conciliatory means, he swung too far to the other extreme, and was persuaded to issue a decree October 3, 1865, declaring that all persons bearing arms against the empire were bandits, and if caught would be tried by courtmartial and shot. Within a month four highly esteemed republican officers had been executed in accordance with this decree, and all hope of popular support for the empire had been destroyed.

Meantime the United States Government having been relieved of its embarrassments by the fall of the confederacy, and the end of the civil war, was now in a position to make it clear to Napoleon III. that his intervention in Mexico would no longer be suffered. Maximilian's life was the sacrifice that Napoleon paid. In May, 1866, Maximilian received despatches that the French troops in Mexico would be withdrawn. Maximilian's first impulse was to abdicate, and he would probably have done so had not Carlotta, his wife, dissuaded him, and undertaken to go to Europe to use her influence with Napoleon and other potentates. When she reached Paris, Napoleon at first refused to see her, and then brutally asked her to leave France. The Pope gave her no better consideration, her mind failed, and she became hopelessly insane. She was taken to the chateau of Laeken, and then to the chateau of Bouillon, near Brussels, where, bereft of reason, she still lives, perhaps less to be

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pitted than Eugenie, empress of the French, since Eugenie can remember while she cannot.

Again Maximilian would have abdicated, but the French commissioners sent by Napoleon III. were unable to agree to the terms which he stipulated. He therefore unfortunately accepted the offer of Gens. Miramon and Marquez, who promised to raise a force sufficient to replace the French troops and maintain his empire. The church party urged him to remain, promising its support, and he established his headquarters at Queretaro. The final tragedy soon came. At Queretaro he was surrounded by the Mexican republican army in the early part of March, 1867. On May 14 plans were made for a sortie by which the emperor might escape to Mexico City or the coast. Before such plans could be carried out, Col. Miguel Lopez, a favorite of the emperor and empress; who had received many favors from them, informed the enemy of the plan, and arranged to let the enemy into the imperial camp. Maximilian and his generals were forced to surrender, and were soon tried by military court. The emperor was accused of treason, usurpation of public power, filibustering, trying to prolong the civil war, and of signing the decree of October 3, 1865. He was declared guilty and sentenced to be shot, together with Gens. Miramon and Mejia. The execution took place on the morning of June 19, 1867.

Both England and the United States had protested against the execution of Maximilian, but their protests had been vain. In answer Juarez stated that the sentence was a retaliation on the Emperor for having personally ordered the execution of any republican leaders who might be caught. Moreover, Juarez, feared, or claimed to fear, the wrath of his own people; he mitigated the severity of the sentence. At the same time it is said by some that Juarez intentionally relaxed the guard over Maximilian so that the royal prisoner might easily have escaped, but that this Maximilian bravely refused to do unless accompanied by his fellow-captives under similar sentence. And so Maximilian fell, a sacrifice to the ambitions of others.

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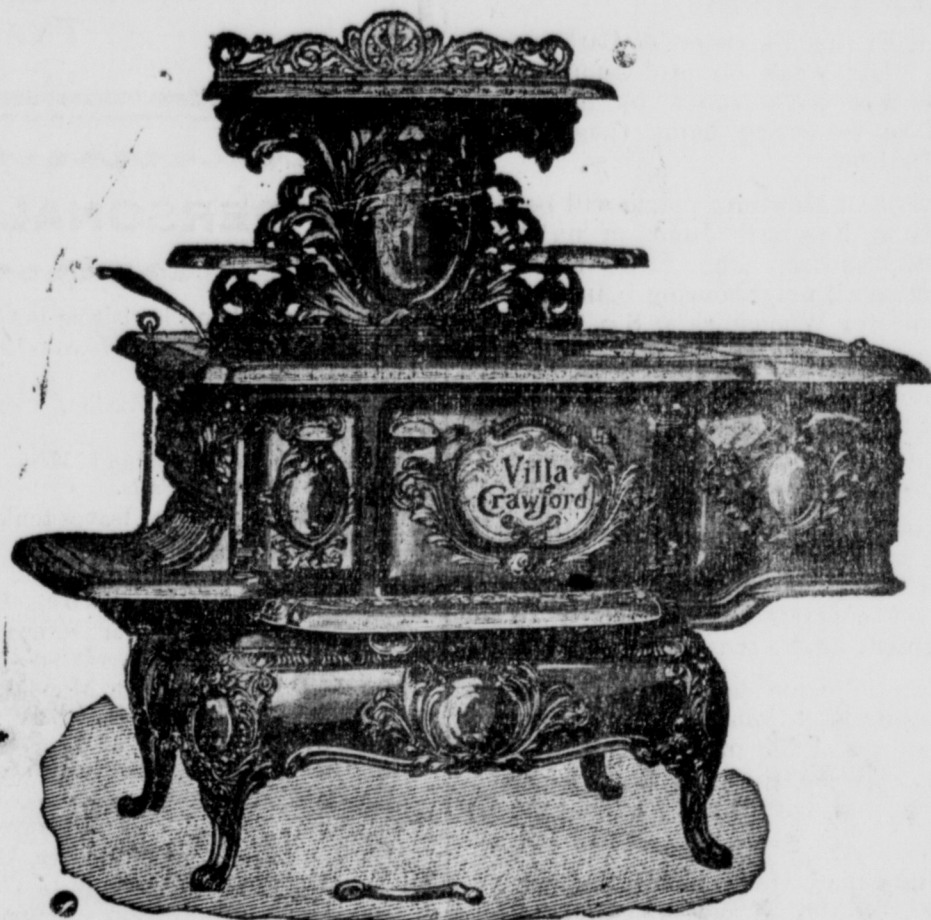
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